

LANGUAGE IN POLITICAL SPEECHES

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Abstract

The persuasive power of political discourse almost entirely rests on the skillful usage of language. Only politicians equipped with a plethora of linguistic tools manage to truly lay claims on political power and authority.

This study seeks to analyze the linguistic strategies Macedonian politicians utilize in their political speeches, in order to construct their and their opponents' roles in the political arena, and to present a reality which simultaneously legitimizes their ideology and undermines the ideology of their adversaries.

Based on Critical Discourse Analysis, this study is qualitative in nature and its aim is to investigate how politicians in a very concrete socio-political context with their choice of lexis, syntactic structures, and figures of speech, make an attempt to successfully present themselves and, at the same time, mar their opponents' repute. The study shows that, apart from the evident similarities, yet certain differences appear in the use of the linguistic strategies between the politician who currently holds the political control and the one who is aspiring to come to power.

Key words: political speeches, linguistic strategies, Macedonian politicians

INTRODUCTION

Politics is concerned with acquiring, maintaining and sustaining power (Charteris-Black 2011). In democratic societies, political power is gained and preserved primarily by means of skillful and persuasive language usage. To put it differently, the language of politicians also known as political discourse has become “the lifeblood of politics”, as it assists politicians to construe a positive and acceptable self-representation or public image, and, thus, “to convince followers that their policies can be trusted” (Charteris-Black 2011).

Research reveals that political discourse is marked by a profound usage of “a wide range of linguistic and rhetorical features”, which make it persuasive without “alerting the audience to the fact that they are being persuaded” (Charteris-Black 2011). *Repetition* of words or entire grammatical patterns is one such attested strategy in political discourse which communicates a sense of conviction (Jones & Wareing 1999; Beard 2000). *Antithesis* is another strategy that is used to present a contrast between certain negative and positive entities and is either explicit or implied (Kulo 2009). Political discourse is also marked by the frequent usage of various figures of speech such as *rhetorical questions*, *sarcasm*, *irony*, and *metaphor*, all of which implicitly communicate the attitude of the speaker towards a

topic, and, at the same time, arouse and retain the audience's interest in that topic (Charteris-Black 2011; Isaiah, Goodluck & Blessing 2018). The use of *pronouns* has been recognized as another particularly important strategy, since it reveals how much responsibility a politician wants to assume for a particular idea (Kulo 2009)¹⁰⁴.

The study of political discourse has been around for as long as politics itself, but viewing political discourse in purely linguistic terms started in the second half of the 20th century with the introduction of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA investigates not just the formal structure of discourse, i.e. the lexical choice and syntactic structure employed in a particular discourse, but also the power relations and conflicts of the groups involved in the discourse as well as the historical, political or social context in which that discourse occurred (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999; van Dijk 1998; Mcclay 2017).

The paper at hand utilizes CDA in analyzing a specific type of political discourse – political speeches. The analysis focuses on how politicians in their speeches work, in parallel, on two opposing planes - creating a positive and persuasive self-representation of themselves, along with marring the opponent's image and repute in the eyes of the general public. For the purposes of this research, speeches of prominent Macedonian political figures are analysed. The selected speeches tackle an extremely serious and sensitive political issue that occupies the entire Macedonian society and the political milieu, in particular – the Prespa Agreement and the name change. In conducting the analysis, a special accent is put on the linguistic strategies (negative and positive lexis, syntactic structures, and figures of speech) employed by politicians in their attempt to present themselves in the best and their opponents in the worst possible light. Eventually, a comparison of the findings is made in order to ascertain whether those who are in power and those who represent the political opposition utilize similar or dissimilar linguistic strategies to achieve their respective goals, namely, staying in power in the case of the former and coming to power, in the case of the latter.

