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Female political discourse in the Albanian parliament in democracy and communism

Abstract. This study delves into the transformation of women's political discourse in Albania amidst significant political and technological shifts in recent decades. Its objective is to systematize the understanding of women's political discourse within the Albanian parliament, examining its evolution across various historical-political periods and the influence of modern information processes in democratic Albania. Utilizing theoretical methodologies, the research scrutinizes political discourse as a dynamic facet of political communication, with a particular focus on its gender dimensions and its impact on political engagement. The analysis spans several eras: the communist regime, the initial formation of democracy, and the current democratic consolidation phase. It employs a comparative approach to highlight distinct and common features of women's political discourse across these periods. The study identifies contemporary challenges in female political communication within the Albanian parliament and proposes strategies for their improvement, emphasizing the need to enhance the role of women in Albania's socio-political sphere. Key lexemes indicative of different historical and political contexts are analyzed to understand the influence of regime shifts on political discourse. The study differentiates between the concepts of political discourse and political communication, offering nuanced insights into these areas. This material reveals the intersection of political, social, and cultural changes in Albania as seen through women's political discourse. It demonstrates how shifts in political regimes and societal norms have redefined political communication, particularly for women, highlighting their growing involvement and impact in Albania's polit-

ical arena. The conclusions provide a comprehensive view of Albania's evolving socio-political landscape, underlining the increasing significance of women in shaping the nation's future.

Keywords: communication; gender; language means; ideology; speech; society.

1. Introduction

In Albania, the role of women in political discourse is a reflection of the country's political culture, influenced by historical and national contexts. This discourse serves functions like information dissemination and persuasion and has evolved with changing social and political dynamics. The country's transition from a 46-year communist regime to democracy in 1990 brought about significant changes in political communication, including the emergence of gender-specific aspects. Female politicians, both in the past communist era and in the current democratic setting, use a variety of communication tools in their political discourse, demonstrating distinct features and mechanisms.

Many studies in the fields of linguistics and political science are devoted to the peculiarities of verbal and non-verbal communication of female politicians. Such scientists as M. Foucault (1980), T. Van Dijk (2002), and J. Wilson (2005) studied the issue of political discourse, paying special attention to the use of language potential for manipulating consciousness and public opinion. Modern scientists are also actively investigating the phenomenon of political discourse. E. Limaj (2022) is convincing in the influence of the gender factor on political discourse. This issue is actively studied in the works of scientists D. Cameron (2022), S. Shaw (2020), and H. Amaireh (2022). Xh. Lloshi (2001) and M. Prifti (2017) emphasize the individuality and uniqueness of the Albanian women's political discourse in the conditions of the transitional socio-political period.

The issue of women's political discourse in Albania under different political regimes requires a deeper analysis, study, and comparative approach. This becomes especially pertinent considering Albania's complex political history, which transitioned from a long-standing communist regime to a democratic system. The communist era, lasting for nearly half a century until 1990, was characterized by rigid control over political expression

and a specific style of discourse. The shift to democracy brought significant changes in political communication, including the emergence of new freedoms and platforms for discourse. The purpose of the study was to compare the features of the discourse of female politicians of the Albanian parliament in the realities of democracy and the communist regime, its specific features and functions, as well as ways of optimization in modern conditions. This comparison aims to understand how the political and societal transformations have influenced the nature and effectiveness of women's political discourse in Albania, reflecting the broader changes in the nation's political landscape.

2. Method

Analytical work was carried out with information volumes in the field of the investigated issues; materials were studied regarding the peculiarities of women's political discourse in the conditions of different political regimes and social realities, in terms of Albania and international experience. With the help of the historical method and the method of synthesis, the characteristic features of the discourse in the political activity of women during the communist period and in the transition period of the formation and establishment of democracy are highlighted. Based on a systematic approach, the research is focused on revealing the integrity and multifactorial nature of the object being studied. Special attention is paid to the influence of the existing political regime and its limitations, as well as to the impact of modern information technology and communication progress on the dynamics of women's political discourse in Albania. In addition, the research used elements of the logical-semantic method, which made it possible to identify specific lexemes characteristic of different political conditions and restrictions, with different resistance to disappearance and adaptability to changes in political conditions. For this, examples of public speeches of powerful representatives and publications in the mass media during the periods of democracy and communism were used.

