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### **OPPOSITIONS AND THEIR MEMBER NOMINATIONS IN THE CONFLICT COMMUNICATION DISCOURSE OF ARTŪRAS PAULAUSKAS (2004)**

*The object of this article is the linguistic means of political conflict communication that are characteristic of the political discourse of the Acting President of Lithuania Artūras Paulauskas (2004). Conflict communication has become a research object of modern conflictology, which mainly focuses on interpersonal conflict and effective methods of managing conflict solutions. Political conflict communication, which is generally analysed on the basis of parliamentary debates, does not have a precise definition. Conflict communication can be defined as verbalizing conflict situations, which are conditioned by variances with set objectives or their means of implementation and by discrepancies between the interests and wishes of the sides involved in the conflict. In political communication, it is possible to talk about the fact that an initial situation of verbal and non-verbal actions can become a source of conflict, while disapproval of such a situation is verbalized in political communication. Any individual who wants to influence political events becomes the subject of such communication.*

**KEY WORDS:** *conflict communication, political discourse, domain, meaning field, concept*

Conflict communication has become a research object of modern conflictology, which mainly focuses on interpersonal conflict and effective methods of managing conflict solutions. Political conflict communication, which is generally analysed on the basis of parliamentary debates, does not have a precise definition. Conflict communication can be defined as verbalizing conflict situations, which are determined by disagreement about set objectives or their means of implementation and by discrepancies between the interests and wishes of

the agents involved in the conflict. In political communication, an initial situation of verbal and non-verbal actions can become a source of conflict, while disapproval of such a situation is verbalized in political communication. Any individual who wants to influence political events becomes the subject of such communication. The object of this research is the linguistic means of political conflict communication that are characteristic of the political discourse of the Acting President of Lithuania Artūras Paulauskas (2004).

The aim of this research is to analyze how conflict communication is manifested in Lithuania in the period of 2004. Pursuing the aim, the following tasks have been set out: 1) to identify the meaning fields significant for the communication of a Lithuanian political subject; 2) to identify the linguistic means of the discourse of the Acting President of Lithuania Paulauskas; 3) to identify the specifics of the political communication of the Acting President of Lithuania Paulauskas as an expression of political conflict. Looking from the perspective of linguistic methodology, this research has been done in the framework of comparative analysis and descriptive-analytical methodology.

The data include randomly selected speeches and interviews delivered in the period of 2004. 5 speeches made by the Acting President of Lithuania Artūras Paulauskas have been investigated. The data has been taken from the official government and media internet sites.

Political discourse is inseparable from politics and politics is inseparable from ideology. Political social life may be regarded as an object of political discourse. The combination of these phenomena is the society's ideology. "Discourse and politics can be related in essentially two ways: (a) at a socio-political level of description, political processes and structures are constituted by situated events, interactions and discourses of political actors in political contexts, and (b) at a socio-cognitive level of description, shared political representations are related to individual representations of these discourses, interactions and contexts" (van Dijk 2002, p. 204–205).

Lassan (1995) approaches discourse as an ideologized phenomenon which is based on binary oppositions where one member

of the opposition is perceived as positive and legitimate and the other member as negative. The aim of political discourse is to consolidate the content of the positive member as the society's value landmark while denying that the content of the other member of the opposition could be feasible in social life.

The democratic system divides the political power between a political majority and an opposition. Van Dijk (1995) suggests that from the ideological point of view there are *us* versus *them* dimensions, "in which speakers of one group will generally tend to present themselves or their own group in positive terms, and other groups in negative terms" (van Dijk 1995, p. 22). The political majority is the political leader himself/herself and his/her colleagues from the same political party who won the majority of votes. The political majority has the aim to justify their right to be in power and, for this reason, they legitimize their actions. The opposition, on the contrary, controls the power by watching the majority and expressing declarative protests, if necessary. Such a situation determines disapproval of power actions and leads to conflict communication.

