Contrastive Analysis of Persuasive Language Techniques Political Speeches of Trump and Biden

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POLITICAL SPEECHES OF TRUMP AND BIDEN

(Završni rad)

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POLITICAL SPEECHES OF TRUMP AND BIDEN

(B.A. Thesis)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this B.A. thesis is to explore which language techniques and strategies Donald Trump and Joe Biden used in their political speeches, in order to persuade citizens to sympathize or agree with them, and eventually to vote for them. In the theoretical part of this thesis, I will write about persuasive language techniques used in political speeches in general, whereas the second part consists of the contrastive analysis based on Donald Trump's and Joe Biden's political speeches. One chapter of the thesis includes also the analysis of the speech rhetoric of the current Croatian prime minister Andrej Plenković and the Croatian president Zoran Milanović. The aim of both analyses is to show similarities as well as differences between the already mentioned politicians and to demonstrate how language indirectly affects people's opinions and beliefs.

Keywords: persuasive language techniques, Speech Act Theory, word-repetition, paralipsis, hyperbole, pronouns, metaphors, unity, ethos

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1. INTRODUCTION

Persuasive language devices have always been a part of political rhetoric and politicians' speeches, whose main aim was to persuade the public in their opinions and points of view. Persuasive language techniques are on the large scale connected with figurative framing and figurative language, mainly metaphor, hyperbole, and irony. However, in the analysis of the political speeches used for this thesis, other techniques were analyzed as well, such as paralipsis, word-repetition, ethos, and frequent usage of pronouns. I decided also to incorporate a few typical values, which were repeatedly used in speeches - democracy and unity. Accordingly, the aim of this thesis is to analyze and compare political speeches of world known politicians Donald Trump and Joe Biden and to emphasize the importance of the language in shaping beliefs of the public. This thesis begins with a theoretical background which provides a brief overview of the main terms upon which strategies in political speeches are based. The main section is based on political speeches of Joe Biden and Donald Trump and their analysis and comparison. This section is followed by the analysis and comparison of political rhetoric of Andrej Plenković and Zoran Milanović. I am going to conclude my thesis with a final overview of the persuasive devices used in political speeches and similarities and differences between the above-mentioned politicians' rhetoric.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The purpose of this chapter is to give a brief overview of the most important linguistic theory and devices, which served as the base for what are today known as persuasive language devices. These are the Speech Act Theory and persuasive language techniques, concepts that proved themselves of crucial importance in writing and giving political speeches.

2.1. Speech Act Theory

The language is, and has always been, one of the most used tool to convey messages and many are not aware of the power it contains and how people, who know how to use the language wisely, can benefit from it. The meaning of the words changes depending on situations and the way in which they are communicated. One can say a lot by using only a few words, whereas someone else can say a thousand words without actually saying anything. The theory which deals with the true meaning of the spoken words is the Speech Act Theory. According to Hashim (2015: 701) the Speech Act Theory is "a tool to interpret the meaning and function of words in different speech situations. It concerns itself with the symbolism of words. The difference between a meaningful string of words and meaningless ones, the truth value or falsity of utterances, and the function to which language can be put."

The key word in this definition is "*symbolism*", which is commonly used in politics, not only in political speeches, but also in political campaigns and political propaganda. When it comes to political speeches, which are in the focus of this thesis, speech acts, that essentially is the way one acts while making certain statements, has an enormous effect on people listening to, in this case, political speeches. Hashim (2015: 701) uses Austin's (1962) classification of the speech acts. It consists of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts.

"A locutionary act is an act of saying something; that is, the act of producing an utterance…Illocutionary act is identified by the explicit performative. That is, the conventional force achieved in the saying of that utterance. This is realized, according to Austin (1962), as the successful realization of the speaker's intention, which for Searle (1969) is a product of the listener's interpretation…The perlocutionary act is the effect or influence on the feelings, thoughts or actions of the listener/hearer."

As apparent, what is delivered to people consists not only of the utterances, but also of the way in which these utterances are produced, and finally, whether the speaker succeeded in his intention depends on the listener's understanding of the message conveyed. Furthermore, I believe the illocutionary acts to be the most important while delivering speeches, because this particular part of the speech acts leaves the largest impression on the addressers. The illocutionary act depends only on the person delivering a speech; therefore, that is what distinguishes a good speaker from the bad one. When politicians sound completely sure and convinced in their words, that makes people unconsciously believe them. Illocutionary acts can be subdivided into five classes, according to Searle (1969), quoted in Hashim (2015: 701-102):

"(1) Assertives: Commit speakers to the truth of the expressed proposition, e.g., stating, claiming, reporting, announcing, etc.

