Phd cand. Ardita Dylgjeri
"Aleksandër Xhuvani" University
arditadylgjeri@live.com

Cognitive metaphors in Albanian political discourse: European Union integration, case study

Abstract

Until the 1950-s metaphors were associated with the enchanting language of poets. It was only with the rise of cognitive linguistics that the traditional view witnessed serious challenges. The conceptual metaphor functions as a schematic cognitive structure (a 'mould') that can theoretically produce infinite instances of metaphorical expressions. Politics is one of the most influential parts of people`s lives. Politicians frequently make use of their "persuasive speeches" to inflict audiences, to make them believe that what they say is the best choice, the most appropriate decisions ever. Since Aristotle times rhetoric has got its primacy of place in the language, politicians use. Metaphors are considered as a lively component of this language in context.

This article develops a basic tool for stylistic metaphor analysis to assess the role of cognitive metaphors in a corpus of political speeches in Albania. Our main aim would be the role of cognitive metaphors in one of the most important and longevity struggles of Albanian politics and people, the integration into the European Europe.

Key words: *cognitive metaphors, stylistics, political discourse, European Union, integration.*

1-Introduction

It is not as common to talk about "creative politics" as it is to talk about "creative writing" or "creative science." One explanation may be that the domain of politics (like many important domains in life) is too loosely organized to allow an easy distinction of creative and non-creative ways of 'doing' politics. It is, nevertheless, possible for politicians to be creative in some domains. This stylistic analysis of creative metaphors will argue that political speeches are another domain of creativity within politics. Even if speeches are essentially a spoken genre and, therefore, do not conform to prototypical examples of artistic language (Müller, 2005, p. 53), they may share several features with literary or creative texts.

Etymologically, the term metaphor is considered to come from the Greek *metapherein*, which means "to transfer, to carry over." Applied to metaphors – as purely linguistic phenomena –, this implies that the working mechanism of metaphor consists in carrying over a name from one thing to another on the grounds of analogy. Traditionally, it seemed natural to differentiate between literal language and figurative language. Briefly, literal language is denotative, clear and unambiguous, whereas figurative language is connotative, unclear, and ambiguous. The latter is adorned with figures of speech (in particular metaphors) and is mainly used by poets. As the term figure of speech suggests, metaphor was simply a decorative feature of language. The former are long-lived, whereas the latter lead an organic life: immediately after birth, metaphors are live and fresh, but in time they undergo a maturing process or, in the linguistic jargon, they become conventional or lexicalised, while the language users may still perceive them as metaphoric, and finally they die out.

2- Conceptual metaphors

The Conceptual Metaphor Theory was introduced in George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's 1980 book *Metaphors We Live By* and has been influential in the cognitive linguistics enterprise ever since. The central claim of this theory is that metaphor is not merely a literary device, but that thought itself is inherently metaphorical in nature. According to cognitive linguists, metaphor is a set of mappings from one domain (source) to another domain (target). The mappings are motivated by a shared frame of experience in which sensory motor patterns play a structural role.

In contrast to the traditional view, cognitive linguists argue that metaphors are not simply ornaments; they act as shortcuts to and reflections of our perception of the world, i.e. they are cognitive tools: by covert comparison between (apparently) similar entities, metaphors sort and sift our knowledge of the world. Furthermore, if metaphors are so useful to our understanding, it follows that they will not only be the apagoge of literary geniuses, but pervades the speech of common speakers. The most relevant argument for the present analysis is the revolutionary cognitive view that metaphor is a property of concepts and not of words (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 261).

Cognitive linguists have shown that metaphors pervade our everyday speech, even if we are not aware of it, and even if we cannot provide a basic definition of the term metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson's assumptions that thought is predominantly metaphoric and that most of our thinking is unconscious have serious implications for the understanding of the human unconscious. If these assumptions are true, it follows that conceptual metaphors provide the foundation of our unconscious, which in its turn regulates the functioning of our conscious thought. This further implies that conceptual metaphors vicariously influence our conscious thought. Congruent with the cur-

rent distinction in the field of cognitive linguistics, the present analysis will be based on the dichotomy between conceptual metaphors and metaphorical expressions. This distinction relies on the different locus of action of these two interdependent phenomena; whereas metaphorical expressions occur at the linguistic level, conceptual metaphors are 'alive' in our thoughts, although conceptual metaphors rarely occur in speech as such. According to Lakoff and Johnson's influential theory, conceptual metaphors are part of a speaker's conceptual set-up and it is precisely the existence of metaphorical concepts in human cognitive processes that makes possible and that mediates the instantiation of metaphors as linguistic expressions. (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 266).

3- The European Union and the Albanian politics.