Laclau and Mouffe (1985) suppose that groups in society are always formed during political discursive processes. The question of identity is also very important in political discourse. According to Jorgensen and Phillips (2004), a subject acquires identity through discursive practices. An individual may have different identities which may also vary. When shared underlying identities emerge, people start to cluster into groups; on the basis of such groups, they ignore other identities and so eliminate them from political games. Therefore, the identities

that are ignored become classified as *others*. This aspect is of crucial importance in conflict communication as analysed in this article, where one communication partner is defined as *we – insiders* and the other as *they – outsiders*.

Researchers of conflict communication stress its cognitive nature and indicate reasons for such cognitive conflict. Gurdjan (2008) points out that cognitive conflict may be attributed to communicative-pragmatic factors which appear as a result of a violation of cognitive-communicative norms. Cognitive conflict emerges as a clash of two conditions, two possible worlds, and is expressed by the interlocutors in real (explicit) and virtual (implicit) propositions. The relevance of such propositions is denied during the resolution of the cognitive conflict. According to Phillips and Jorgensen (2008), political conflict communication helps to eliminate alternative ways of perceiving the world and suggests that only one attitude is possible.

In conflict communication, the choice of nominations – the adjectives, nouns, verbs and phrases which are attributed by political leaders to their opponents – is determined by the aim to negatively affect the attitude of society towards them, their ideology and behaviour. Certain nominations are used in order to form stereotypes about political and personal opponents. These stereotypes are beneficial to those in power, to win their fight for power, and to achieve their personal aims. Nominations are also used to create a more positive image of the political leader and his/her colleagues. According to Bolinger (1987), the choice of nominations is essential in order to create the intended picture of the world; thus, particular nominations are used for particular reasons in

propaganda to manipulate the consciousness of addressees.

Artūras Paulauskas became the Acting President after the suspension of President Rolandas Paksas. At that moment, the conflict between the former President (Paksas) and his opponents was still being widely discussed and analysed. As a result, Paulauskas treats Paksas as his opponent and aims all of his conflict communication at the predecessor and his actions.

On the basis of Paulauskas's political discourse, a few nominations based on oppositions may be analysed. This politician's conflict communication is based on the binary *WE–THEY* model, where *WE* stands for the interim President and his supporters while *THEY* stands for the suspended President (Paksas) and his colleagues. Paulauskas mostly focuses on the *WE* part of the latter model, and he identifies himself with the State:

(1) *Kalbėdamas Jums visiems, sąmoningai vartojau įvardį "mes". Mes – kaip tauta, mes – kaip valstybė. Mes – kaip Lietuva [...].* (2004)

Moreover, Paulauskas introduces himself (*WE*) as a defender of freedom and a fighter against indifference, deception and manipulation of people. Therefore, it becomes evident that negative features are attributed to Paulauskas's political opponents, who manipulate and deceive people.

The most important domain in Paulauskas's political discourse is *benefit*. The meaning fields *benefit–detriment* may be analysed in this domain.

Paulauskas expresses his resolution, opposes himself against the Constitution and understands this behaviour as a *benefit*:

(2) *Atsižvelgdamas į tai, kad šiandien Seimas pirmu balsavimu pritarė Konstitucijos 56 str. pakeitimui, neleidžiančiam asmeniui, Seimo pašalintam iš pareigų apkaltos proceso tvarka,*

*būti renkamam anksčiau nei po 5 metų, tačiau Konstitucijos pakeitimas gali įsigalioti tik prieš pat Seimo rinkimus, nenorėdamas rizikuoti valstybės likimu, nusprendžiau teikti Seimui skubos tvarka svarstyti Prezidento rinkimų įstatymo papildymo įstatymą, kuris neleistų Respublikos Prezidentu rinkti asmenį, Seimo nušalintą apkaltos proceso tvarka.* (2004)

This extract expresses the personal merits of Paulauskas with the help of such words as *atsižvelgdamas, nenorėdamas rizikuoti, nusprendžiau* (*taking into consideration, reluctant to risk, decided*). These words directly help to present his reasons for acting, which, with the help of the euphemism *rizikuoti valstybės likimu* (*to risk the fate of the State*), acquire a shade of resolution. It should be evident that the politician takes responsibility for the State. On the other hand, it is obvious that he does not trust the nation and is afraid that Paksas will be re-elected. In his speeches, Paulauskas wants to appear to be a wise and resolute politician. In this case, a manipulative type of “black rhetoric” is used, as the President’s real reasons are hidden behind euphemisms.