3. Results

3.1. Evolution and influence of women's political discourse in Albania's Parliament

The end of the 20th century marked a significant shift in global politics, characterized by the widespread adoption of democratic processes. This shift led to the dismantling of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes and paved the way for the formation of modern legal public societies, where power redistribution and political pluralism became the new norm. In this context, the historical genesis of democracy in Albania stands out as a long-term, complex, and ongoing process (Petrogiannis & Freidenvall, 2022). A pivotal achievement in the establishment of a democratic regime in Albania is the realization of equal participation for all citizens, including women, in the political decision-making process (Weatherall, 2005). To support and ensure gender equality, various institutions have been active over recent decades. Following the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on March 12, 2003, member states, including Albania, have established independent bodies, observation committees, or intermediary bodies. These entities are responsible for overseeing and implementing government policies on gender balance in political activities or have delegated this task to national equality bodies (Vehbiu, 2019). Specifically, in Albania, the Group of Women Parliamentarians was formed to spearhead the government's gender policy initiatives (Petrogiannis & Freidenvall, 2022). The political significance of gender, and the potential to shape it through political tools, is heavily influenced by the process of socialization, the impact of mass media, and individual self-awareness (Foucault, 2019; Melnyk, 2022). These factors collectively form a fertile ground for increasing the influence of women's communities in socio-political processes and legislative initiatives in Albania. This trend underscores the growing role of women in shaping the political landscape and highlights the importance of continuous efforts towards gender equality in the democratic framework.

Women's political discourse in Albania, a multifaceted and evolving aspect of the country's socio-political landscape, represents the voice, perspective, and influence of women in the realm of politics. This discourse is created by women who are actively involved in political life, ranging from elected officials and party leaders to activists and public intellectuals. It emerges in various contexts, from parliamentary debates and policy discussions to public forums and media appearances. The tools employed in shaping this

discourse are diverse. Women in Albanian politics leverage traditional platforms like parliamentary speeches and political rallies, as well as modern channels like social media and digital campaigns. These tools enable them to reach a broad audience, articulate their viewpoints, and engage in political dialogue.

In terms of representation, the number of women in the Albanian parliament has varied over time. The post-communist era witnessed a gradual increase in female parliamentary representation, influenced by global trends towards gender equality and specific national policies aimed at increasing women's political participation. These women come from various political parties, representing a wide spectrum of political ideologies and agendas. Their backgrounds are diverse, reflecting different regions, professional experiences, and socio-economic statuses. The guiding principles of these women in political life are as varied as their backgrounds. They are driven by a range of motivations, from personal convictions and party ideologies to broader social and national interests. Their political discourse often reflects a blend of these factors, addressing issues like gender equality, economic development, social welfare, and national security.

Beyond the realm of politics, the discourse of Albanian women in the political sphere also extends to cultural and social issues. They often speak on matters such as education, healthcare, and family life, reflecting their roles not just as politicians but as members of the broader Albanian society. In essence, an anthropology of politics in Albania, focusing on women's roles, would provide valuable insights into the linguistic and social dynamics of political discourse. It would offer a deeper understanding of how women in Albania shape and are shaped by the political landscape, highlighting the interplay between gender, politics, and society in shaping the nation's discourse.

