Universidad Zaragoza
1542

Trabajo Fin de Grado

Language and the Construction of Identity in the Scottish Separatist Movement:
First Minister Alex Salmond's Preface to
Scotland's Future (2013)

Autor

Adrián TORRALBA GRACIA

Directora

Rosa Lorés Sanz

INDEX

ABSTRACT

Political discourse resorts to certain linguistic mechanisms to convey concrete meanings which translate into the adherence of the voting masses. This paper examines the linguistic techniques that were used in the Preface by Alex Salmond to *Scotland's Future* (2013) in the construction of identity in the separatist message and the portrayal of Scotland and the Scots. For this purpose, one of the main tools for my analysis is the systemic-functional analytic framework by Halliday, more specifically, the relevance of the ideational metafunction. This concept links to Van Dijk's critical approach to the discursive reproduction of dominance discourses. This methodological framework has contributed to the highlighting of certain language choices in the analysis of dominance in political discourse. In the selected source text, language erects as a source of enhancement of unity among the Scottish population or as a source of distancing to the UK institutions, which are linked to their oppression. All of these linguistic associations result in the creation of a new, separatist Scottish identity.

Key Words:

Separatism, Scotland, Language, Government, Preface, Identity, Referendum.

El discurso político recurre a mecanismos lingüísticos para trasladar un significado preciso que desencadene la adhesión de votantes. Este papel examina las técnicas lingüísticas que se han utilizado en el prefacio de Alex Salmond al texto *Scotland's Future* (2013) para crear una nueva identidad escocesa enmarcada en el mensaje separatista y en el nuevo proyecto de Escocia y de los escoceses. Con este fin, una de las herramientas de análisis es la lingüística sistémica-funcional de Halliday, y más concretamente la metafunción ideacional. Este concepto hila con la teoría del análisis crítico del lenguaje de Van Dijk que aborda la perpetuación a través del lenguaje de las perspectivas de dominación en el discurso político. En el texto de análisis, el proyecto independentista se erige lingüísticamente como fuente de unión entre los escoceses así como del rechazo hacia las instituciones del Reino Unido, que se presentan como opresivas. Todo esto se asocia, a través del lenguaje, con la creación de una nueva identidad de la Escocia independiente.

Palabras Clave:

Separatismo, Escocia, Lenguaje, Gobierno, Prefacio, Identidad, Referéndum.

1. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly polarised world and political panorama, language erects as an indispensable tool for ideological persuasion and voters' adherence. It is precisely in separatist movements that this bears special relevance. The reason for that is rooted in the identity of the people living in those areas which aim for independence. Language should convey their separatism message and comprise the essence of their collective identity — as identity cannot be understood without a social context. This conception links identity to ideology and the values of a group. Therefore, the sense of belonging to a community is an idea influenced by political discourse. In political communication, identification and, therefore, a sense of community, is essential for the creation of a political space and the adhesion of voters. This has been addressed by many scholars in the last years, especially regarding the secessionist campaigns. Van Dijk (1993, 2006) carried a very exhaustive analysis of the dominance perspectives on politics and ideology. Mackay (2015) focused on the multimodal symbolic rather than on the linguistic implications of the separatist message. Moragas Fernández (2016), on the other side, analysed the metaphoric creations in favour of Scottish independence on social media. Szolnoki (2006) developed a very precise categorization of the techniques used in the hegemonic separatist Scottish political message. However, the linguistic implications in the creation of a new sense of identity have not been directly addressed. There lies the relevance of my paper. The linguistic approach to Scottish independence by the defenders of this process emotionally portrays a sense of belonging based on a prosperous future, grounded on the cultural shared values of the Scottish population. There is an aim to reconstruct Scottish identity through linguistic means. For that purpose, this paper focuses on the First Minister Rt Hon Alex Salmond's Preface to *Scotland's Future* (2013).

Language is charged with ideology, and political speech is especially vulnerable to be marked and, therefore, biased, as it was claimed by Van Dijk (2006). Therefore, language shapes our conception of identity and the sense of belonging to a group.

All languages are considered to be shaped and organised in terms of three functions or metafunctions, as it was developed by Halliday in his book *Explorations in the Functions of Language* (1973). And the most relevant for this analysis is the ideational function: "[l]anguage is used to organize, understand and express our perceptions of the world", as it was claimed by Mayr (2008, p.17), referring to Halliday's ideas and his systemic-functional analytic system on language. And precisely this feature is relevant in politics as the message that is delivered conveys certain assumptions and implications that are linguistically marked. Although many times it may happen unnoticed, certain speech features are maximised to make the audience perceive the reality through those terms, which are ideologically charged. The electorate may not be aware of this markedness but the message inevitably penetrates in their subconscious. As Murdoch (2008, p.16) states "[i]dentity is a highly complex, multi-faceted issue, but one which was and remains highly personal, totally subjective. We cannot help but let ourselves be influenced in our thinking on identity by numerous factors including our own upbringing, education and cultural assumptions".

