Conditionnement idéologique et publicitaire dans les médias
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Investigating linguistic patterns of ideological persuasion and emotional framing in the Albanian political discourse

Eriola Qafzezi
Fan S. Noli University, Korça, Albania
eriola_bonja@yahoo.com

Le discours politique constitue un outil puissant pour façonner la perception du public, consolider les récits idéologiques et légitimer les structures de pouvoir. Cette étude explore les mécanismes de persuasion et de propagande dans la rhétorique politique albanaise, en se concentrant sur la manière dont le langage tendancieux et d'autres stratégies discursives y contribuent dans la représentation médiatique. Elle examine deux discours prononcés par Edi Rama, Premier ministre de l'Albanie, à l'intention des communautés albanaises de la diaspora en Grèce et en Italie, et met en évidence les modèles linguistiques qui renforcent les dynamiques d'inclusion/exclusion, d'identité nationale et de légitimité politique. Démontrant comment les choix linguistiques amplifient les techniques de persuasion dans la sphère publique, elle contribue aux débats sur la propagande, le contrôle idéologique et le discours médiatique, en offrant un éclairage sur la construction linguistique du discours politique.

Mots-clés : persuasion, rhétorique politique, langage tendancieux, propagande, discours médiatique.

Political discourse serves as a powerful tool for shaping public perception, reinforcing ideological narratives, and legitimizing power structures. This study explores mechanisms of persuasion and propaganda in Albanian political rhetoric, focusing on how loaded language and other discursive strategies contribute to ideological persuasion in media representation. Using Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis (CADS), this research examines two speeches delivered by Edi Rama, Prime Minister of Albania, to Albanian diaspora communities in Greece and Italy. The study analyzes linguistic patterns that reinforce inclusion/exclusion, national identity, and political legitimacy in both speeches. The findings demonstrate how linguistic choices amplify persuasion techniques in the public sphere. This research contributes to broader discussions on propaganda, ideological control, and media discourse, offering insights into strategic linguistic conduct in political communication.

Keywords: persuasion, political rhetoric, loaded language, propaganda, media discourse.

El discurso político es una herramienta poderosa para dar forma a la percepción pública, consolidar las narrativas ideológicas y legitimar las estructuras de poder. Este estudio explora los mecanismos de persuasión y propaganda en la retórica política albanesa, centrándose en cómo el lenguaje tendencioso y otras estrategias discursivas contribuyen a ello en la representación mediática. Examina dos discursos pronunciados por Edi Rama, primer ministro de Albania, a las comunidades albanesas de la diáspora en Grecia e Italia, y destaca los modelos lingüísticos que refuerzan las dinámicas de inclusión/exclusión, de identidad nacional y legitimidad política. Demostrando cómo las elecciones lingüísticas amplifican las técnicas de persuasión en la esfera pública, contribuye a los debates sobre la propaganda, el control ideológico y el discurso mediático, aportando luz sobre la construcción lingüística del discurso político.

Palabras clave : persuasión, retórica política, lenguaje cargado, propaganda, discurso mediático.

Introduction

Political discourse serves as a critical arena for shaping public opinion, constructing collective identities, and reinforcing ideological narratives. In contemporary democracies, political leaders strategically employ language not only to communicate policies but to cultivate emotional bonds, frame perceptions of reality, and legitimize their authority. This is particularly evident in speeches directed at diaspora communities, where national identity, emotional belonging, and political loyalty intersect powerfully. This study examines the discursive strategies of ideological persuasion in two speeches delivered by Edi Rama, Prime Minister of Albania, to Albanian diaspora audiences in Greece and Italy in May 2024. These addresses provide a valuable corpus for analyzing how language is mobilized to create narratives of unity, hope, resilience, and national pride across different diasporic contexts. Using the methodological framework of Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis (CADS), this research investigates how loaded language, emotional framing, agency attribution, and binary oppositions operate in Rama's diaspora rhetoric. Particular attention is paid to lexical and collocational patterns, modality structures, and the notion of inclusiveness through pronoun strategies and evaluative language. By analyzing the linguistic textures of these speeches, the study aims to uncover how emotional and ideological meanings are crafted in order to reinforce political legitimacy and national cohesion. It contributes to broader discussions about political communication, propaganda techniques in democratic societies, and the role of language in maintaining affective and ideological ties between home nations and their diaspora populations.

Theoretical framework

Political activity does not exist without the use of language (Chilton, 2004, p. 6). The relationship between political discourse and propaganda has long been a central concern in critical discourse studies. Propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012. p. 7), while the essence of political propaganda is that it is a kind of speech that fundamentally involves political, economic, aesthetic, or rational ideals, mobilized for a political purpose. Propaganda is in the service of either supporting or eroding ideals (Stanley, 2015, p. 52). Drawing on the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this study examines how language structures ideological meaning by controlling access to information, selecting perspectives, and naturalizing particular worldviews (Fairclough, 1995). CDA emphasizes that discourse is never neutral: it reflects and reproduces social power relations, particularly through seemingly banal linguistic choices such as modality, agency, metaphors, and evaluative lexical fields (van Dijk, 2006). Complementing CDA, the study employs Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS), as the techniques of Corpus Linguistics can assist the study of features of discourse, defined as the processes of interaction between speakers or between authors and readers (Partington, 2006, p. 267). Moreover, Partington (2010, p. 88) talks of integrating discourse studies with techniques and tools from corpus linguistics, a point noted by Mautner (2019, p. 8) who considers how the two strands can be sensibly combined (Baker, 2023, p. 20-21). Similarly, Charteris-Black outlines that corpus linguistics methods provide insights into the rhetoric of political speeches that complement and enhance those gained from intuition alone and entirely qualitative approaches (Charteris-Black, 2018, p. 173). Furthermore, O'Keeffe asserts that corpus linguistics offers a useful approach to the analysis of language in the media,

allowing for the quantification of recurring linguistic features to substantiate qualitative insights and vice versa (2006, p. 50).

Beyond rational persuasion, propaganda operates powerfully through emotional activation. Emotional framing is a core mechanism of political discourse, serving to elicit affective responses such as pride, fear, indignation, and belonging. Diaspora audiences are often emotionally charged due to their dual attachment to both their host country and their homeland. This emotional positioning makes them particularly receptive to appeals of national pride, memory, sacrifice, and belonging, thereby intensifying the persuasive potential of political discourse (For a more precise definition of 'diaspora', see Safran, 1991). In these contexts, politicians not only seek to persuade but also to reaffirm identity and loyalty through emotional, moralized language. Building upon these insights, this study focuses on four key linguistic mechanisms: lexical patterns, agency and pronoun usage, modality, and collocational networks. Through analyzing lexical selections, collocational patterns, and modal constructions, the research seeks to uncover how language operates as a site of ideological reproduction and emotional mobilization in Edi Rama's diaspora speeches.

