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# *A Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis of Ursula von der Leyen's Political Speeches*

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## ***Introduction***

This dissertation studies the political speeches of President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen. Specifically, the aim is to identify von der Leyen's communication strategies as a political figure relying on the linguistic analysis of a corpus comprehending her discourses. The corpus used for said analysis includes 173 speeches delivered by the President, from the first she uttered since her election in December 2019 to the end of 2021. My interest in this topic is due to the admiration for female figures of power in modern days' political scene, as well as the effect and significance of their presence in the public sphere. Secondly, another factor that arose my interest, was the importance of communication and language, which are the backbone of society and in particular of politics. As Schäffner (1996) points out, language is vital to the process of transforming political will into social action: any political action is prepared, accompanied, controlled and influenced by language. Another relevant element to consider is the main function of political language i.e. persuasion.

The dissertation will try to understand how language is influential in politics and how politicians are able to manipulate language in order to persuade the audience, in particular how President von der Leyen exploits language to convey her messages. The thesis is articulated in three chapters. Chapter 1 focuses on the language of political speeches. It defines the meaning of discourse analysis, especially of political discourse analysis, and analyses the main features of the language of politicians. It illustrates rhetoric, persuasive strategies, the use of pronouns as well as the structure and register used and vocabulary. Chapter 2 presents the use of corpora to investigate political discourse, providing a definition of corpora and examples of previous studies that resorted to corpora as a tool for discourse analysis in the political field. Ultimately, Chapter 3 offers an overview of the life of Ursula von der Leyen and her path to the European Presidency and describes the analysis of the 173 speeches composing the corpus by identifying the features of said speeches that characterize Ursula von der Leyen's communication strategies.

The results of my study will allow the reader to understand how President von der Leyen employs specific pronouns, vocabulary choices, metaphors and other figures of speech and persuasion strategies in order to clearly express her ideologies, her messages and persuade the audience.



# **1. Discourse analysis: the language of political speeches**

In this chapter, I will discuss the prominent role of language in political speeches and the use of discourse analysis in correlation to politics. In order to do so, I will define language, politics, discourse analysis and political discourse. I will take into consideration the ability of politicians of manipulating linguistic tools in order to persuade an audience (Mooney & Evans, 2019). To further understand how language can be used as a means of persuasion, the following features will be explored: rhetoric, pronouns use, vocabulary use, structure and register.

Language is vital to the process of transforming political will into social action, to the extent that “any political action is prepared, accompanied, controlled and influenced by language” (Schäffner, 1997: 1). Politics can be defined as a science which deals with decision making and government; in these terms, politics is carried out by politicians. In a broader view, politics can be understood as any social relationship which deals with power, governing and authority (Mooney & Evans, 2019: preface, xiv). The language of politics studies the way language and linguistic differences between peoples are dealt with in the political arena. It is the language used by institutions of governance to conduct their business, to communicate with other institutions and with the rest of society, or, more largely, all the discourses produced by groups within a society which relate to issues concerning the management of power of social governance (Mooney & Evans, 2019: 1). In the following sections I will deeply examine the aforementioned topics devoting particular attention to discourse analysis, the components of the research method adopted in this investigation and specifically the application of these in the analysis of political speeches.

## **1.1 Political discourse analysis**

As Taylor (2013: 2) states: “discourse analysis usually refers to a research approach in which language material, such as oral or written texts, and sometimes other material, is examined as evidence of phenomena beyond the individual person.”

To better understand the previews statement, discourse analysis can be narrowly defined as a close study of language and how it is used as evidence of different aspects of society and social life (Taylor, 2013: 4). This method penetrated in a variety of disciplines such as sociology, philosophy, history, literary studies, cultural studies,



anthropology, psychology and linguistics. According to Wodak and Krzyżanowski (2008 : 3), discourse analysis provides a general framework to problem-oriented social research. In other words, it is used to conduct research on the use of language in context in a wide variety of social problems.