Every act of communication has its distinctive codes and special linguistic traits. "From the perspective of political communication, it is the ability to communicate the ideology of political parties that makes sense of metaphor in political discourse". (Moragas Fernández, 2016). Ideology is essential in the creation of collective sense as this concept can only be understood in a social dimension. The reason for that is rooted in the fact that "there are no private languages, there are no private, personal ideologies. Hence these belief systems are *socially shared* by the members of a *collectivity* of social actors" (Van Dijk, 2006, p.116). Ideology is defined in a communitarian sense and, therefore, it should be widespread to effectively reach the audience and convince them. "[I]deologies consist of social representations that define the social identity of a group, that is, its shared beliefs about its fundamental conditions and ways of existence and reproduction" (Van Dijk, 2006, p.116) Political discourses resort to certain dimensions of the language

to deliver a message that contains the speaker's perceptions and perspectives of the world.

This reality has been exploited throughout history for the Scottish nationalist quest for identity. Scottish separatism can be interpreted as a "result of Calvinism, or the Union, or the Highland Clearances, or industrialisation" (Watson, 1990, p,34). During James I King of Scotland and England's reign, the Act of Union 1707, and Industrialization and other events in Scottish and British History lie the bases for the Edinburgh Agreement. This document is the most essential piece of writing in the recent history of Scotland and of the Separatist message. It contains the UK-Scottish Governments' consensus for the referendum on Scottish independence, which was signed on 15th October 2012 in Edinburgh. The agreement was signed by the Prime Minister, David Cameron; the Secretary of State for Scotland, Michael Moore; the First Minister and author of the Preface that is going to be analysed, Alex Salmond; and the Deputy First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon. It was published on the official website of the United Kingdom Government and comprises the basis for the referendum as well as "the date of the referendum; the franchise; the wording of the question; rules on campaign financing; and other rules for the conduct of the referendum" (Agreement, 2012, p.3). This 13-pages document led to the writing of the text that is going to be analysed. History has shaped the identity of the Scottish people and this evidence is also a ground idea for the development of the separatist message.

Following some of the criteria that the mentioned authors highlighted, this paper analyses the enhancement of the positive outcomes after independence as a guarantee for social unity; the subrogation of the oppressing character of the British government and the national politics as a strategy for distancing the Scottish population from the common British institutions; the diminishing of the efficacy of British institutions and leadership to claim a need for renewal; the affirmation of Scottish solvency and legitimation as the only solution for true liberty; and acceptance of some future-oriented premises as a guarantee for resolution and a better future. All these aspects have effectively shaped the new separatist identity by distributing a brilliant future to the new Scotland ("us") whereas it portrays the 'other' as the oppressor. It will reflect on the election

results as proof of the efficacy of these linguistic traits in the construction of the new separatist Scottish identity.

2. METHODOLOGY

One of the most remarkable pieces of evidence of this separatist campaign can be found in *Scotland's Future* (2013). It is a white paper published on the brink of the Scottish referendum of Independence aiming at reporting or informing readers about the complex process of separatism and presenting the issuing body's philosophy on the matter. This kind of paper is intended to help readers understand the relevance of the movement, the solutions proposed to the problem and the possible consequences after the decision is made. As I mentioned before, this text was written and released as an informative document for voters regarding the separatist campaign that resulted from the Edinburgh Agreement, in which David Cameron signed a constitutional referendum to vote for or against independence and dated the ballot day (September 18th, 2014). The document comprises the most relevant and detailed information about the process.

The document is divided into five sections which include an overview of the process towards independence, the strengths of the Scottish economy, a list of very precise and detailed measures for the new country, the timetable of the separatist process and a compilation of more than 600 questions that the population asked to the authorities. The third section develops the intended political reform and the consequences, at different levels, of the politics that will be implemented. The lines analyse financial and economic stability, wellbeing and healthcare, education and development, exterior relationships and security, citizenship and culture as well as justice, law and democracy. The precision used to address every single aspect of the process toward Independence of Scotland reveals the formality of this movement and the inclusion of the Q&A section manifests the democratic effort to listen to the citizens and their demands for a new country.

