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ANTITHESIS AS POWERFUL LINGUISTIC TOOL OF PERSUASION IN POLITICAL SPEECHES IN KOSOVO

Venera LLUNJI, PhD

AAB College, Kosovo

venera.llunji@universitetiaab.com

Albert PAÇARIZI, PhD c.*

AAB College, Kosovo

albert.pacarizi@universitetiaab.com

*corresponding author

Abstract: *Political speeches play a vital role in the communication strategies of political leaders, enabling them to express their ideas, mobilize support, and persuade the public. Within this context, the effective use of rhetorical devices assumes paramount importance in conveying messages. This paper aimed to investigate the role of antithesis as a potent linguistic tool of persuasion in political speeches, specifically within the context of Kosovo. The paper sought to examine the prevalence and patterns of antithesis in political speeches delivered by Kosovo politicians, analyze its rhetorical effectiveness in shaping public opinion and influencing political discourse, explore sociopolitical and cultural factors that influence its usage, and assess its impact on audience perception and receptiveness to political messages. The paper employed methodologies such as corpus analysis, rhetorical analysis, and sociopolitical analysis, to achieve its objectives. The expected contributions of this paper lie in advancing our understanding of political rhetoric in Kosovo, highlighting the significance of antithesis as a persuasive linguistic tool, and enriching the knowledge base in the field of political communication.*

Keywords: antithesis, political speeches, persuasion, rhetoric, Kosovo, linguistic tools

1. Introduction

Whenever people speak and express their ideas, they not only want to make others listen to them but also want to achieve the effect of their words. Undoubtedly, such an effect does not depend only on the situation we are talking about, but also on the person who conveys such a message to the listeners or the readers. Creativity during the expression of thoughts and ideas, creativity in the way of the ability to interpret the other's message has its importance as well. Therefore, everything we say is related to our ability to express it, to the style of communication, to the choice of vocabulary when perceiving the message, in other words, our communication,

whether written or spoken, depends on many factors. In the field of politics, communication is the essence of an individual's presentation. There you can see apart from the intellectual and academic development, the attitude, the courage, and the creativity to say what one thinks and is necessary to say in front of the citizens, and in particular, this affinity is noticeable during the electoral campaigns.

Politics is the art of the impossible, but also the art of the possible, it is the art of negotiations and it is part of different social and political arrangements, that of democracy but also of dictatorship. The language discourse used by politicians is the one that decides the choice to vote most of the time. The discourse of the politician is the distinguishing emblem in conveying the message to the voting electorate; it is the tool that convinces the other how to act. Linguistic discourse is, therefore, the most powerful weapon during various speeches, whether they are electoral speeches or speeches on different occasions: fundraising, negotiations, or solutions to various disputes, be that state, national, or international occasions. Hence, this paper aimed to explore the role of antithesis as a powerful linguistic tool of persuasion in political speeches, focusing specifically on the context of Kosovo. By investigating the prevalence, effectiveness, and underlying sociopolitical and cultural factors, this paper aimed to shed light on the significance of antithesis in shaping political discourse and influencing public opinion in Kosovo.

When Albin Kurti¹ entered the political scene of Kosovo, his communication skills through powerful rhetoric became the main component of his public persona and his political success in addition to his demonstrated courage and skills in dealing with Kosovo's national political issues especially during the years 1997-1999 and in the years to come.

Taking into account the importance of his public appearances as a political person, it is seen as very important to analyze his speeches, not only the electoral ones but also his appearances in the Assembly of Kosovo as a representative of the opposition (when the party 'Lëvizja Vetëvendosje!' was an opposition party) and as Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo. His eloquence is special because it represents his communication style in every situation. Therefore, the questions that were addressed in this article cover the following: a) the

¹ Albin Kurti is the President of the biggest political party in the country, Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE! (LVV), as well as the fourth and now the sixth Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosova since the country's declaration of independence.

frequency and distribution of antithesis in political speeches in Kosovo; b) the use of antithesis as a contribution to the persuasive discourse in political speeches in Kosovo; c) the sociopolitical and cultural factors that influence the deployment of antithesis in political speeches in Kosovo; d) the extent of the use of antithesis in order to shape audience perception and influence political discourse in Kosovo. This paper initially presents a review of the existing literature on linguistic discourse, then we identified and analyzed antithesis as Kurti's rhetoric during his public appearances. The examples taken from those speeches were given translated from the source language (SL) i.e., the Albanian language, into the target language (TL), i.e., in English. The political, economic and social, and cultural significance in the context of Kosovo was also explained.

2. Discourse in political speeches

The nature of language is closely related to the demands that we make on it and the functions it has to serve. In concrete terms, these functions are specific to a culture. Therefore, one of the important features of discourse analysis is to study authentic text and conversations in the social context. According to Halliday (1978), texts should encode both personal and social processes.

