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# CONTENTS

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# POLITICAL DISCOURSE –
# A SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC ANALYSIS

*Abstract: The language of politics is commonly studied within discourse analysis, whereby its linguistic features relating to vocabulary, grammar structures, textual and intertextual aspects are investigated using various methodologies. This paper presents an analysis of political discourse from a syntactic-semantic point of view. The corpus studied has been extracted from five. Montenegrin dailies and the analysis attempts to describe the genre as effectuated in the Montenegrin political discourse. As a result, the functions of political language are extrapolated and illustrated and its style is described in terms of intertextuality and other linguistic strategies commonly employed in political discourse. The paper aims to give a contribution to the understanding and linguistic profiling of political language.*

*Key words: discourse, language of politics, syntactic-semantic analysis*

## 1 Introduction

In this paper, we shall present a syntactic-semantic analysis of political discourse, an area which has challenged researchers for a long time and produced a series of dilemmas. It covers an ever growing field of activity. Although in the past it was believed that political discourse was simple and straightforward, several decades of its studies have produced an array of papers dealing with its lexical peculiarities, genre varieties, influence on other discourses, characteristics of syntactic structures, as well as the interplay of politics with socio-cultural and economic spheres.[2]

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[2] "Political language has ceased to represent a stronghold of bureaucratic language, it has become somewhat simpler and more comprehensible; in its milder forms it intertwines with economy, remaining all the while in the mass media and other domains of the use of language" (Klikovac 2001: 87).

The language of politics is marked by the use of specific words, phrases and hidden linguistic messages. Political words are never randomly selected – they are never "summoned" in communication for no particular reason, i.e. without a specific aim pursued by a politician – they always strive to verbalise an underlying political message or an idea.

A number of linguistic features of a political text are typically dealt with within discourse analysis, involving investigations into its vocabulary (lexeme value, particularly its expressive value), grammar (active or passive voice, use of personal pronouns *we – you – they*, nominalisation, coordination – subordination), textual structure (use of connectors, speech acts) and intertextual relations (the relation of the text to other texts, propensity to being quoted) (Katnić-Bakaršić, 2012: 12–13).

## 2 Theoretical background

The research of political discourse is as old as politics itself. The role language plays in politics is a significant one, which accounts for the fact that political rhetoric itself dates back to ancient Greece. The discourse in question is used in the speeches of political leaders, political groups, management of various kinds and levels, as well as in the language used by the media, which is closely related to it and frequently influenced by it. Political discourse is characterised by considerable metaphoricity, whereby the choice of register (either standard or vernacular), vocabulary associated with certain social groups and choice of address forms (signalling either distance or solidarity) reveal political positioning (Katnić-Bakaršić, 2012: 53).

Some linguists distinguish between political language in a broader sense (texts which contain any political elements) and political language in a narrower sense (state, diplomatic, party, pre-electoral, parliamentary, propaganda language) (Milić, 2006: 168).

Moreover, political language can be exclusive, totalitarian, democratic, but it may also be emotional, expressive, iterative,

extensive and coherent. Exclusive political language refers to its professional usage within political circles. Totalitarian language is associated with the ruling elites, whereby it is employed as a means of rule and manipulation which is imposed on all spheres of life. On the other hand, democratic language is the language of dialogue and tolerance, whereas emotional and expressive political language affects listeners through their specific vocabulary. Iterative political language imposes itself by repetition of certain phrases and words, while at the same time it also serves to check the reaction of the audience. Finally, extensive language is characterised by numerous digressions, interpolations and considerable length, unlike coherent language which is typical of good orators who are able to pitch their talk into harmonised and logical units. (Ana Knežević-Hesky, 2014: 5).

When the relationship between politics and language is in question, we can note that they permeate and influence each other, whereby language represents a significant factor in constructing political messages. Language is not a static element of politics, but, on the contrary, it acts very dynamically. People interpret and construct politics (as part of social content) through language, hence the continuous connection between language and politics accomplished at various levels. Some linguists see political language as an administrative-functional style, while others see it as an oratory style, which, in turn, is a subclass of the rhetorical style (Tošović, 2002: 287; Katnić-Bakaršić, 1999: 75).

Language always manifests various aspects of power which characterise relations among people; as a matter of fact, politics may be understood as a play to gain power or, simply put, a power play, which is why language is inextricably linked with both politics and power. Language and politics reflect the society out of which they stem and in which they are employed, as well as the relationships which exist in the society; however, they do not only reflect those relationships but they also create them (Katnić-Bakaršić, 2012: 92).

Another division of political discourse suggests that it includes communicative, administrative and diplomatic language. Communicative language abounds in figures of speech and motivational phrases; it is the language of power that verbalises empathy. On the other hand, administrative language is the language of public affairs, which can be said to be lexically poor and procedurally molded. Lastly, diplomatic language is the language of foreign and interior politics, the language of signs and symbols, lacking in clear formulations but rich in all linguistic elements and hidden messages.

## 3 Corpus and methodology

The corpus studied in this paper consists of excerpts taken from five print Montenegrin dailies: *Pobjeda, Vijesti, Dan, Dnevne novine* and *Blic*. These involve statements issued by politicians, as reported by the media, as well as excrepts from their speeches, campaigns etc. quoted in the articles.

The whole corpus had first been read thoroughly to extrapolate the syntactic and semantic features of the political discourse at hand; the strategies were then identified and classified.

The extracts from the dailies are used throughout the paper to illustrate and explain the linguistic mechanisms underlying political discourse as effectuated in Montenegro.
Our analysis follows in the next section of the paper.

## 4 Syntactic-semantic analysis of political discourse

In our analysis of the corpus we have covered various syntactic and semantic aspects, i.e. linguistic structures and devices that have been found common and typical of the texts analysed. These include: functions and style of political language, positioning, pairing and grouping, reduplication, common verb forms, nominalisation, common conjunctions, embedding, rhetorical questions, exclamations, intermediation, depersonalisation, condensing, key words and phrases, common logical relationships and foregrounding via discourse markers.