The relevance also lies in the authorship of the text. It is an official document signed by the Parliament of Scotland. Therefore, it can be argued that it is in the manifest interest of the Scottish people, as it was signed by their representatives, who obtained a majority of seats at the elections. Moreover, it was published and it is still posted nowadays on the institutional Scottish Parliament website.

The reception of the document and, consequently, of the campaign, was effectively based on data compiled in McInnes, Ayres & Hawkins's research paper (2014). From the 26th of November 2013 (the day of the publication of the white paper) onwards, there was a concatenation of public events in which the message was spread. Especially significant was the 16-week campaign period that officially began on 30 May 2014. The highest peaks of diffusion for the message coincide with the televised debates between Alistair Darling and Alex Salmond (leaders of the 'No' and 'Yes' campaigns, respectively) on 5th and 25th August 2014.

The Preface to this text is written by the First Minister and leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP) at the time, Alex Salmond. This fragment is especially relevant for the emotional implication that it conveys, which is essential in the construction of identity. As an implicated member and prominent public figure in the movement, his writing is eminently personal and, therefore, charged with ideology. Consequently, this preface is the section that is most relevant for the emotional impact in the audience and, therefore, the most pertinent for my analysis of the discourse, far from the political aspects and attentive to the most emotionally charged part of the document.

What is especially relevant about these events and about Salmond's Preface is the linguistic dimensions that have been used to convey their intended meaning and the creation of the Scottish identity. There are some assumptions that should be transferred to the audience to reinforce the community belonging. "What is taken as a basic assumption is often what is taken as 'natural'. What is natural is usually taken as equivalent to 'good'. Similarly, what is seen as 'rational' and what is 'commonsense' are also usually taken as good. [...] a vast resource of cultural assumptions which we draw upon in order to legitimate our very process of legitimation" (Mackay, 2015). By linguistically reinforcing certain Scottish common traits, there is an occult intention to naturalise their national identity. Therefore, the neglection of those 'natural' rights by the British institutions is limiting the people of Scotland's will and freedom. In the Preface to the text, this sense of essentiality, of fundamentality, is reinforced by claiming that this separatist referendum is, as the paper itself claims, "a fundamental democratic choice for the people of Scotland".

These rights and commonsense principles are rooted in cultural beliefs. Consequently, culture is relevant for the portrayal of this separatist message. This is the basis for the nationalist distinction from the "other". And the concept of culture is essential in the description of citizenship and what is linguistically implicit in this term: what is included and what is not under the umbrella of Scottishness. It presents what is originally Scottish as opposed to the British tradition, the "us" vs. the "other". Rather than just represented by stereotypes ["a Scot became a mean man in a kilt who drank whisky" (Watson, 1990)], "ideologies [...] specify what general cultural values (freedom, equality, justice, etc.) are relevant for the group" (Van Dijk, 2006, p.116). These shared beliefs shape the sense of community. Culture, and the differences between these cultures "justify the legitimate establishment of a new state based on the will and consent of its members, where citizenship is something more than a mere civil contract, as it requires a sense of 'community membership'" (Marshall, 1950, p.40, in Dalle Mulle & Serrano, 2019).

It is precisely the combination of all these concepts (language, identity, ideology, history and shared beliefs) that structure all the argumentative scaffolding of my paper as the creation of a new collective sentiment is achieved by different linguistic techniques. Therefore, political identity is definitely shaped by language.

In order to prove this last statement and its relation to the analysed Preface, I carried a close reading of the text and subsequent content analysis, looking for pieces of evidence that demonstrated the strategic use of language in the construction of this new separatist identity. In this detailed analysis, one of the main tools for the analysis is the systemic-functional analytic framework by Halliday, more specifically, the relevance of the ideational metafunction. Halliday (1985) presented language as a 'social fact'. As such, it implied that grammar reflected a view of society that the speaker or writer has. Language works as a system and the choices we make reflect the personal representation of a reality. This system is shaped and organised in relation to three metafunctions: the ideational, which has to do with how we perceive and refer to the reality around us; the interpersonal, which refers to the use of language to interact with others; and the textual, which allows us to refer to reality and interact with others by

constructing organised texts. The most relevant for this analysis is the ideational one, as it regards the construction of personal experience and, therefore, identity.

This ideational metafunction refers both to the linguistic construction of personal experience and to its relational aspects. Firstly, the experiential function linguistically (grammatically, to be precise) shapes for the speaker the meanings of the surrounding world and about the self. The speaker will be "using language to construe a theoretical model of their experience. This is language in the experiential function" (Halliday, 2003, p. 15). Perceived reality "provides the framework of day-to-day existence and is manifested in every moment of discourse, spoken or listened to. We should stress, I think, that the grammar is not merely annotating experience; it is construing experience" (Halliday, 2003, p.16). The relevance will be clearly explained in the ongoing sections as the author of the text will use experience, and the collective sentiment, as the main tool for persuasion.