3.2. Linguistic techniques and rhetorical strategies

With the help of verbal means, politicians implement the struggle for power, exercise direct influence on the addressee. Each political regime is characterized by its own political discourse, which fully reveals its essence and national character. Even if political language is natural, it is closely related to the corresponding ideology. Political leaders in Albania, regardless of gender, use special language mechanisms, adding aggressive elements to their discussions, speeches, or debates (Pan, 2019). In a certain sense, language plays an important role in the processes of transformation of politi-

cal will into social action (Van Dijk, 2002; Shaw, 2020). Regarding women's style of speech in the politics of Albania, it is worth noting the high level of its emotional expression, which is achieved due to rhetoric, metaphors, antitheses, the wide use of the comparative scale of relativity and absoluteness, expressive and emotional words (Weatherall, 2005; Pan, 2019). In general, all the listed measures are means of active influence, persuasion, and manipulation of the public. While in opposition, women's political speech is mostly rude and contradictory. It contains reproaches and accusations, doubts about the truthfulness of the opponent, critical assessments and remarks (Shaw, 2020).

An important factor determining the aggressive style of women's political communication and discourse is the inheritance of a rigid control model of communication from the time of the dictatorship, as well as the difficult and long path of the transition period that Albania had to go through after changing the regime. This period had a high level of aggressive social and political language (Weatherall, 2005). The political rhetoric of this period often degenerated into trivial debates, attacks and slogans, showing a lack of professionalism, ethics, and responsibility. In order to gain political supremacy and be successful in the discourse, female politicians had to show aggressiveness, courageous character and masculine features of speech (Pan, 2019; Petrogiannis & Freidenvall, 2022).

Today, political discourse is one of the influential socio-political tools of power, but often also a means of imposing the political will of the ruling class, forming social stereotypes, prejudices, and beliefs (Muller & Mell, 2022). The peculiar dualism of the nature of political discourse is manifested in a number of characteristic features. Political discourse is a complex phenomenon of the modern socio-political environment with its own structure and factors (Tian, 2021). In the modern realities of Albania, which has entered the path of establishing democracy, the content of political discourse is actively influenced by both state resources and information and communication technologies (Pan, 2019).

In the modern realities of Albania, which has entered the path of establishing democracy, the content of political discourse is actively influenced by both state resources and information and communication technologies (Pan, 2019). Its general main goal is to convince the audience, and it is worth noting that women's discourse has an advantage in terms of more complete consideration of the cognitive, psychological, and social parameters of the

audience (Rakiplari, 2016). In general, regardless of the gender aspect, political discourse is characterized by ambiguity, ideologization, phantom, individualization, informativeness, and some theatricality (Prifti, 2017; Cameron, 2022).

Contemporary women's political discourse in Albania is characterized by a number of features. Among the main ones, it is worth highlighting the following (Xhani, 1982; Weatherall, 2005; Pan, 2019):

- ambiguity of basic terminology;
- polemic (orientation on forming a negative attitude towards political opponents, imposing one's own assessment and value system);
- variability of the relationship between the word and its meaning;
- orientation towards a mass audience, target for influence;
- vagueness of wording (use of language templates, replacement of "uncomfortable" expressions with conventional ones that do not carry a semantic load);
- preference for commenting over information;
- the advantage of directing the argument to the emotional sphere of influence.

As a result of the comparative analysis of language tools used by female politicians in the Albanian parliament during the periods of communism and democracy, a peculiar panorama of discourse creation by female leaders was obtained. The implementation of the specified analysis became possible thanks to the study of the materials of the minutes of the meetings of the Presidium of the People's Assembly of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania during the communist era (Golemi, 1992; Culi, 2005; Felaj, 2016), as well as the minutes of the sessions of the People's Assembly of Albania during the time of democracy (Zeneli, 1975; Thomai, 2006; Vokshi, 2016). At the same time, archival data for the periods 1960–1982 and 1992–2016 serve as the basis. These periods provide an opportunity to cover the most interesting and representative moments to highlight the features of the language used in women's political discourse of the specified historical and political periods.

Analysing the linguistic characteristics of the speeches of female politicians of Albania in a historical context, it is possible to highlight the primary features.