To examine ideological persuasion, particular attention is paid to linguistic patterns that have been consistently recognized in the literature as central to propaganda and political communication (For more details, see Charteris-Black (2018); Bou-Franch & Blitvich (eds.) (2019); Baker (2023); Biber *et al.* (2007); Chilton (2004); Wodak (2009); van Dijk (2006); Fairclough (1995); Jowett & O'Donnell (2012); Partington (2006); and O'Keeffe (2006)). These focus areas are summarized in the following table, which outlines how each methodological approach contributes to identifying and interpreting the linguistic mechanisms at work in the selected speeches.

Approach	Focus Area	Description	Application in This Study
Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)	Modality	Examines expressions of necessity, certainty, and obligation (e.g., must, should, needs to).	Identifying how Rama frames political action as inevitable or morally necessary.
CDA	Agency	Analyzes who is depicted as an actor vs. as someone acted upon (e.g., active vs. passive constructions, pronoun usage).	Revealing how Rama positions himself, his government, the diaspora, and political opponents.
CDA	Emotional Framing	Studies how language evokes emotions like pride, fear, belonging, and hope.	Understanding affective appeals targeting the collective identity of diaspora audiences.
Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS)	Keyword Analysis	Identifies unusually frequent or significant words compared to reference corpora.	Highlighting dominant ideological and emotional themes (e.g., unity, future, sacrifice, Europe).
CADS	Collocation Patterns	Analyzes frequent co-occurrence of words.	Exploring ideological associations (e.g., unity + Europe; freedom + sacrifice).
CADS	Concordance Analysis	Examines keywords in real textual contexts to study usage and framing.	Detecting polarization, emotional appeals, and ideological framing across the speeches.

Table 1: Methodological approaches for the selected corpus under study

Methodology

Corpus description

The corpus for this study consists of two political speeches delivered by *Edi Rama*, Prime Minister of Albania, addressing Albanian diaspora communities in Europe in May 2024:

Speech 1: Athens, Greece, Galatsi Stadium, May 12, 2024

Speech 2: Milan, Italy, May 26, 2024

Both speeches were downloaded as prepared text from the official website of the Prime Minister of Albania (www.kryeministria.al), and authentic phrasing and rhetorical structures have been duly preserved. The speeches were selected for their thematic focus on diaspora engagement, national identity, and political mobilization, allowing for a comparative analysis of emotional and ideological framing across different diaspora contexts.

Feature	Description
Language	Albanian (standard variety)
Total size	Approx. 12,162 words (Athens speech 6,097 words; Milan speech 6,065 words)
Type	Political addresses to diaspora communities
Source	The Prime Minister's official website, Albania

Table 2 Corpus description

This corpus enables the exploration of persuasive strategies in a diasporic communicative setting where emotional and ideological appeals are particularly salient.

Analytical framework

The study employs an integrated approach combining:

1. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 1995; Chilton, 2004)
2. Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) (Partington, 2006; Baker, 2023)

CDA provides a theoretical lens to examine ideological meanings, while CADS offers tools for discovering and illustrating recurring linguistic patterns across the speeches.

The analysis focuses on four main discursive mechanisms:

1. Lexical patterns and emotional fields: ideological perspectives expressed through word choices and evaluative adjectives.
2. Agency attribution and pronoun usage – shaping power relations through the use of pronouns and passive vs. active constructions.
3. Modality and certainty framing – using modal constructions to mobilize commitment and project optimism and persuasion.
4. Collocational networks and ideological binaries – revealing deeper ideological structures that underpin political discourse through the tendency of co-occurrence of words.

Tools

Corpus analysis was conducted using:

- *Sketch Engine* for keyword extraction as well as collocation and concordance analysis (to identify ideological and emotional associations).
- *AntConc* for building visual maps of keywords.
- *Manual close reading* to identify and distinguish patterns of persuasion and power relations in each speech.

Procedures

- Building separate sub-corpora for the Athens and Milan speeches.
- Extracting keyword lists for each speech.
- Mapping collocational networks.
- Identifying patterns of pronoun usage, active/passive voice, and modality markers.

Context of delivery

Understanding delivery context of each speech is critical to interpreting their linguistic and emotional strategies.

- Athens Speech (May 12, 2024):
Focused on unity, European integration, optimism about Albania's progress, targeting a diaspora community with complex historical ties to Greece.
- Milan Speech (May 26, 2024):
Emphasized dignity, resilience, and national sacrifice, targeting a diaspora community with long-established social integration but strong historical memory of migration.

For both speeches, Italian and Greek government policies and Italian and Greek social attitudes to Albanians are part of delivery context. These contextual elements influence both the emotional fields and ideological constructions mobilized by *Rama* in his rhetoric.

Analysis

This section analyzes the persuasive and ideological strategies deployed by *Edi Rama* in his two diaspora speeches delivered in Athens (May 12, 2024) and Milan (May 26, 2024). Using an integrated framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS), the study examines how linguistic patterns contribute to emotional mobilization, identity construction, and ideological reinforcement. The analysis is organized into five thematic areas: first exploring lexical and emotional fields, then investigating agency attribution through pronoun usage, modality and certainty framing, collocational networks and binary oppositions, and finally providing a comparative synthesis of the two speeches. This structure allows for a systematic interpretation of how language both reflects and constructs political meaning in diaspora contexts. Furthermore, the following Wordcloud in *Figure 1* generated via *AntConc* visualizes the most frequent lexical items in the Athens speech subcorpus, while *Figure 2* presents the keyword distribution from the Milan speech subcorpus.
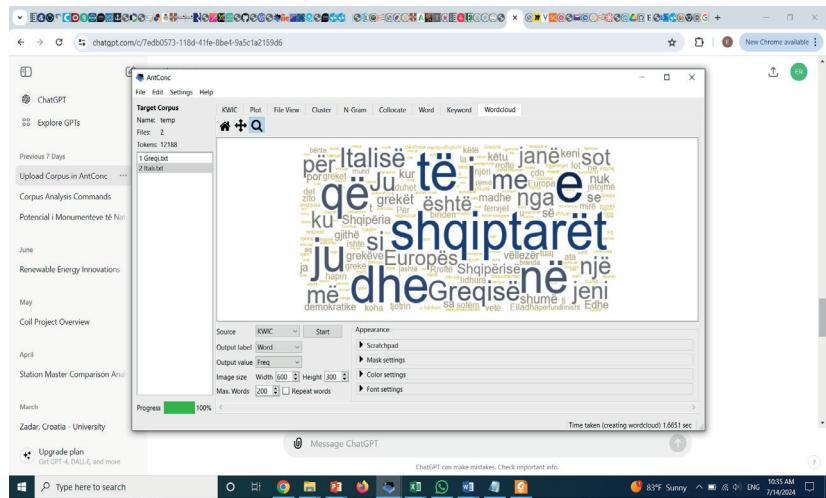
Figure 1 Screenshot of Wordcloud generated by AntConc for the Athens speech subcorpus
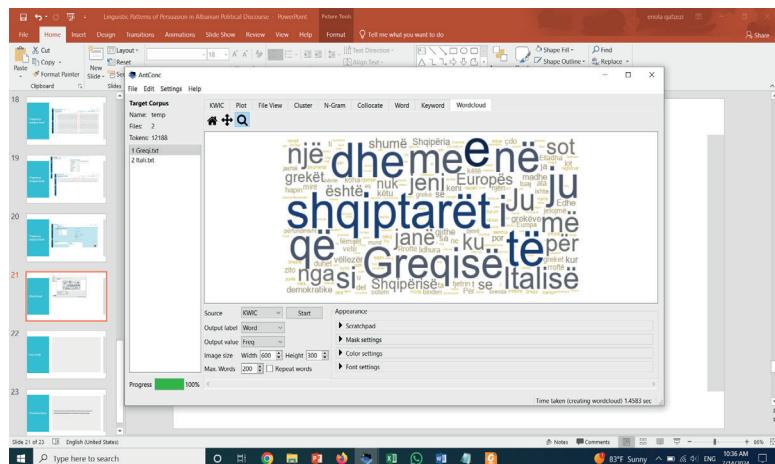
Figure 2 Screenshot of Wordcloud generated by AntConc for the Milan speech subcorpus