In addition to that point regarding experience, Halliday describes the logical function of language and refers to them as those systems "which set up logical–semantic relationships between one clausal unit and another" (Halliday, 2003, p.16). The connections that are made by the speaker also shape the perspective on reality. Language is impregnated with our perceptions and relations to the world and systemic-functional linguistics "provide insights into the ways in which language is socially constructed and embedded in culture. That [is why] it becomes useful for its application in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)" (Mayr, 2008, p.17). Halliday's systemic-functional framework will serve as the methodological foundation for CDA. Therefore, Halliday theories link to Van Dijk's critical approach to discourse analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis reveals how "social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (Van Dijk, 2015, p.466). Somehow, he focuses on the discursive reproduction of dominance discourses and "the way specific discourse structures are deployed in the reproduction of social dominance"(Van Dijk, 2015, p.468). This was also included in Mayr (2008). Language gives evidence of these dynamics as to "[w]ho controls public discourse, at least partly controls the public mind, so that

discourse analysis of such control is at the same time inherently a form of political analysis" (Van Dijk, 1997, p.44). The Preface that I am analysing clearly depicts the dominance relationships between UK and Scotland.

What is also relevant for the analysis of this text relates to the source text. It is a political text, which is especially suitable for linguistic analysis. It was claimed by Wilson (2015, p.776) that these political texts are especially relevant for the language these texts use, "where the focus is on aspects of language structure as it constitutes and displays specific political functions". In the development of his thesis, he argued that "control and domination of representations allow politicians to generate worldviews consistent with their goals, and to downgrade, negate, or eliminate alternative representations". There lies the relevance of this Preface, as a political text which uses language to show the alternative path for the people of Scotland. For that very purpose, it focuses on linguistic elements to show that "[h]ow one refers to oneself or others is not, or not always, a neutral act, and can be affected by culture, context, and interactional practice" (Schiffrin, 2006).

My analysis is methodologically grounded in these concepts and theories, as "[w]e need to know how they are organized, structured, and expressed, and what kinds of possible influence or effects they may have on the political cognitions of the public at large" (Van Dijk, 1997, p.41).

Having all that into consideration, my paper analyses the mentioned text —the Preface to *Scotland's Future* (2013) — in the delivery of the intended separatist message through the confrontation of the prosperous perspectives that the Scottish independent government is claiming to be able to achieve. Similarly, this independent Scottish identity is also accomplished by presenting the otherness of the British national institutions as the oppressing constraints for the liberty of Scotland. Moreover, by using vague language and avoiding, where possible, the direct mention of the British government, Salmond's paper aims at reinforcing the autonomous future of the nation-to-be. In other instances, the agency of the little-mentioned British Parliament is diminished so that their inefficacy impregnates the voter's flow of thought at the same time that the Scottish council is reinforced in its efficacy. Finally, the temporal references that the First Minister introduced are especially relevant in the portrayal of what was still an uncertain reality that

ended up failing in the ballot boxes. Summing up, language is used in diverse manners in order to convey a new conception of community, shaped by the separatist character of Scotland.

3. RESULTS

The creation of a new Scottish identity is grounded in cultural, political and economic, as well as historical reasons. All of these justifications are conveyed linguistically in Alex Salmond's Preface to *Scotland's Future* (2013). In the depiction of this new reality, there is a key concept that structures most of the strategies: the representation of 'the self' and the 'other'. The author presents some solid arguments for separatism that justify their need for a new independent situation. "The justification [...] involves two complementary strategies, namely the positive representation of the own group, and the negative representation of the Others" (Van Dijk, 1993, p.263). The results of my research have brought to the spotlight some of the most relevant linguistic techniques for the portrayal of a new communitarian identity rooted, in essence, in Scotland. These are going to be described and correspondingly exemplified in this section.

It is undeniable that the contents of the discourse present Scotland as the paradigm of uniqueness and exceptionalism. Their essence stands over and is distinct from that of the UK. By presenting these positive qualities the author aims at subverting the paradigm of dominance and bringing Scotland to the centre of the conversation.