Almost all the surveys and field studies indicate that the awe-inspiring Albanians' majority supports EU integrated Albania. This orientation is either to be related with the support of a clear European way, or should it be considered as the competitive economy that seeks to be integrated in lucrative united trade partnership. The concept of a super government that imposes limits, other than the limits enforced by the proper government, policies which mostly are fruit of the interests of persons who they do not personally know, and the concept of the possibility of more taxes, cannot be incentives for such popularity.

So where can the foundations of the support the European political orientation be looked for? The roots, this support is consolidated on, are mostly perceptions. The Albanians during the '80-s suffered the effects of a devastating economic crisis. The shortage of the vital goods, which was being suffered in the outskirts earlier,

came to be present in the main urban centres in Albania. In the late '80-s, the information censorship resulted to have lowered the guard and Italian televisions and movies became the first bridge of contact between the Albanians, hungry of everything new and the principles of the economic ideals applied in the Common Market; at least as commercialized and propagandized by the Italian programs.

The December Movement of the 1990 was the creator of a new slogan, which had to replace the Stalinists ones; "E duam Shqipërinë si gjith' Evropa" (We want Albania to be like Europe). Although mostly considered as a cliché, the reality is that the West European political and economic model, was, and is still considered by my fellow citizens as the model to be followed. It is an ideal, which is the antipode of the domestic politics. Fairness, justice, equality are considered by anyone as the back bone of the European values, values that in their consistence evade any kind of diversification of a just, fair, and equal competition process. The very concept of the European value is challenging to us.

Albanian politicians tend to use this phrase any time they want to show their connections with the Student's Movement in the 1990 – 1991. Nowadays, those who found in the European example, the path to pursue are considered the very ones who must grant the accomplishment of such aim. However, this occurs because a very different reason. The European Union is considered as an arbiter who cannot allow the domestic politicians abuses unpunished. This is the reason why "the path to the European Union" is nowadays still a slogan, which can not be ignored by any politicians. The perception is that the political class is in duty to ensure the "integration to the EU".

Europe has always been a symbol to the Albanians, the representation of liberty and prosperity. The Ottoman Rule and the communist dictatorship have been and still are considered as oriental

oriented regimes. The governments, which followed them, had been designated to abolish any kind of Oriental influence in the social and political infrastructure (Shqiptari i Italise , 2012).

It is since the Albanian National Renaissance, when the pertinence of our people to the group of nations that were carriers of the values of a European identity, became vital. The communist dictatorship isolated *the youngest of the European children* away from his natural place within the "family".

4- Cognitive metaphors in Albanian political speeches

Cognitive linguists define conceptual metaphors as consisting of two conceptual domains, a source domain and a target domain. The target domain is understood in terms of the source domain on the basis of a unidirectional relation from source to target, which resides in a set of correspondences (or mappings, in linguists' parlance) between the constituents of the two conceptual fields (Kövecses, 2002, p. 6). This definition of metaphor is central to Lakoff and Johnson's approach, which postulates, "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another".

In the view of conceptual metaphor theory, speakers invoke a metaphor whenever they refer to one domain, such as JOINING THE EUROPEAN UNION, with vocabulary from another domain, e.g. the JOURNEY. Conceptual metaphor theory is vocabulary from another domain, e.g. the JOURNEY. Conceptual metaphor theory is motivated by the existence of linguistic data in which, for example, the process of adjusting to EU standards, in the view of joining the EU, is expressed in terms that are used to refer to journeys:

JOINING THE EU IS A JOURNEY.

In the JOINING THE EU IS A JOURNEY metaphor, JOINING

THE EU (the target domain) is conceptualised in terms of the JOUR-NEY (source domain) such that the physical road in the source corresponds to the political road in the target. Let`s refer to different ways several politicians chose to refer to this journey towards the European dream"

...Albania **has returned to the forbidden Europe**. The Albanians have chosen once again the western values... (Kuvendi i Shqiperise, 2009)

…to a people who has no family, its discovery brings it to a completely new existence phase. In other words, for the very first time in 600 years Albania is getting ready to make **her route** in the continent without her loneliness… (Shqiptari i Italise , 2012)

…this is the actual national and public interest incarnated in a initiative of our European alternative for Albania, these are the milestones where we can redirect **the path** of the Albanians towards Europe. (Rama, 2011)

They are the sons who, do not hesitate to substitute the rule of law with the police state, don't hesitate to do everything to impede our **path** towards Europe. (Hoti, 2013)

I strongly confirm that Europe is our **destination**… We have the full will to be oriented to Europe as our only destination, political, economical, cultural, because we belong to Europe… (Braçe, 2015)…

…today it (Tirana) is **directed closer** the western world and strongly connected with all the Albanian districts… (abc, 2012)

As in the above example, nominal concepts like ROAD (with its variant path, destination, route), etc., and verbal concepts like (has returned, make the route, redirect) etc., pertaining to the source do-

main, JOURNEY, are mapped onto the target domain, JOINING THE EU. Thus, the political path to the political integration within the European Union is the path returning home.