Paulauskas attributes the *detriment* meaning field to Paksas, who is implicitly accused of populism. This meaning field is related to such negative actions of the former President as lies, disrespect, violation of moral values and self-interest:

(3) *Todėl noriu kalbėti paprasta ir aiškia kalba: žmonės, netikėkite pigiais pažadais greitai ir be pastangų pakeisti jūsų gyvenimą ir sukurti gerovę. Taip nebūna. Pasaulio, o ir Lietuvos istorija rodo, kad kuo garsiau kas nors žada sukurti rojų žemėje, tuo greičiau jo vedami žmonės atsiduria aklavietėje. Dažniausiai – palikti savo vedlio likimo valiai.* (2004)

(4) [...] *Tad priesaika, buvo netikra. Pasirodo, netikra buvo ir pagarba savo šalies Konstitucijai.* [...]. (2004)

(5) *Lengvatikiai, vadinasi, ir populistai, atsiranda ten, kur trūksta pilietiškumo, pilietinės visuomenės, normalių profsąjungų, piliečių bendruomenių.* (2004)

(6) *Didžioji visuomenės dalis tapo lengvatikiais ir tam tikros politinės jėgos jais netruko pasinaudoti.* (2004)

Examples (3–6) do not directly apply *detriment* to Paksas and his supporters, although from the broader context the target audience is able to perceive the former President as responsible for and guilty of detrimental actions. It is obvious that Paulauskas associates Paksas’s performance with his promises; clearly all of these statements containing the phrases *pigūs pažadai* and *lengvatikiai* (*cheap promises, credulous*) are intended for the impeached President. Moreover, the last statement contains a reproach to the society and accusation of credulity. Example (4) does not contain any phrases indicating Paulauskas’s opponents, but the target audience understands who is being addressed as it is acquainted with the situation and its participants very well.

The *detriment* characteristic used to identify Paksas is intensified by the following words:

(7) [...] *į Prezidento postą gali sugrįžti šiurkščiai Konstituciją ir priesaiką pažeidęs bei apkaltos keliu nušalintas Prezidentas Rolandas Paksas. Tai turėtų jau neprognozuojamų pasekmių mūsų valstybei, jos tarptautiniam įvaizdžiui.* (2004)

The last statement reveals Paulauskas’s attitude towards his opponent as a person who rudely contravened the Constitution. Furthermore, this example introduces the idea that Paksas’s administration will have unforeseeable results for the State and its international image. Moreover, a hidden meaning is also present in the latter state-

ment: if there is an opportunity for Paksas to hold the presidential office once again, he might be re-elected; therefore, the initiated law contradicts the volition of the larger part of society. The collocation *neprognozuojamų pasekmių* (*unpredictable results*) conveys a negative connotation intended to frighten the public. In Lithuanian political discourse, international image identifies a concept generally used as an argument against some particular actions.

In order to disassociate from his opponent Paksas, Paulauskas uses the inclusive pronoun *we*, including himself and the part of society which does not support Paksas. It is evident that the latter part of society is presented as the whole country. Moreover, his frequent usage of the adjective *tarp-tautinis* (*international*) helps Paulauskas to introduce himself as a person who is concerned about the image of Lithuania abroad and the international evaluation and acknowledgment of the State:

(8) *Tikiu Lietuva, kuri per keturiolika metų klysdama ir taisydama savo klaidas, vis dėlto eina pirmyn. Šiuo ėjimu jau pelnėme tarptautinę pagarbą ir esame laukiami – ir laukiami jau ne kaip svečiai įtakingiausiose Europos ir pasaulio organizacijose.* (2004)