There is textual evidence in the Preface to *Scotland's Future* that points to their national pride and their worldwide relevance. In the construction of a new separatist identity, enhancing the sense of belonging with the land is essential. Consequently, the author describes Scotland as "this diverse and vibrant country" full of " natural resources". This identification should be conveyed not only through its landscape but also through the community as a whole through the use of the first person plural ("we, our"). The discourse emphasises their richness "in human talent". Their land is claimed to be "renowned for the ingenuity and creativity of our people, the breathtaking beauty of our land and the brilliance of our scholars". Linked to this brilliantness, the discourse portrays certain social values which are commonly shared by the general population and which shape the separatist identity: "values of compassion, equality, an unrivalled commitment to the empowerment of education, and a passion and curiosity for invention". All these arguments constitute a "national celebration of who we are". This feeling of unity and belonging is the summarising tone that lies underneath the whole message. The new identity is characterised by their unity, and their sense of belonging to the land and the Scottish community.

The First Minister also enhances their own capability and ability of self-management. It is not only a social issue but a political concern. It is precisely a u-turn into the self, into Scotland. It is in independence where the discourse finds the solution to their problems and also the most beneficial source of hope. A more prosperous future is drawn linked to the self. This statement is reinforced by presenting the Scots as the best option for the leadership of their territory: "people who care most about Scotland - those who live and work here". It is precisely this separatist movement that guarantees this: "Independence will put the people of Scotland in charge of our own destiny". In this process towards the referendum,

creating a sense of Scottish community, which is described as superior, unique and independent, is essential; and so it is reinforced by addressing only the positive outcoming characteristics of the separatist project. With their raw materials, the Scottish population can build their own, and better, future: "[w]e are rich in human talent and natural resources. We are one of the wealthiest nations in the world. With independence, we can build the kind of country we want to be". It is also essential to prove independence as the only guarantor for the liberty and decision-making capacity for the people in Scotland so that they can "build a country that reflects our priorities as a society and our values as a people". The upcoming buoyancy of an independent Scotland can only be achieved by the people who belong to the land. Cultural values are also referred to in the creation of the separatist identity, linked to this sense of superiority and exceptionalism. As "one of the wealthiest nations in the world", Scotland is claimed to be in the vanguards: "at the forefront of the great moral, political and economic debates".

The positive representation of the self creates a sense of unity, of collectivity, in the population. The enhancement of the elements that create this community lies in the uniqueness and exceptional characteristics of this country and its people so that the writer presents independence as the only path to liberty.

3.2. ENHANCING THE OTHERNESS

In addition to the previous point, the linguistic "negative other-presentation" reinforces this sense of community, one which is being denied, and, therefore, should be defended. "The tactic of emphasising the negative actions of one's opponents and de-emphasising our own negative actions (and conversely with positive actions) is fundamental to legitimation" (Mackay, 2015). Therefore, this legitimation of independence is closely linked to the creation of a Scottish independent identity. Presenting the 'other', Westminster Parliament, as the oppressor and only portraying their negative aspects distances the Scottish people from the common UK identity. Moreover, linked to this point, there is a subversion of this Scottish's position of submission that will come with independence.

Firstly, the incapacity for taking action is emphasised in the Preface. Their own decisions are not taken into account and this is reflected in the consolidation of the idea that 'someone decides upon us'. If the separatist process fails to achieve independence, "[d]ecisions about Scotland would remain in the hands of others", which are associated with oppression. The text highlights "the powers Westminster has over matters such as taxation, welfare and the economy" as the limiting source of Scottish liberty to decide on their own matters, which reinforces the need for self-managing. This is guaranteed with a successful separatist result: "Independence will put the people of Scotland in charge of our own destiny". It is the solution for the prosperity of liberty: "It will no longer be possible for key decisions to be made by governments that do not command the support of the Scottish electorate". This sense of distancing from the rest of the UK is reinforced by the fact that "Westminster governments [are] rejected at the ballot box in Scotland". It is necessary that this movement and the new Scottish identity create "our own place in the world". This shapes the construction of the separatist identity, which is in need for self-determination and freedom of choice.

This dependence is especially emphasised in the financial status of the different territories: the "economic policy which disproportionately benefits London and the South East of England". Not only is it oppressive but also unfair in the distribution of resources. "Westminster governments [...] will no longer be able to inflict the poll tax or the bedroom tax on the most vulnerable people in our

society". This feeling of distance with the national government is emphasised by the emotional aspects which are explicitly included in this section.

The submission that the Scottish Parliament is claimed to suffer is confronted by independence, creating in this process a sort of bilateral relationship between the countries that would make them equal. This lack of consideration refers to politics but it also alludes to the people, the population of Scotland: "England, Wales and Northern Ireland will always be our family, friends and closest neighbours. But with Scotland as an independent country, our relationship will be one of equals". The new separatist government aims at restructuring not only the political but also the cultural difference that submissively considered Scotland.