For the purpose of this specific study, I will be focusing on the analysis of political speeches, otherwise described as political discourse analysis. This field of discourse analysis focuses on discourses of political matter such as debates, speeches and hearings as the phenomenon of interest. To be able to completely understand what political discourse analysis is, it is necessary to determine what can be identified as political discourse. The easiest way to identify a political discourse is by the authors or actors, that is to say that a political discourse can be recognized as such as a consequence of the person who delivered said discourse, i.e. the politician. Politicians in this sense are the group of people, elected or appointed as the central players in the polity, who get paid for their political activities (Van Dijk, 1997: 13). To study and understand political discourse analysis, it is crucial to include every interactional point of view of the discourse. Therefore the various *recipients* in political communicative events, of any group or category, should also be included (Van Dijk, 1997: 13). When locating politics and the political discourses in the public sphere, it becomes obvious that many other participants in political communication, other than politicians, can be easily recognized. Another evidently important factor of political discourse analysis is political terminology. Chilton (2010: 226) describes “political terms” as lexical items that would be recognised by native speakers as typically used to refer to entities and processes in that domain of social life concerned with politics, where politics is understood as the primary activities associated with the public institutions of the state. According to Chilton (2010: 226), political terminology and political discourse are two distinguished elements, since political discourse concerns the function of political speeches, whereas political terminology mainly focuses on their topics.

## **1.2 The main features of the language of politicians**

Chomsky (2004) explains how words are the currency of power in elections. Language is certainly involved in every political action, with just a very limited number of exceptions, and represents the main mean of persuasion used in the political field to instil the audience with ideas and beliefs. Politicians’ strategies pursue “a certain

*objectif explicite*” (Gambier, 2008: 64), namely gaining consensus (Viezzi, 2001: 136). Functional features are the beacon of political communication. Topics, which are partially determined by broader and narrow contextual factors, are not the drive of political communication. Rather, the discursive strategies selected to address topics are the heart of political communication and, consequently, of research on political speeches. The choice of the verb *select* in the previous sentence is deliberate, in that politicians’ choice of specific thematic and functional strategies is the hinge of political argumentation (Zarefsky, 2009: 121). In the following section, I will describe the main features that characterize the language of politicians.

### **1.2.1 Rhetoric**

The main feature of political discourse is rhetoric. The term was born in the first democracy of ancient Greece and is none other than the skill of persuasion. In formal rhetoric, we can identify three main fields where persuasion is applied: politics, law and speeches of public praise or blame (Partington and Taylor, 2018: 4). The Greeks presented a five-step process for speech making: invention/idea, arrangement, style, memory and delivery. By following these steps, the speaker would be able to deliver a believable and persuasive speech (Mooney & Evans, 2019). According to Aristotle, rhetoric consists of three basic appeals. The first, *ethos*, is the attempt to establish the credentials to justify why you should be listened to. An adversary may attempt to *delegitimise* the *ethos* by questioning the character or discrediting the credentials to make certain claims or hold certain powers. The second basic appeal is *logos*, the attempt to present a plausible argument in a logical or at least apparently logical way. Finally, the third basic appeal is *pathos*, meaning the attempt to appeal to the audience’s emotions (Aristotle, 2008: 236). A fundamental concept in sociolinguistics and communication theory is that of *face* and *facework* (Goffman, 1967; Brown and Levinson, 1987). “Face” is defined as the image people project of themselves to the outside world and “facework” is the behaviour employed to project that image. As Partington (2006: 97-98) has shown, politicians and other professional persuaders have two separate kinds of face, namely *competence* face and *affective* face. Competence face is one’s image as well-informed, expert, in control and authoritative. On the other hand, affective face is one’s image as likeable, good-humoured, normal, part of the collective (Partington and Taylor, 2018: 45). Knowing when to prioritise one over the other in