Lexical patterns and emotional fields

Lexical choices form the foundation of emotional and ideological framing in political discourse. In Edi Rama's diaspora speeches, loaded language and emotionally resonant terms are strategically employed to create narratives of national pride, unity, resilience, and progress. Through the use of *Sketch Engine* and *AntConc*, keyword analysis and collocation mapping reveal distinct emotional fields corresponding to the two speeches specific diaspora contexts.

Example: Athens Speech
The Athens speech is infused with future-oriented, optimistic, and inclusive language, projecting national progress and emotional belonging. Keywords extracted from the corpus include *bashkim* (unity), *fuqi* (strength), e *ardhmja* (the future), *dritë* (light), and *sukses* (success). These terms

frequently co-occur with positive evaluative adjectives such as *e madhe* (*great*), *e ndritur* (bright), and *e sigurtë* (*safe*).

> *Shqipëria 2030 duhet t'ia marrë më të mirën e mundshme përmes fuqisë së gjithë shqiptarëve që flamuri kuq e zi i Skënderbeut dhe Ismail Qemalit të ngrihet në krahë të flamujve të shteteve anëtare të Bashkimit Europian, atje në qendrën e Europës demokratike.* (Albania 2030 must make the most of its potential through the *strength* of all Albanians, so that the red and black flag of Skanderbeg and Ismail Qemali may be raised alongside the flags of the member states of the European Union, there in the heart of democratic Europe).

> *Faleminderit nga zemra për këtë mikpritje kaq prekëse nën këtë strehë kaq të madhe, që ju e bëtë të duket kaq e vogël.* (Thank you from the heart for this touching welcome under this *large shelter*, which you made it feel so *small*).

Lexical patterning in the Athens speech emphasizes national pride and a forward-looking collectivity through the repetition of terms related to unity, strength, and shared aspiration.

Example: Milan Speech

The Milan speech shifts tone slightly: it is more retrospective and moralistic, invoking dignity, sacrifice, and national character. Keywords highlighted include *sakrificë* (sacrifice), *dinjitet* (dignity), *krenari* (pride), *liri* (freedom), and *betejë* (struggle). These terms collocate with emotionally charged language evoking memory, endurance, and moral duty.

For example:

> *Besimin e* çdo *shqiptari si ju që e di shumë mirë që asgjë që arrihet me punë nuk arrihet pa mund, nuk arrihet pa sakrifica, nuk arrihet pa durim, nuk arrihet pa shtrënguar dhëmbët.* (The trust of every Albanian like you, who knows very well that nothing achieved through work comes without *effort*, without *sacrifice*, without *patience*, without *gritting one's teeth*).

> *E kush më mirë sesa ju shqiptarët e Greqisë, Italisë, Europës e di të vërtetën, e cila sa* ç'*është e thjeshtë, aq* është e pamundur *që të kuptohet nga kushdo që punës nuk ia ka provuar peshën mbi supe, nuk ia ka njohur zhgënjimet mundit, nuk ia ka ndjerë dhimbjen sakrificave, nuk ia ka kaluar sprovat durimit.* (And who better than you Albanians of Greece, Italy, and Europe knows the truth, which although simple, is nearly impossible to understand for those who haven't felt the *burden* of work on their shoulders, who haven't known the disappointments of *effort*, who haven't felt the pain of *sacrifice*, who haven't endured the trials of *patience*).

Lexical patterning in the Milan speech revolves around moral endurance and national resilience, with the repetition of a hardship-related lexis that emotionally frames the diaspora as both victims and heroes of national perseverance. Here, the emotional narrative shifts from forward-looking optimism to a commemorative and morally solemn tone, shaping the diaspora's identity in relation to national perseverance and historical struggle. These differentiated emotional fields suggest a deliberate rhetorical adaptation by Rama, aligning emotional appeals with the particular historical experiences and sentiments of diaspora audiences in different national settings. This lexical field resonates with the moralized narrative of sacrifice that characterizes Albanian diasporic identity.

Agency attribution and pronoun usage

Agency attribution - the linguistic assignment of action and responsibility - is a critical element in political discourse. Through choices of pronouns, active or passive voice, and actor placement, political speakers construct relationships between themselves, their audiences, and external forces. In Edi Rama's diaspora speeches, agency attribution serves to foster solidarity, position the diaspora as active agents in national progress, and reinforce the legitimacy of political leadership. In both diaspora speeches, first-person plural ("*we*") pronouns are often used to emphasize national unity and shared purpose, while plural second-person ("*you*") pronouns highlight gratitude and create intimacy. Passive constructions, on the other hand, are selectively used to obscure agency or depersonalize political actions.

Pronoun usage and collective identity

Both the Athens and Milan speeches frequently utilize the pronoun *ne (we)* to create a strong sense of collective identity. Even when the pronoun *ne (we)* is not explicitly stated, the first-person plural is still clearly marked through verb conjugation in Albanian, where subject pronouns are often omitted due to the inflected nature of the verb. Rama consistently blurs the boundaries between the Albanian government, the Albanian people at home, and the diaspora abroad, constructing a unified national "we/us".

Examples include:

Athens Speech:

Tani kush na ndalon ne që të mos jemi njëkohësisht krenarë bashkë me grekët për kontributin që i ka dhënë Greqisë ajo grua heroike me prejardhje nga një familje ku flitej shqip. (Now who stops *us* from being proud, *together with* the Greeks, for the contribution given to Greece by that heroic woman from a family where Albanian was spoken)?