This phenomenon shapes separatist identity by distancing society from the UK institutions, which are presented as perpetrators of injustices towards the Highlands. Along the main body of the text, the feeling of not being taken into account is especially highlighted as the motif of oppression. Moreover, as disposed of any decision-making ability, independence is presented as the path towards real representation and a true reflection of the Scottish interests as well as towards a re-evaluation of the Scottish prestige.

3.3 AGENCY

Another key concept for this analysis, which links to the previous section, is agency. The author in this text highlights "the power of various linguistic constructions which (de)emphasise agency" (Mackay, 2015). It refers, in this context, to the capability to take part in decision-making policies and the possibility of actual representation. This linguistic trait works bidirectionally: it emphasises the mistakes in British politics and the prosperity that the Scottish independent politics would cause. But, at the same time, it portrays the lack of agency that Scotland suffers as a member of the United Kingdom.

Partially, as the previous point of analysis points out, it emphasises the unfairness that lies underneath the measures proposed by the British representatives. There is a paternalistic identification of Westminster Parliament, as the almighty force that controls the decisions and actions in Scotland. Therefore, the sense of Scottish community is reinforced by emphasising the agency of the Westminster oppressive figure over the Scottish people. Parallel, the lack of agency that the Scottish Parliament has is also reinforced along the text.

In the text by Alex Salmond, he points out different pieces of evidence in which the democratic choices of the Scottish population are not respected nor considered: "Westminster governments, rejected at the ballot box in Scotland, will no longer be able to inflict [...]". Ideology is shaped by presenting negative charged words, such as "reject" or "inflict", in association with the Scottish electoral choice. This is subverted by presenting the direct consequences of the independent electoral system: "That is the real democratic value of independence -the people of Scotland are in charge. It will no longer be possible for governments to be elected and pursue policies against the wishes of the Scottish people". Moreover, in contraposition of this point, the agency of the Scottish government is presented as the guarantee for a "better future". It presents voting —and voting in favour of referendum— as the action that will lead Scotland to prosperity: "Those generations could only imagine a better Scotland"; however, "[o]ur generation has the opportunity to [...] start building the better Scotland". Independence is presented as an "opportunity to chart a better way". The Scottish government is the subject of submission and the agent of change.

Agency also points to the Scottish population's capacity to change the oppressive situation. The whole text can be understood as an opposition between oppression and liberty: they vs. us. Precisely the author, Alex Salmond, erects himself as the voice of the collectivity whose actions are to subvert the predetermined imbalance. As the people's voice, he manifests that "I believe in independence because I believe it will be better for all of us". This certainty and certitude manifest his "absolute conviction" that independence will bring liberty to Scotland. He, as the embodiment of the people of Scotland's will and as his First Minister, has "no doubt that it will flourish". That is "why the Scottish Government is asking you to vote Yes", as the guarantee for building a better future. This individual choice in the ballot boxes also symbolises the agency of the voter. This shapes the identity towards representativeness, as the new separatist government presents itself in the Preface as the agent for change. In opposition to UK politics, which are blamed-- they "could and should have done more"-- with independence, it is "the people of Scotland [who] are in charge", who can act on their affairs. This is even visually materialised in the capitalization of "Government". It is the institution, which appears 20 times mentioned in the Preface, that will shape the future of the nation-to-be. The capacity to choose ("the answer we give") is rooted in the separatist identity. The answer to the referendum will reveal the solution to "how we can shape our nation for the future". Scottish people, as embodied with agency, have the "opportunity to chart a better way".

Scottish society is presented as capable of changing this situation by voting in favour of independence. Their agency is emphasised as the solution for putting an end to the oppressive situation that Westminster enforces over Scottish territory. In addition, their representatives erect as the solution that would value the people of Scotland's choices.

3.4. LINGUISTIC VAGUENESS

Language can reveal, but also hide a reality. The technique is also applied in the introductory section to *Scotland's Future*. "Furthermore, it is possible to be vague linguistically (e.g. not *naming* one's opponent), while making it perfectly clear who or what is the intended target" (Mackay, 2015). This idea is linked to the previous section.

In comparison with the times the Scottish Government is mentioned, the United Kingdom as a country —in which Scotland was and is still included— does not even appear. Rather than referring to the whole country, there are few references to their government. "Westminster" is seldom mentioned in this Preface and, when it occurs, it is for absolute necessity. Where possible, other possibilities are used to refer to 'the other': "the rest of the UK", " the other parts of the British Isles", "England, Wales and Northern Ireland", "closest neighbours"... However, it is perfectly recognizable the fact that points out the United Kingdom as the source of oppression in the Scottish people's mind. The avoidance of as many direct mentions as possible to the British institutions erase the concept of Britishness and the United Kingdom as their country from the separatist identity.