front of an audience is a political skill. The scholars studying rhetoric have categorised the various methods of persuasion in different ways. One of said methods distinguishes between “persuasion by appeal to reason” and “persuasion by appeal to the emotions” (Partington and Taylor, 2018: 45), which is similar to that made by Aristotle between the appeals to *logos* and *pathos*. Another similar distinction is a division between ideational or conceptual persuasion and interpersonal persuasion (Partington and Taylor, 2018: 46). In ideational or conceptual persuasion, the speaker projects primarily the competence face and an author attempts to persuade an audience of the validity, logic or usefulness of the idea and actions of the politician itself. In interpersonal persuasion, the speaker projects primarily the affective face and an author attempts to convince others that he/she is honest, interesting and worthy of attention, respect and friendship. Alternatively, they could seek to persuade the audience itself is lacking some quality, product or service that the speaker/author would be able to provide (Partington and Taylor, 2018: 46).

### **1.2.2 Persuasive strategies**

In order to better understand the dynamics of political persuasion, I will provide a selection of the most common persuasive strategies adopted in political discourses (Mooney & Evans, 2019; Partington and Taylor, 2018).

Figures of speech such as metaphor and simile (Mooney & Evans, 2019) are a key tool in political discourses. Metaphor is a figurative expression where a word or phrase from one area of meaning (semantic field) is used to refer to something from a different semantic field. Metaphorical expressions transfer some features from the first semantic field to the second. As Mio (1997) observes, metaphor seems uniquely designed to address the information-processing capacity problems discussed by the political cognition theory advocates. This discussion draws on Ortony's (1975) compactness thesis which discusses the importance of metaphors in conveying much information in a concise manner. Due to its relative simplicity, a metaphor is a key element in persuading the receiver who “will feel relief from the tension created by not understanding the issue” in a situation where said political issue is not easily accessible in its unorganized form (Mio, 1997: 121). A second phenomenon, related to the latter, is the feeling of familiarity. Effective metaphors “resonate with latent symbols residing within the receivers”, therefore, if these latent symbols resonate within the metaphor, the receiver

will recognize the theme and rediscover the familiar (Mio, 1997: 122). The second device, the simile, is a figure of speech in which something is figuratively compared to something else. Unlike a metaphor, where the comparison is implied, the comparison in a simile is made explicit by the use of expressions such as *as*, *as if*, *like*. Further relevant figures of speech used as persuasion strategy are euphemism and dyseuphemism, semantic tools which can be seen as another way of representing events and ideas from a particular angle. A euphemism can be described as the use of an inoffensive or more pleasant term as a substitute for one which might be unpleasant or taboo; it can also be used to promote a more positive image. On the other hand, a dyseuphemism is the opposite - that is, the use of a more offensive or less pleasant term (Mooney & Evans, 2019: 52). In bipartisan politics, each side naturally tends to describe its own policies with euphemistic terms and the other's with dysphemisms. Thus, in politics, dysphemisms represent a rhetorical *delegitimation*, an attempt of discrediting "the right or ability of an opponent to make a certain claim or argument or to hold a certain power" (Partington and Taylor, 2018: 75-76).

Partington and Taylor (2018) provide even further studies on the strategies of persuasion, examining first the persuasion by authority. In this appeal, the persuader, that is "the person responsible for the persuasive message, appeals to some sort of higher authority to convey and strengthen their message" (Partington and Taylor, 2018: 47).

A clear example of this kind of persuasion is religion, but it is largely used in academic and scientific writing as well. In her speech given on the International Women's Day Celebration, President von der Leyen included for instance:

[...] the female doctors and nurses, working double shifts for entire weeks and months. The women entrepreneurs, who have fought back, reinvented their business and pulled out all the stops to save their employees. The mothers of lockdown children, who have had to learn the toughest and the most amazing job in the world with no support from the outside world (von der Leyen, 2021)

She continues:

Look at Vice-President Kamala Harris, look at Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and what they have done for their countries. Look at their grace, professionalism, compassion, and resolve (von der Leyen, 2021).