In other words, texts should be generated, comprehended, and put into a social context, thus, both linguistic and social analyses are important. "The particular form taken by the grammatical system of language is closely related to the social and personal need that language is required to serve", states (Halliday, 1978, p. 142). Discourses, as such, are interpreted as communicative events because discourses between people convey messages beyond what is said directly. What is important in such discourse is the social information that is transferred allusively. Whenever people have to vote be that for one person or one party, it is most likely that their decision on who to vote for is based on communication through language and the influence of that language upon the decision of the voter. As Charteris-Black (2005) states "Within all types of political system, from autocratic, through oligarchic to democratic; leaders have relied on the spoken word to convince others of the benefits that arise from their leadership" (Charteris-Black, 2006, p. 1). As such, political speech is considered to be a pervasive longstanding political genre because power relationships in societies are mainly expressed

through language and practices, which according to the theories of Michael Foucault (1972) consist of statements that are organized regularly and systematically. Organized statements are part of the linguistic discourse which, “integrate a whole palette of meanings' bearing in mind that 'discourse is a broad term with different definitions” (Titscher, 2000, p. 42).

In political speeches, ideas and ideologies are conveyed through language. Words and expressions are used to affect meanings in the way in which they are planned to affect. Political speeches are composed by using persuasive language and the language of a speech may be of crucial importance in winning the elections. And using rhetorical devices in a speech may be considered the key to success.

The use of a figure of speech or any other literary device in a speech be it written or spoken, cannot pass unnoticed as the text in point becomes stylistically marked. The stylistic analysis of such devices aims at pointing out the effects that they achieve on the recipients and the possible reasons why they were employed in a particular place in the text, as this can account for the speaker's personality in terms of education and psychological traits of personality such as intentions, emotions, and attitudes. The truth is that the effects of any stylistic device “differ from text to text and within texts, depending on the immediate context”. The beauty of orations resides mainly in the stylistic devices used for a better illustration of ideas. Thus, in speeches intended to influence people, rhetorical devices go hand in hand with stylistic devices. Giambattista Vico's (1996) opinion that “to persuade is to instill in the listener conformity to the spirit of the oration so that the listener wills the same as that which the oration proposes” (Vico, 1996, p.5), is worth emphasizing, as in this definition Vico does not refer to the orator, but to the oration as a text with a message only.

Political speeches are a specific sub-genre of political texts which are products of the political discourse. The term discourse in this formulation is used according to Norman Fairclough's (2013) critical discourse analysis integrative approach. This means that their form and content, i.e., the linguistic structures and the message ‘transmitted’ by the political texts, “are related to larger contexts of communicative settings and political functions” (Schäffner, 1996, p.202).

A political speech is generally seen as a rhetorical product created and delivered in a political context: “Political texts are a part of and/or the result of politics, they are historically

and culturally determined” (ibid.) Let’s not forget that campaign communications are carefully constructed with specific political objectives in mind.

Linguistic performance is considered the most important skill required for political success. The choice of language a politician opts to use while addressing people publicly is essential for acquiring a leader’s status. The mental aspects of language production and recognition as seen by cognitive linguistics give means to political consultants, speech writers, and politicians to successfully manipulate the ideas and images they produce in the people’s minds. Language and discourse according to Van Dijk (2006) have “a broad range of structural possibilities to emphasize and de-emphasize information and hence also the ideologically controlled opinions about in-groups and out-groups” (Van Dijk, 2006). As such, discourse structures function as “strategic means” to influence the mental attitudes and behavior of the people.

We must first stop at the theory of argumentation which considers persuasion as an act of communication and as a term that emphasizes both situations, i.e., persuasion and the persuaded in order to analyze the antithesis as a form of rhetoric in political speeches. Various authors have dealt with 'persuasion' as the goal of rhetoric. Let us emphasize that in the Albanian language, the term 'persuasion' has the same connotation compared to the two terms used in the English language, the term "convince" and the term "persuade". Is there a difference between this term in the English language when talking about political rhetoric, or when literary tools are used in political rhetoric to reach listeners and readers, and in our case, voters? It seems that different researchers have also given different definitions. For example, Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984, 1992) prefer the term "convince" (van Eemeren, 1984); (van Eemeren H. a., 1992) while Walten and Krabbe (1995) consider it more appropriate to use the term "persuade" (Walton, 1995).

In the Albanian language, both terms have the same meaning, so it does not matter if one term or the other is used, as long as the purpose of use and the strategy of use in a political discourse achieves its aim, that of convincing the listeners and conveying the message to them. The persuasion through the message sent to the listener and the voter and the power that a message transmits depends on the ability of rationality of thinking and logic not only of the sender of the message but also of the listener: the ability to correctly understand and absorb the