The phrase *na ndalon ne* ("stops *us*") frames Albanians and Greeks as co-contributors, constructing ne as both inclusive and confident. The use of *bashkë* ("*together*") with ne emphasizes emotional and cultural solidarity, both within the diaspora and with the host society, in this case Greece.

Sot ju nuk e ulni më kokën kur thoni: "jam nga Shqipëria". Dhe siç atdheu juaj ka qenë gjithnjë kryelartë për ju, ju sot jeni në të drejtën e Zotit të jeni kryelartë për Shqipërinë. (Today, *you* no longer lower *your* heads when *you* say: "I am from Albania." And just as your homeland has always held its head high for *you*, *you* now have every right, before God, to hold *your* head high for Albania).

This passage shifts between *ju* (you) and *ne* (*us* - implied through shared emotion and national pride). Rama equates personal dignity with national dignity, constructing a reciprocal relationship between the diaspora and the homeland that is rooted in mutual respect and symbolic pride.

Milan Speech:

Ne shqiptarët jemi përgjegjës të barabartë për ecurinë e fatit të atij projekti etnik për të ardhmen e përbashkët të banorëve të këtij kontinenti në rrugën e fateve tona të pandashme europiane, ku shtetet e Europës demokratike, o ia dalin të gjitha në krye së bashku si europianë pa dallim, o mbetemi mbrapa botës gjithë bashkë në një Europë që sot është e sfiduar si asnjëherë më parë qysh nga Lufta e Dytë Botërore. (*We* Albanians share equal responsibility for the course of that ethnic project aimed at a shared future for the inhabitants of this continent, along the path of *our* inseparable European destinies, where the states of democratic Europe will either all succeed *together* as Europeans without distinction, or *we* will *all* be left behind together in a Europe that today is more challenged than any point since the Second World War).

Here, *ne shqiptarët* (*we* Albanians) emphasizes shared responsibility and equal standing with other Europeans. Rama uses this collective identity to position Albanians as active agents in the broader European political project, blending patriotism with a cosmopolitan, EU-aligned narrative. To illustrate collective identity, we also introduce Figure 3, which displays concordance lines for the pronoun *ne* (*we*) in the Milan speech, demonstrating how Rama linguistically aligns the diaspora with the Albanian nation.
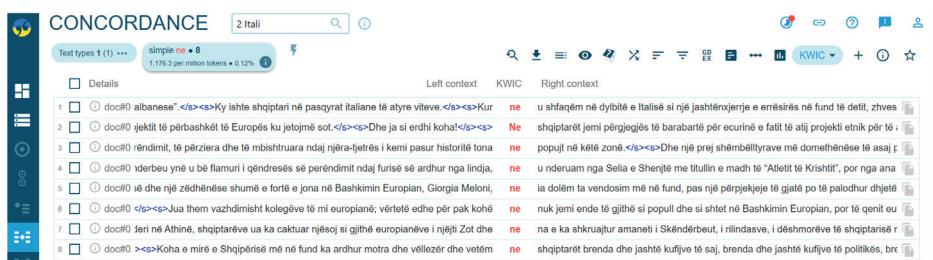

Figure 3 Screenshot of concordance lines with 'we' in Milan speech subcorpus

Ju shqiptarët e Italisë provuat të pabesueshmen, kur derdhët lot malli çurk për Shqipërinë, të cilën e kishit lënë me betimin ekstrem për të mos ia parë më kurrë sytë dhe lot të nxehta inati për Italinë, që e kishit kërkuar me besimin ekstrem se nuk do t'jua lagte kurrë fytyrën me ujin e kripur të syve. (*You Albanians of Italy experienced the unbelievable, when you shed streaming tears of longing for Albania, which you had left with an extreme oath never to lay eyes on again, and burning tears of resentment for Italy, which you had sought out with the extreme belief that it would never wet your face with the salty water of your eyes*).

In this other example, the use of *ju shqiptarët e Italisë* (*you Albanians of Italy*) emotionally singles out the diaspora, emphasizing nostalgia and pain as a form of loyalty and emotional investment. Rama invokes shared trauma (exile, longing) to rebind the diaspora emotionally to the national narrative, even when they once felt alienated from it. In both speeches, pronouns are used not just as grammatical elements, but as discursive tools to build an imagined community, rooted in shared sacrifice, memory, and aspiration.

In the screenshot below, we introduce more concordance patterns for *ju* (plural "*you*") in the Milan speech. These second-person plural references directly appeal to the diaspora's lived experiences and sacrifices.
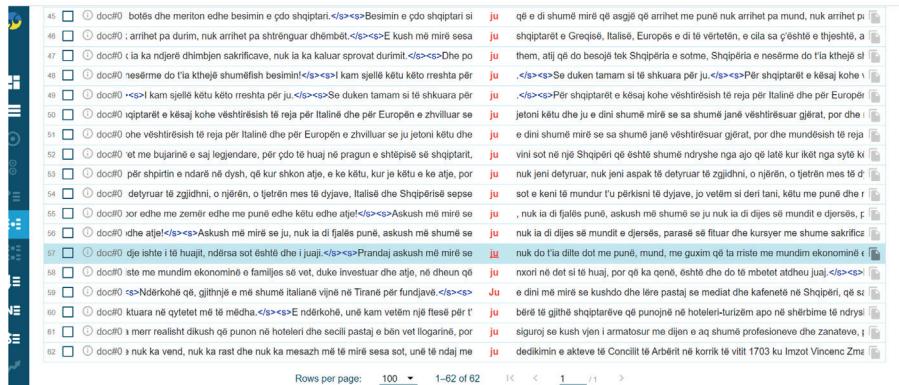
Figure 4 Screenshot of concordance lines with 'you' in the Milan speech subcorpus

Active voice and empowerment

Rama predominantly uses *the active voice* when describing actions attributed to Albanians collectively, especially when highlighting their agency, dignity, and contributions to the homeland. This rhetorical strategy affirms empowerment and fosters a sense of shared accomplishment among the diaspora.

Examples include:

Athens Speech:

E ndërkohë, ju ktheheni gjithmonë e më shpesh edhe në shtëpitë tuaja në Shqipëri ku keni mbajtur gjithë këto vite, me ndihmën tuaj të paçmuar financiare, prindërit e moshuar, vëllezërit, motrat, nipat e mbesat, dhe ku keni nisur edhe të investoni, sidomos në fshatra, kursimet tuaja. (And meanwhile, *you are returning* more and more often to *your* homes in Albania, where for all these years - with *your* invaluable financial help - *you have supported your* elderly parents, brothers, sisters, nieces, and nephews, and where *you have also begun to invest your* savings, especially in villages).

This example is rich with active verbs (*ktheheni, keni mbajtur, keni nisur të investoni; Eng. return, have kept, have started to invest*) that affirm the agency of the diaspora. Rama attributes an economic and emotional contribution to Albanian emigrants, portraying them not as absent, but as actively shaping national development.