The paper does not aim to provide an exhaustive list and analysis of all semantic-syntactic aspects that characterise political discourse, but solely to single out those most common ones found in this particular corpus which we find representative of the Montenegrin political language.

## *Functions of political language*

By analysing the corpus, we have determined the most common functions of political language and linguistic devices used to accomplish them. These involve persuasive, manipulative, referential, phatic, metalinguistic and symbolic functions, among other roles political discourse may assume.

Politics is generally marked by underlying ideologies, whose basic function is pragmatic – they encourage the change not only of people's consciousness, but also of their behaviour. This is achieved through linguistic **persuasion**, i.e. by "seducing the masses". In order to be persuasive, political communication employs linguistic units containing elements of emphasis, such as emphatic adverbs (*naravno* (*of course), svakako (certainly), očigledno (obviously), očekivano (expectedly)*), emphatic adjectives (*nesporna* činjenica *(undeniable* fact), *nesumljiva* činjenica *(indubitable* fact), *ubjedljiva* ilustracija (*convincing* illustration)), depersonalized constructions with emphatic adverbs (*očigledno je (it is obvious), it is evident (evidentno je), it is clear (jasno je)*) and the corresponding adverbial phrases (*bez sumnje (without doubt)*), among other linguistic devices.

The linguistic means through which persuasiveness is achieved in political discourse depend on the political genre. Thus, persuasiveness of a political speech delivered by a certain individual will differ from a political statement issued by a political party, government or management. The choice of verb phrases such as: *smatram* bitnim *(I consider* it important)*, smatram* nespornim *(I consider* it unquestionable)*, da podsjetimo* birače *(*let us *remind* the voters)), points to open persuasion and imposing of one's own attitude. Such constructions are frequently found sentence-initially, with the aim of intensifying the

subsequent content. Politicians use them to explain their own stances, evaluate and deny the statements of others and convince the public of the righteousness of their own opinions. In political discourse, their function is directed towards achieving political goals and forming political opinions.

Language can also be seen as a form of social interaction, therefore, besides its communicative role, it also assumes many other additional roles, including even the ***manipulative*** one. The most frequently used mechanisms of linguistic manipulation are: macro-speech acts which imply our good acts as opposed to their bad ones; semantic macro-structures or the choice of topics that emphasises either positive or negative facts; the vocabulary, i.e. choice of positive or negative lexemes; and syntax – the active voice versus passive voice, nominalisation etc. (Podboj, 2011: 126–127).

Apart from the above-mentioned, other important functions of political language include ***referentiality***, i.e. providing new information and evoking connotations (convincing), and the so-called ***phatic function*** achieved through phatic expressions, i.e. common connectors, phrases and expressions whose only function is to point to political discourse, as opposed to conveying information (*U prethodnom periodu smo govorili... (In the previous period we spoke about...); Predmet našeg političkog programa jesu... (The subject of our political programme is...); Zadatak je da posvećeno radimo na... (The task is to stay committed to the cause...); Zadatak Vlade je obezbijediti mladima obrazovanje i posao... (The task of the Government is to provide young people with education and jobs...); Cilj je borba protiv korupcije... (The aim is to fight the corruption...); da zaključimo...; (let us conclude...); smatramo potrebnim napomenuti* (*We find it important to point out that...*)).

The ***meta-linguistic function*** is also very present in political statements – it consists of definitions, explanations, quotes, speech within a speech etc., as illustrated in the following examples:

– Predsjednik je rekao: „Besperspektivnost mladih, visoka nezaposlenost i drugi socijalni problemi, uvozna zavisnost i siva ekonomija, korupcija i kriminal – sve su to problemi od kojih danas nije imuna gotovo nijedna država" (The President said: "The lack of perspective for the young, high rate of unemployment and other social problems, dependence on import and grey economy, corruption and crime – all these are the problems that not a single country today is immune to");

– BBC je citirao i izjavu predsjednika koji je poručio da je razočaran, ali ne i iznenađen rezultatima, kao i da referendum ne smije biti razlog novih podjela u tom (The BBC quoted the President's statement in which he said that he was disappointed but not surprised with the results, as well as that the referendum could not be the cause of new divisions in the society).

The discourse of politicians is also abundant with the **symbolic function** or, more precisely, language becomes a symbol of unity for all the speakers who use it:

– Crna Gora može da bude kao Švajcarska. Svi treba da budu svjesni svoje uloge, mjesta i odgovornosti. (Montenegro can be like Switzerland. Everybody should be aware of their role, position and responsibility they hold).

### Style

The language of politics is characterised by **stylistic dualism**, i.e. intertwining and mutual influence of **administrative** and **journalistic styles**. The connectedness of political and administrative styles may be seen in some of its common phrases (*institucionalno prilagođavanje (institutional adaptation), financial means (novčana sredstva), financial support (finansijska podrška), negotiating position (pregovaračko mjesto)*); administrative and legal terms (*legitimnost (legitimacy), legalnost (legality)*), names of legal documents (*odluka o sufinasiranju (decision on co-funding), ugovor o nastavku saradnje (contract on the continuation of cooperation)*), precise stating of titles and positions (*državni sekretar (state secretary), union president (predsjednik Sindikata)*)) etc.

Other <u>frequently used</u> <u>terms</u> are those typical of the **legislative and legal style** (*na osnovu (pursuant to), u roku od (within the deadline), zasniva se (it is based upon), uređuje se (it is defined), razmatra se (it is being considered), odlučuju (they make decision)*), <u>verbal nouns</u> (*učlanjenje* u NATO *(integrating in* the NATO), *djelovanje (acting), povezivanje (connecting), pristupanje (accessing), brisanje (erasing), isključenje (excluding)*); as well as <u>listing numerous verbs</u> at the beginning of certain textual segments, for example, political programmes of socio-political organisations, parties or associations (*zastupa (represents), čuva (protects), unapređuje (enhances), ispunjava (fulfills), utvrđuje (establishes), odlučuje (decides), razmatra (considers), usvaja (adopts), saziva (convenes), verifikuje (verifies), osniva (establishes)*) or in political statements (*transformisali (transformed), oduzeli (subtracted), ukinuli (abolished), zabranili (banned)*).