(2) Directives: these are statements that compel or make another person's action fit the propositional element. It is usually used to give order thereby causing the hearer to take a particular action, request, command or advice.

(3) Commissives: Commit speakers to some future actions, e.g., promising, offering, swearing, etc. to do something.

(4) Expressives: Count as the expression of some psychological state, e.g., thinking, apologizing, congratulating, etc.

(5) Declaratives: These statements are used to say something and make it so, such as pronouncing someone guilty, resigning, dismissing, accepting, declaring a war, etc."

Once again, it is clear that all the above listed is found regularly in almost every political speech.

2.2. Persuasive language techniques

Firstly, I would like to give a brief overview of the persuasive language devices and why they are so important in the aspect of political rhetoric. When talking about persuasive language techniques, one of the most used ones is connected with figurative language and framing. According to Joris, d'Haenens, & Van Gorp, 2014, p. 609, as cited in Burgers et al. (2016: 411):

"Figurative frame is typically defined as consisting of two elements: (a) framing devices which are "clearly perceptible elements in a text or specific linguistic structures such as metaphors" and (b) reasoning devices which are the (latent) information in a text through which the problem, cause, evaluation, and/or treatment is implied.

In this divide, "framing device" thus refers to the linguistic packaging of a frame, while "reasoning device" refers to the frame's conceptual content."

This, a bit abstract, definition of the figurative framing, refers to a key concept in a number of political speeches - using figurative language to persuade the public of the credibility of the politicians' words.

The figurative framing in these terms is mostly applicable to the metaphor, hyperbole, and irony. These three devices are widely used among politicians. Metaphor helps people to better depict what is the real message behind the words, which is a good way for politicians not to be too direct, and for example, obviously to insult his/her opponent. In addition, metaphors are convenient to explain crucial political concepts, which can be too abstract or unclear for common people without previous knowledge. On the other hand, hyperbole, often called extreme exaggeration, is a rather manipulative device. I would like to give a simple example, of how hyperbole can affect our mind. To call someone "*weak*" or to call someone "*the weakest*" evokes completely different associations in our mind. "*The weakest*" has a much stronger effect, and thus creates equally strong negative feelings toward someone. Politicians use hyperboles in a negative way on a large scale when they talk about their opponents. Alike, they use hyperboles to evoke positive feelings when they talk about their own achievements, or when promising that they will build "the strongest economy" and that their country is going to be "the richest country", and similar. Finally, irony is used mainly to belittle their opponents' words, making them sound ridiculous and unachievable.

Before listing and explaining the most important language strategies and techniques used in political speeches, I would like to emphasize the importance of a good political speech. Despite popular belief among people that no one can mislead them and that those who rule the country should show their worth with deeds and not with words, the politicians with their teams make commendable efforts not only to write, but also to deliver a political speech in a desirable way. It is logical that political speeches represent, perhaps, the most important part of every political campaign.

While delivering a speech the politicians have a very difficult task of convincing people to believe them. How their words will be received by people, depends not only on the content of the speech, but also on the politicians' attitude, gestures, mimics, tone of the voice, etc.

All political speeches are analyzed in depth by sociologists, psychologists, and linguists, especially during the elections.

Since almost every political speech nowadays is recorded and stored forever in the Internet, it is more and more difficult for a politician to hold a speech. The content of the political speech depends on the occasion. While this thesis deals with political speeches during the elections, the language devices I focused the most on, are those used frequently by both Trump and Biden, and Milanović and Plenković, respectively.

3. ANALYSIS

3.1. Donald Trump

The ex-American president Donald Trump is widely known for his political speeches, and most of them criticized for the hate speech, insulting, and depreciation. Despite all these facts and his obvious inconsistency while speaking, Trump's speeches were welcomed by his supporters. Although he comes off as spontaneous and his speeches sound as they were in conversational manner, he applies almost always to certain language strategies, which enable him to leave a better impression. The following are the language techniques analyzed by Dr. Jennifer Mercieca, an expert on US presidential rhetoric and political communication from Texas A&M University. (Guardian News, 2019, 5:09.)