argument of what they say and the message that is conveyed. Undoubtedly, the effort to convince the other and to change either the attitude or belief depends on the way of argumentation and the ability to achieve the intended goal on the part of the speaker. Therefore, the approach through which the message is given, the goal to convince the other, and the aim to achieve the goal is the main advocate of each speaker against the target audience. It seems that if we want to convince someone to change their approach, conviction, belief, and attitudes, then we must be able to win the conviction and trust through objective and accurate argumentation. Argumentation should be seen as a factor or element which affects both the logic and the emotion of the other so that it can be converted into conviction/persuasion. The argument must be used to prove what the sender of a message wants to reach within his audience, and in this specific 'art', everything the politician wants to reach is the voter. That being said, every argument must aim to convince the other. This is how a politician who speaks in front of a certain audience of voters should do with the arguments to convince. However, this does not guarantee that the success will be undeniable because there are many cases when the politician fails, through the speeches and arguments they present, to offer convincing arguments at the right level which would change the attitude of the voters and make them obey the arguments presented in a speech or a public presentation. Does this mean that the arguments are not enough? Not necessarily, but this means that the arguments depend on what persuasive power is presented to the listener, and in our case, to the voter. Argumentation cannot be considered complete if a speech or public presentation is related to only one argument. On the contrary, in every public appearance of each politician, the argument must be a continuous connection of the arguments presented so that the voter is convinced of what is conveyed as a message. The range of arguments must be logical, correct, and above all, convincing. Arguments must be supported by the reasonableness of their submission. If a politician tries to convince the voters by offering an argument or several arguments related to certain topics and tries to convince them of the political positions offered, then the reason should be the connected string of logical thinking and should contain the clarifications properly presented on many levels and with eloquence. This brings us to the definition given by Simons et al (2001) who says that persuasion is "human communication designed to influence the autonomous judgments and actions of others" (Simons, 2001, p. 7). This means that the sender of the message wants to influence the receiver of the message in a certain, structured, and planned

way. The sender of the message does this by influencing the feelings, way of thinking, and communication of the recipient of the message, that is, in this case, the voter. The way of communication, the eloquence of conveying the message, and the appropriate and purposeful argumentation represent an appropriate and subtle form of conveying the message to its recipient. In political rhetoric, persuasion undoubtedly represents a main concept because it aims to convince the audience to accept the views and positions presented by the party that wants to achieve its goal (Walton D., 2007, p. 87). So, one might raise the question of when can a persuasion be called successful. Only when the purpose intended by the sender of the message is achieved; only when the recipient of the message is consciously convinced that what has been offered to him/her is sufficiently argued to influence the beliefs, emotions, and decisions he/she will make in a given situation. In our case, persuasion is considered successful when the message carrier manages to influence the voter's decision as a result of ample argumentation in favor of the given party; a theory of attitude change that posits that the persuasive power of a given message depends on how different the position advocated in the message is from a person's attitude. We can say that every decision that the individual takes about a certain situation, for example, the decision of which party to vote for in the upcoming elections, depends on the information that he/she receives and what is offered to him/her through that information. For a voter, it is important how every word and every argument of the sender of a message related to a certain party in the electoral campaign will affect the decision he/she will make during the vote. In other words, people make their evaluations according to the content of the message and the argument behind that message to decide whether the message will ultimately be acceptable or not for them. In persuasion theories, this position is known as social judgment theory and is attributed to American psychologists, Carolyn Wood Sherif (1922–1982), Muzafer Sherif, and Carl I. Hovland. What level of argumentation will emerge during the transmission of messages to the voter, depends on the argumentative power of that message. If this argumentative power is emphasized, then the voter will resonate based on those arguments, and any doubts or insecurities that the voter may have had beforehand, he/she will fight precisely by relying on the strong arguments that are given. If the argumentative power is weaker, then this will cause either uncertainty in the voters and wavering in their decision to vote, or it will make them lean towards the opposite of what is being argued.

In other words, when we talk about different tools that politicians use to convince their audience about issues that they can consider as facts and arguments to win the support of voters, we must also look at the rhetoric that they use in this regard. A politician who aims to have the support of the majority is clear that he/she must find a way to approach the voters. So, the argumentation of the truths that a politician tries to present to the general public is related to the way he/she can argue it. Will the politician do this through facts that can be argued, or will the politician be able to convince the voter that the argument which seems to be a fact, is just a skill of the politician to present that 'argument' as a fact through means that will convince the voter in question? So, voters in such a dilemma will either remain neutral and not vote at all, or they will rely on weak arguments and vote for the party that gives strong arguments and makes them believe and change their attitude by leading to a certain conviction. Such a situation makes us see another approach to the theory of argumentation known as the New Rhetoric which was promoted by two Belgian philosophers, Chaim Perelman, and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca in 1958. What plays the main role in such an approach is also related to the necessity of having a listening audience if the politician is not sure (that) that audience is stable and believes the arguments that the politician offers since the politician's goal is known: to touch the audience and influence the audience, then convince the audience through the arguments that the politician offers as facts or simply as arguments to promote the attitudes but also the goals in the realization of the political platform. To achieve the political goal, every politician must build the argumentative rhetoric knowing to whom it is directed, what is the educational, social, and economic level of that audience; it must be clear what are the expectations of that audience; what could upset them or what could encourage them and convince them in the arguments offered. Every politician should know what social norms this audience supports and gives its support to a certain politician or party. All these elements help to build the argument and/or rhetoric on which a politician will try to convince the audience to support and vote in his/her favor or in favor of the political party that is represented at a given time and situation certain. Let us agree with Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1969) definitions of the new rhetoric "as the study of the discursive techniques allowing us to induce or to increase the mind's adherence to the theses presented for its assent" and 'audience' as "the ensemble of those whom the speaker wishes to influence by his argumentation" (al., 2014, p. 262-263). So, every approach and behavior of a politician to