### Positioning

Political discourse contains a variety of linguistic mechanisms which either implicitly or explicitly convey political content, shape public policies, prescribe roles to their actors and target groups, carry identity messages, gather political support and define goals. Through political language certain concepts are subconsciously or strategically highlighted, concealed, distorted or valued, which is why it may be said to be a discourse tool of public policies with the function of persuading and legitimising politics.

In political language, personal pronouns play an important role (as index symbols – Katnić-Bakaršić, 2012: 54), bearing in mind that they reveal which agents are dominant and which are subordinate. As very relevant rhetorical means, pronouns carry a strong symbolic function. What we have in mind here is the opposition *us* vs. *them*, where *us* implies positive and *them* negative content, as well as *us* vs. *you*, which, on the other hand, points to different relationships (*mi smo naš dio posla završili (we have completed our part of the deal); ponosimo se i mi time (we*

*also take pride in that)*; *oni sve teže izmiruju obaveze (they find it ever harder to pay their dues); Vašu misiju doživljavam kao snažnu diplomatsku misiju (I find your mission to be a very strong diplomatic mission); da vas podsjećamo na neslavni dio vaše istorije (let us remind you of the unfortunate part of your history)*).

Katnić-Bakaršić suggests that there are two types of the pronoun *us* – the inclusive and the exclusive one. In political discourse, the former carries the meaning *me + you* and has the function of a strong emotional means of familiarising with the recipients of the message, while the latter implies power and strength of the number (Katnić-Bakaršić, 2012: 55). The inclusive *us* can be found in other discourses as well – for example, in the academic discourse, where lecturers address students in this way in order to establish closeness with them. Such form is characteristic of genres with the appealative function or, more precisely, the function which acts upon addressees who need to be turned into active participants in decision-making (Katnić-Bakaršić 1999: 77).

### *Verb forms*

Among dominant verb forms of political discourse we find future constructions implying finality and strong orders, as illustrated in the following examples:

> – do sjutra *ćete dobiti* program rada (you *will get* the agenda by tomorrow);

> – *postaće* država sivog političkog tržišta (the country *will become* a grey political market);

> – na neistine *odgovorićemo* istom mjerom (to lies we *will respond* in the same way);

> – kao ozbiljna i odgovorna partija *bavićemo se* uzrocima i posljedicama ovakvog rezultata (as a serious and responsible party *we will be dealing* with the causes and consequences of such results).

These are commonly used with the dative of the personal pronoun *I*, indicating the person for whom an action is intended (donijećete *mi* sjutra dopis (you will bring *me* the statement tomorrow); javićete *mi* rezultate izbornog procesa (you will let *me* know the results of the electoral process)).

Sentences with verbs in the <u>imperative form</u> (*vratimo se* glavnoj temi *(let us go back* to the main topic), *podsjetimo se* prošlogodišnjih izbora (*let* us *remind* ourselves of the last year's elections) and <u>impersonal constructions</u> (*važno je istaći* i to (*it is important to point out* this as well); *nesporno je* (*it cannot be doubted*)) are characteristic of political discourse and perform the role of modifiers which legitimise the authority of the addressees to deliberate on the topic at hand.

Frequently used are also present and future forms of the modal verbs *should, can, must*, taking into account that modal verbs may be used to express orders and prohibitions (*ne treba* da presuđuje... (*he should not* judge...);  *ne možemo* odustati od svojih ciljeva... (*we cannot* give up our aims...); *moraće* svi učestvovati u tom procesu... (everybody *will have to* take part in that process...); t*reba* da više radimo na stvaranju konkurentnog ambijenta u privlačenju investicija (we *should* work more on the creation of competitive environment for attracting investments)).

Political discourse is also rich in decomposed predicates (such as *donositi odluku (pass a decision)*, *podnijeti izvještaj (submit a report*), *izraziti protest (express disagreement*), *uzeti učešće (take part in))*.

### *Pairing and grouping*

In political language, verbs are commonly used in pairs (*razmatra i usvaja (considers and adopts); bira i razrješava (elects and dismisses), donosi i utvrđuje (passes and establishes), raspušta i imenuje (dismisses and appoints), predlaže i stara se (proposes and takes care of), zastupa i brani (advocates and defends*)). The same may be said of noun pairs (*kandidovanje i izbor (candidature and election), organizacija i organi (organisation and*

*organs)*), as well as adjective pairs (*politički* i *disciplinski (political and disciplining)*).

In some cases multiple lexemes are grouped together (*prati, analizira, usklađuje (follows, analyzed, aligns); uspostavljanje, razvoj, promovisanje* (*establishment, development, promotion), postanku, razvoju i trajanju etnosa i nacije (origin, development and duration of an ethnicity and nation)*).

### Nominalisation

One of the forms of nominalisation is the use of adverbial constructions instead of adjectives and adverbs (*od izuzetnog značaja* da se promoviše *(of outstanding importance* to promote), koja su *od izuzetnog značaja* za Crnu Goru (that are *of outstanding significance* for Montenegro), *na visokom stepenu bezbjednosti (at a high level of safety)*, *na nivou prošlogodišnjeg* ostaju *(*remain *at last year's level*), *sa mnogo više odlučnosti (with much more decisiveness)*).

A striking feature of political discourse refers to the phrases that are combined with verbal/de-adjectival nouns, such as *with the aim of (u cilju), come to (doći do), traje do (lasts until), prisutno je* (*it is present),* as used in the following examples:

> – *u cilju pobjede* na izborima *(with the aim of winning* at the elections);

> – *u cilju oporavka* crnogorske privrede *(with the aim of recovering* Montenegrin economy);

> – we could *come to a cessation* (moglo bi *doći do prestanka)*;

> – vanredno stanje *traje do prestanka okolnosti* zbog kojih je proglašeno (state of emergency *lasts until the end of the circumstances* due to which it has been declared);

> – vjeruju da će *doći do kompromisa* (they believe that *a compromise will be arrived at)*;

> – *prisutno je uvjerenje* da treba raditi sve u cilju pobjede *(there is a belief* that everything should be done in order to secure victory).