3.1.1. Word-repetition

Word-repetition is a language technique, which makes the speaker, in this case Donald Trump, sound more convincing and sure in his words. At the same time, this device helps him to delay the rest of the speech, which provides him more time to think about his next words. Another advantage of the word-repetition is avoiding pauses. Long pauses in the speeches give a wrong impression of indecisiveness and insecurity, and can even ruin the speech.

The most commonly repeated words and phrases by Trump are:

"America first. America first.", "Jobs. Jobs. Jobs.", "It's true. It's true.", "Thank you. Thank you." "Make America great again. Make America great again."

These utterances are short, but clear and precise. By the listeners they produce the feeling of unity, safety, and collectiveness. One of the phrases Trump occasionally adds to the end of his sentences is "Believe me."

Besides repeating different phrases, in his speeches can often be heard "very, very" in front of the adjectives (for example, very bad). In formal speeches and in formal writing in general, the adverb "very" should be avoided, because of its informality. However, when used in speeches, it serves to amplify the effect.

3.1.2. Paralipsis

Paralipsis, praeteritio or *apophasis* are often used in political discourses as one of the techniques which have power to form subconsciously the public opinion. By using *paralipsis* at the beginning of the sentence occur different types of negation constructions for the following content, which are, however, not being negated but accentuated. (Gradečak-Erdeljić, Gudurić 2017: 25)

Some of the Trump's sentences in which he uses *paralipsis* are: "I'm not supposed to say this, but…", "If I say….", "I refuse to say…", "I won't say that…"

Although the intended meaning of the sentence was pronounced after the negated part of the sentence, the negation mitigates it, so the person, in this case Trump, cannot be held as accountable for saying something, which in fact he intended to say.

3.1.3. Hyperbole

Hyperbole or exaggeration, according to the Cambridge Dictionary is "a way of speaking or writing that makes someone or something sound bigger, better, more, etc. than they are."

When talking about U.S.A. and its citizens, Trump often describes them as "the most brave people", whereas the United States has "the greatest economy". Almost every adjective describing America in his speeches is preceded by superlatives - "greatest president", "craziest thing".

Hyperbole is not used only to create a feeling of superiority among people, and C. Burgers et al. (2016: 415-416) argues that according to cf. Doig & Phythian (2005) and Kaufmann (2004) *hyperbole* is much often used in a negative context to persuade the public in the existence and importance of a certain threat.

In the political discourse exist even the terms of "threat exaggeration" which is used in societal debates on terrorist threats. Public perceives this type of *hyperbole* as more dangerous than it is in reality.

3.1.4. Pronouns

The usage of pronouns is one of the most latent and indirect techniques, which is, however, widely used in the political discourse to form the public opinion. Wisniewska (2020: 3) states, as Hamdaoui (2012) wrote, that pronouns in political speeches help the hearers to understand the politicians' attitude "towards the group they want to identify themselves with, as well as who they consider to be "the outsiders".

The results of the quantitative analysis based on the speeches from presidential elections conducted by Wisniewska (2020) showed that Donald Trump uses the pronoun "we" and its varieties in 43% of all deictic pronouns usage by Trump. The percentage of using the pronoun "he" is 8%, whereas "she" is used in 14% of cases. Unlike Biden, that will be seen later in the thesis, Trump prefers using "they" and its varieties. The example is in the sentence: "**They** do not write about that. **They** don't want to write about that. **They** do not want you to know those things." The pronoun "**They**" usually is referred to his opponents and to everyone he does not consider his supporters, thus creating "us vs. them" situation, which, as result, deepens disparities between his followers and everyone else.

3.1.5. Metaphors

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the *metaphor* is "an expression, often found in literature, that describes a person or object by referring to something that is considered to have similar characteristics to that person or object".

One example of the *metaphor* would be to say for a person "he is a lion". The widely spread belief for lions is that they are strong and brave, which can also be used when describing certain characteristics of people. As in every aspect of human interaction metaphors are also commonly used in political speeches.

Donald Trump uses metaphors in every aspect of his speeches, referring mostly to country, nation, economy, and similar concepts. Pavlikova (2020: 318-319) was focused on Trump's and Biden's using of metaphors in speeches.