Von der Leyen uses the appeal to women, and in particular to women in a position of power such as Harris and Arden, as a persuasive authority in order to support her argument of the necessity of having equal career opportunities for men and women.

According to Partington and Taylor (2018: 59), the problem-solution is an additional method of persuasion. The persuader first proposes and outlines a supposed problem in order to later suggest the solution to said problem. In a more sophisticated version of this strategy, the author outlines the problem then offers a preliminary solution, which is evaluated as wrong, inadequate or unjust by the speaker itself and therefor rejected. The persuader then suggests an alternative solution which is evaluated as correct, satisfactory or fair (Partington and Taylor, 2018: 60). The next persuasion model I will explore, also allows the speaker to create a situation for which he/she has already studied the evolution: the hypothesis-evidence-explanation model. In this model, the speakers first introduce their principle argument in terms of a hypothesis to then provide one or more arguments to explain, support and corroborate the hypothesis. This model might seem very rational, however, listeners and readers need to be aware that the speakers attempting prove their own hypothesis “are not always likely to include any counter-examples or inconvenient evidence in their discussion” (Partington and Taylor, 2018: 62).

The final persuasive strategy explained in this section is the three-part list or tricolon. Very common in political speeches, the tricolon employs parallelism. As the name implies, it consists of three parallel items, most commonly three words or phrases (Partington and Taylor, 2018: 99). “Most tricolons consist of a set of three phrases, each of which has a similar lexical and syntactic structure but accommodating a degree of variation” (Partington and Taylor, 2018: 100). According to Charteris-Black (2005: 11), the first part is supposed to initiate an argument, the second part emphasizes the first or responds to it, and the last part is a reinforcement of the first two and a indication that the argument is completed, assisting the audience by suggesting when it is appropriate to applaud. In Western societies, the number three is an important cultural element as it is obviously shown in many cultural elements: the Holy Trinity, the Three Kings and Lucky Number Three, just to mention a few. Furthermore, famous quotes that recall the three-part list strategy are the motto from the French Revolution *liberté, égalité, fraternité* and Churchill's *blood, sweat and tears*.

The following example from President von der Leyen's 2021 State of the Union speech, shows how she used the structure to emphasize the importance of working together (referring to the European states) when facing major crises:

In the biggest global health crisis for a century, we chose to go it together so that every part of Europe got the same access to a life-saving vaccine. In the deepest global economic crisis for decades, we chose to go it together with NextGenerationEU. And in the gravest planetary crisis of all time, again we chose to go it together with the European Green Deal (von der Leyen, 2021).

### **1.2.3 Pronoun use**

The following paragraph takes into consideration how pronouns can be used in speeches, specifically political ones, to influence the audiences making them feel connected with or disconnected from the speaker. According to Levinson (1983: 62), person deixis is involved in the encoding of the role of participants in the speech. The meaning of the personal pronoun is closely bound to its context, thus the use of pronouns can be easily manipulated. Experimental research has shown that the manipulation of personal pronouns influences the way we interpret our relationships with others. Moreover, the context and the way personal pronouns are utilized create decisive turning points for any politician (Van Dijk, 1997: 34).

The most commonly used and analysed pronouns in persuasive speeches, e.g. political one, are the plural pronouns in the first person ('we') and the second person ('you' plural). The use of the pronoun 'we' is essential, and it is fundamental to know that 'we' can be used inclusively as well as exclusively. Mooney and Evans (2019: 47) state:

The inclusive 'we', as you would expect, includes the people being addressed. The exclusive 'we' can function in two ways. It may be used to refer to the self and some other people, not the addressees. For example, the leader of a nation may use 'we' to refer to herself and other important government officials: 'We're working hard to fix this economic problem'. It can also be used to include some people, but not everyone. Thus, when political parties address their members at conferences and rallies, they will refer to the party and its followers as 'we' while excluding other political parties and their followers, 'they'.