Profligate use of genitive constructions in political discourse emerges as a consequence of excessive nominalisation (Klikovac, 2001: 88), as in the examples:

– nadoknađivanja dijela troškova koji se odnose na troškove *puta*, izdavanja *sanitarnih knjižica*, *smještaja* (reimbursement of part of the costs that refer to the cost *of travel, issuing sanitary records*, *lodging)*;

– MUP bi trebao da bude nadležan za postupke *ispravki*, *dopuna*, *promjena* u biračkom spisku, kao i za sprovođenje *postupka brisanja lica* iz *biračkog spiska*, upis *napomena* u birački spisak, i druge poslove u skladu sa Zakonom o biračkom spisku (The Ministry of the Interior should be competent for the procedure of *correction, supplement*, *changes* in the electoral roll, as well as for implementing the *procedure of erasing persons from the electoral roll*, entering of *notes* in the electoral roll, and other activities in accordance with the Law on Electoral Roll);

– MUP bi trebao da ima nadležnosti u pogledu *obrade podataka* iz *biračkog spiska*, analizu *podataka*, njihovo ažuriranje i preduzimanje *adekvatnih mjera* u cilju *usklađivanja* i *potpune tačnosti podataka* (The Ministry of the Interior should be responsible for the processing *of data* from *the electoral roll*, the analysis of *data*, their updating and taking *adequate measures* in order to to obtain *harmonised* and *completely correct data*).

The use of nominal expressions has to do with the fact that abstract and impersonal information are exchanged, while the activities and those who perform them are less relevant in this context. This is why some political speeches are overly generalised (Katnić-Bakaršić, 2007: 252).

### *Conjunctions*

In complex sentences, conjuctions are often repeated, as the case in the following examples:

– Na pitanje kako zajedno te dvije partije ako je koliko juče rukovodstvo SDP-a o Pozitivnoj Crnoj Gori govorilo kao stranci *koja* je došla iz miksera gdje se cijedi pomorandža, *a* iz „kuhinje medijskih

tajkuna", *a* sada da su to dvije partije kao dvije grane istog stabla *koje* su se samo u jednom trenutku razdvojile, *a* sada se spojile i idu dalje (To the question of how come that those two parties are together if only recently the leadership of the SDP has spoken about the Positive Montenegro as of a party *that* emerged from an orange squeezing mixer, *and* from the "kitchen of media tycoons", *but* now it reversed its discourse and states that these two parties are like two branches of the same tree *which* were apart only for a while, *and* are now joined back together and go on together);

– Preporučujem svima koji se nijesu odlučili koga će da izaberu za gradonačelnika 25. maja da biraju kandidata *koji* će njihove probleme staviti u prvi plan, *kojem* će građani biti na prvom mjestu, *koji će... (*I recommend to all those who have not decided yet whom to vote for at the elections for the mayor on May 25 to choose a candidate *who will* put their problems in the forefront, *to whom* the citizens will be the most important thing, *who will...);*

– Iskazala je zadovoljstvo *što* su usvojene izmjene četiri „izborna zakona", ali i nezadovoljstvo *što* nijesu prošle promjene sistemskog zakona o izboru odbornika i poslanika; sve to praćeno zahtjevom *da* se nastavi, *da* se ulože dodatni napori i *da* se posao završi (She expressed her satisfaction *because* four changes of the "electoral law" have been adopted, but also her dissatisfaction *because* the changes of the systemic law on election of board members and deputies have not been passed; all of this was accompanied with a request *to* continue, *to* put in additional efforts and *to* finish the job).

One of the characteristics of the syntax of political language is the use of the so-called *and-group* conjunctions, often found in synonyms or clichés, as in:

– obezbijediti *bezbjednost i sigurnost* (provide *security and safety)*;

– *popravka i rekonstukcija* puta *(repair and reconstruction* of the road);

– završila čitav niz *mjera i aktivnosti* od značaja za prijestonicu (has performed a large number of *measures and activities* significant for the capital);

– *bezbjednost i zaštita imovine* prva je stvar koju građani očekuju od države, a danas to je *dodatno i sloboda kritičkog izražavanja i*

*izvještavanja (security and protection of property* is the highest priority that citizens expect of their state, and today there is also the *additional freedom of critical speech and reporting)*;

– Mnogo toga nam se događalo u XX vijeku – *svjetski i građanski ratovi*, promjene *državnih tvorevina i društvenih uređenja* (A lot of things happened to us in the 20th century – *world and civil wars*, the change *of state borders and state organisation models*).

Some linguists call them two-part speech forms, which represent rhythmical units and leave an impression of completeness and roundedness (Klikovac, 2011: 104). These groups can also consist of three elements, which draws attention to and implies a greater importance of the content at hand (the state has to provide *development, modernisation and greater productive forces*; now we are resuming with *development, modernisation and reconstruction* of the remaining local roads).

### Embedding

This type of discourse contains a lot of embedded constructions which clarify the content or redirect the attention to parts of the content, as in the following examples:

– U običnom životu to se zove licemjerje u politici postoje adekvatnije riječi ali kojih se treba ovoga puta, *makar koliko bila otvorena politička perverzija ovih dana u državi,* suzdržati (In real life that is called hypocrisy, but in politics there are more suitable words which should, however, be refrained from, at least this time, *regardless of how open the political perversion in the state has been these days)*;

– Toga dana grupa od ne više od 200 ljudi većinom mladih, podijeljenih, da li dogovorom među njima ili ne, *sasvim svejedno*, na one sa fantomkama i džepovima punih kamenja i ostalih „demokratskih argumenata" i onih drugih koji su odlučili da se malo odmore (On that day, a group of not more than 200 people, mostly young, divided, whether upon agreement or not, *it is quite irrelevant*, into those with balaclavas, pockets full of stones and other "democratic arguments", and into those who decided to take some rest);

> – *Pa znate*, izbori su, kao procedura, *sami po sebi*, nikad dovršena priča *(Well, you know*, the elections are a procedure that is, *in itself*, a never-ending story).