Trump emphasizes that they "built the strongest…economy in the history of the world." they are "…going to go and give New York a real shot" and "California was saying." When talking about virus, he behaves as if the virus was a person, saying that America has "a virus coming." What is also typical, but not only for Donald Trump speeches, but also in everyday communication, is to talk about a city as a person: "Washington stood idly by", of course, here clearly referring to the White House.

3.2. Joe Biden

It is rather challenging to compare Donald Trump's and Joe Biden's political speeches since they use completely different rhetoric and their speeches aim into different directions. Whereas Trump uses his political speeches mostly to criticize and belittle his opponents and glorify United States, Joe Biden is more focused on plans and actions he is willing to translate into action. Biden's speeches are more what is traditionally considered to be a political speech - formal and with elevated tone. That is his style and manner when speaking. Another difficulty in analyzing Biden's speeches is the spreading of the pandemic, because of which pre-election gatherings were kept to a minimum, and the majority of his speeches were presented via social media and platforms. That resulted with already rehearsed and record speeches, leaving him no opportunity to improvise and expose his potential weaknesses. Finally, his speeches were not analyzed in depth as those of Donald Trump, since they are not the true reflection of him as a person, which is the case with Donald Trump's untypical style of speaking. However, Joe Biden's political speeches contain certain rhetoric and persuasive language devices, which have been present in politics for many years. In his speeches, especially in the inauguration speech, Joe Biden was focused on the basic principles of every political speech - he incorporated the notion of unity, one of the oldest persuasive devices - ethos, and finally, the devices which have similarities with Donald Trump - usage of pronouns and metaphors. Some of the devices used by Biden were explained in the video Rhetorical Analysis of President Biden's Inaugural Address (Annotate With Me, 2021, 12:48).

3.2.1. Unity

In his address Biden keeps repeating words such as "indivisible", "together", "union", "unity", "united", "one nation" etc.

Pedrini (2021) observes that the concept of *unity* appears 30 times in the speech. This typical rhetoric device has an aim to show citizens that only together they can overcome obstacles and move into the right direction. The notion of unity appears in almost every political speech, independently of the occasion.

3.2.2. Ethos

Ethos in the terms of political rhetoric is defined by Roberts (2020), as cited by Dollinger (2021: 4), as "The speaker's personal character, when the speech is so spoken to make us think [them] credible".

The definition itself can be understood the best through one of the sentences in his inauguration speech:

"There's no accounting for what fate will deal you. Some days when you need a hand. There are other days when we're called to lend a hand."

Everyone knows that in this sentence Joe Biden talks about his own family tragedy. He tells people that he knows how difficult life can be and therefore he is ready to deal with difficulties, that the role of the president will assign him. This way he wants to make people believe in his credibility, but also to make people feel empathetic with him. A part of the ethos, which also coincides with the usage of pronouns, is when saying "we" ("we the people"), instead of "I". "We aim to be the nation we know we can be and should be". By listeners, using "we" creates a feeling of already mentioned unity and togetherness.

3.2.3. American Values

Perhaps this rhetoric device is slightly on the edge of the persuasive techniques usually used, since it can be applicable only for America. Incorporating typical American values has always been a part of almost every political speech.

In his inauguration speech, Biden named a great number of these values - in the first place - democracy, then optimism, boldness, restlessness, strength, opportunity, security, liberty, dignity, respect, honor, truth.

Perhaps the most known American value, which is rooted in American identity and known worldwide, is **democracy**. Every American president emphasizes this as the base of American society and system. Pedrini (2021: 15) points out interestingly that Biden repeats the term *democracy* even 5 times at the very beginning of his speech, and 11 time throughout the whole discourse, saying "This is the day of democracy", "We are celebrating the triumph (…) of democracy", "democracy is valuable", "democracy is fragile", "democracy has prevailed". Another phrase, which is actually the definition of democracy, is "And we can still disagree." By this sentence, Biden points out that not everyone has to share his opinion, and that is legit, because democracy is based on the diversity of opinions.