1. The use of loud words, words of foreign origin during the communist period, which served as a language tool for hiding details, creating a blurring of real facts, creating the effect of ambiguity, distracting attention:

“Bllokimi i komisioneve hetimore në parlament fakton barrikadën shtetërore për të penguar zbardhjen e abuzimeve me pseudoreformat që vodhën Shqipërinë, burgosën shqiptarët, larguan me qindra e mijëra shqiptarë drejt vendeve të BE-së për të kërkuar azil dhe po dëbojnë çdo ditë investitorët e huaj” (“Blocking investigative commissions in parliament creates a state barricade to prevent the disclosure of abuses with the pseudo-reforms that stole Albania, imprisoned Albanians, drove hundreds and thousands of Albanians to EU countries to seek asylum and are expelling foreign investors every day”) (Lumi, 2021).

The use of numerous foreign words is also characteristic of the period of the formation of democracy, because during this period foreign terminology had a priority influence on the Albanian political language.

“Si forcë e gjallë, plot vitalitet e energji në sistemin e diktaturës së proletaria-tit, organizata e BPSRH-së, gjithë brezi ynë i ri, do të jetë gjithmonë në këmbë për ti cuar më tej e për të mbrojtur fitoret tona, duke zbatuar parrullën luftarake “punë e vigjilencë” (“As a living force, full of vitality and energy in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the organization of the BPSRH, our entire young generation, will always be standing to advance and defend our victories, implementing the slogan combat ‘work and vigilance’”) (Culi, 2005).

2. The use of various adjectives in women’s political discourse, which is characteristic of both studied periods, especially for communism and the early stage of the formation of democracy. The purpose of such a language tool was to create the effect of false reality and fiery idealism.

“Sot është fjala jonë e fuqishme e apeli i përfaqësuesve të popullit që me dorë në zemër, siç e ka zakon shqiptari, i bëjnë Evropës së mençur e të fuqishme, por pak të ftohtë dhe organizmave ndërkombëtare botërore për ndalimin e kësaj lufte e pengimin e shtrirjes së saj në Kosovë” (“Today is our powerful word and the appeal of the representatives of the people who, with their hands on their hearts, as is the habit of the Albanians, make the wise and powerful Eu-

rope, but a little cold, and the international organizations of the world to stop this war and prevent its extension in Kosovo”) (Felaj, 2016).

3. Widespread use of clichés, ready-made expressions, complex verbs and language turns to emphasize the authority, dominance, power of the politician.

“Të frymëzuar nga materialet e plenumit të 5-të e të 6-të të Komitetit Qëndror të PPSH, klasa punëtore, fshatarësia kooperativiste, rinia, gratë, të mëdhenj e të vegjël, të gjithë punonjësit e rrethit tonë me entuziazëme vull të madh revolucionar i janë përveshur një pune të vëmendshme e më të organizuar, për të organizuar, për të kryer me sukses detyrat e planit të vitit 1975, si vit i fundit i 5-vjecarit” (“Inspired by the materials of the 5th and 6th plenum of the Central Committee of the ALP, the working class, the cooperative peasantry, youth, women, big and small, all the workers of our district, with great enthusiasm and revolutionary momentum, careful and more organized work has been undertaken to organize and successfully carry out the tasks of the 1975 plan, as the last year of the 5-year plan”) (Felaj, 2016).

4. Technicality, uniformity of language techniques to strengthen and consolidate the desired speech effect.

“Nën udhëheqjen e Partisë populli ynë ka korrur edhe po korr suksese të mëdha në ndërtimin e socializmit. Gjatë kësaj periudhe Republika jone Popullore e udhëhequr nga Partia e punës ëshnjbjtë bërë një kështjellë e fortë në brigjet e Adriatikut” (“Under the leadership of the Party, our people have reaped and are reaping great successes in the construction of socialism. During this period, our People’s Republic led by the Labor Party has become a strong fortress on the shores of the Adriatic”) (Xhani, 1982).