achieve his goal towards the audience is related to the politician's ability to reach the specific audience and convey the message to the specific audience. The arguments that the politician used in conveying the message and trying to convince the audience are also given very well by two other theorists, Baker and Huntington, (1905, p.7), who are cited in "Handbook of Argumentation Theory" (2014). They state that both conviction and persuasion are important in the view of argumentation: "Conviction aims only to produce an agreement between writer and reader," they say, while "persuasion aims to prepare the way for the process of conviction or to produce action as a result of conviction" (al., 2014, p. 428).

In this respect, antithesis is a powerful persuasive tool in the political discourse because, in speeches, language is an important device by which conveyance can be made. Therefore, in political speeches, the speakers are often very careful in using language because they aim to achieve the required power in them. To characterize a phenomenon from a specific point of view, it may be necessary not to find points of resemblance or association between them and some other phenomena, but to find points of sharp contrast, that is, to set one against the other.

As Jones (1994) puts it, [a]t the micro level we use a variety of techniques to get our way: persuasion, rational argument, irrational strategies, threats, entreaties, bribes, manipulation – anything we think will work. (Jones, 1994, p. 5)

That is the reason why stylistic opposition, which is given a special name, the term 'antithesis' has long been a favorite device of accomplished speakers. Antithesis means opposite and is used as a literary device to put two contrasting ideas together. It emphasizes the difference between the two ideas and the effect of the contrast between the two ideas because it is built on that contrast of concepts that can be compared but which are not a common discourse in an ordinary speech. The message or focus is usually on the second idea.

3. Approach to the article

The approach in this article focused on the analysis of antithesis in the linguistic discourse of political speeches of Kosovo Prime Minister, Albin Kurti. The excerpts of speeches were taken from portals and social networks, and the party's official website "Lëvizja Vetëvendosje!" / "Self-determination Movement!". To achieve the research objectives and answer the research question(s), the following methodology was employed: a) Corpus Analysis: A

comprehensive corpus of political speeches delivered by Kosovo politicians, i.e., by Prime Minister Albin Kurti was compiled and analyzed to identify instances of antithesis. b) Rhetorical Analysis: The identified instances of antithesis underwent a meticulous rhetorical analysis to examine their persuasive impact and effectiveness in shaping political discourse. c) Sociopolitical Analysis: A short introduction was given to present the sociopolitical factors that influence the usage of antithesis in political speeches in Kosovo. Excerpts have been identified, described, and translated from the Albanian language as the source language (SL) into English as the target language (TL) to understand their meaning.

In other words, taking into consideration the fact that corpus analysis and rhetorical analysis can be considered as complementary methodologies that are employed in a language, we may say that even for this paper the two although being distinct play that complementary role, especially in the context of political speeches. Antithesis is used as a literary device in political speeches, therefore authors, i.e., researchers through such analysis gain an understanding of different corpus to identify such patterns and the frequency of those patterns used. In the case of antithesis in political speeches, researchers may compile a corpus that comprises speeches from politicians to identify either common features or differences and variations in the use of antithesis as a political speech structure. This has to do with the quantitative perspective of analyzing the corpora. However, this paper uses a qualitative perspective and through its rhetorical analysis, it explores the nuances of how antithesis functions rhetorically in trying at the same time to persuade its audience and engage it into accepting the rhetoric and messages sent to them. In other words, rhetorical analysis tries to analyze the strategies used by its speakers to persuade its audience until it achieves its goals. In this sense, it consists of ideas, memorable phrases, and the construction of such phrases so that they resonate with the audience. It emphasizes linguistic features, contextual nuances, and the rhetorical significance of antithesis. This qualitative analysis involved as such an analysis of individual instances of antithesis within the selected speeches of the Prime Minister of Kosovo. The purpose of his usage of antithesis in his speeches is to contrast, to give a memorable phrase, and to evoke the emotional response, at the same time. It includes the approach toward the broader context of his speeches, while including the political climate, voters' expectations, and specific events and issues addressed. Having qualitatively analyzed the antithesis within the corpus, the authors in

this work endeavored to examine and describe the intricacies and peculiarities of its usage, providing a nuanced understanding of how this literary figure operates in the realm of political discourse. This qualitative approach adds depth to the overall academic inquiry, offering valuable insights into the rhetorical strategies employed by political speakers and the communicative power of antithesis in shaping public opinion. Hence, the basis of this paper is comprised of phrases and sentences that can be considered sufficient examples of the usage of antithesis as a rhetorical device mentioned above. Speeches that were addressed to the general public and the language that was carefully organized served specific communicative and political purposes. In political speeches such rhetorical devices are carefully chosen and constructed being that such language is artificial and highly figurative designed with premeditated intent.