Avoiding or vaguely mentioning the national community helps in the portrayal of the independent region of the Highlands. Moreover, when mentioned, it is obviously used to emphasise its oppressive characteristics and the reasons for the separatist campaign.

The expression of time in political discourses is also essential in conveying a message on the basis of "future-oriented abstractions premised on desire, imagination and the will to the yet 'not present'" (Brown 2005, p.331). By portraying the separatist future as a close-in-time and beneficial reality, it is very likely that this perception will penetrate the voter's mind. Consequently, the final separatist aim could happen. This aspect is also present in Alex Salmond's contribution to the white paper. This necessity of immediacy, of certainty, is reinforced by another linguistic trait that shapes the close future: the use of present forms for a hypothetical future reality.

The country resulting from a favourable voting scrutiny is introduced as a reality by using the present tense with a future value. Scotland is referred to as a nation, when it is just a country integrated in the United Kingdom: "[W]e are rich in human talent and natural resources. We are one of the wealthiest nations in the world". However, they are still not a separated nation. These statements make of the future a present reality: "This is our country. This is Scotland's future. It is time to seize that future with both hands". This political discourse aims at transmitting a "capacity [...] to mobilise a 'desire for life', a 'will to live' and 'a fighting spirit'" (Brown, 2005, p.348). It includes common knowledge to do so: "the better Scotland we all know is possible". The portrayal of these ideas makes the idea of independence a necessity and a motif for Scottish identity. These shared values are alluded to as the basis for a reality that they, all together, could build: "Our generation has the opportunity to stop imagining and wondering and start building the better Scotland we all know is possible". It is presented as a "progress in the modern age". Premised on the positive outcome of the referendum, the different pieces of evidence are presented as future-like evidence that is bound to happen does not let the reader "differentiate between our expectations of things [...] and the reality of those things" (Brown, 2005, p.351). However, the use of the present gives rise to hope. It is also claimed by the author of the Preface that "I have no doubt that it will flourish". The expectations regarding "the light of the outcome" concede a buoyant tint to the Yes results as the Scottish population will "stop imagining and wondering and start building". Alex Salmond looks forward

to the prospect of a brighter future and so he transmits to the compatriots, who would be equally "lucky enough to live in this diverse and vibrant country".

The use of not yet present situations as a reality reinforces the sense of need for independence. Moreover, at the same time, it creates a desire for a better future in the identity of the Scottish population.

3.6. POST-REFERENDUM REFLECTION

There are some relevant points that were spotted as a result of the voting ballots. The 'remain' outcome reveals that these linguistics techniques were not enough for a successful campaign. "In the Scottish Independence Referendum held on the 18th September 2014, the question 'Should Scotland be an independent country?' was answered 'No' by a margin of 10.6 percentage points: 2,001,926 electors (55.3%) voted 'No' and 1,617,989 electors (44.7%) voted 'Yes'" (McInnes, Ayres & Hawkins, 2014, p.1). However, the results show a very interesting tendency for this analysis. "'Yes' then appeared to narrow the deficit appreciably between February and April 2014 and then almost closed the gap entirely during the final three weeks of the campaign" (McInnes, Ayres & Hawkins, 2014, p.16). The campaign and the linguistic strategies that were used along the previous month were effective as, "[a]ccording to the Lord Ashcroft survey, 62% of voters who made their mind up in the final month of the campaign voted 'Yes' [...] The overall pattern was that the later a voter made up their mind, the more likely they were to vote 'Yes'" (McInnes, Ayres & Hawkins, 2014, p.19). This tendency can be attributed to the linguistic-charged campaign that First Minister Salmond did on national television and meetings with the electorate, of this Preface to *Scotland's Future* (2013) is a written manifestation. So effective this was that it was claimed that "[f]or yes-voters the most important issues that determined their vote were disaffection with Westminster politics" (McInnes, Ayres & Hawkins, 2014, p.19). Although it was not enough for a 'Yes' majority, these techniques proved to be successful.

Very recently, just one week before finishing my paper, the First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon has claimed to be organising a new campaign for another referendum for independence in October 2023 (Hui, 2022), despite the British institutions' opposition and Boris Johnson's explicit denial for an agreement to organise the referendum for Scottish independence. In the upcoming year, separatist politicians may implement the techniques that I developed in this paper and will therefore highlight the relevance of Halliday's functional linguistics and Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis for the analysis of political discourse. Linguistically linked to the points I developed in my analysis, the world will see the role of Brexit in this new campaign and the importance of the COVID-19 pandemic

and Boris Johnson's administration on the Scottish discontent with Westminster. In the development of this new campaign, we will likely see a display of linguistic techniques that will mirror Alex Salmond's Preface to *Scotland's Future* (2013).