“Zgjerimi dhe zhvillimi i lëvizjes së gruas, bashkëpunimi me institucionet europiane dhe ndërkombëtare, sollën edhe zgjerimin e njëkohshëm të Komitetit të Barazisë Gjinore, i cili u shtua në staf dhe në projekte dhe u shndërrua në një pike referimi të rëndësishme për këtë lëvizje, në një mbështetje të pazëvendësueshme institucionale, përmes së cilës jo vetëm përcillen në ekzekutiv problemet ekzistuese, por edhe shtohen hapat drejt standardeve europiane” (“The expansion and development of the women’s movement, cooperation with European and international institutions, also brought about the simultaneous expansion of the Gender Equality Committee, which was add-

ed to the staff and projects and turned into an important point of reference for this movement, in an irreplaceable institutional support, through which not only the existing problems are conveyed to the executive, but also the steps towards European standards are increased”) (Thomai, 2006).

5. Use of metaphors that have lost their relevance, idioms, phraseological units, or borrowings. The sentences in the speeches of both periods are usually short and simple, but it is this language technique that allows to achieve the effect of ambiguity.

“Ne punojmë, ka thënë shoku Enver Hoxha, duke mbajtur në një dorë kazmën dhe në tjetrën pushkën, prandaj le të lehin qentë, karvani ynë ecën me siguri përpara” (“We work, said Comrade Enver Hoxha, holding a pickaxe in one hand and a rifle in the other, so let the dogs bark, our caravan moves safely forward”) (Lapka, 2021).

“Përse ta kthejmë jetën tonë në një stërmundim Sizifi dhe të ngremë kështjella Rozafe vazhdimisht?” (“Why do we turn our lives into a Sisyphian struggle and build Rozafa castles over and over again?”) (Thomai, 2006).

6. Active use of metaphors, sometimes with irony or sarcasm.

“Mos harroni se u dënua një Sude, një Vehbi Alimuçë, por sudet, vehbitë e vërtetë qëndrojnë ende në këtë sallë, pa iu dridhur qerpiku” (“Don’t forget that a Sude, a Vehbi Alimuçë, was sentenced, but the Sudes, the real Vehbis are still in this hall, without batting an eyelash”) (Vokshi, 2016).

“Janë të pastër, por janë të zinj në sytë e opinionit publik, të atij opinionit, që kurrë nuk duhet të harrojë se ujku sot për parzmore ka veshur lëkurën e qengjit, ndërkohë në brez, në vend të sëpatës, ka ngjeshur fort formularin e dekriminalizimit!” (“They are clean, but they are black in the eyes of public opinion, of that opinion, which must never forget that today the wolf has worn lamb’s skin for armor, while in his belt, instead of an ax, he has tightly compressed the form of decriminalization!”) (Vokshi, 2016).

7. The use of words that have changed their semantic meaning or the use of which is avoided due to a significant substantive political load. This tool of

political communication is more characteristic of the communist period, but it was also used in some places during the democratic period.

“Në Organizatën e Kombeve të Bashkuara edhe njëherë akoma më qartë doli fytyra e egër e imperialistëve me atë amerikanin në krye, të cilët e kanë kthyer këtë organ në një vegël për realizimin e qëllimeve të tyre agresive” (“In the Organization of the United Nations, the wild face of the imperialists with the American at the head, who have turned this body into a tool for the realization of their aggressive goals, came out even more clearly”) (Xhani, 1982).

“Tenderokrati Beqja refuzon të japë dokumentacionin, me pretendimin se ‘nuk e disponojmë, pasi e ka sekuestruar prokuroria’ (“Tenderocrat Beqja refuses to provide the documentation, claiming that ‘we do not have it, as the prosecution has seized it’”) (Lumi, 2021).

3.3. Conceptual metaphors and ideological construct

Contrasting the feminine and masculine is often a subconscious but effective way of metaphorically constructing the political picture of the world and processes within the country, their conceptualization in the mind of the addressee of political communication (Foucault, 1980; Foucault, 2019; Limaj, 2022). Therefore, the conceptual metaphor can be considered one of the most influential means of interpreting political processes and influencing mass consciousness as part of political discourse, and, at the same time, it has a gender color (Van Dijk, 2002).