4. The social, economic, political, and linguistic situation

Kosovo is a new state in the community of states, but it is an ancient country in the Balkans. In 1999, it faced its last fight to preserve its existence and that of its people. Over 1 million people became refugees. Helped by NATO and other allies, the war stopped, and the displaced population returned to find great destruction of houses and properties but to resume life in a country freed from the chauvinism and repression of Serbia.

In 2008, Kosovo was declared an independent state. Another phase of social and political circumstances and a great challenge for economic development began. The country was devastated for years even before the war of 1999; there was no economy and no industry. Education was at a low level; the infrastructure was weak for a country that is considered to be in the heart of Europe. Kosovo has a great wealth of underground minerals, it is rich in coal, and it has natural wealth, but all of these were exploited, damaged, and destroyed for decades by Serbia. The help of powerful international organizations and institutions helped to start the reconstruction of the country in all spheres. Kosovo today has about 10,000 square kilometers and about 1.8 million inhabitants. 93% are Albanian and the rest are other ethnic communities: Serbs, Turks, Bosnians, etc.

Kosovo is a secular state and its political organization is that of parliamentary government. It has its Government, Assembly, and President. It has its own Constitution and all other legislative units.

The democratic development of the state based on pluralism has created political parties. The election of the representatives of the Government and the Parliament, the election of the President, the Speaker of Parliament, and deputies in the Parliament of Kosovo, also shows political pluralism.

Today, Kosovo as a state coexists with its minorities, such as Serbs, Turks, Bosnians, the community called RAE, which includes Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians; as well as a group of other minorities, such as Croats and Montenegrins. In Kosovo, the majority of the population speaks the Albanian language since 90% of Kosovo consists of Albanians. According to the Law on the Use of Languages, which was approved in 2006 and confirmed in the Assembly of Kosovo in 2008, the Albanian language and the Serbian language are the official languages in Kosovo. According to the Law on the Use of Languages, all public institutions are obliged to publish all documents in both languages, while the presence of a professional translator is necessary in all events. It should be emphasized that the language in Kosovo is not only a common means of communication, but it is also a powerful means of identifying the ethnic, historical, and cultural identity of each of its members. Hence, Kosovo's linguistic landscape is a dynamic tapestry that reflects the region's rich historical complexity and diversity. Language(s) plays a crucial role in the larger conversations about identity, inclusion, and the sociopolitical structure of Kosovo because it not only reflects the coexistence of various communities but also the ongoing social and political complexities. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of linguistic diversity in comprehending political discourse in Kosovo since language acts as a complex lens through which political narratives are expressed and understood. Since Albanian and Serbian are recognized as official languages, the region's linguistic diversity is representative of its intricate historical and cultural context. To convey ideas that connect with a variety of communities and highlight the value of inclusive governance, political leaders must navigate this linguistic diversity. The choice of language in political discourse reflects historical narratives, identity politics, and power dynamics, influencing how political messages are received across different linguistic groups. In a region with a history marked by ethnic tensions, linguistic diversity shapes the nuances of political debates, negotiations, and policy discussions, impacting the effectiveness of communication and the building of consensus. Therefore, understanding the intricacies of linguistic diversity is an integral part of deciphering the layers of meaning embedded in political

discourse and fostering a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of the political landscape in Kosovo.

Serb political leaders frequently emphasize their points of view and deliver nuanced messages by using figurative language, particularly when discussing Kosovo. By employing metaphorical language, these characters can shape the story to suit their political viewpoint by using symbolic expressions that connect with historical or cultural imagery. For instance, metaphors pertaining to territorial integrity, sovereignty, or historical ties may be used in discussions regarding Kosovo's status, effectively framing the discourse to appeal to the audience's emotions and beliefs. Moreover, rhetorical strategies like hyperbole and analogy are quite often employed to highlight the significance of particular political viewpoints or to make comparisons with past occurrences. Serb politicians use figurative speech to convey complex political viewpoints to audiences both at home and abroad. It adds layers of meaning to their speeches by interacting with the cultural and historical background of their discourse.

Amid the complex landscape of Serbian political rhetoric, the incorporation of antithesis is considered supreme as a powerful tool that enriches and highlights the discourse, especially in the multilingual setting of Kosovo. In the intricate landscape of Kosovo's historical and political complexities, Serbian leaders skillfully utilize antithesis as a powerful linguistic device. By deftly juxtaposing contrasting ideas, they shed light on the intricate nature of their positions. This technique serves as a powerful tool for emphasizing Serbia's perspective on issues such as sovereignty, territorial integrity, and historical ties, setting it in stark contrast to opposing views. This tactic takes on even greater significance in the bilingual setting of Kosovo, where both Serbian and Albanian languages hold equal importance.

To effectively communicate with a bilingual audience, it is crucial to carefully navigate linguistic nuances. By utilizing antithesis, political leaders can bridge cultural and linguistic gaps, making for a powerful discourse. This rhetorical tool, when executed skillfully, allows for a nuanced approach that acknowledges the linguistic diversity of the region while confidently stating important stances on crucial issues.