Let us consider the FAMILY OF NATIONS metaphor; what is striking about it is that one can distinguish two conceptual domains. FAMILY as the domain of the basic social unit in which there are a number of roles distinguishing the participants (such as parents and children) while FAMILY may also refer to a group of related entities (e.g. family of plants, family of languages, etc.), which are not necessarily involved in a hierarchical relationship. Therefore, it makes sense to claim that two related conceptual metaphors can be detected: in the former, the particular roles are mapped from the family members onto the member states of the EU, whereas in the latter model there is no emphasis on hierarchy and thus no or only scant subjective associations are activated. The parts of the domain FAMILY that are necessary to structure, in a systematic way, the concept of POLITICAL ORGANISATION. Our Albanian politicians have of course made use of this metaphor when referring to EU.

*…according to the school text books we shall create a European (type) school. We shall endorse our children like the ones of the children of **the common European Family**…* (Rama, 2012)

*… Albania's affiliating process in the **European family**, in the European Union…* (Hoti, 2013)

5-Conclusions

To sum it up, metaphors, especially conceptual metaphors provide a tool of reasoning of one thing in terms of another, drawing on a particular kind of linguistics that sees itself within the broader field of cognitive sciences. In this way, it is made possible the drawing of a bridge between the study of metaphor as a linguistic expres-

sion and metaphor in thought. Politics aiming at persuasion, affiliation of the masses and persuasion uses conceptual metaphors. This article was mainly concerned with the dream of Albania European Union Integration, being a pivotal issue in the political discourse and not only. The conceptual metaphors, paying tribute to the freshness, vitality and stylistic flourish of the political language, are considered as colorful means of expressing conscious and psychological, not only linguistic thought.

References:

abc. (2012, February 11). *Berisha dhe Basha në simpoziumin për 92 vjetorin e Tiranës kryeqytet*. Retrieved March 21, 2015, from http://www.abcnews.al/lajme/aktualitet/2/14328

Albanian Parliament. (2009, November). Retrieved March 23, 2015, from http://www.parlament.al/web/pub/seance_11_3173_1.doc

Bano, E. (2014, July 18). *Identiteti shqiptar dhe ai evropian*. Retrieved March 24, 2015, from http://www.tiranaobserver.al/identiteti-shqiptar-dhe-ai-evropian/

abc. (2012, February 11). *Berisha dhe Basha në simpoziumin për 92 vjetorin e Tiranës kryeqytet*. Retrieved March 21, 2015, from http://www.abcnews.al/lajme/aktualitet/2/14328

Albanian Parliament. (2009, November). Retrieved March 23, 2015, from http://www.parlament.al/web/pub/seance_11_3173_1.doc

Bano, E. (2014, July 18). *Identiteti shqiptar dhe ai evropian*. Retrieved March 24, 2015, from http://www.tiranaobserver.al/identiteti-shqiptar-dhe-ai-evropian/

Braçe, E. (2015, January 29). *Braçe: Vullnet për t'u bërë pjesë e Bashkimit Europian*. Retrieved March 24, 2015, from http://botasot.info/shqiperia/365131/brace-vullnet-per-t-u-bere-pjese-e-bashkimit-europian/

Hoti, B. (2013, December 9). *Përvjetori, Basha "shmang" fjalimin e Berishës për Ditën e Rinisë*. Retrieved March 22, 2015, from http://gazeta-shqip.com/lajme/2013/12/09/pervjetori-basha-shmang-fjalimin-e-berishes-per-diten-e-rinise/

Kuvendi i Shqiperise. (2009, November). Retrieved March 23, 2015, from http://www.parlament.al/web/pub/seance_11_3173_1.doc

Müller, R. (2005). Creative Metaphors in Political Discourse. Theoretical considerations on the basis of Swiss Speeches. *metaphorik.de*, 53-73.

Rama, E. (2011, Septeber 24). *PAKTI PER SHQIPERINE SI GJITHE*

EUROPA. Retrieved March 23, 2015, from http://www.edirama.al/shkrime/pakti-per-shqiperine-si-gjithe-europa/

Rama, E. (2012, November 11). *Shqipëria do rilindë përmes shkollimit europian*. Retrieved March 24, 2015, from http://www.edirama.al/fjalime/shqiperia-do-rilinde-permes-shkollimit-europian/

Shqiptari i Italise . (2012, Ottobre 09). Retrieved March 22, 2015, from http://www.shqiptariiitalise.com/kontakte/3558-kadare-europa-shtepia-e-natyrshme-dhe-e-vetme-e-shqiperise.html