In political discourse, regardless of the gender factor, language is considered as a means of exercising power and informing the world-view, but not its direct expression (Shaw, 2020). Ideological direction is implemented through the actualization by a political figure of his system of values, evaluations of information that he conveys to the object of political influence. The means of syntactic organization (repetitions, rhetorical questions, parallel constructions), which are aimed at strengthening the emotional and psychological impact on the recipient, are the tools of implementation (Foucault, 1980; Wilson, 2005).

Another characteristic of political discourse is intertextuality, which consists in the fact of the existence of several authors at the same time, responsible for a certain statement or thesis (Olliver, 2015; Prifti, 2017; Cameron, 2022). In the female performance, intertextuality does not exclude the pos-

sibility of diagnosing the speech behavior of a politician on the basis of his personal characteristics, inherent only to him. At the same time, during the communist period, such a trend was not particularly popular because the dominant trend was totalitarian influence with strict restrictions on the expression of will (Prifti, 2017). If talking about the democratic present, intertextuality refers to the responsibility of several authors for an idea popularized in the discourse, but their implementation by means of communication occurs simultaneously and has a subjective color, with a significant emotional and psychological load (Lapka, 2021; Muller & Mell, 2022). It is assumed that with the further development of democratic processes in the socio-political life of Albania, the considered characteristic of women's political discourse will acquire greater emotional inertia and stability, and will carry a more informative and representative load rather than a psychological one (Cabot et al., 2022).

Mythology is another specific characteristic of women's political discourse (Wilson, 2005; Olliver, 2015). It manifests itself in the fact that the producer appears as a kind of image mythologeme. This is due to the conscious or intuitive choice of a stereotype – a certain algorithm of knowledge, through which a one-sided perception of a certain phenomenon or object occurs. At the same time, the image of a female politician is partially determined by natural and psychological features, and this fact is reflected in political communication (Olliver, 2015; Cameron, 2022).

It is necessary to emphasize the fact that such properties of language as the mobility of the semantic structure of the word, the difficulty of distinguishing connotation from direct denotative meanings, their variability under the influence of social factors, as well as the multicomponentity of lexical and pragmatic meaning, associativeness, and modality are often purposefully used in the propaganda process, and women's political discourse in the Albanian parliament is not an exception, both under communism and in the democratic present (Xhani, 1982). Quite often, there is speculation on such properties of the lexical potential as abstractness, extensibility, or uncertainty. This leads to situations when the communicative semantics of a word contradicts its actual semantics (Rakiplari, 2016; Prifti, 2017).

4. Discussion

As a result of the analysis of speech characteristics and aspects of the formation of women's political discourse in Albania in terms of comparing two political and social institutions of the time (communism and democracy), it is worth emphasizing the following.

First, both in the conditions of the early democratic process and under the communist regime, women's political discourse is characterized by the maximum use of adjectives to hyperbolize the effect of the speech. In particular, it is going about the early stage of the formation of democracy in Albania, when the framework between radically different political regimes was levelled by the factors of minimum time interval and maximum stability of the public masses. Scientists such as B. Olliver (2015) and Xh. Lloshi (2001) focus on this.

At the same time, comparisons were often used as an influential tool for attracting attention, manipulation, and for the purpose of propaganda. These issues are discussed in detail in the works of S. Rakiplari (2016) and J. Thomai (2006), and it is difficult to disagree with the theses that these scientists try to formulate in an axiomatic form. The use of numerous adjectives and comparisons gives the political address in the female performance a more conversational character, expressiveness, and a certain emotional color.