In the first section of the paper, the research methodology employed in this study is explicated. The subsequent sections depict the results and insights gained from the research at hand, and, finally, the last section presents the conclusions drawn on the basis of this research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purposes of this study, two speeches were subjected to a detailed and thorough analysis. The first speech was delivered by the current Macedonian opposition leader, Hristijan Mickovski, at the Annual Conference of the greatest political party in opposition, VMRO DPMNE¹⁰⁵, held on 23 October 2018. The second speech was delivered by Zoran Zaev, the Prime Minister and the leader of

¹⁰⁴ The first person singular pronoun *I*, for instance, clearly declares who is responsible, while the first person plural pronoun *we* makes the status of responsibility unclear (Jones & Wareing 1999). Also, the first person plural pronoun in the introduction of a speech makes an appeal to the sharing of interests between the speaker and the audience (Charteris- Black 2011).

¹⁰⁵ VMRO DPMNE stands for Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization of Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity.

the ruling party, SDSM, in Parliament, on 9 January 2019 – immediately before the endorsement of the name change in the Macedonian Parliament.

Both speeches, having been conveniently downloaded from YouTube¹⁰⁶, were carefully orthographically transcribed. The duration of Mickovski's speech was somewhat more than half an hour; whereas Zaev's speech was considerably shorter and lasted about quarter of an hour. The uneven time span of the selected speeches does not diminish the quality of the research, since the analysis is primarily qualitatively oriented, not quantitatively. What was considered of greater importance in this research was finding speeches that will be comparable in terms of the general theme (the name change) and the specific topics (e.g. the effects of the name change decision; the conduct of the 8 MP from the opposition who supported the government over the name change etc.) covered in them. In any case, generally speaking, the entire corpus that was subjected to analysis consisted of about one hour of transcribed speech.

Given that Mickovski and Zaev represent and defend their respective party's ideologies, which are for the most part mutually exclusive, they both set out to accomplish completely distinct goals with their speeches. The Prime Minister's goal is to convince the public of the rightfulness and the historic salience of the decision made with the Prespa Agreement. His underlying premise is that making this decision was absolutely necessary in order to realize Macedonia's long-awaited NATO membership and EU integration, and to terminate the country's long-term deadlock. The opposition leader, on the other hand, strongly disagreeing with the Prime Minister, in his speech warns the public of the harmful consequences of the Prespa Agreement and the name change, qualifying them as extremely detrimental to the country's national interests.

The primary aim of this research is to analyze the political speeches in light of the linguistic strategies politicians employ to depict themselves and their roles positively and their opponents and their roles negatively ('us' versus 'them' (Sevasti 2014)). In other words, the aim is to determine how the use of language can produce the effects of authority of 'us'; give legitimacy to 'our' ideology, and ensure electorate's consensus for and endorsement of 'our' policies, doing, at the same time, the complete opposite for those at the other end of the political scale ('them'). The linguistic strategies that are placed in the focus of the study include vocabulary (positive and negative lexis); syntactic structure of sentences (short and simple vs. long and complex sentences; declarative versus interrogative, exclamative and imperative sentences); and figures of speech (metaphors, antithesis, irony etc.).

Eventually, the findings gained from the analysis of both speeches are compared in order to pin down similarities and differences in terms of the usage of the aforementioned linguistic strategies in relation to the respective 'power' position of the speakers.

¹⁰⁶ Mickovski's speech was retrieved at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QpXhK-QU0A>; whereas, Zaev's speech at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3TZWDPn_Yo.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

A) *Hristijan Mickovski's speech*

The leader of the opposition, Hristijan Mickovski, in his speech is clearly targeting several major addressees – the party members; the eight MPs excluded from the party for their cooperation with the government over the Prespa Agreement; his political opponents - the government, and the electorate (the people of Macedonia) in general.

Mickovski touches upon several major topics all of which are closely related to the general theme – the Prespa Agreement and the name change. More specifically, he talks about the ‘betrayal’ of his former party members; the irrational decisions of the ruling coalition; the values his party stands for, which are in stark contrast to the ones of the government, and, finally, the support that the ‘reformed’ VMRO DPMNE needs from the Macedonian citizens to reverse the decision and get the country back on track.