Today, in Kosovo as a state with full democracy, political speeches are essential for forming public opinion and influencing legislative choices. These speeches, which are an effective communication tool, give political leaders the chance to directly address the public with

their vision, principles, and policy goals. Politicians in Kosovo influence public opinion and generate support by strategically framing important issues and using persuasive language and rhetorical methods. Effective political speeches and their influence go beyond simple eloquence. They tend to provide a link between public authorities and the general public, facilitating democratic participation, accountability, and transparency. This highlights the speeches' critical role in the dynamic relationship between public opinion, governance, and the policy-making process. Speeches have been an important tool in Kosovo's turbulent history, helping to express the people's hopes, complaints, and resiliency at pivotal points. Passionate speech has been used, especially in times of conflict and political unrest, to mobilize communities, garner support, and define the Kosovar people's collective identity. Moments of national importance, peace talks, and declarations of independence have all been commemorated with historic speeches. These speeches influenced the course of the country's history while also reflecting the hardships and victories of the Kosovo people. Speaking at pivotal moments, leaders' eloquence and conviction have sparked public sentiment and symbolized the tenacity and resolve of a people attempting to exercise their right to self-determination while navigating difficult geopolitical challenges.

Saying this, the presence of linguistic diversity adds a compelling layer of complexity to the use of antithesis in political communication, particularly in regions with bilingualism, as seen in Kosovo. This coexistence of multiple languages presents both a challenge and an opportunity for political leaders utilizing antithesis in their speeches. Beyond the intricacies of creating effective rhetorical devices, the bilingual context requires skillful maneuvering of linguistic nuances, cultural connotations, and historical resonances associated with each language. When incorporating antithesis in a bilingual setting, one must carefully consider how contrasting ideas and expressions may translate or resonate differently within various linguistic communities. The broader impact of bilingualism on figurative language in political discourse is significant. To effectively communicate with a diverse audience, it is crucial for political figures to carefully tailor their language to be culturally relevant and resonant. This includes recognizing the potential for bilingual individuals to interpret metaphors and opposing ideas differently. By skillfully navigating this complexity, political actors can foster a more inclusive and impactful form of communication. Harnessing the power of figurative language across diverse linguistic backgrounds creates a more cohesive and effective dialogue especially in the Kosovo context.

5. Antithesis in discourse

As Foucault argues “Discourse is a system of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, and courses of action, beliefs, and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak” (Foucault, 1969, p. 45); as such antithesis, as a linguistic tool in political discourse, can be a powerful tool for sending and receiving the message. Campaigns for parliamentary and presidential elections, as well as municipal elections, are often an incentive for linguists who deal with the analysis of the political discourse of political representatives everywhere including Kosovo, as is the case in this article. It is known that politicians use rhetoric and different linguistic and stylistic figures to reach their voters and what is heard the most are metaphors, comparisons, synonyms, and others. But antitheses are not often heard in speeches and public presentations as an interesting and quite powerful tool in the discourse of any politician. The Prime Minister of Kosovo, Albin Kurti, uses the antithesis in his speeches.

If we start with the person deixis that Levinsons (1983) emphasizes, too, as a process of encoding role in a person’s speech /Levinson,1983:62/, Kurti uses “we” and combines it with the antithesis in his speeches.

“We shouldn’t seek out what is possible, but we should and will make possible what we seek out”(Kurti,2017, <https://www.facebook.com/DMalbinin/posts/267652548205826/>)

The wording “shouldn’t seek out.....we shouldseek out” is intended to specify that it is the right of the citizens of a country to demand what they deserve according to the natural law of human rights.

“We don’t collaborate with others to bring misery to our people and luxury to the ones in power”(Kurti,2017, <https://www.periskopi.com/fjalimi-plote-albin-kurtit-ne-tubimin-esotem/>)

In addition to the emphasis on the pronoun "we" that Kurti makes in his speeches to identify the group of those who are the main participants of a society, i.e., the people, he also does this to emphasize that in his attitudes, all are included, both for better and for worse; he also includes those who have created negative situations in society, such as corruption and crime. To emphasize the inclusion of all, he does not divide "us" and "them" but emphasizes the group which together with him will affect the expected change. He emphasizes the attempt to fight the

rulers of the previous governments, who had enriched themselves at the expense of the state budget, which is still a poor one. This is what Van Dijk points out as ideological polarization /van Dijk, 1997:28/ when a positive or negative evaluation is given to the parties involved. And, in addition to the use of the pronoun "we", the utterance also shows the use of the antithesis through the word "misery" against the word "luxury". Kurti tries to divide the economically poor people from the members of the government who extorted the state budget for personal interests, which was a prominent phenomenon before he became prime minister. The use of the antithesis, in this case, promotes the image among the people that they are a group separated from the usurpers of the state; they are the impoverished side against the abusers of the state budget who live in luxury.