## Reduplication

At the syntactic level there is another frequent form used in political texts called reduplication, i.e. a process of intensification of syntactic units. Thus, besides the repetition of phonemes, there is also the repetition of phrases and constructions (*u roku od 5 dana... u roku od 6 mjeseci* (*within five days ... within six months); Isti* ljudi, *ista* pamet, *iste* namjere, *isti* mentori, *ista* sredstva (*The same* people, *the same* mind, *the same* intentions, *the same* mentors, *the same* means); faktički *vanredno* stanje, *vanredna* situacija (practically a state of *emergency*, a situation of *emergency*). Often, all these elements are combined into a single sentence:

> – Crnogorci, koji *istorijski* i *savremeno* imaju kolektivno vlastito ime – *što je jedan od ključnih elemenata iskaza nacionalne posebnosti – posjeduju i manifestuju, istorijski i danas, povezanost i pripadnost* svojoj domovini – Crnoj Gori (The Montenegrins, who *historically and currently* have a collective name – *which is one of the main elements of the expression of national identity – have and manifest, both historically and today, a connection and belonging* to their homeland – Montenegro).

## Rhetorical questions and exclamations

Frequently, the choice of certain persuasive devices – such as exclamations, rhetorical questions, imperatives – is conditioned by the connotative function. The message of political texts is first of all aimed to convince and persuade, which is why its rhetorical component is strongly directed at its recipients. Thus, asking questions usually results in providing the expected answers in the second part of the message. These rhetorical questions are commonly self-answered, but often they leave us in a dilemma. Imperative utterances aim at moving the recipients to action and offer them guidelines as to what they are supposed to do. Moreover, exclamatory utterances, as a type of speech act,

achieve pragmatic aims and evoke certain reactions from the audience. Owing to the context and the use of various exclamatory linguistic devices (verbs with specific semantic meaning, exclamations, vocatives, imperatives, intonation etc.), these propositions express specific emotional-expressive meanings. The expressive and emotional function of exclamatory sentences can at times signal the speaker's attitude towards a phenomenon or the subject of the exclamation:

> – Šta se moglo očekivati u situaciji kada su jednak udio imali osnivač, država i njemački ulagač, a uređivanje novina i izbor glavnog urednika za sebe je obezbijedila država. Zašto je to postala uobičajena praksa? Zar se ne zna šta je čiji posao i u takvim osjetljivim događanjima? I posebno: zašto može rješenje da se nađe pritiskom i na ulici, a ne može „redovnim" putem, blagovremenom angažovanošću (ne)odgovornih ljudi u za to nadležnim institucijama? Građani, *ne vjerujete* takozvanim političkim analitičarima; (What could have been expected in a situation in which the founder, the state, and the German investor had equal participation, but in which the state secured newspaper editing and the election of editor-in-chief exclusively for itself? Why has that become the way it is usually done? Are the individual roles in such sensitive dealings not well known? And this above all: why can a solution be found under pressure, even via the streets, but not through the "regular" procedure, by timely involvement of the (ir)responsibe people in competent institutions?);

> – *Pogledajte* koliko ljudi danas više radi. Samo činjenicama! *Rješavajte* uzrok – *riješićete* posljedicu! A to je ogromna razlika! Koji da hoće bi mogli sve! Cetinje su ljudi! Samozvani bankari, samozvani direktori, ali isključivo eksperti! Dear citizens, *do not believe* the so-called political analysts (*Take a look* at how many more people are employed today. Believe only the hard facts! If you *solve* the cause – you *will solve* the consequence! Which makes an enormous difference! If they only wanted to, they could do anything! Cetinje is its people! The self-appointed bankers, the self-appointed directors, but exclusively experts!).

The exclamatory mark sometimes operates as a specially emphasised linguistic device, whereas the marked lexemes are carriers of emotional attitudes. In the examples below, the

selected chunks serve as means of attracting attention and emphasising the content. Whether a word as a lexeme with full meaning, a phrase or a clause, they are dependent on the context and are purposefully embedded in a certain position in the sentence, whereby they perform certain syntactic functions. The application of this stylistic method is motivated by the function of emphasising the significance of the designated sentence element, thus enhancing the emotional tone of the text. The exclamatory expression is highlighted intonation-wise:

> – „žive" i po nekoliko godina!!! evo kako… ("they live on" even for several years!!! this is how…);

> – Opravdava žrtve pripadnika naroda za koje je mislio da ne slijede vođu kome je lično služio; da?! i tako dalje i tako redom… (He justifies the victims of the people who he thought did not follow the leader whom he personally had served; yes?! and so on and so forth…);

> – Kružili su automobili; trubilo se; zasviravalo; prijetilo; provociralo; a, bogami – i direktno napadalo!!! I niko od njih, na čelu sa njima nije ni pokušao da progovori ni jednu – jedinu „odbrambenu riječ"! (The cars were circling; the horns sounded; the music resounded; threats were heard; provocations flung; and, truth be told – there were also direct assaults!!! None of them, with themselves in the leading positions, attempted to utter even a single "word of defense"!).