3.2.4. Pronouns

As in the analysis of Donald Trump's political discourse, it is similar with Joe Biden. Out of usage of all deictic pronouns, 40% stands for using "we". Similarly, Biden mentions both "he" and "she" in 12% of the cases. Interestingly, unlike Trump, who prefers using "they", Biden uses the personal pronoun "I" and its other forms in 27% of the total pronouns usage. (Wisniewska 2020)

3.2.5. Metaphors

The *Metaphor* as a rhetoric device is used not only in terms of politics, but also in everyday life. Everyone uses metaphors without even being aware of it. However, when it comes to politics, a great number of metaphors usually are premeditated. Metaphors are frequently used

to describe more complicated political terms to common people, and to encourage people to think about them.

Pavlikova (2020: 317) states that "Metaphors encountered in political speeches facilitate human understanding of complex concepts by explaining them via bodily experiences and the physical senses."

Since they are easier to depict, people understand them and memorize better. As it was the case with Donald Trump, Joe Biden also uses metaphors. However, not that often, since he is at the beginning of his mandate. In his inaugural speech, Biden talks about America's strength "to dissent, peaceably, the guardrails of our Republic". This rather interesting metaphor helps a hearer to imagine the guardrail as a physical obstacle, which has to be "dissented". In one of his speeches on the economy Biden does the same thing as Donald Trump often used in his speeches. He compares American economy with a building, by saying "This is our moment to imagine and build a new American economy for our families." When talking about institutions, Biden states "Wall Street and the CEO´s didn´t build this country." (Pavlikova 2020: 318).

3.3. Comparison

Despite the obvious differences in their political discourse, rhetoric, style, tone, and manner when delivering a speech, as well as in the differences of the very content of the political speeches, Donald Trump and Joe Biden share a few basic concepts, or to be more precise, persuasive language techniques while addressing their hearers.

What differs mainly in Donald Trump's style from Joe Biden's is the usage of word-repetition, hyperbole, and important - paralipsis. As analyzed in the chapter about Donald Trump, word-repetition is commonly used to avoid pauses while speaking, which could be negatively interpreted by a person, meaning that he/she is unprepared or insecure in its own words. The Hyperbole is typical of Donald Trump's style, and he uses it mainly to present America and his followers as superior, while describing his opponents as inferior and incapable. By adding negation at the beginning of the sentence, known as paralipsis, Donald Trump actually "negates his negation", which is a cunning way to justify himself. The rhetorical devices listed above are

not used exclusively in other politicians' speeches, as it is the case with Joe Biden, whose speeches are predictable and expected.

Unlike Donald Trump, Joe Biden bases his speeches on traditional American concepts of unity and values, primarily the one of democracy.

Since Ancient times, part of many political speeches was ethos. With the principle of ethos, Biden successfully manages to persuade his hearers in the truthfulness of his words. In the example of his inauguration speech, it is observable that he does it by mentioning his life events and tragedies, making his speech emotional. On his hearers he leaves the impression of being an experienced and trustworthy person, who knows how to lead a country. Biden frequently uses words and phrases connected with unity, through which he shows that he stands with his people and that they all belong to the same American nation. This way no one feels excluded, which brings followers to Biden on the both sides.

Two traditional rhetoric devices connect Trump and Biden - metaphors and pronouns. Metaphor as a device is used not only in politics, but also in literature and in everyday life. For now, Donald Trump leads in the number of used metaphors, but that fact can be connected with a bigger number of speeches he held. In his speeches, Trump often refers to "building the economy", as well as Joe Biden. Trump also gives human characteristics to virus, saying that virus "is coming", and referring to Washington as a living person, who stands by the people. This will probably be heard in many of the Biden speeches as well, since the term "Washington" is commonly used in American English when talking about the White House.

When it comes to pronouns, the situation is approximately the same. Out of using all deictic pronouns, both Trump and Biden prefer the pronoun "we" (40-43%).

As already explained, this specific pronoun creates by the hearers a feeling of unity. The pronouns "he", "she", and "you" make 12% of Biden's speech, whereas Trump prefers "she" (14%) to "he" (8%). The greatest difference is in the use of the pronouns "I" and "they", where Biden prefers "I" (27%), unlike Trump, who mostly uses the forms of the pronoun "they" (21%).

3.4. Andrej Plenković and Zoran Milanović

This chapter of the B.A. thesis is dedicated to the two Croatian politicians, the current Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenković and the Croatian president - Zoran Milanović.

Among the general Croatian public, Plenković and Milanović are currently considered the greatest opponents, since a number of their public addressing contains mostly insulting statements instructed from one to another. Media carefully observe their statements, and the majority agree that such statements are inappropriate in the public communication. The tensions between the two politicians are not something new; in fact, they last from 2016, when they were both candidates for the parliamentary elections.