Talking about inclusion, Levinson (1983) distinguishes between *we* and *they*. The first of the two plurals is called *inclusive we* that may include the speaker and the addressee, as seen in the aforementioned definition. Politicians select one deictic category rather than another to indicate to what degree they are personally involved. They highlight this difference through the categorization of groups using person deixis. For instance, they may use *we* when showing their solidarity with a particular ideology and *they* when trying to show the difference between them and another group (Tabakowska, 2002: 449). Van Dijk (1997: 28) brings forth the idea of “ideological polarization” by analysing the implementation of the pronouns *we* and *our* as a positive representation of the self and evaluating the self negatively choosing the pronouns *them* or *their*. This model of persuasion can also be recognized in a situation where the persuader invites the audience to compare and contrast an argument, policy, product or any element included in the speech, with others. Considering the fact that, in most cases, there is an assumption or implication that one of the sides compared is better than the others, evaluation plays a crucial role in this model of persuasion (Partington and Taylor, 2018: 51).

#### **1.2.4 Vocabulary use**

In political speeches, as well as in any other category of speech, the words the speaker chooses can both reflect their opinions and intentions and have persuasive affects (Partington and Taylor, 2018: 23). This paragraph will focus on the importance of words as a means of persuasion in politics. To better understand this subjects, I will explore the so called evaluative language, i.e. language which expresses the opinion, attitude and ideologies of a speaker or a writer which is the basis of political persuasion. Evaluation is intended, in simple terms, as “the indication of whether the speaker thinks that something is good or bad” (Partington and Taylor, 2018: 18). The persuader uses evaluative language in order to convince the audience of the good intents of their own opinions, that their proposals are worthy and logical and those of their opponents are instead illogical or dangerous, “that they themselves are honest and trustworthy (good) and maybe that others who disagree with them are not (bad)” (Partington and Taylor, 2018: 18).

When talking about evaluation, we can distinguish “textual evaluation” and “lexical evaluation”. The former implicates that evaluation can be expressed by the positioning

the blocks of language in the text in a particular order. Hence, if a speaker presents two alternative policies to their audience, the first one they talk about will probably be the one they do not approve, while the second one will be the one they support and intend to promote (Partington and Taylor, 2018: 21). This structure recalls the one represented with the hypothesis-evidence-explanation persuasive model in chapter 1.2.2.

Lexical evaluation regards vocabulary, meaning the words and phrases a speaker or writer uses in the text. Partington and Taylor (2018: 21) mention that the lexis contains the most obvious signs of evaluation. All the words in the language can be divided into two types: grammar words including determiners (e.g. the, a, one, some), linkers (e.g. and, because, since) and prepositions (e.g. in, at, from, by, across); and content words including nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Thanks to this classification, it is possible to observe that an enormous variety of the second type, content words, have evaluation as part of their meaning (Partington and Taylor, 2018: 21). Even though there are many ways of saying the same thing, the speaker or writer must choose carefully one among these many potential ways. The vocabulary choices made by the speaker/writer “can tell us a great deal about how they evaluate the topic in question, and so a great deal about their opinions and/or intentions” (Partington and Taylor, 2018: 21).

Thanks to the Appraisal theory, elaborated by Martin and White in Australia in the late 1990s and early 2000s, we can make use of analytical tools for the investigation of the writer/speaker's emotions, judgments and evaluations (The Appraisal Website, 2020). The Appraisal framework is concerned firstly with how text producers (writers or speakers) show themselves through their texts sharing their attitude and beliefs, secondly with how authors negotiate their alignment or disagreement with actual or potential respondents, and thirdly with how writers or speakers construct an ideal addressee for their texts (Martin and White, 2005: 95-96). The aim of this theory is to uncover the writer/speaker's attitude and the way in which texts align with their potential or real reader/listener. The appraisal framework organises evaluation in three main semantic systems or domains: *engagement*, *attitude* and *graduation*. For the purpose of this study, I will be focusing on the system of *attitude*. According to Martin and White (2005: 42), this system is divided in three semantic areas: *affect*, which deals with emotions, the expression of positive and negative feelings; *judgement*, which is concerned with ethics and the attitudes toward behaviour; *appreciation*, which focuses



on the aesthetic, the ways in which phenomena are valued or not in a specific field (Oteíza, 2017: 460).