The inability of differentiating between exclamatory and interrogative intonation is confirmed by the existence of exclamatory-interrogative sentences, which are marked in the written text with a combination of two punctuation signs – the question mark and the exclamation mark, or vice versa. The combination of the question and exclamation gives the sentence various semantic nuances: doubt, wonder mixed with questioning when uttering the question in a high-pitched voice etc. (Simeon, 1969: 697). The *Writing and Punctuation Rules* state that these two marks are put at the end of interrogatory-exclamatory sentences which pose questions about the things which provoke wonder, disbelief, disagreement, amazement, and

in such cases the order of these two symbols is flexible (Writing Rules, 2011: 138). Such examples in political discourse have an interrogatory-exclamatory character and politicians use them consciously to make stylistic interventions, which results in the intensification of the events and phenomena in the minds of the message recipients. Exclamatory-interrogative sentences are significant from the communicative-syntactic (pragmatic) point of view. The use of these sentences intensifies the meaning of the text addressed at the receiver of the message in order to affect their feelings and create certain kinds of reactions. These sentences express specific emotional reactions (wonder, joy, suspicion, doubt, exhilaration). The exclamatory-interrogative sentences modify the basic meaning of the text, introducing an additional systemic meaning whether as an explanation, clarification, emotional attitude, drawing attention, emphasis, cognitive attitude etc:

> – Pa gdje to može?! Povodom ukrajinske krize, mada ni sami ne znaju baš tačno – što je čovjek, zapravo, rekao a da nije (bilo) u skladu sa zvaničnom državnom politikom?! Baš niko, međutim – s „druge strane"– nije ni reagovao?! Loša stvar u cijeloj priči, možda i nije u tome – što se dogodilo?! Za mene je ključni problem – nedostatak adekvatnih reakcija?! Zar niko od tih silnih lidera nije mogao da izađe pred te ljude i kaže im – dajte, nije to naša politika?! Mi ćemo da živimo u miru i skladu sa svima?! (Is this for real?! Regarding the Ukraine crisis, even though they are not quite sure what exactly – what exactly did this man say that was not in line with the official state policy?! Not a single person, however – from "the other side" – has reacted?! In fact, this might not even be the worst thing in this story – what exactly has happened?! For me, the main problem is – the absence of adequate reactions?! Could none of the great leaders have come out before those people and told them – come on, that is not our policy?! We want to live in peace and harmony with everybody?!).

### Intermediation

One of the features of the political language from our corpus is also the use of lexical and grammatical devices with which the speaker avoids commenting on an action performed or

to be performed, in such a way that between the present moment and the completion of an action he/she introduces an intermediary action to which they are committed (Klikovac, 2011: 96). This may achieved through the use of the verb *doprinijeti* (*contribute):*

– Auto-put *će doprinijeti* ekonomskom razvoju Crne Gore (The highway *will contribute* to the economic development of Montenegro);

– Mislim da ćemo imati i očekivani rezultat, koji će *doprinijeti* daljoj izgradnji (I think that we will achieve the desired result, which will *contribute* to further construction projects);

Additionally, this is accomplished with the phrases *stvoriti uslove (create conditions), uložiti napore (invest efforts), pokrenuti inicijativu* (*take the initiative):*

– *...stvoriti uslove za pokretanje biznisa*, a potrebno je *stvaranja* dodatnih *uslova za održavanje demokratskih i fer izbora* (...*create conditions for stimulation of business*, and it is also necessary to *create* additional *conditions for holding democratic and fair elections*,

– *...uložiti* dodatne *napore* da bi stigla pozivnica za članstvo u NATO, *pokrenuti* neku zajedničku *inicijativu* za stabilnost *(...invest* additional *efforts* in order to receive an invitation for the NATO membership, *take* some common *initiative* for stability).

### *Depersonalisation*

The syntax of political texts is characterised by the use of linguistic devices that express objectivity, as well as depersonalisation in some cases (mainly in informative texts when the mention of the actor is to be avoided). On account of this, political discourse abounds in a frequent use of the passive voice, impersonal verbs, infinite verb forms and complex sentences. The use of passive voice foregrounds the action or the described process, not the actor. On the other hand, the actor is used when speaking about personal experience or individual choice. The choice between active and passive voice is conditioned by communicative and pragmatic factors relating to

the speaker and his/her choice of the informative focus (Alanović, 2008: 94). What follows are examples of such depersonalised sentences:

> – *Odlučeno je* da redovna sjednica Vlade *bude odložena*, a da hitna pitanja *budu riješena* na način predviđen Poslovnikom Vlade Crne Gore (*It has been decided* that the regular Government session *is to be postponed* and that urgent matters are to *be resolved* as defined by the Standing Orders of the Government of Montenegro);

> – O svemu tome – ili bar dijelu – *piše se* mjesecima (On all this – or at least part of it – *has been written* for months);

> – *Konstatovan je* visok stepen mobilnosti i agilnosti stranačke infrastrukture koja *je* već uveliko *anagžovana* za predstojeće lokalne izbore... (A high level of mobility and agility of the party infrastructure *has been noted.* This infrastructure *has* already been largely *engaged* for the upcoming local elections...);

> – ...sada *pokušava spasiti* što se *spasiti* može – *pokazati* da njegova stranka ima visoke standarde od kojih *ne želi odustati*, i time *pokazati...* (...now they are *trying to save whatever can be saved – to show* that his party has high standards it does *not want to give up*, and in this way *show...*);

> – *Pričalo se*, ranije, da *će se* taj problem *riješiti*. *Pominjana je* i pomoć Slovačke (*It was said*, earlier, that the problem *would be solved*. The support of Slovakia *has also been mentioned).*

Passive constructions emphasise orders and represent a means stylising political language. In many instances, passive voice condenses a passive sentence in order to achieve brevity, conciseness and economy of the language expression. On the other hand, active and passive voices differ with regards to the communicative intention of the speaker (Ham, 1990: 69). In passive sentences, information is given from the standpoint of the patient, while in active ones the information is given from the

standpoint of the agent. This relationship of empathy[3] or "standing by somebody" enables the speaker to establish a different attitude, i.e. enables them to stand closer by certain individuals than by others. The speakers achieve empathy through various orderings of the semantic, syntactic and lexical elements. Empathy represents a communicative intention, "an element from the standpoint of which the whole communication is observed" (Ham, 1990: 69). The speaker establishes an empathetic connection with "the person from whose perspective they follow what is said" (Ivić, 1987: 41). The relationships between sentences determine empathy. By selecting such an empathetic relationship, speakers choose from which perspective they would observe a certain event. Therefore, the active and the passive sentences have different communicative values and politicians consciously opt for the passive diathesis. Any change of the grammatical relationships entails a change in meaning, which means that the relationship between the active and the passive voice is considered semantically different (Belaj, 2004: 82).