4. CONCLUSIONS

Although many of these linguistic traits were implemented during the whole separatist campaign, as it has been developed in the Preface and the principles for declaration of independence, they have not been powerful enough for the successful outcome of the movement. So it was proven later in the 2014 referendum for independence (McInnes, Ayres & Hawkins, 2014). In their attempt, Scottish separatist figures and politicians used different linguistic approaches to convey the necessity of the independence of the Scottish nation and the construction of a new Scottish identity: the enhancing of the positive outcomes after the independence to foster the unity of the population; the portrayal of the oppressing character of the British government and national politics for the distancing of the UK institutions from the people; the diminishing of the efficacy of British measures and leadership for the rejection of the British roots of Scotland; the affirmation of Scottish solvency and legitimation in an act of showing capability of acting; and the presentation of future-oriented measures in present tense to offer a perspective and the possibility of hope and optimism. These linguistic traits may be implemented in the recently announced campaign for another referendum in 2023 to achieve the final outcome for independence and the shaping of a truly independent identity. All these arguments have been rooted in Halliday and Van Dijk's perspectives on language and on discourse analysis, who emphasised the relevance of language choices in the analysis of dominance in political discourse and, more especifically, in Alex Salmond's Preface to *Scotland's Future* (2013).

26

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Agreement, E. (2012). Agreement between the United Kingdom Government and the Scottish Government on a referendum on independence for Scotland. *HM Government, The Scottish Government.*

Brown, N. (2005). Shifting Tenses: Reconnecting Regimes of Truth and Hope. *Configurations 13*(3), 331-355. doi:10.1353/con.2007.0019

Dalle Mulle, E., & Serrano, I. (2019). Between a principled and a consequentialist logic: Theory and practice of secession in Catalonia and Scotland. *Nations and Nationalism*, *25*(2), 630-651.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1973). *Explorations in the functions of language*. London: Arnold.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold.

Halliday, M.A.K. (2003). On the "architecture" of human language. In On Language and Linguistics. Volume 3 in the Collected Works of M.A.K. Halliday. London and New York: Equinox. pp. 15–18.

Hui, S. (2022, June 14). Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon launches campaign for second independence referendum. *The Globe and Mail.* https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-scottish-first-minister-nicola-sturgeon-launches-campaign-for-second/

Mayr, A. (2008). *Language and power: An introduction to institutional discourse*. London: A&C Black.

Mackay, R. R. (2015). Multimodal legitimation: selling Scottish independence. *Discourse & Society*, *26*(3), 323-348.

Marshall, T. H. (1950). *Citizenship and Social Class*, vol.2. London: Pluto Press.

McInnes, R., Ayres, S., & Hawkins, O. (2014). Scottish independence referendum 2014. *Economic Indicators*, *5*, 14.

Moragas Fernández, C. M. (2016). *Claiming independence in 140 characters. Uses of Metaphor in the construction of Scottish and Catalan political discourses on Twitter* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitat Rovira i Virgili). https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/tesis?codigo=114317

Murdoch, S. (2008). Anglo-Scottish Culture Clash? Scottish Identities and Britishness, c. 1520-1750. *Cycnos, 25*(2), 1-16.

Schiffrin, D. (2006). *In Other Words: Variation in Reference and Narrative*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Szolnoki, A. (2006). *Scottish independence. An analysis of speeches made by Jack McConnell* (Master's thesis, Universitetet i Tromsø). https://munin.uit.no/bitstream/handle/10037/448/doga.pdf?sequence=1

The Scottish Government (2013). *Scotland's Future: Your Guide to an Independent Scotland.* Edinburgh, Scotland: APS Group*. https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-future/*

Van Dijk, T. A. (1993). Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse & society*, *4*(2), 249-283.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1997). What is political discourse analysis?. In: J. Blommaert and C. Bulcaen (eds.), *Political Linguistics* (pp. 11–52). Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Van Dijk, T. A. (2006). Ideology and discourse analysis. *Journal of political ideologies*, *11*(2), 115-140.

Van Dijk, T. A. (2015). Critical discourse analysis. In D. Tannen, H.E. Hamilton and D. Schiffrin (eds), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 466-485). Oxford, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Watson, G. (1990). Scottish Culture and the Lost past. *The Irish Review (1986-2018)*, (8), 34-45.

Wilson, J. (2015). Political discourse. In D. Tannen, H.E. Hamilton and D. Schiffrin (eds), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 775-794). Oxford, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.