Milan Speech:

Ju, shqiptarët e Italisë e këputët me forcën e mërisë ndaj diktaturës së varfërisë dhe me duart e ëndrrave *tuaja për Europën e prosperitetit, kërthizën me tokën mëmë përmes po atij deti ku paraardhësit tanë të vjetër, arbëreshët, e panë t'ju këputet ajo kërthizë me shpatat e makthit të tyre.* (*You*, Albanians of Italy, *severed* - with the force of *your* anger against the dictatorship of poverty and with the hands of *your* dreams for a prosperous Europe—the umbilical cord with the motherland, across the same sea where our old ancestors, the Arbëresh, *saw it severed* by the swords of their nightmares).

Here, the vivid active construction (*e këputët... me forcën... me duart; Eng. have severed…with strength…with hands*) dramatizes the emancipatory agency of the Albanian emigrants. Rama elevates the diaspora's migration into an act of historical resistance and visionary struggle. It is a powerful mythologization of modern migration, using the active voice to assign heroism and control to the speaker's audience. In contrast, the final sentence - "*e panë t'ju këputet ajo kërthizë me shpatat e makthit të tyre*" ("they *saw it severed* by the swords of their nightmares") - shifts to the passive voice, notably altering the distribution of agency. Here, the umbilical cord is not actively severed by the ancestors, but rather is acted upon by an ominous, external force ("the swords of their nightmares"). This shift serves a discursive function: while the modern diaspora is framed as assertive and self-determining, the Arbëresh ancestors are depicted as victims of historical trauma, passive witnesses to an imposed rupture. The contrast enhances Rama's overarching narrative of progress and empowerment - moving from a past marked by powerlessness to a present defined by agency and visionary action. From a discourse analysis perspective, this juxtaposition underscores how the category of voice reflects and constructs differing roles and relationships within collective memory and national identity.

Passive constructions and external forces
Passive constructions, being depersonalizing, subtly reinforce a narrative of historical inevitability. When Rama shifts to the passive voice, he does so to highlight historical processes or external conditions beyond the control of Albanians. These constructions create a narrative of challenge and survival, wherein Albanians emerge resilient despite forces beyond their agency.

Examples include:

Athens Speech:

Kjo e vërtetë është *se kultura jonë e përbashkët, mesdhetare e ballkanike,* është *plazmuar shumë kohë përpara sesa të lindnin shtetet tona.* (The truth is that our shared Mediterranean and Balkan culture *was shaped* long before our states were born).

The passive phrase është *plazmuar* (*was shaped*) downplays human agency, locating cultural formation in historical processes rather than in national actors. This passivity does not signal weakness; rather, it constructs a deep temporal continuity, placing Albania within an ancient and sophisticated cultural lineage.

Milan Speech:

Ju e dini më mirë se kushdo dhe lëre pastaj se mediat dhe kafenetë në Shqipëri, që sa shumë është *shtrenjtuar jeta juaj këtu në Itali, që sa ndjeshëm* është *rritur pasiguria për të nesërmen.* (You know better than anyone - and never mind the media and cafés in Albania - how much your life here in Italy *has become* more expensive, how sharply insecurity about tomorrow *has been increased*).

The passive verbs është *shtrenjtuar* (*has become more expensive*) and është rritur (*has been increased*) attribute responsibility to global or foreign economic conditions, not to Albanian actions. The rhetorical move here is to acknowledge difficulty without assigning direct blame, thus maintaining the moral high ground for Rama's audience. In both speeches, the active voice empowers the diaspora by emphasizing what they have done, while the passive voice highlights what has been endured. Rama crafts a dual narrative of proud action and resilient survival, reinforcing a collective identity that is both heroic and historically grounded.

Modality and certainty framing

Modality—the linguistic expression of necessity, possibility, or certainty—plays a crucial role in political rhetoric. Through modal verbs and related constructions, political speakers frame future actions as inevitable, morally required, or highly desirable. In Edi Rama's diaspora speeches, modality structures are strategically used to mobilize commitment, project optimism, and present political projects as natural outcomes of collective effort.

Rama frequently employs strong modal verbs of necessity such as *duhet* (must), *kemi nevojë të* (we need to), and *është e domosdoshme* (it is necessary) to frame unity, national progress, and European integration not as optional ideals, but as urgent historical imperatives.

Examples:

Athens Speech:

Kohët kur të tjerët vendosnin se deri ku mund ta hidhnin hapin shqiptarët kanë vdekur. (The times when others decided how far Albanians *could* take a step are over).

The modal verb *mund* (*could*) is embedded in a statement of finality *kanë vdekur* (*have died, i.e. are over*). The construction *mund ta hidhnin hapin (how far Albanians could take a step)* implies that Albanians were once limited in their agency. Now, Rama removes that limitation, using the past conditional to contrast with the current potential for empowerment. The certainty of change is asserted through the final verb *kanë vdekur* (*are over*).

Gabime unë mund të kem bërë plot deri këtu, në këto 10 vjet. (Mistakes - I *may* have made plenty until now, in these last ten years).

Here, the modal verb *mund të kem bërë* (may have made) expresses epistemic modality - an acknowledgment of fallibility. It softens criticism while affirming responsibility. This use of modality enhances credibility by admitting uncertainty and limiting overclaiming.

Ky kompleksitet duhet të jetë një nxitje e madhe që grekët e shqiptarët të binden përfundimisht dhe reciprokisht që fatet tona janë të pandashme dhe ata të cilët marrin përsipër t'i përfaqësojnë shqiptarët dhe grekët, të binden përfundimisht se nuk mund t'i gjejnë përgjigjet për të ardhmen tek e shkuara por tek e sotmja e fateve të lidhura të grekëve të Shqipërisë me shqiptarët e Shqipërisë, me shqiptarët e Greqisë, me greket e Greqisë. (This complexity *must serve* as a strong incentive for Greeks and Albanians to be finally and mutually convinced that our destinies are inseparable, and that those who take on the responsibility of representing Albanians and Greeks *must become firmly* convinced that the answers for the future *cannot be found* in the past, but in the present reality of intertwined destinies of Greeks in Albania with Albanians in Albania, with Albanians in Greece, and with Greeks in Greece).

The use of *duhet të jetë* (*must be*) presents political understanding as a moral and historical necessity. Rama appeals to logic and unity through deontic modality, encouraging the audience to accept shared European destinies as a given rather than as an aspiration. Furthermore, the phrase *nuk mund t'i gjejnë* (*cannot be found*) introduces a negative epistemic assertion, effectively closing off the past as a legitimate source of solutions. By insisting that the answers "*cannot be found in the past*," Rama delegitimizes retrospective blame or grievance and redirects attention toward the "present reality" of intertwined destinies. This rhetorical move frames the future as a collective

project grounded in contemporary solidarity, not historical division - a discursive strategy that simultaneously discredits nationalist nostalgia and promotes a vision of pragmatic, forward-looking cooperation.