Before commenting on Plenković and Milanović, I would like to mention a few words about political rhetoric in Croatia in general. Namely, when Andrej Plenković first appeared in the media, many articles were written about his great rhetoric and rich vocabulary, which is, presumably, a quality every politician should have. However, throughout the history of Croatian political rhetoric, only few politicians were distinguished as good speakers, while others did not pay attention to this important aspect of the political image.

Andrej Plenković is often considered in public as a good speaker. As Ph.D. Sc. Gabrijela Kišiček (2016) states, he is fluent, calm, handles well the situation and gives the impression that he is sure in his words. However, many times journalists accused him of avoiding answering the asked question, trying, instead, to change subject. He is also known for his hand gestures while speaking, so often because of that he was compared to the German chancellor Angela Merkel. However, it was widely discussed in media whether Plenković's gestures were taught: they seemed, in fact, unnatural and rehearsed.

On the other hand, Zoran Milanović is more direct in his addressing, sometimes even impolite and rude. Many consider him arrogant. The first incident in one of his public addresses was when he referred to politicians Ms. Dalija Orešković and Ms. Marijana Puljak as "*samodopadne i neozbiljne narikače*" - "smug and frivolous mourners". However, he possesses an extensive vocabulary, often cites great philosophers and Latin proverbs and phrases, saying, for example that he will not be "*deus ex machina*".

(Prgomet 2016: 19) Despite being an atheist, he often cites Bible and religious phrases.

Anyway, it has to be admitted to both Plenković and Milanović that they are good speakers with extensive vocabulary, who handle well the situations. Even when the questions are directed against them, they find a cunning way to avoid the real answer. Their rhetoric differentiates from the majority of other Croatian politicians. Good rhetoric is often neglected not only in speeches and addresses of Croatian politicians, but also in media. Therefore, Plenković and Milanović are different in terms of rhetoric. Rhetoric should be a part of every politician's informal education, considering that the proper usage of language and its persuasive devices has an important role in the shaping of public opinion. This fact is important because, obviously, both Plenković and Milanović knew that and each one had created his own recognizable style of speaking.

3.4.1. Andrej Plenković

I decided to analyze Plenković's political rhetoric and usage of common devices, based on two of his speeches, wishing to emphasize that his style differs from occasion to occasion, mostly in tone and style. One speech is from 2019, held on the electoral campaign before the presidential elections, where he called Croatian citizens to vote for Kolinda Grabar Kitarović. The second speech was held in the headquarters of HDZ party, after they won the parliamentary elections in July 2020. Finally, I analyzed Plenković's interview dated the 6th of January 2021, when he talked about the earthquake that hit the area of Petrinja. This interview was incorporated mainly because of its conversational style, unlike the before mentioned prepared speeches. I found it important because in this interview, despite a more spontaneous tone, he still showed some of language devices he usually uses in his speeches.

In the speech during the electoral rally held before the presidential elections on the 22nd of December 2019, Plenković spoke in a very persuasive, winning manner, sure of the victory of Kolinda Grabar Kitarović. His tone was passionate and he spoke in a loud voice. If we want to compare it with the speeches of Trump and Biden, Plenković's speech resembles more the Biden's rhetoric, when it comes to the usage of persuasive devices.

3.4.1.1. Ethos

Plenković based his election campaign speech mostly on ethos and on the concept of unity. He also exaggerated when talking about Grabar Kitarović, saying "there is no better president than Kolinda Grabar Kitarović". In that occasion he mentioned that "he has known Kolinda for almost 25 years" and explained that he trusts her and has a complete faith in her. This part of his speech was obviously based on the ethos. Plenković mentions his long lasting friendship with Grabar Kitarović, wishing to imply that he trusts her and that Croatian citizens should do the same. He adds that together with Grabar Kitarović, he "did a lot", "together for Croatian people". Next he addresses Croatian people with the sentence "Let's support our president; we know that Croatian people will choose the best!"

In his interview after the earthquake in Petrinja, Plenković constantly refers to Croatian citizens and their "solidarity" and "good heart". Praising the Croatian citizens helped him to avoid concrete answers to the questions about the organization and coordination of the help in the area of Petrinja. Plenković emphasizes firstly that together with his colleagues he immediately went to Petrinja. This is the obvious example of ethos, to show to the Croatian citizens how Plenković knows the seriousness of the situation and is aware of the circumstances in Petrinja.