A thorough analysis of this speech reveals a careful selection of linguistic strategies with which the speaker creates a setting, reminiscent, in many respects, of the one in the medieval English romances. Namely, just like in the romances where there is a villain, i.e. an evil spirit, a victim – a damsel in distress, and a hero – a noble knight ready to save the victim, in his speech, Mickovski also presents three main characters with similar features. First, the ruling coalition, Zoran Zaev's government, along with the former renegade VMRO DPMNE's MPs are attributed the role of antagonists – evil spirits and their sidekicks, who, led by personal interest, seriously jeopardize the country's existence. The politician's motherland – Macedonia, which according to him is at the verge of being destroyed, is depicted as a helpless damsel in distress who urgently needs help. Finally, Mickovski himself assumes the role of a brave knight who is bound by honor and duty to undertake a difficult quest to save the damsel (the country).

Mickovski invests in the persuasive power of his speech by carefully selecting the lexis with which he describes the main features of these “characters”. Thus, in portraying the image of his opponents, not surprisingly, he uses predominantly negative vocabulary associated with evil, weakness, darkness, corruption, lies, etc. Thus, for instance, he calls his opponents *ill-intentioned and lazy politicians* (“злонамерни и мрзеливи политичари”)¹⁰⁷, comparing them with *gamblers* who gamble with principles (“се коцкаат со принципи“); *liars* whose statements and promises are nothing but lies (“се што кажаа, се што ветива беше лага“); *vulchers* whose favourite pray is the country (“нивниот најпосакуван плен“); *trespassers* who slowly but surely take control of the country (“го запоседнуваат нашиот дом/куќа”) etc.

His bitterness towards his opponents is clearly seen in the fact that in most of his speech he even refrains from making any explicit reference to them. He only alludes to them by using the pronouns: *they* (“**They** sink, turning our country into a political swamp.”)/ “**Tue** тонат создавајќи од нашата земја политичко мочуриште”); *somebody else* (“People feel like they have been put aside, and *somebody else* behaves like the country's owner and proprietor.”)/ “Народот се чувствува како

¹⁰⁷ The translation of all of the instances extracted from the analysed speeches was done by the author of the paper.

трнат на страна, а *некој друг* како нејзин сопственик, нејзин стопан”); *somebody* (“I find it hard to accept *somebody*’s messing around with principles.”/ “Тешко ми паѓа кога *некој* се коцка со принципи.”). In most of the statements, he is not even using pronouns to refer to his opponents; the grammatical category of person is indicated morphologically by attaching a suffix to the verb form (“They said that they were democrats, and now they are the godfathers of the greatest media censorship.”/ “Велеа дека биле демократи, а кумуваат со најголемата цензура на медиумите.”). With this linguistic strategy the speaker is only hinting that he does not consider his opponents worthy of even being mentioned by name.

Nevertheless, in some of the statements he changes the strategy and refers to his opponents only by using their last name, or their full name, thus, deliberately skewing the appropriate and expected mode of address. For instance, the speaker refers to the Prime Minister without mentioning his title (“We cannot afford to tolerate **Zoran Zaev**’s incompetence and shame.”/ “Не смееме да си ја дозволиме некомпетентноста и срамот на Зоран Заев”; “The sad truth is that Macedonia has hit the rock bottom with Zoran Zaev.”/ “Тажната вистина е дека Македонија го допре дното со Зоран Заев.”).