Modality is key in framing potential and obligation. Figure 5 presents concordance lines of *mund* (can/could) in the Athens speech, illustrating how Rama balances possibility with progress-oriented determination.
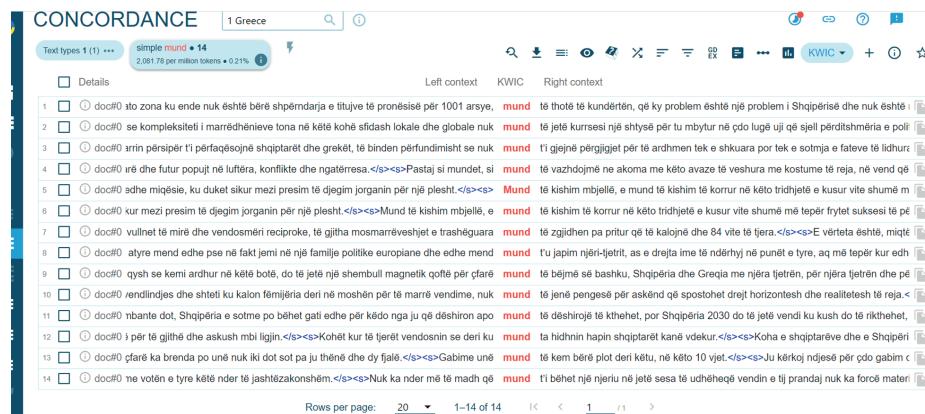
Figure 5 Screenshot of concordance lines of 'mund' (can/could) in the Athens' speech subcorpus

Milan Speech:

Kush mund ta imagjinonte deri para disa vitesh këtë Shqipëri sot, në arenën e madhe europiane, e cila i ngjan gjithmonë e më shumë të gjithëve ju në familjen e madhe europiane, por Shqipëria sot pret dhe ju, shqiptarët e Italisë dhe krejt botës, si vendlindja juaj që rilind çdo ditë dhe që më në fund po bëhet shteti që aq shumë i ka munguar shqiptarëve të Shqipërisë. (Who *could have imagined*, just a few years ago, this Albania of today, standing in the great European arena, increasingly resembling all of you in the large European family? But today, Albania is also waiting for you - Albanians of Italy and of the entire world - as your homeland that is reborn every day and is finally becoming the state that Albanians in Albania have long yearned for).

In this other example from the Milan speech, Rama uses *mund ta imagjinonte* (*could have imagined*) to emphasize the unexpected progress Albania has made. The counterfactual construction builds emotional impact and validates present achievements, transforming improbability into national pride.

Disa gojë, nga ato që i njihni mirë, thonin këto ditë që unë nuk duhet të vija këtu sepse nën udhëheqjen time paskan ikur nga Shqipëria 1 milionë shqiptarë. (Some mouths, the kind you know well, were saying these days that I should not have come here because under my leadership, one million Albanians have supposedly left Albania).

The reported speech *nuk duhet të vija* (I should not have come) ironically contrasts external judgment with Rama's own act of commitment. He acknowledges dissent but uses modality to reclaim moral ground and justify his presence through audience validation.

Ndërsa Bashkimit Europian iu desh të zvarritej dhjetëra vite me të ashtuquajturin zgjerim derisa carizmi rus u shfaq si ajo gjilpëra në sepeten e kasherit të pavdekshëm duke hapur luftën e parë pushtuese në këtë kontinent pas 77 vitesh dhe duke e bërë Europën të fillojë të kuptojë më në fund se duhet të ribashkohet një orë e më parë përmes urave të demokracisë, jo të zgjerohet me hapin e breshkës përmes kanaleve të burokracisë. (Meanwhile, the European Union dragged its feet for decades with the so-called enlargement process until Russian czarism appeared like that needle in the basket of immortal hay, launching the first war of conquest on this continent in 77 years—forcing Europe, finally, to begin to understand that it *must reunite* urgently through the bridges of democracy, not expand at a turtle's pace through the channels of bureaucracy).

The modal *duhet të ribashkohet* (*must reunite*) is presented as a historical imperative. Rama extends necessity beyond Albania, framing European unity as not only strategic but existentially urgent, especially in the face of geopolitical crises. In summary, Rama's use of modal verbs serves to: present progress and unity as moral imperatives (*duhet*), project measured humility (*mund të kem bërë…*), frame Albania's transformation as unexpected but real (*mund ta imagjinonte*), critique external doubt while asserting personal legitimacy (*nuk duhet të vija*), and emphasize the urgency of European cohesion (*duhet të ribashkohet*). His modality choices contribute to an overarching rhetorical pattern where certainty, optimism, and inevitability replace hesitation, thus reinforcing the ideological framework of collective purpose and national destiny.

More concretely, Figure 6 visually reveals the usage of *mund* (*can/could*) in the Milan speech, where it constructs a narrative of unexpected national transformation and personal sacrifice, lending rhetorical force to Rama's vision.
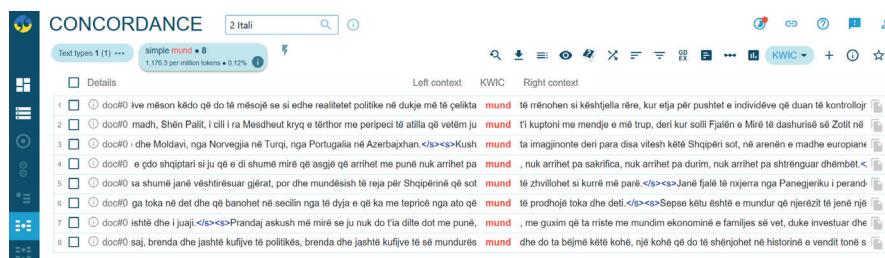

Figure 6 Screenshot of concordance lines of 'mund' (can/could) in the Milan speech subcorpus

Collocational networks and ideological binaries

In political discourse, collocational patterns - the habitual co-occurrence of words - reveal not only linguistic tendencies but underlying ideological structures. These co-occurrences help construct binaries such as light vs darkness, progress vs stagnation, unity vs division, and Europe vs isolation. Edi Rama's diaspora speeches utilize such collocational strategies to reinforce national identity, frame ideological narratives, and mobilize collective sentiment. Using corpus tools (*Sketch Engine* and *AntConc*) and close reading, several clusters of collocational patterns emerge around emotionally and ideologically charged keywords.

The collocational fields are not neutral: they systematically associate certain abstract values (unity, freedom, dignity) with emotionally loaded positive attributes (strength, hope, pride) or historical sacrifices (blood, resistance).