Pronouns

With the usage of the pronoun "we" and the word "together" in the first speech, Plenković creates the feeling of unity between him, Grabar Kitarović and Croatian people. During his speech Plenković made a few pauses, where people applauded him, which showed that people support him and believe him.

3.4.1.2. Democratic Values

Plenković's speech held after the parliamentary elections was not as fierce and passionate as the one where he supported Grabar Kitarović and had a more steady rhythm and formal tone. This speech was based mostly on hyperbole, word-repetition, and one of the often-mentioned values in many of his speeches - democracy.

Firstly, Plenković thanks the "Croatian citizens, no matter for whom they voted, because that is democracy". This part of the speech resembles the Biden's inauguration speech, where he mentioned that not everyone has to agree with him, but that would be the simplified definition of democracy. During his speech, Plenković talks about "brilliant result" and "brilliant victory", their "difficult mandate full of challenges", and that in front of HDZ there is a "great responsibility". His statements were not false, but they seem a bit exaggerated.

3.4.1.3. Word-repetition

When it comes to the word-repetition, in the previously mentioned speech, he repeats the word "*strengthening*"- strengthening of democracy, human rights, institutions, and minority rights. He concludes his interview with a promising sentence: "Tomorrow morning at 9 a.m. we begin to work." This is a good choice for the conclusive sentence, this can be understood literally and metaphorically.

3.4.1.4. Hyperbole

In the speech held after the earthquake in Petrinja there were two instances of hyperbole. Firstly, Plenković said that people "cannot expect everything to be perfectly clean in just few hours after the earthquake". More specifically, he used the phrase "da sve izgleda kao apoteka" ("*that everything will be clean as a pharmacy*"). Later on, he accused the media of "creating the distrust in public space" and of "attempt to dismantle the state". This is the case of extreme exaggeration, in order to justify the government for the ineffectiveness brought up by citizens.

In Plenković's rhetoric it is important to mention his hand gestures while speaking which is known to be typical for his style.

3.4.2. Zoran Milanović

For the analysis of Milanović's rhetoric I focused on two of his speeches: his first speech after he won the presidential elections on the 5th of January 2020, and his inauguration speech on February 18, 2020.

Common devices used by Zoran Milanović, similar to the ones of Plenković, are the concept of unity, ethos, democratic values, and word-repetition.

3.4.2.1. Metaphors

In his winning speech, Milanović addressed his supporters saying "welcome to the factory of victories", which is a very memorable and interesting metaphor. Milanović also added that "four million Croatians are searching for their place under the Sun" and how "the president has to be a dam and a solid wall that can't be cut through a machine or a tank". He added that he "knows the spirit of the Croatian Constitution" and he knows how it is to lead the country, because once he "had the levers of power".

Milanović implemented also a number of metaphors in his inauguration speech when asking for a "grain of understanding" for his future mistakes, from which will "grow the mandate of benefit to Croatia and all its citizens". He asked for solidarity because "every person needs a chance to find its own way and its place". Metaphor similar to the one in his victory speech about him being "a dam and a solid wall" is here modified into "a dam against the tyranny" and refers to the academic community, media and judiciary. In addition, as in his previously mentioned speech, Milanović promised to work "in the spirit of the Constitution". Another metaphor composed in a memorable manner was to call Croatia a "home for us, for every one of us". Finally, I would like to cite perhaps his most commented sentence from the speech which clearly refers to unity and acceptance - two values respected by president Milanović. "Croatia is a homeland of an unqualified worker, equally as it is of a respected academic. Croatia belongs equally to the unemployed turner and to the busy programmer, to an underpaid cashier and a manager in a public or private enterprise."

3.4.2.2. Unity

Like Plenković, Milanović has a tendency to direct his speeches towards unity. In his winning speech, he was talking at the same time about unity and diversities. He mentioned "our republic", "republic of every citizen", but from "different families, upbringing, different views on

the world, and different prejudices".