“The government in power has divided the common people but has united the corrupt and the criminals” (Kurti, 2017, <https://telegrafi.com/kurti-pushteti-ne-kosove-ka-percare-popullin-kurse-ka-bashkuar-te-korruptuarit-e-kriminelet/>)

“In general, even the middle class has more chances to become poorer rather than richer” (Kurti, 2017, <https://www.botasot.info/aktuale-lajme/704478/kurti-ja-pse-do-te-fitoj-vetevendosje/>).

“The poor are poor because of a few who use their power to poor others and enrich themselves” (Kurti, 2017, <https://www.botasot.info/aktuale-lajme/704478/kurti-ja-pse-do-te-fitoj-vetevendosje/>).

“Someone is entitled to survive but someone else is entitled to luxury. Someone doesn't have the basic things, but someone makes personal dreams come true”. (Kurti, 2017, <https://www.botasot.info/aktuale-lajme/704478/kurti-ja-pse-do-te-fitoj-vetevendosje/>).

The fight against crime and corruption, as a problem of the new state, makes Kurti always distinguish between the people and the corrupt government; his speeches would focus on fighting corruption because it is crime and corruption that have divided the people; and he uses the antithesis in this part of his speech.

“In post-war Kosovo, our people have never had it more difficult in terms of socio-economics and never had it easier to make the desired change” (Kurti, 2017, <https://www.botasot.info/aktuale-lajme/704478/kurti-ja-pse-do-te-fitoj-vetevendosje/>).

“We cannot successfully fight corruption and crime in society if we do not make the institutions clean of it” (Kurti,2023, <https://www.vetevendosje.org/mbledhja-li-e-keshillit-te-pergjithshem-te-lv-se/>).

Undoubtedly, the best strategy for drawing attention to the opinion to which the sender of the message is addressed is to emphasize as much as possible the meaning required for the recipient of the message, to reinforce that thought of the recipient of the message because the mental and memory model of opinion is created in a way that makes the process of persuasion easier in the future. The audience, in this case, the people who will vote, will know what the message is about.

The use of different stylistic figures by politicians, according to Allen (1998), means to appeal to the audience. Such an approach influences the audience to develop the culture of receiving the message as an indivisible whole because it creates the feeling of being one and indivisible. Kurti always tries to convey this message to the audience in his speeches. He talks about love for the people and encourages the feeling of being united and equal, for a greater purpose.

“People will love you if you love them back; People will never abandon you unless you abandon them first”(Kurti,2017, <https://www.botasot.info/aktuale-lajme/704478/kurti-ja-pse-do-te-fitoj-vetevendosje/>).

The inclusion of the people as one body, to create a strong bond in the minds of the voters, can be seen in many parts of Kurti's speeches. He does not want to be perceptive of the voter's message without emphasizing the importance that voters have in the entire process of seeking changes. Emphasizing the long period of misconduct of governance by previous governments, Kurti, through his strategy, convinces the voter that change can only be made through the voter.

The voter can understand the real situation only when included directly in the whole picture where everyone has a place. *“18 months is not too long but 18 years are not too short”(Kurti,2017,<https://www.botasot.info/aktuale-lajme/704478/kurti-ja-pse-do-te-fitoj-vetevendosje/>).*

A. Beard (2000) believes that one of the most efficient strategies related to persuasion is the use of the so-called “list of three” (Beard,2000:38). Apparently, the repetition of certain words, e.g., nouns, prepositions, and verbs strengthen the effect of the message that the speaker

wants to give to the listener; in politics, it is the message given by the politician to the voter. Kurti, too, uses “the list of three” to strengthen the effect of his message.

“If you believe you've reached the ultimate truth, you've reached the end of the road, the end of the effort, the end of history (Kurti,2023, <https://www.vetevendosje.org/mbledhja-li-e-keshillit-te-pergjithshem-te-lv-se/>).

“This requires strategy and tactics, flexibility and stability, persistence, and creativity” (Kurti,2023, <https://www.vetevendosje.org/mbledhja-li-e-keshillit-te-pergjithshem-te-lv-se/>).

“The League of Prizren is a historical event, not in the sense of an already closed stage of the past, but in the sense of an era that extends to the present, where we are a part of it and which guides us for the future”

(Kurti,2023,<https://www.kultplus.com/lajme/fjalimi-i-albin-kurtit-ne-144-vjetorin-e-lidhjes-shqiptare-te-prizrenit/>).

In the case of Kurti, we do not only see the "list of three" but the repetition of words that involve antithesis as a strong persuasive tool. It is considered as very creative by the listeners because it reflects the power of the word, the conviction, and the determination to achieve the goal, and gives the listener the feeling of being the most important part of the whole process of change. He uses words such as “pro” and “against” to emphasize the idea behind the antithesis used.

“Movement: Pro development, Against corruption; Pro equality Against privileges; Pro domestic products, Against poverty; Pro employment, Against migration; Pro justice Against crime; Pro unification of Albanians, Against Serbia's aggression; Pro minorities, Against discrimination; Pro solidarity, Against division; Pro peace, Against war”.