Secondly, both the communist and the democratic periods are characterized by the use of voluminous speech phrases and phrases that create the effect of significance, scientific weight, and have an archaic semantic load. Such statements have an unreasonably large quantitative content and carry a significant emotional load. Scientists such as H. Amairh (2022) or M. Prifti (2017) are convinced of this. At the same time, quite often they are used to distracting attention, blurring reality, and creating ambiguity in the political context. In the latest period of democratic Albania, an additional factor contributing to the use of extensive speech phrases in political discourse was the influence of foreign terminology on the formation of a new political lexicon, dominant and decisive during the transition from the communist regime to a democratic form of society (Weatherall, 2005). E. Limaj (2022) and D. Cameron (2022) believe that the psychological tendency of women's society to hyperbolize will only strengthen this tendency. The use of idiomatic expressions, intensifiers, and modal verbs influence the formation of the evaluative and emotional component of women's political speeches. In practice, excessive expressiveness of women's political discourse can destroy the

identification space, nullifying the informational and consolidating functions of the discourse itself.

Thirdly, it is worth noting the significant decrease in the frequency of use of ready-made phrases and complex verbs in the conditions of modern political discourse in Albania, compared to the communist past, as A. Vehbiu (2019) states. The purpose of their use under the totalitarian regime was dominance, the establishment of unprecedented authority and power of the political leadership (Lloshi, 2001; Vokshi, 2016; Vehbiu, 2019).

At the same time, such minimization is not observed with regard to the use of metaphors. Metaphors provide persuasiveness in women's political discourse from both political and cognitive perspectives. For the most part, they represent irrelevant expressions that have lost their persuasive power, but are still used even in the conditions of the development of the democratic process in Albanian political realities (Olliver, 2015). Usually, the use of metaphors indicates a politician's lack of interest in the subject of his statement. S. Shaw (2020) as well as V. Petrogiannis and L. Freidenvall (2022) think so. A game of words is used, which provides ambiguities, irony and sarcasm, or phraseological units, sayings, and borrowed phrases. In any case, when analyzing women's political discourse in Albania, it is necessary to take into account the socio-historical context as an unconditional basis for the interaction of language and society (Lloshi, 2001; Vokshi, 2016).

After all, today there is a tendency to avoid or change the meaning of characteristic words that carry a certain semantic load and are associated with the communist past (Tian, 2021; Lumi, 2021). The original meanings of the terms are levelled under the influence of the space-time factor, the re-orientation of the country's political course and socio-ideological changes.

In addition, scientists such as M. Muller and R. Mell (2022), L. Tian (2021), and P. Cabot et al. (2020) are convinced that it is worth paying special attention to the need for a clear distinction between the concepts of political discourse and political communication. The latter is the process of transmitting information to the addressee through a certain channel in accordance with the context of the action and the circumstances of speech (Tian, 2021). Politically oriented texts are actualized in the process of political communication, but the political discourse itself is not a process, but rather a complex symbolic reality that arises in the process of communication (Cabot et al., 2020). It is positioned as a thematic network of political texts of the same topic, determined in relationships with pragmatic, cultural-sociological, linguistic, psy-

chological planes, that is, it is only a symbolic reality that arises in the process of communication (Fairclough, 1995; Rakiplari, 2016; Shaw, 2020).

Women's political discourse in Albania today is, in fact, a set of political texts that circulate in society, producing and anchoring meaning to politically significant concepts. The latter often become peculiar criteria for the correctness of actions within a certain society (Olliver, 2015; Prifti, 2017).

It should also be noted that a democratic society is characterized by an increase in the role of Internet communications and mass media in the creation, dissemination and filtering of information flows, determining to a large extent the effectiveness of the interaction between the government and civil society (Rakiplari, 2016; Shaw, 2020). Political activity is subject to mediatization, sometimes turning real politics into a symbolic one, formed according to the media format (Muller & Mell, 2022). Simultaneously, political discourse is formed through mass media, and this fact cannot be ignored, considering the duality of the consequences of these processes.