Sometimes politicians consciously or intentionally leave out the agent, thus making the audience believe that the offered information is complete. In such cases, the agent is hidden or preserved.[4] On the other hand, if the agent is not explicated unconsciously, we either know who/what the agent is or this is an irrelevant piece of information, which is why there is no need for its explication. The frequency of all types of sentences without agents – *passive, impersonal constructions* (impersonalised) and sentences with *an inordinate subject,* give a particular tone to political texts. Even though the authors of the texts often address

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[3] The notion of empathy was introduced into linguistics by Susumu Kuno and Etsuko Kaburaki. See: Ivić, Milka. *O nekim srpskohrvatskim gramatičkim fenomenima uslovljenim empatijom,* Južnoslovenski filolog, XLIII, 1987, p. 41–49.

[4] Some linguists call this passive the rhetoric passive. See: Bjelaković, Isidora. *Agens u neagentivnim participskim pasivnim konstrukcijama (u tekstovima 19. veka).* Zbornik matice srpske za filologiju i lingvistiku, L, 1–2, 2007, p. 66.

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the audience, either directly or indirectly, there is the above-mentioned sentence types are substantially used with the aim to achieve certain communicative and stylistic effects.

### Condensing

The connotation of solidarity, i.e. of coming closer to or away from the addressee, may be effectuated through the use of infinitives, which represent a neutral or formal form that contributes to the condensing of the discourse as well as distancing and objectivitisation:

> – Treba *stimulisati* mlade ljude da ostanu na selu, *planirati* otvaranje pogona za preradu mlijeka i ljekobilja. Važno je *poboljšati* i otkup stoke... (We should *stimulate* young people to remain in the countryside, *plan* the opening of a plant for processing milk and medicinal herbs. It is important *to improve* the buying up of live stock...);

> – Treba *reformisati* lokalnu upravu, treba *obezbijediti* drugačiji poslovni ambijent, *vrednovati* tradicionalne, ali i savremene evropske duhovne i materijalne vrijednosti. Ne može ovaj kraj *oživjeti*... (We should *reform* the local government, we should *provide* a different business environment, *appreciate* traditional, but also contemporary European spiritual and material values. We cannot *revive* this region...);

> – Opština bi u narednom periodu morala maksimalno *koristiti* pretpristupne fondove EU, *crpiti* na taj način značajna sredstva. Treba *organizovati* novu lokalnu upravu, *dovesti* i *obučiti* nove ljude, *uvesti* ih u posao i sve zakonski *organizovati*. Ukoliko postoji nezadovoljstvo realizacijom vladine politike onda treba *izaći* sa konkretnim predlozima kako je to moguće bolje *raditi* i *unaprijediti* (In the future, the municipality would have to *use* the pre-accession EU funds to the maximum and *obtain* significant financial assets in that way. We should *organise* new local administration, *take on* and *train* new people, *introduce* them to the job and *organise* it all within legal regulations. If there is dissatisfaction with the implementation of the government policy, then we should *come up* with concrete proposals of how to *do* it better and how to *enhance* it).

Apart from the infinitives, the role of condensing is also played by verbal adverbs and deverbative nouns, as in the examples which follow:

– *Govoreći* o ekonomskom razvoju, premijer je istakao da je Vlada prošle godine, u uslovima krize, uspješno konsolidovala javne finansije... (*Speaking* of the economic development, the Prime Minister pointed out that last year the Government, amid the conditions of crisis, successfully consolidated public finances...);

– *...zaboravljajući* pritom da ih nikakve elite neće ostaviti u orbiti... (*forgetting* thereby that no elites whatsoever would keep them within the orbit...);

– Centar za preduzetništvo, kako se dodaje, biće namijenjen *podršci* i *osmišljavanju* biznis projekata... (The Centre for Entrepreneurship, as they added, would be intended for the *support* and *creation* of business projects...);

– organizovao sam sa rukovodstvom *obilazak*... (I organised a *guided tour* with the management...);

– Za *utvrđivanje* izbornih lista političkih partija iii grupa birača... (For *establishing* the electoral rolls of political parties or groups of voters...);

– Crnu Goru očekuje *intenziviranje* i *konkretizacija* pregovaračkog procesa kroz *sprovođenje* zakonskih rješenja, strategija i akcionih planova koje su donijete u prethodnom periodu u mnogim poglavljima (Montenegro is awaiting *intensification* and *concretisation* of the negotiating process through *implementation* of legal decisions, strategies, and action plans that were passed in the previous period in several chapters).

As it can be seen, the sentence condensers can be used with different syntactic functions – those of the subject, object, adverbials, etc. By the use of these devices (infinitive, verbal adverbs), politicians manage to distance themselves and be objective regarding the subject of explication.

### Key words and phrases

Key words and syntactic constructions play an important role in conveying political messages. In the political texts, we have found conventional language that uses a certain number of verbal symbols or more precisely key words and phrases:

> – ...kako bismo građanima kroz *konkretne aktivnosti* i *praktična rješenja* približili *evropske standarde i vrijednosti*, a kroz *efekte reformi* ih pripremili na promjene koje *pristupanje* EU i *buduće članstvo* donosi (...in order to familiarise the citizens with the *European standards and values*, through *concrete activities* and *practical solutions*, and through *reform* prepare them for the changes that the *accession* to the EU and *the future membership bring*).