In portraying the negative image of his political opponents more convincingly, Mickovski skillfully uses several attested rhetorical devices, commonly found in political speeches – *Biblical allusions*, *metaphors* and *rhetorical questions*. For example, in one of his utterances he uses a Biblical allusion (the government represents the evil, i.e. the devil) combined with a war metaphor (the government must be *defeated*) (“This evil must be defeated and will be defeated.”/ “Ова зло мора да биде поразено и ќе биде поразено”). In another utterance, he combines a Biblical allusion (‘spooky shadows’ which stands for something evil) with a metaphoric expression (the Prime Minister and his collaborators are compared to *refuse* which must be disposed of) (“The politicians like Zoran Zaev are the last residues of the gloomy transition, spooky shadows that stand between us and the sun.”/ “Политичарите како Зоран Заев се последни остатоци од мрачната транзиција, морничави сенки кои стојат меѓу нас и нашето место под сонцето”).

The speaker makes a similar choice of linguistic strategies when he ‘constructs’ the image of the eight VMRO DPMNE parliamentarians who decide to support the government over the Prespa Agreement. The underlying qualification that he uses in portraying them is associated with ‘treachery’ (“...the treachery that you committed of the country that have raised you...”/ “...предавството кое го направивте кон татковината која ве одгледала”). Additionally, he uses a host of rhetorical questions with which he only consolidates the image of ‘traitors’ that he previously created for them (“Why did you give up?”/ “Зошто не издржавте?”; “Didn’t you see that he (Zaev) was finished, that he was running away from the prospect of election as the devil runs away from the cross?”/ “Па нели сфативте дека беше готов (Заев), дека бегаше од избори како ѓавол од крст?”). He also tarnishes their political repute by using an abundance of negative lexis to present them as: *people moved only by their personal vested interest* (“They only followed their personal interest.”/ “То следеа својот личен интерес.”); *servants of the government* (“They only finished the dirty work of the government.”/ “Ја

одработија валканата работа на власта.”), and *deceitful and untrustworthy individuals* (“You only wish to deceive the public.”/ “Ја замајувате јавноста.”; “You only wish to cover the whole thing.”/ “Сакате да ја заташкате работата.”).

The usage of metaphors in this context cannot escape unnoticed as well. One of the more creative metaphors draws on the domains of medicine and sport as it compares the support that Zaev got from the eight MPs to an *injection* (medicine given to a patient to help him recover his health) and *doping* (used in sport to enhance the sportsman’s performance) (“You have only prolonged Zaev’s political career for a short while. “Your injection, your doping, will not last him long.”/ “Виe само кратко ми ја продолживте политичката кариера на Заев. Вашата инекција, вашиот допинг, кратко ќе му потрае.”). Another rather innovative metaphor is when he refers to the ratification of the Prespa agreement in the Macedonian Parliament as ‘Black Friday’ not only because it happened on Friday but also because the phrase ‘Black Friday’ is normally used to refer to a terrible day filled with great tragedies and horror (“The Black Friday happened to us.”/ “Ни се случи црниот петок.”).

From the point of syntax, the analysis reveals that, this speaker mainly uses *short and syntactically simple sentences* which are rather easy to follow and memorize. Long and complex sentences are virtually non-existent in this speech. Also, most of the sentences of the declarative type with which he states his opinions and his assessment of the newly arisen situation in the country. There is a frequent usage of questions (particularly when addressing the 8 MPs, demanding an explanation for their unexpected course of action) as well as imperative sentences when he encourages people to be active and confront the government’s decision (“Don’t sit with your arms folded!”/ “Немојте да седите со скрстени раце!”). Moreover, the structure of the sentences is further marked by an intense *repetition of words and phrases*, in an obvious attempt to increase the negative sentiment towards the government and the eight MPs (“**You have failed** your country. **You have failed** me. **You have failed** each and every member of VMRO.”/ “Ја изневеривте вашата татковина. Ме изневеривте мене. Го изневеривте ВМРО. Го изневеривте секој член на ВМРО.”).