Examples

Athens speech:

Mund të kishim mbjellë, e mund të kishim të korrur në këto tridhjetë e kusur vite shumë më tepër frytet suksesi të përbashkët si fqinj, si miq, si aleatë strategjikë, duke përdorur pasuritë, mundësitë, energjitë tona, si burime komplementare të rritjes së fuqisë dhe të mirëqenies së dy popujve tanë dhe duke u bërë shembull rrezatues për krejt rajonin, në vend se të hyjmë nga një cikël stinor në një tjetër, nga ngërçi në ngërç, ku pas vjeshtës vjen dimri dhe pasi vjen pranvera që zgjat shumë pak, nuk vjen vera asnjëherë. (We could have *planted*, and we could have *harvested* in these thirty-something years far more *fruits of shared success* as neighbors, as *friends*, as *strategic allies* - by using our resources, opportunities, and energies as complementary sources of *growth* in *strength* and well-being for both our peoples, and by becoming a radiant example for the entire region, instead of entering from one seasonal cycle to another, from *deadlock to deadlock, where after autumn comes winter, and when spring arrives - which lasts for very little - summer never comes*).

Collocational Clusters

- *mbjellë – të korrur – frytet suksesi* (*planted – harvested – fruits of success*)

This metaphorical collocation draws on agricultural imagery to describe political and economic cooperation. It creates a narrative of lost opportunity and underutilized potential.

- *fqinj – miq – aleatë strategjikë* (*neighbors – friends – strategic allies*)

This triadic collocation elevates the idea of bilateral cooperation from mere proximity (fqinj) to emotional trust (miq) and, finally, to institutional strength (aleatë strategjikë), constructing a progressive semantic scale of partnership.

- *burime komplementare të rritjes së fuqisë dhe të mirëqenies* (*complementary sources of growth in strength and well-being*)

This noun phrase chains together economic, energetic, and ideological keywords of prosperity (fuqi, mirëqenie, rritje; Eng. *strength, wellbeing, prosperity*) to justify integration and mutual investment.

Ideological Binaries

The above paragraph employs metaphorical binaries to illustrate the deeper ideological tensions in Albania's political trajectory. Rama juxtaposes cooperation and shared growth with a metaphor of repetitive stagnation, captured vividly in the cyclical imagery *nga një cikël stinor në një tjetër, nga ngërçi në ngërç* (from one seasonal cycle to another, from deadlock to deadlock). This rhetorical framing evokes a sense of political paralysis, suggesting that despite historical opportunities for progress, Albania has remained trapped in a loop of unfulfilled potential. Moreover, the speech builds on the binary of promise versus disillusionment: while spring - symbolizing renewal and hope - arrives briefly, summer, representing true fulfillment and transformation, "*never comes*." This seasonal metaphor becomes an implicit critique of both external delays, such as the slow pace of EU integration, and the inefficiencies of internal governance. Through these contrasts, Rama constructs a persuasive emotional landscape, positioning national aspiration against the recurring frustrations of political reality. In summary, this paragraph is densely layered with metaphors from agriculture, nature, and time used to critique missed historical opportunities while reaffirming the potential of strategic unity. The speaker positions Albania and its neighbors as capable but trapped, urging a break from cyclical frustration toward a new, shared ideological season of growth.

Milan Speech:

Ato gjurmë shtrihen nëpër trupin e Shqipërisë ndër shekuj drejt kohëve më të vona, deri aty ku mori jetë plani urbanistik i arkitektëve fiorentinë mbi të cilin u vu guri i parë i Tiranës moderne,e më pas aty ku nga përqafimi i dhunshëm i Shqipërisë dhe Italisë fashiste, shtrënguar mes historisë së një fuqie të madhe adriatike që e kishte parë mëmëdheun tonë si simotër dhe fuqisë megalomanianike të një Italie të verbuar nga ëndrrat *e vjetra perandorake, u hap një plagë e rëndë prej së cilës mbeti lavdia e luftës antifashiste, po edhe gjurma e kulturës së asaj kohe, që sot e gjithë ditën* është *e shenjuar mbi të gjitha në asamblin historik të bulevardit kryesor të Shqipërisë*. (Those *traces* stretch across the body of Albania through the centuries to more recent times, up to the point where the *urban plan* by Florentine architects gave rise to the first *stone* of modern Tirana; and later, to where, from the *violent embrace* of Albania and Fascist Italy - caught between the history of a great Adriatic power that had once seen our *homeland as a sister*, and the *megalomaniac power* of an Italy blinded by *old imperial dreams* - a deep wound was opened, from which remained both *the glory of the anti-fascist war* and the *cultural trace of that era*, which to this day is marked above all in the *historical ensemble of Albania's main boulevard*).

Collocational Analysis

- "gjurmë" + "trupin e Shqipërisë" (*traces - body of Albania*)

This metaphorical collocation personifies Albania as a living body marked by historical events. "Gjurmë" (traces) suggests long-term historical imprints, evoking memory and permanence.

- "përqafimi i dhunshëm" (*violent embrace*)

A striking oxymoronic collocation: "embrace" connotes affection, but "violent" redefines it as domination is used to characterize colonial or fascist occupation with rhetorical subtlety.

- "fuqia e madhe adriatike" vs. "fuqia megalomanianike" (*great Adriatic power vs megalomaniac power*)

These parallel collocations form an ideological contrast: one recalls mutual recognition (simotër = sister nation), the other critiques imperialistic aggression (blind and megalomaniac).

- "plagë e rëndë" + "lavdia e luftës antifashiste" (*deep wound - glory of the anti-fascist war*)

The juxtaposition of suffering and heroism forms a recurring trope in national-patriotic discourse, where victimhood is transformed into dignity through resistance.

- "shenjuar" + "asamblin historik të bulevardit" (*marked - historical ensemble of the boulevard*)

This phrase grounds ideological meaning in urban space. Architecture and city planning become monuments of political memory, making ideology visible in the everyday landscape.

Ideological Binaries

These collocational patterns are not merely stylistic, they function as vehicles for conveying deeper ideological binaries that structure the speaker's historical narrative. Rama contrasts the "*violent embrace*" of Fascist Italy with the "*cultural trace*" it left behind, framing the past not only as traumatic but also as materially and symbolically productive. Similarly, the depiction of Italy as both a "*sister nation*" and a "*megalomaniac power*" reveals a binary tension between fraternity and domination and between mutual recognition and imperial ambition. The language oscillates between the imagery of a "*deep wound*" and the "*glory of the anti-fascist war*," turning national suffering into a source of dignity and resistance. Finally, by anchoring memory in the "*historical ensemble of the boulevard*," the speech invokes a binary between historical violence and present-day urban symbolism. In all these instances, language does not merely describe historical events, it reconstructs them ideologically, embedding meaning in the very spaces and metaphors it employs. In summary, this paragraph from the Milan speech intricately weaves historical narrative with emotional framing, blending trauma and pride through careful lexical and collocational choices. By presenting urban development as a material trace of ideology, it reinforces the idea that nothing is forgotten: the ideological past is literally inscribed in Albania's capital.