3.4.2.3. Ethos

As a part of the ethos in his winning speech Milanović mentioned his carrier as prime minister and how familiar he was with his roles of the president. Talking about his experiences, he evokes in people the feeling of trust and confidence. Furthermore he returns to the notion of unity, mentioning that Croatia is " a part of Europe and part of the continent" and that people should not expect from him "cheesy stories of unity", referring ironically to his opponent Grabar Kitarović. Typically for every winning speech in democratic systems, he thanked "everyone who supported him, and also those who did not support him", implying to the democracy, because Croatia is "multi-party parliamentary democracy". Finally, he repeated a few phrases, saying that Croatia will go towards better results "breath by breath, smile by smile, event by event".

3.4.2.4. Democratic Values

As in his prepared and rehearsed inauguration speech, Milanović referred mostly to the values of democracy and diversity incorporating a few metaphors in his speech. At the beginning of his speech, he chose a quote about the truth by Israeli philosopher Harrari. To begin a speech with a quote is a subtle way to make one's speech memorable and sophisticated. He thanked his predecessors who gave their maximum in performing their duty. When referring to democracy, Milanović said how "It is not a mistake when we disagree in our opinions and attitudes". Besides democratic values, Milanović kept emphasizing diversity and how "no citizen should feel scared, or discriminated, or excluded for the fact that she/he is different".

3.4.3. Plenković and Milanović- conclusion

Considering the fact that Plenković and Milanović come from different political spectrum and promote different ideologies, the main difference in their rhetoric, and consequently in their political speeches, are the values they promote. Whereas Plenković's speeches are based mostly on unity of Croatians, Milanović usually emphasizes, besides unity, the importance of diversity

and acceptance of differences. However, one important value, upon which they both agree on, is democracy. Implications on democracy are hidden in every their speech. On the other hand, both Milanović and Plenković use word-repetition, ethos and metaphors. It is obvious that Milanović is more inclined to use the latter, whereas Plenković more often uses the device of hyperbole.

In comparison with Biden and Trump, the rhetoric of president Milanović resembles more to Trump's, when it comes to political correctness, which is by both sometimes neglected, and more direct and sometimes an insulting style of speaking, while both Plenković and Biden are more calm and diplomatic in their speeches, following the pattern of typical political speech. Anyway, both Plenković and Trump have similarities in their speeches, cherishing more traditional, national values, while Milanović and Biden are the opposite to the previously mentioned, which is connected primarily to their ideologies.

4. CONCLUSION

The aim of this B.A. thesis was to analyze and compare persuasive language techniques used by Donald Trump and Joe Biden in their political speeches. The persuasive language devices are an important aspect of every political speech because of the effect they have on people's opinions. Consequently, the proper usage of persuasive devices help politicians to gain supporters, affect their beliefs and change their perspectives. In this thesis, I focused on devices from figurative language - metaphor and hyperbole, as well as techniques, which were noticed in most of Trump's and Biden's speeches- paralipsis, word-repetition, hyperbole, metaphors and frequent usage of personal pronouns. Another important content aspect of the analyzed political speeches were ethos and values, such as democracy and unity. One chapter of this thesis was dedicated to Croatian politicians Andrej Plenković and Zoran Milanović, famous in Croatian public and media for their typical rhetoric. Despite their differences, resulting mostly from their different ideologies, their rhetoric shares a number of language devices - metaphors, ethos and word-repetition. Furthermore, this B.A. thesis was based mostly on Joe Biden's inauguration speech, whereas the analysis of Donald Trump's rhetoric is an excerpt from a number of his speeches held during his presidential mandate. The difficulty in analyzing Joe Biden's rhetoric is the fact that he became president during the pandemic of COVID-19, so that his pre-election rallies were reduced to a minimum. Therefore, the analysis of Joe Biden's rhetoric still has scope for exploration in the years yet to come.

Moreover, the analysis of Andrej Plenković's rhetoric is based on three of his speeches. The first speech was held during the electoral campaign in time of presidential elections in 2019, the second was held after the parliamentary elections in July 2020, whereas the last one was his interview from the 6th of January 2021.

For the analysis of Zoran Milanović's rhetoric I decided to write about his first speech after winning the presidential elections held on the 5th of January 2020, and his inauguration speech held on February 18, 2020. The results in general showed that every political speech contains a number of persuasive language techniques. In spite of different ideologies and values, the persuasive language devices are used worldwide in every politician's rhetoric and they represent a good tool to control effectively the public opinion and views on certain situations.

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