The speaker, tries to build his own image, understandably, in a most positive and favorable light. In fact, first he presents himself as a sufferer, a sensitive and compassionate human being, who is deeply hurt by the injustice done to his country (“My heart was breaking, hellish pain is that.”/ “Срцето ми се кинеше, пеколна болка е тоа.”). Then, he presents himself as a fighter, a noble knight, who will defend his country and his people (“We have a country, we have a wonderful motherland, which we love, which we are proud of, and which we have no intention to lose.”/ “Имаме земја, имаме прекрасна татковина која треба да ја сакаме, на која сме горди, и која немаме намера да ја изгубиме.”). The image of a capable knight is further intensified with the heavy use of *war metaphors* whose sole purpose is to encourage people to raise their voice against the current government (“Let us join our strengths, let us act together, in a principled and firm manner.”/ “Да ги збиеме силите, заеднички, принципиелно и силно!”). In this call for resistance, Mickovski resorts to using *terms of endearment* too (“My dear brothers

and sisters, nobody will break your spirit.”/ “Драги браќа и сестри, никој нема да ви го скрши духот.”).

Finally, in depicting his party, Mickovski uses only positive vocabulary, describing it as reformed, refreshed and rejuvenated with the right sort of people who can lead and govern the country (“We are done with our reform and reformation. We are ready. We are focused.”/ “Ние завршивме со нашата реформа и преродба. Подготвени сме. Фокусирани сме.”). The speaker employs *personification* in reference to his party, VMRO, ascribing human-like qualities and skills to it and presenting it as a *faithful and trustworthy ally of the Macedonian people* (“VMRO is the greatest, the strongest ally of the Macedonian people.”/ “ВМРО ќе биде најголемиот, најсилниот сојузник на македонскиот народ.”).

B) Zoran Zaev’s speech

The Prime Minister’s speech was delivered in Parliament on 9 January 2019 and its purpose was, for the very last time, to encourage the Parliamentarians to vote in favor of the name change. Apart from discussing the central issue - the historical importance of the decision regarding the name change and the bright future that awaits the country, the Prime Minister also in his speech touches upon his successful endeavors in positioning the country as an equal and respected partner in both the immediate neighborhood and in the world; then, he expresses his gratitude to all those who supported him and worked hard to get this process underway. His addressees are manifestly, the present Parliamentarians, the general public, the eight former members of VMRO DPMNE and the opposition.

What is noteworthy in his speech is that he depicts himself as a progressive and liberal leader, who has got both courage and determination to make radical changes in order to improve the country’s position. In other words, he attempts to present himself as a visionary who is prepared to break all the ties with the past that hold the country from moving forward and as a hero who is willing to take decisive steps to enable his county and people to embrace a prosperous and promising future.

The image of a visionary that the Prime Minister creates for himself is based on carefully made lexical choices. Namely, in discussing the endorsement of the name change, he continuously qualifies the decision with extremely positive lexis describing it as *historic, patriotic, grand*, (“историска, татковинска, голема”); a decision with which our country writes history (“одлука со која пишуваме историја”); a decision with which we turn a new page of our bright future (“отвараме нови бели страници на нашата иднина”); a decision with which we build our state (“одлука да ја градиме нашата земја”); a decision which guarantees a secure and peaceful future (“одлука за безбедна и спокојна иднина”); a decision which enables the young people of our country to stand on an equal footing with their European peers (“одлука што им дава сила на нашите млади генерации да излезат рамо до рамо со нивните европки врсници”), and a decision with which our country will become a NATO and EU member.

Just like his political rival from the opposition, from a syntactic point of view, it was notable that the Prime Minister was also prone to using relatively *short and simple declarative sentence*. In his speech there were practically no instances of long complex sentences, and, instances of interrogative, exclamative and imperative