The negativity of the ex-President Paksas is reinforced by attributing a *fear* meaning field to his picture with the intention of frightening the society. This characteristic is a very beneficial and helpful weapon in Paulauskas's conflict communication aimed at his predecessor, as it enables him to enthrone the governing side and to marginalize the opposition. The intended aim is to win the support of the electorate and to gain a larger share of their votes during the forthcoming presidential elections. The following example illustrates the attribution of the *fear* characteristic to the opponent:

(9) *Tik noriu pasakyti, kad jeigu ne Rolandas Paksas ir jo komanda šių priešlaikinių iškilnių apskritai nebūtų buvę. Todėl nekalbėti apie tai neįmanoma. Neikalbėti neįmanoma ir todėl, kad yra pakankamai daug politinių jėgų ir joms tarnaujančios propagandos, kurios labai norėtų, kad visa tai kaip galima greičiau užmirštume. Ir viską būtų galima pradėti iš naujo... Dalykas, kurio jie labiausiai bijo – tai mūsų atmintis. Kartais man atrodo, kad jie bijo visai be pagrindo. Gyvenimas kužda, kad tauta ima prarasti atmintį.* (2004)

Repetition of the noun *atmintis* (*memory*) is a particularity of Paulauskas's rhetoric. He appeals to *memory* as a value. Paksas, conversely, appeals to history, because history has a connotation of a fair judge. According to Arnautova (2006), memory cannot be a source of objective facts, because memories may be false, fragmentary or purposely created. Moreover, two accusations are evident in these statements. One is implicit, intended for *HIM* – the opponent Paksas – who is blamed for propaganda: *daug politinių jėgų ir joms tarnaujančios propagandos* (*a lot of political forces and the propaganda that serves them*). Another reproach is intended for the part of society that still supports Paksas: *tauta ima prarasti atmintį* (*the nation has started to lose its memory*). This may raise the question of whether Paulauskas really believes in democracy if he feels free to reproach the Lithuanian society. However, as it is already obvious from the *fear* analysis, this politician wants the citizens to pay attention to the negative actions of the suspended President and is willing to imply various methods to ensure that Paksas does not return to his former position. These methods include both the formation of a negative image of the opponents and the intimidation and accusation of society.

The analysis of Paulauskas's texts expressing conflict with his opponents revealed oppositions and their member nominations, and it is possible to draw the conclusion that the interim President, with the help of the meanings connoted by *I/WE*, associates himself with the following

characteristics: *I am resolute, I want to save the State from its mistakes, I care about the international image of the Republic of Lithuania. At the same time, HE/THEY lie, give unsupported promises, and are credulous people who easily lose their memories of negative events.*

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## OPPOSITIONS AND THEIR MEMBER NOMINATIONS IN THE CONFLICT COMMUNICATION DISCOURSE OF ARTŪRAS PAULAUSKAS (2004)

### Summary

In modern democratic societies, political life is embodied through the actions of political parties, their duly elected leaders, and various

## OPOZICIJOS IR JŲ NARIŲ NOMINACIJOS ARTŪRO PAULAUSKO KONFLIKTINĖS KOMUNIKACIJOS DISKURSE (2004)

### Santrauka

Šiuolaikinių demokratinių visuomenių, kur politinis gyvenimas vyksta per atskirų politinių partijų, piliečių daugumos išrinktų lyderių veiksmus bei įvairias politines ideologijas, neatskiriama

political ideologies. In this context, political discourse, which records a variety of opinions and, frequently, their conflict, becomes an inseparable element of political culture.

In political communication it is possible to talk about the fact that an initial situation of verbal and non-verbal actions can become a source of conflict, while disapproval of such a situation is verbalized in political communication. Any individual who wants to influence political events becomes a subject of such communication.

The object of this article is the linguistic means of political conflict communication that are characteristic of the political discourse of the Acting President of Lithuania Artūras Paulauskas (2004). The research investigates the lingua-pragmatic means prevailing in conflict communication which is expressed in the political discourse of Lithuania. Comparative analysis and descriptive-analytical methods are applied in the conflict communication discourse research of the Acting President of Lithuania Paulauskas (2004).