> – Može se reći da su mjerila rezultat zajedničkog rada Crne Gore i EK na *sagledavanju stanja* i *definisanju* onoga što je potrebno učiniti u predstojećem periodu kako bi se unaprijedili svi *segmenti vladavine prava*, kako u oblasti *temeljnih prava, reforme pravosuđa*, tako i u dijelu *borbe protiv korupcije i organizovanog kriminala* (It can be noted that the norms are the result of joint efforts of Montenegro and the EC to *map the situation* and *define* what needs to be done in the upcoming period in order to enhance all *segments of the rule of law*, in the area of *fundamental rights, reform of legislature*, as well as *the fight against corruption and organised crime*);

> – On smatra da *treba precizno definisati zakonodavnu ulogu* parlamenta, *ulogu daljeg nastavka prilagođavanja nacionalnog zakonodavstva evropskoj pravnoj baštini*, zatim *političku ulogu* kroz određene vidove *političke komunikacije* i sa drugim institucijama (He finds it necessary to *precisely define the legislative role of the parliament, the role of further continuation of harmonising the national legislature with the European legal tradition,* then *the political role* through some forms of *political communication* with other institutions as well);

> – Naime, vjerujem da je Balkanu potrebna neka *nova doza samopouzdanja, posvećenosti sebi, odlučnosti u preuzimanju odgovornosti za svoju evropsku budućnost* (Namely, I believe that the Balkans needs a *new dose of self-confidence, commitment to itself, decisiveness in taking responsibility for its European future*).

### *Foregrounding via discourse markers*

When politicians wish to emphasise some aspects or events in the text, those elements can take up a prominent position in the first sentence and the text or the delivery itself, while the unfavourable perspectives are pushed back to the periphery of the text (Katnić-Bakaršić, 2012: 103). Thus, in the following example, the use of the adverbial *in the end* signals the part of the discourse which is the conclusion, thereby drawing the addressee's attention to what follows the discourse marker:

> – Na kraju, želim da naglasim da mi nije namjera da zanemarim druge oblasti. Odnosi između dvije zemlje i dva naroda razvijaju se i na horizontalnom nivou i trebalo bi po mogućnosti da obuhvate 360°, i pored zahtjevnog, neizbježnog i ponekad teškog odabira prioriteta (*In the end*, I want to stress that it is not my intention to neglect other domains. The relationships between two states and two peoples are developing on the horizontal level, too, and should, if possibly, reach 360°, despite the demanding, inevitable and at times difficult selection of priorities).

### *Common logical relationships*

When presenting their arguments, politicians frequently use grammatical constructions which communicate various logical relationships:

a) the relationship of comparison:

> – Recesija u Grčkoj veća *nego što* se mislilo... (The recession in Greece is greater *than it was*...);

> – izjavio je da je Evropa snažnija *nego što* je pojedini prikazuju, kao i da bi mogućnost isključenja pojedinih država iz euro zone... (he stated that Europe is stronger *than* some individuals like to present it, as well as that the possibility of exclusion of some countries from the Euro zone...);

> – Uprkos ekonomskoj krizi, naše opredjeljenje je razvoj uz podršku partnera, *kao što je* Svjetska banka... (Despite the economic crisis, we

choose development supported by partners, *such as* the World Bank...);

## b) the relationship of parallelism expressed by compound and other constructions and connectors:

– ...*kako* u svjetskoj politici, *tako* i u našoj zemlji... (...*just as* in world politics, *so* in our country...);

– ...potrebna je opsežna analiza kako malih tako i velikih preduzeća... (a wide analysis of *both* small *and* large companies is needed);

## c) the relationship of opposition:

– ...u prvom periodu vjerovatno predstavljale težak izazov u smislu opterećenja državnog budžeta, *ali* bi na dugi rok imale višestruko pozitivan efekat... (in the first period they would probably represent a serious challenge for the state budget, *but* in the long term they could have multiple positive effects...);

– Jake institucije su brana svakom propadanju, *a* naše su u povoju, i tu je moguća erozija, zloupotreba, nepotizam... (Strong institutions represent a barrier to any kind of decay, *while* ours are only in their infancy, so there is the possibility of erosion, misuse, nepotism);

## d) the explanatory relationship:

– Ustvari, centralno je pitanje koliko planovi i programi razvoja u pogledu korišćenja prirodnih resursa i dobara prate komponente socijalnog kapitala, *to jest* planovi socijalnog razvoja i zadovoljavanja socijalnih potreba, pogotovo sa stanovišta prevladavanja problema lokalnog i regionalnog razvoja Crne Gore i u tom kontekstu osiguranja perspektive porodice u pojedinim regionima. (In fact, the central question is how much the plans and programmes of development of the use of natural resources and goods follow the components of social capital, *that is* the plans of social development and meeting of social needs, particularly from the standpoint of overcoming the problem of local and regional development of Montenegro, and in this context the insurance of the family perspective in certain regions).

– Jedini segment potrošnje koji neće biti limitiran je segment penzione potrošnje, jer ovdje troškovi rastu – polazeći od namjere Vlade da

vršimo usklađivanje vrijednosti penzija, *odnosno* da od svih nepopularnih mjera tokom ove godine ukinemo onu o zamrzavanju vrijednosti penzija (The only segment of consumption that will not be limited is the segment of retirement consumption, because costs are rising in this area – starting from the intention of the Government to adjust the value of pensions, *that is* to abolish the decision on pension freeze, out of all the unpopular measures passed this year).

## 5 Conclusion

Just as language and society are interconnected and cannot function one without the other, language and politics are constantly permeating each other. Political discourse is characterised by its specific style, as well as constant changeability and recognisability. It acts as a means of articulation and popularisation of stances and opinions. What we have observed is that it commonly contains syntactic-semantic constructions that additionally strengthen the speaker's dominant position in the minds of the recipients.

Political discourse is persuasive and symbolic, hence it has strong influence on the opinion-forming of an individual. Its ideological function is thus its inseparable part. Apart from its informative function, the most important functions of political discourse include the conative and expressive functions, by which politicians strive to attract individuals and convince them to accept certain political standpoints and attitudes and assure them of their validity.

Our linguistic analysis has shown that the function of certain syntactic-semantic devices employed in political language aims to convey a message, inform, convince and persuade. The choice of functional-syntactic devices shapes the way various political content is conveyed and, bearing in mind the importance which politics plays in societies in general, merits more in-depth linguistic analysis.

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