type of sentences. With the declarative sentences, the Prime Minister was presenting the target audiences with his point of views, reassuring everybody that his political decisions are justified and correct. As in the case of his political opponent, the syntactic structure of his sentences was marked by a frequent *repetition of the same word* in a series of consecutive sentences. Thus, by constantly repeating the term *decision* and attaching positive attributes to it, he not only tries to convince the MPs and the general public of the righteousness of this decision, but also he implicitly imposes an image of himself being a capable leader, a visionary who reaches major decisions that will change Macedonia's otherwise gloomy prospects. The repetition in some sentences is manifested in the form of a string of words of the same part of speech usually *nouns* ("Instead of with *bitterness* and *anger*, starting today we will fill the white pages with *hope, understanding, unity, solidarity* and mutual *joy*." / "Наместо со горчина и гнев, од денес овие страници да ги испишиме со надеж, со разбирање, со заедништво, со солидарност, и со взаемна радост.") or *adjectives* ("this choice is *generational, historic* and *patriotic*" / "овој избор е генерациски, историски и патриотски").

The use of the figures of speech was not that pronounced in this speech, i.e. apart from the several instances of metaphoric expressions, there were no other tropes used. This implies that most of his utterances were rather straightforward and did not require making inferences on the part of the audience. The speaker drew his metaphors from the domains of *education* comparing the country's bright future to a book whose pages are yet to be written ("What we have in front of us are the white pages of our future." / "Пред нас се белите страници на нашата иднина."); the domain of *agriculture* comparing his political efforts to tilling the soil and picking fruits ("We all worked very hard and now is the time to gather the fruits of our work." / "Работевме напорно сите и сега е време сите заедно да ги собереме плодовите од тој труд."), and the domain of *family and domestic life* comparing our country's future membership in the EU as becoming a member of a well-respected family ("Europe has given us her hand and has called us to join its family." / "Европа и подаде рака и нè повика во своето семејство."). In all these metaphorical expressions, he indirectly hints at the successful politics of his government, which means that the speaker is simultaneously reinforcing the positive image of both himself and his government. His frequent choice of first person plural pronoun, *we*, implies that he is prone to sharing both the successes but the responsibility as well for the changes he is introducing in the Macedonian society with the other government representatives ("We defeated the fear in order to secure safe and peaceful future" / "Се издигнавме над стравот за да обезбедиме безбедна и спокојна иднина").

The subtle self-praise and the creation of the image of a visionary can be easily tracked down when the Prime Minister talks about his success in establishing good neighboring relations with the countries in the region. Thus, for instance, the Prime Minister attaches a clearly positive label to our southern neighbor, Greece, referring to it as a 'our friend the Republic of Greece' ("нашиот пријател Република Грција"). In that context, he also emphasizes the fact that Macedonia has no longer any open issues with the other neighbors as well ("немаме отворени прашања со ниеден сосед"; "We spread positive energy, we build friendships with all our

neighbors.”/ “Шириме таков дух, такво пријателство со сите наши соседи.”), implying that thanks to his political dexterity, all of Macedonia’s past issues with the neighboring countries have been finally resolved – something that no other politician before him had managed to accomplish. The Prime Minister particularly stresses the improved position of the country in the international community and its newly gained respect among the most influential international powers, again due to his own and his government’s hard work and vision (“Our country is now perceived as a role model for settling disputes. Our friends have recognized that and they acknowledge that. We have become a partner with the greatest powers with which we share the same values”/ “На нашата земја гледаат како на пример за решавање на спорови. Тоа нашите пријатели го препознаа и ни оддават признание. Станавме земја партнер со најголемите сили со кои делиме исти вредности.”).

Unlike the opposition leader who for the most part of his speech vigorously attacks the ruling party, the Prime Minister only vaguely alludes to the opposition on just several occasions, hinting at their corruptive and irresponsible behavior in the past (“The other choice is to put the personal and party interest of some political actors above the interests of our people and our children and to deliberately obstruct the future of our country.”/ “Другиот избор е да ги ставиме партиските и лажните интереси на некои политички актери над интересите на нашиот народ на нашите деца и свесно да ја попречите иднината на нашата земја.”).