Artūras Paulauskas became the Acting President after the suspension of Paksas. At that moment, the conflict between the former President (Paksas) and his opponents was still being widely discussed and analysed. As a result, Paulauskas treats Paksas as his opponent and aims all of his conflict communication at the predecessor and his actions. This politician's conflict communication is based on the binary *WE-THEY* model, where *WE* stands for the interim President and his supporters while *THEY* stands for the suspended President and his colleagues.

In the political discourse of Paulauskas, the concept of *State's welfare* prevails. Here the *benefit* is expressed through the words of this politician whereas *detriment* is presented as the result of Paksas's performance:

The interim President, with the help of the meanings connoted by *I/WE*, associates himself with the following characteristics: *I am resolute, I want to save the State from its mistakes, I care about the international image of the Republic of Lithuania. At the same time, HE/THEY lie, give unsupported promises, and are credulous people who easily lose their memories of negative events.*

**KEY WORDS:** conflict communication, political discourse, domain, meaning field, concept

politinės kultūros dalimi tampa politinis diskursas, atskleidžiantis ne tik nuomonių įvairovę, bet dažnai ir jų konfliktą.

Politiame diskurse vyksta konfliktinė komunikacija – pasisakymai, nukreipti prieš kitų politinių subjektų nuomones arba veiksmus, o nepritarimas tokiai situacijai verbalizuojamas per politinę komunikaciją, kurios nariais tampa bet kas, norintis daryti įtaką politiniams įvykiams.

Šio straipsnio tyrimo objektas – kalbinės politinės konfliktinės komunikacijos išraiškos priemonės, būdingos laikinojo Lietuvos Respublikos Prezidento Artūro Paulausko politiniam diskursui (2004). Šiame darbe siekiama ištirti Lietuvos politiniame diskurse išreikštoje konfliktinėje komunikacijoje vyraujančias lingvopragmatines priemones. Lyginamoji analizė ir aprašomasis analitinis metodas naudojami laikinojo Lietuvos Respublikos Prezidento A. Paulausko (2004) konfliktinės komunikacijos diskurso tyrimui.

Šis politikas tapo laikiniu Prezidentu po Rolando Pakso nušalinimo. Tuo laiku konfliktas tarp buvusiojo Prezidento (R. Pakso) ir jo oponentų vis dar buvo plačiai aptariamas ir analizuojamas. Dėl šios priežasties laikinasis Prezidentas laiko R. Paksą savo oponentu, jo tekstai išreiškia konfliktą su pirmtaku ir jo veiksmais. A. Paulausko konfliktinė komunikacija paremta dvinariu *MES-JIE* modeliu, kuriame *MES* reiškia laikinąjį Prezidentą ir jo šalininkus, o *JIE* – nušalintąjį Prezidentą ir jo kolegas. Populiariausia A. Paulausko politinio diskurso sąvoka – *valstybės gerovė*, kurioje *nauda* išreiškiama per jo paties veiksmus, o žala nurodoma kaip R. Pakso veiklos rezultatas.

Laikinasis Prezidentas, remdamasis *AŠ-MES* konotuojamomis prasmėmis, sau priskiria tokias savybes: *AŠ* – ryžtingas, norintis išgelbėti valstybę nuo klaidų, besirūpinantis Lietuvos tarptautiniu įvaizdžiu. *JIS/JIE* – meluoja, duoda nepagrįstus pažadus, yra lengvatikiai, lengvai prarandantys atmintį. Taip pat galima teigti, jog *MES* – tai ta visuomenės dalis, kuri nepalaiko R. Pakso. Šių dviejų politikų – R. Pakso ir A. Paulausko – konfliktinę komunikaciją jungia faktas, jog abiem atvejais – tai tarpasmeninis konfliktas.

**REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI:** konfliktinė komunikacija, politinis diskursas, domenai, prasmės sritis, konceptas