

Hedging and Boosting Truth in Albanian Newspaper Opinion Pieces

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Ohrid, 24 August 2019

Introductory remarks

- Opinion pieces frequent articles in Albanian newspapers
- Express opinions to influence readers by forwarding arguments and highlighting truth
- Opinion pieces are to be classified as argumentative texts
- Arguments and truth
- A metadiscoursal approach of investigating truth through linguistic devices and intentionality
- Our aim to look into hedges and boosters, frequent devices which can or cannot determine truth

Theoretical framework(s)

- Metadiscourse, an interactional process “between text producers and their texts and between text producers and users” (Hyland, 2010: 125)
- Truth as a constructivist approach
- Two frequent processes, hedging and boosting
- Hedging can be seen as “an intentional action in that the speaker chooses a linguistic device over and above the propositional content of the message which will affect the interpretation of the utterance” (Fraser, 2010: 202) and includes linguistic items, such as *may*, *perhaps* or *it is possible*

Theoretical framework(s)

- Boosters include items, such as *obviously*, *certainly* or *no doubt* mainly used to express writer's certainty in what it is stated so as "to mark involvement with the topic and solidarity with their audience" (Hyland, 1998: 350)
- They "attribute an increased force or authority to statements" (Bondi, 2008: 32)
- Both process indirectly convey tokens of truth

Data

- Two major Albanian national dailies, namely *Shqip* and *Panorama*
- Opinion pieces written from January 2013 to December 2014

Discussion

- Por këto identitete nuk **duket** se i pengonin shqiptarët e shkuar në Spanjë që sipas Markos përbënin një komunitet kompakt e solidar edhe pse vinin nga të dyja gjinitë, nga të gjitha prejardhjet fetare, nga fshatrat e qytetet ... (SM140710).
- But these identities **do not seem** to obstruct the past Albanians in Spain, who according to Marko constituted a compact and solid community even though they came from both genders, from all religions descents, from villages and towns (my translation)
- Unë nuk e di nëse shqiptarët e zgjedhur për ta pritur dhe për të folur me zonjën Bonino i dinë të gjitha këto. **Ndoshta** po dhe **ndoshta** jo. (PM131002)
- I do not know whether all the elected Albanians to meet and talk with Mrs. Bonino know all of these. **Maybe** yes, **maybe** no. (my translation)

Discussion

- **Nuk besoj** se fjala “new” e bën qeverisjen e re të ngjashme me “new Labour” e Blerit apo “new Democrat” të Klintonit. (SF131003)
- **I do not believe** that the word “new” makes the new governance similar to Blair’s “new Labour” or Clinton’s “new Democrat”. (my translation)
- Personalisht **mendoj** se Rama ishte i sinqertë kur deklaroi para disa ditësh në TV se ai mendon që Hoxha ishte një katil. (PF140102)
- Personally **I think** that Rama was sincere when he declared a few days ago on TV that he thought that Hoxha was criminal. (my translation)

Discussion

- Eshtë **krejt e qartë** se tema e bashkimit kombëtar do të jetë një temë kryesore e kësaj fushate elektorale. (PM131003)
- It is **completely clear** that the issue of national unity will be a central topic of this electoral campaign. (my translation)
- **Sigurisht** që ndryshimet e mëdha nuk mund të ndodhin brenda një dite, jave apo muaji, por ato mund të fillojnë nga gjëra të vogla. (SM130301)
- **Of course**, major changes cannot occur within one day, week or month, but they can begin with small things. (my translation)

Discussion

- Ndëshkimi, sado i pamundur duket, është **tërësisht** i mundur nëse faktet janë aty. (SF140802)
- However impossible the punishment may seem, it is **entirely** possible, if the facts are there. (my translation)
- Ata **pa dyshim** duhet të jenë zëri i rëndësishëm që duhet të marrë përsipër drejtimin në këtë situatë. (PF140102)
- **Without doubt** they should be the important voice which should undertake the management in this situation. (my translation)

Final remarks

- Truth and hedging
- Truth and boosting
- Opinion pieces
- A valid approach?

References

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Fraser, B. (2010). "Pragmatic markers". *Pragmatics* 6 (2): 167-190. 2010. "Hedging in political discourse: The Bush 2007 press conferences". In *Perspectives in Politics and Discourse*, ed. by Urszula Okulska, and Piotr Cap, 201-214. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

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Hyland, K. (2010) "Metadiscourse: Mapping Interactions in Academic Writing," *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 9, no. 2.

Panorama website (<http://www.panorama.com.al/category/opinion/>), (accessed 01 April 2017)

Shqip website (<http://gazeta-shqip.com/lajme/category/opinion/>) (accessed 15 April 2017)

Truth: National experiences

- Students' protest, Dec 2018
- The Vetting process
- Local elections (constant pressure for general elections)
- The SPAK committee
- position – opposition – president
- (over)tourism
- Libelling
- Licensing media, revising the law on audio-visual media, portals and blogs to be included
- Revision of the role of the media



Thank you for your attention!