At the same time, one more aspect of communication should be taken into account – political advertising. After all, dichotomies such as “destruction – revival”, “loss – gain”, etc., as well as elements of symbolism, are often used in political advertising and in the speeches of female political leaders. Political advertising plots are filled with symbols of colors, male and female principles, status, and roles in society. Political slogans and aphorisms have a high degree of autonomy and communicative power, sometimes with a hypnotic potential that is realized through the repetition of quanta of information. Thus, it can be argued that the components of women's political discourse in Albania are very heterogeneous: in addition to verbal signs and paralinguistics, political emblematics and symbolism, or symbolic use of space have a significant influence (Yahya et al., 2022). It is in the symbolic field of discourse that the maximum differences between the political communication of Albanian women during the communist regime and under democracy are manifested. It is also worth noting that women's political discourse as a combination of power discourse, counter-discourse, and public rhetoric can both strengthen the system of socio-political relations and exert a destabilizing influence.

Based on the results of this study, it is possible to make some predictions of the dynamics of the development of the phenomenon of women's political discourse in Albania. Firstly, it is worth noting the positive dynamics and optimistic forecast regarding the growing role of women politicians in

the formation of a democratic society. This will be facilitated by the change of generations, as a result of which, virtually all gender stereotypes regarding the role of women in social and political activities are eliminated, which, in turn, leads to qualitative changes in the political discourse. For the formation of a true democratic society, it is necessary to take into account the gender factor in the process of formation and functioning of the state mechanism at various levels, which even involves the creation of special institutions to monitor the effectiveness of such actions. The involvement of women as equal subjects in the decision-making process, in the formation of national social development strategies, the entry of both sexes into the public political process with equal opportunities is a historically determined necessity that was suppressed in Albania for a long time by the functioning of the communist regime. However, the assessment of the degree of influence of the participation of the women's community on the dynamics of modern political processes in Albania highlights the problem of gender asymmetry.

5. Conclusions

The use of political discourse in the activities of female politicians plays an important role in the formation and preservation of the politician's image, his behavioral reactions and consciousness. For women's political discourse in Albania, in the conditions of the formation and development of democratic socio-political processes, features of negativism, oversaturation of complex word combinations and modification of the meaning of words are characteristic. The standardized, unified language used under the communist regime was replaced by the language of borrowings, sharp emotional expressions, and previously prepared phrases. Among the echoes of the times of the totalitarian society in the Albanian women's political discourse, there remain changing forms and clichés that do not involve speech logic, carrying an informational and communicative load without meaning, but in a politically correct formation.

Political discourse performed by women in democratic Albania is technical in nature with limited terminology, borrowings, reorientation of terms from the past, and on the other hand, full of metaphoricality, contrast, irony, and harshness of statements. In recent years, such features of political discourse have been used in the Albanian parliament by female politicians quite consciously, carefully and predictably, without avoiding tautology and

predictability. This is a logical consequence of the exclusion of women from the management system at an earlier stage of society's development, forcing the women's community to act preemptively, decisively, and even rudely.

Sufficient informativeness of women's political discourse should be achieved not only through the novelty of information, but also through effective language means. A progressive, literate, and balanced women's political discourse, which does not shy away from its gender identification, should become the basis of effective political communication in a modern democratic society, as opposed to the populism of the totalitarian regime of Albania's past.

It is worth hoping that with the development of democratic processes in Albania, women's political discourse will somewhat change the masculine features and signs of femininity, due to the dominance of positive qualities of female politicians: tolerance, tendency to compromise, and collegial decision-making. After all, women have a more pragmatic approach to solving complex issues and a developed sense of duty. And although women's political discourse in Albania is already characterized by directness and openness, the successful overcoming of stereotypes of the communist past will allow creating and establishing a new image of a woman politician – independent, competent, and rationally motivated, which will lead to positive dynamics in the development of women's political discourse on a democratic basis and orienting it to the example of developed countries, where society has long provided equal opportunities for all its members. A constructive combination of gender roles in political activity and a proportional representation of women leaders in it can significantly optimize the socio-political situation, optimize the decision-making process, and improve image characteristics in foreign policy relations.

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