Comparative synthesis: Athens vs Milan

The comparative analysis of Edi Rama's speeches delivered to the Albanian diaspora in Athens and Milan reveals a consistent yet contextually nuanced deployment of ideological persuasion and emotional framing. Despite contextual differences, both speeches converge on the strategic aim of reinforcing state-diaspora cohesion and legitimizing Albania's European trajectory, anchoring Albania's European aspirations within a compelling narrative of shared sacrifice, progress, and belonging. However, each address calibrates its rhetorical strategy in response to the specific emotional and historical terrain of its audience.

In the *Athens speech*, Rama adopts a predominantly future-oriented and optimistic tone. Lexical choices such as *bashkim* (unity), *fuqi* (strength), and *e ardhmja* (the future), collocating with positively charged adjectives like e *ndritur* (bright) and *e sigurtë* (secure), construct an emotional field rooted in hope, progress, and collective empowerment. The pronoun "*ne*" (we) is used inclusively, collapsing boundaries between Albanians at home and abroad to emphasize a unified national project. The modality structures - particularly through the use of *duhet* (must) - frame European integration and internal cohesion as moral imperatives, not just policy objectives.

Ideological binaries such as *cooperation vs stagnation* and *promise vs disillusionment* structure the speech's persuasive force, portraying a nation poised to transcend historical deadlocks through unity and vision.

In contrast, the *Milan speech* shifts toward more retrospective, morally charged rhetoric. Here, Rama leans into emotional appeals centered on sacrifice, dignity, and memory. Keywords such as *sakrificë* (sacrifice), *krenari* (pride), and *betejë* (struggle) dominate the collocational landscape, often paired with metaphors of endurance and rebirth. The use of the pronoun "*ju*" (you) foregrounds the agency of the diaspora as historical actors and custodians of national identity. The speech invokes shared hardship - *lot malli* (tears of longing), *durim* (patience), and *zhgënjim* (disappointment) - to build emotional solidarity and position the diaspora as both witnesses and contributors to Albania's transformation. The modality here, too, presents national revival as necessary and inevitable, yet the tone is more solemn and grounded in collective resilience.

What unites both speeches is the strategic construction of collocational networks and ideological binaries that shape the listener's perception of national identity, progress, and political legitimacy. In the Athens speech, binaries like *Europe* vs *isolation* and *light* vs *darkness* project a forward-looking vision, while in the Milan speech, *pain* vs *dignity* and *departure* vs *return* create a narrative of moral triumph over adversity. Both speeches employ the active voice to empower the Albanian people and passive constructions to attribute blame to historical forces or external obstacles, thereby preserving the agency of the speaker and the national community.

In sum, Rama's diaspora rhetoric strategically aims at shaping ideology and identity. The emotional and ideological content of the speeches is meticulously aligned with each audience's lived experience, creating a persuasive discourse that blends national pride, political purpose, and emotional resonance. This comparative analysis underscores how political discourse, when examined through the lens of Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis (CADS), reveals not only linguistic patterns but also the intricate scaffolding of ideological persuasion in contemporary democratic contexts. Language thus functions as both a mirror and a motor of ideological continuity across geographical and emotional distances.

Discussion

The analysis of Edi Rama's diaspora speeches reveals how political discourse operates as a multi-layered instrument of ideological persuasion, emotional mobilization, and identity construction. Consistent with Fairclough's (1995) assertion that discourse constitutes social reality, Rama's speeches do not merely reflect Albania's political ambitions; they actively construct visions of national identity and destiny. Through inclusive pronoun usage, Rama collapses the distance between state and diaspora, producing a collective "*we*" that encompasses both political leadership and ordinary citizens abroad. This strategy is further reinforced by the systematic use of the active voice, which empowers Albanians as historical agents rather than passive observers. Modality analysis reveals a careful balancing act between projecting certainty about Albania's European future and emphasizing the moral necessity of continued collective effort. This duality aligns with Charteris-Black's (2011) observations that political rhetoric often simultaneously inspires hope and demands commitment. Emotional framing through loaded lexical choices and ideological binaries — unity vs division, dignity vs shame - demonstrates the core function of emotional activation in diaspora politics. In line with Jowett and O'Donnell's (2012) definition

of propaganda, Rama's discourse simplifies political complexities into affective, morally polarized narratives that mobilize identity and loyalty. Importantly, the speeches' subtle adaptation to different diaspora audiences suggests a flexible and audience-sensitive rhetoric. This rhetorical strategy is especially salient in diaspora politics, where emotional connection must bridge physical and symbolic distances. In Athens, optimism and European aspirations dominate, while in Milan, historical memory and moral duty are foregrounded. This strategic adjustment resonates with the emotional and historical experiences of each diaspora group, illustrating the importance of contextualizing propaganda within audience-specific emotional landscapes. Overall, the findings confirm that Rama's diaspora addresses are carefully engineered performances of emotional persuasion, ideological alignment, and identity reinforcement, key elements for maintaining political legitimacy across national borders.

Conclusion

This study analyzed two diaspora speeches delivered by Edi Rama in Athens and Milan in 2024, focusing on how language constructs emotional bonds, ideological narratives, and political legitimacy. Using a combination of Critical Discourse Analysis and Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies, the research uncovered systematic patterns of lexical framing, agency attribution, modality construction, and ideological binary formation. The findings demonstrate that Rama's speeches mobilize emotional and ideological resources strategically: using inclusive pronouns to foster unity, active voice to empower the diaspora, modal verbs to frame political goals as necessary and inevitable, and collocational patterns to create morally resonant oppositions.

While both speeches pursue similar ideological goals, their emotional framing subtly adapts to the historical and emotional landscapes of different diaspora communities. These results contribute to broader discussions on propaganda, political rhetoric, and diaspora engagement, confirming that emotional framing and ideological simplification remain central tools in contemporary political communication. Building on these findings, several avenues for further research emerge. Comparative studies analyzing diaspora speeches delivered by different political figures or across various regions could uncover broader rhetorical patterns and strategies. A longitudinal analysis of Rama's diaspora rhetoric over time would offer insights into possible shifts in political messaging, emotional appeals, and strategic framing as contexts evolve. Additionally, audience reception studies investigating how diaspora communities interpret and respond to such speeches emotionally would provide a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of persuasive strategies. Finally, cross-linguistic analyses comparing the original Albanian discourse with translations into English or Italian could illuminate how emotional and ideological meanings are preserved, adapted, or transformed across languages and cultural contexts. Such studies are critical for understanding how political legitimacy is discursively constructed in transnational settings.

By continuing to explore the intersections of language, emotion, ideology, and identity, researchers can further illuminate the complex dynamics of contemporary political discourse.

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