In his speech he specifically addresses the eight MPs from the opposition who supported the Prespa Agreement, expressing his gratitude to them and presenting them in a very favorable light. Thus, in one of his utterances he uses an antithesis to compare them with the rest of the opposition which he qualifies as ‘uncooperative’ (“I would like to express my gratitude to the 8 MPs who gave a serious contribution, which is becoming of a constructive opposition, which was not the case with the rest of the opposition from the Macedonian block.”/ “Им се заблагодарувам на осумте пратеници кои дадоа сериозен придонес, како што личи на конструктивна опозиција, што не е случај со остатокот од опозицијата од македонскиот блок.”). In his final attempt to reassure the eight MPs that they are doing the right thing by supporting the name change, he uses another figure of speech – a *metonymy* with which the countries that are interested in the outcome of the Prespa Agreement such as our neighbors, the EU, the USA, and Russia perhaps, are referred to as the entire world (“The world is watching. The world is watching and expects that you as proud representative of the citizens will show responsibility and vote in favour of the changes”/ Светот гледа. Светот гледа и очекува дека вие како одговорни претставници на граѓаните на нашата земја ќе покажете државничка одговорност.).

CONCLUSION

The critical discourse analysis of the two analyzed political speeches reveals that although political speeches delivered by the representative of the ruling party and the opposition are marked by many commonalities in terms of the linguistic means employed by these two politicians, still, certain differences are bound to arise.

Thus, for instance, as far as the politicians' choice of lexis is concerned, it was not surprising to find out that they both made a careful selection of an abundance of positive lexis to depict their personal and their party's image and role in the concrete political milieu. In contrast, they reserved the negative lexis only to refer to their political opponents and to depict them as undeserving of the power they have or aspire to. Still, the usage of negative lexis was much more pronounced in the speech of the opposition leader. Unlike him, the representative of the government used negative lexis much more tentatively and rarely. In fact, he seemed to have almost completely replaced the negative lexis strategy with another much more subtle tactics, also intended to debase the image of his political adversaries. More specifically, by not mentioning nor addressing the opposition in most of his speech, he is deliberately putting the limelight on himself and his party, and, thus, implicitly imparting the message that because of the opposition's obstructions to the name change and their 'destructive' behavior in general they should be punished, i.e. ignored and forgotten by everybody.

Also, another common tendency in both politicians' speeches was noted in terms of the syntactic structure of the sentences. Namely, both politicians preferred using short and simple sentences, mostly of the declarative type, marked with a frequent repetition of certain words and phrases. This is probably due to the fact that both speeches were previously prepared and well-thought out, and the intention of the speakers was to ensure the clarity of their messages, as well as to make them more effective, persuasive and memorable. As in the case of lexis, here as well certain differences were marked. Namely, while the opposition leader was using interrogative and imperative sentences along with the declaratives, the government representative stuck only to declarative sentences. As mentioned earlier, the choice of the type of sentences was in a close nexus with the speaker's goals. The opposition leader was assessing the situation in his declarative sentences, but also he was demanding answers and explanations from the government and the 8 MPs with his imperative sentences, and he was trying to encourage the general public to take a stance and confront the government with his imperative sentences. The government representative, being vested with power and authority, was only stating his opinions and assessments in the form of declarative sentences.

When it comes to the use of figurative language, the differences were the most striking. The presence of figurative language as a special linguistic strategy was noted in both speeches. Nevertheless, a considerably greater inclination towards using tropes was marked on the part of the representative of the opposition. Not only was he using tropes more frequently, but also he was making use of a greater variety of tropes (metaphors, rhetorical questions, personification and Biblical allusions) than his opponent who used only several instances of metaphors and one instance of metonymy, in his entire speech. One possible explanation for this difference would be that the former felt a stronger need to impress the audience and to appeal to their emotions with some sort of poetic and elevated expressions, in order to persuade them to vote for him when the time comes, so that he and his party can come to power. The latter, being in power already, probably felt much more relaxed and comfortable, and thought that fact-based and non-figurative language was more appropriate to appeal to people's reason, so that they could