(Kurti,2017,<https://www.botasot.info/aktuale-lajme/704478/kurti-ja-pse-do-te-fitoj-vetevendosje/>)

The use of antithesis or as it is also known as 'contrastive pairs' gives a special emphasis, and a specific tempo, and shows the attitude of its speaker to the recipient of the message.

“Organized inactivity leads to bureaucracy. Disorganized activity leads to chaos” (Kurti,2023, <https://www.periskopi.com/kurti-sot-prezantoi-platformaten-si-kandidat-per-kryetar-te-vv-se-ja-fjalimi-i-plote-i-tij/>).

The repetition of certain words and expressions is intended to strengthen the message given because the way of conveying the message contains the most successful means of attracting the listener's attention, understanding the power of the word, and acting according to those words and expressions. They are expressions that connect with the listener and support the audience because they are catchy, powerful, and always simple to remember.

“Pride without humbleness turns into arrogance. Humbleness without pride turns into submission”

(Kurti, 2023, https://www.periskopi.com/kurti-sot-prezantoi-platfomen-si-kandidat-per-kryetar-te-vv-se-ja-fjalimi-i-plote-i-tij/?_cf_chl_rt_tk=jQh9bJiPjeK56TYx4Ft73npp7n6CsFJglbMUAza89jY-1687017748-0-gaNycGzNDBA)

“The issue that keeps such an activist is exactly this, how to influence history as a people, to be a participating people in it and not a spectator. This requires strategy and tactics, flexibility and stability, persistence, and creativity. Not hardening and stubbornness, but also not letting go or opportunism”

(Kurti, 2023, <https://www.vetevendosje.org/mbledhja-li-e-keshillit-te-pergjithshem-te-lv-se/>).

“No success is achieved without difficulty, but if we liked comfort, we would not be activists. We are comfortable with discomfort. We are concerned and worried, but we aren't concerned about why we are concerned, and we don't even worry about why we worry”

(Kurti, 2023, <https://www.vetevendosje.org/mbledhja-li-e-keshillit-te-pergjithshem-te-lv-se/>).

Kurti also used the antithesis to emphasize the human values of a global citizenry while describing the country he leads from 2019 as its Prime Minister.

“Today I am speaking to you as the Prime Minister of a sovereign and independent state, small but important, poor but full of hope, young but ancient at the same time, which has several times defended common European values” (Kurti, 2023, <https://www.arbresh.info/lajmet/fjalimi-i-albin-kurtit-ne-parlamentin-evropian/>).

The antitheses in Kurti's speeches are a powerful linguistic tool to present the determined positions of his government in preserving the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state.

“Kosovo is not an issue in the dialogue, but a party to the dialogue”.
(Kurti, 2023, <https://www.arbresh.info/lajmet/fjalimi-i-albin-kurtit-ne-parlamentin-evropian/>)

“Between Kosovo and Serbia, there is more of an armistice than peace. According to Kant, a true peace solution is not possible without canceling the existing causes of future war” (Kurti, 2023, <https://www.kosova-sot.info/lajme/654200/kurti-ne-23-vjetet-e-fundit-me-serbine-me-shume-kemi-pase-armepushim-sesa-paqe-e-vertete/>).

All these different lexical units, words, and expressions as part of Kurti’s discourse are used by him to convince the audience of their truthfulness and correctness, their importance, and the power they are supposed to carry as an effective tool of persuasion and to strengthen the sense of their true meaning.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, this article emphasized the importance of studying the role of antithesis as a potent linguistic tool of persuasion in political speeches in Kosovo. By delving into its prevalence, effectiveness, and socio-cultural dynamics, this study aims to advance our understanding of political rhetoric and communication within the specific context of Kosovo. Through an examination of antithesis, this article seeks to shed light on the persuasive strategies employed by Kosovo politicians and their impact on public opinion.

The research objectives focused on analyzing the prevalence and patterns of antithesis in political speeches, assessing its rhetorical effectiveness, exploring the sociopolitical and cultural factors that shape its usage, and evaluating its influence on audience perception. By employing the methodologies such as corpus analysis and rhetorical analysis, and audience perception studies, this article aims to provide comprehensive insights into the role of antithesis in political discourse.

The anticipated contributions of this article lie in enriching the knowledge base on political rhetoric in Kosovo, highlighting the significance of antithesis as a persuasive linguistic tool, and deepening our understanding of the interplay between language, persuasion, and politics. The findings of this article can serve as a valuable resource for political leaders, communication practitioners, and researchers interested in political communication and discourse analysis.

By exploring the unique context of Kosovo, this article also adds to the broader scholarship on political rhetoric by providing a comparative perspective and enhancing the diversity of perspectives in the field.

In summary, this article underscores the importance of investigating the role of antithesis in political speeches in Kosovo, aiming to contribute to our understanding of political rhetoric and communication within this specific context. By examining the prevalence, effectiveness, and socio-cultural dynamics of antithesis, it seeks to advance knowledge in the field and provide practical implications for political communication and discourse strategies in Kosovo and beyond.

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