

SILVANA NESHKOVSKA
ZORICA TRAJKOVA STREZOVSKA

**INVESTIGATING
POLITICAL DISCOURSE**

Theoretical and Practical Approaches

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PREFACE

The book “Investigating Political Discourse: Theoretical and Practical Approaches” is a result of a longstanding collaboration and joint scientific research in the area of pragmatics and critical discourse analysis of the authors, prof. dr. Silvana Neshkovska and prof. dr. Zorica Trajkova Strezovska.

“Investigating Political Discourse: Theoretical and Practical Approaches” is a collection of 11 papers written, reviewed and published in the period from 2017 to 2023, in a number of distinguished domestic and foreign journals such as *Palimpsest*, International Journal for Linguistic, Literary and Cultural Research (Goce Delchev University – Shtip); the *Journal of Contemporary Philology* (Ss. Cyril and Methodius University – Skopje); *Teacher* – International Journal of Education (Faculty of Education – Bitola, St. Kliment Ohridski University – Bitola); *Horizons*, International Scientific Journal (Series A) Social Sciences and Humanities (St. Kliment Ohridski University – Bitola); *Respectus Philologicus* (Vilnius University – Lithuania), *Thesis* International Research Journal (AAB College – Prishtina), and *International Journal of Applied Language Studies and Culture* (London College of United Knowledge Press). Some of the papers in the book have originally been published in Conference proceedings – ESIDRP Conference Proceedings (Faculty of Philology, Blazhe Koneski, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University – Skopje), and Conference Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference “Towards a Better Future, Democracy, EU Integration and Criminal Justice” (Faculty of Law, St. Kliment Ohridski University – Bitola). The last one is a chapter published in a book (SpringerNature – London, the UK).

What all these papers have in common is that they all attempt to shed some light on various aspects of political discourse. The authors’ mission to unravel the specificities of the discourse employed by politicians encompasses a thorough linguistic and pragmatic analysis of a number of tailor-made, small-size corpora of political speeches, political TV debates, politicians’ interviews and statements for the press of a number of Macedonian, American, British and other current and former politicians from different countries in the world. The political discourse under investigation depicts politicians’ linguistic behaviour as they strive to come to power, i.e. during pre-election campaigns; when they are already in power, or when they represent the opposition; then, during precarious and decisive moments when their decisions directly affect the lives of constituents as well as when they realize that their political engagement is no longer yielding the desired results and they decide to resign from office.

The book is organized in 4 separate sections according to the topics covered in the selected papers. Thus, the underlying idea of the papers in the first section, titled

Persuasion in Political Discourse, is to disclose the persuasion strategies politicians employ to convince the electorate to endorse their political ideology and decisions. More specifically, these papers offer a glimpse at how politicians, in concrete socio-political contexts, with their choice of lexis, syntactic structure of their utterances, and figures of speech, attempt to successfully present themselves (to legitimize themselves) and, simultaneously, mar their opponents' repute (to delegitimize their opponents); how they establish their identity by actively engaging the electorate in the argumentation they present in their speeches with the use of self-mentions and engagement markers; and, what speech acts, politeness maxims and strategies they resort to when their aim is to persuade people to make vital decisions such as getting vaccinated against the coronavirus.

The second section, titled *Figurative Speech in Political Discourse*, consists of papers which underline the important role of verbal irony in political discourse when it comes to achieving the effect of persuasion. The papers in this section underscore the inevitable presence of different types of ironic utterances in political discourse (e.g. ironic compliments, ironic criticism, ironic questions, offers, orders, promises, apologies, etc.) as well as the variety of functions they perform, ranging from evoking humor, to expressing mild ridicule, or harsh criticism at the expense of political opponents. Apart from verbal irony, politicians' metaphoric language is also analyzed, specifically in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The aim is to establish whether the use of war and other types of conceptual metaphors have a bearing on people's response to politicians' calls for obeying the preventative measures, implemented by government officials.

The third section of this book which bears the title *Features of Political Resignation Speeches* consists of papers that explore the discourse politicians employ when they resign their office. More precisely, these papers investigate the topics political figures cover in their speeches alongside with the rhetorical devices (positive and negative lexis and figures of speech) they employ to make their resignation speeches less detrimental to their political reputation in the long run. Additionally, a number of other linguistic features of resignation speeches are explored which are deemed to be in direct correlation with the amount of responsibility politicians assume upon leaving the political stage – the types of utterances (both according to function and structure); the usage of syntactically marked utterances versus sentences in which the SVOCA rule is observed; the different realizations of the subject, and politicians' use of passive vs. active voice upon leaving office.

The papers in the fourth section, *Rhetorical Violence in Political Discourse*, draw attention to politicians' use of debasement language, especially hate speech as the most precarious form of debasement language. Moreover, this section touches upon the implications of derogatory language on society, particularly when it stems from high ranking political figures who are expected to serve as a role model for the population at large in many respects, including their linguistic behaviour.

The book "Investigating Political Discourse: Theoretical and Practical Approaches" is primarily intended to be of assistance to undergraduate, postgraduate and Ph.D students who are interested in doing linguistic and pragmatic research in the domain of political discourse. Taking into consideration the diverse range of topics discussed, this publication

could be of interest not just to students of linguistics but also students of political sciences, the politicians themselves, fellow researchers, as well as the general public which strives to understand properly politicians' language.

As authors of this book we extend our deepest and most sincere gratitude primarily to our families for their patience, understanding and constant support, without which none of this would have been possible. We would also like to thank wholeheartedly our mentors, colleagues and students who in their different capacities, with their comments, questions and constructive criticism, have helped us tremendously in various ways, enhancing our creative process and research endeavors, which, eventually culminated in the compilation of this book.

The authors

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