## 2. Using corpora to investigate political discourse

The second chapter of my thesis explores the meaning of the term *corpora* i.e. large bodies of naturally occurring language data stored on computers (Baker, 2006: 1) and how these can be used to deeply analyse discourse, in particular political discourse.

Political discourse can be recognized as such due to the fact that the person delivering said speech is a politician. This chapter will attempt to answer the following question: how are corpora used to investigate political speeches?

To reach my aim, I will first explain what corpora are, how they work and how they can be used in discourse analysis. I will then proceed to discuss six previous studies of corpus-based political discourse analysis:

- “Corpus-based analysis of political speeches of warfare by Bush and Obama”, by Danijel Trailovic (2014)
- “A corpus-based discourse study of identity construction in political discourse”, a research article published by Shatha Naiyf Qaiwer (2019) in the International Journal of Language Academy
- “Using a Corpus of English and Chinese Political Speeches for Metaphor Analysis”, by Kathleen Ahrens, Huiheng Zeng, Shun-han Rebekah Wong (2018)
- “LGBT\* People in the Speeches of Italian and British PMs: a Corpus- Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis”, by Carmen Serena Santonocito (2020)
- “The use of metaphors in political discourse: the speeches of George W. Bush”, by Sandra Fadda (2006)
- “What Lies Underneath a Political Speech?: Critical Discourse Analysis of Thai PM’s Political Speeches Aired on the TV Programme *Returning Happiness to the People*”, a research article published by Jonathan Rante Carreon and Chavalin Svetanant (2017)

### 2.1 What are corpora?

This section will describe what corpora are, how they are created and how they can be used.

As Baker (2006: 2) mentions, the use of corpus-based methods dates back to the nineteenth century, but only in the 1980s corpus linguistics became a prominent methodology after the advent of personal computers, accessible by the majority of the

population. Johansson (1991) shows that the number of studies based on corpus linguistics increased significantly between 1976-1991, “doubling for every five year period” (Baker, 2006: 2). Since the postmodern era, corpus linguistics has been a key method in a number of areas of linguistics i.e. creation of dictionaries, interpretation of literary texts, forensic linguistics, language description, language innovation and mutation studies and language learning and teaching materials (Baker, 2006: 2-3).

But what are corpora?

Corpora are generally large (consisting of thousands or even millions of words), representative samples of a particular type of naturally occurring language, so they can therefore be used as a standard reference with which claims about language can be measured (Baker, 2006: 2).

*Corpus* (the plural form is *corpora*) is a Latin word meaning “body”. In linguistics, it has historically been used to refer to a “body” of data - a sample of utterances or texts - which provides evidence about the language it comes from. [...] today it is most often used to refer to a particular kind of sample: it is a large collection of authentic linguistic material which is stored in computer-readable form and can be analysed using computer software (Cameron & Panović, 2014: 81).

Therefore, a corpus is a collection of texts, written or spoken, that are stored on a computer and employed as a means to analyse how language is used in the selected material. For instance, in this study, the corpus includes 173 political speeches delivered by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. This corpus will be analysed with the purpose of discovering and understanding how she utilises language to convey her messages and persuade her audiences.

The most important type of corpora, in terms of discourse analysis, is the *specialized corpus* which can be used to study aspects of a language variety (Baker, 2006: 26). To build this kind of corpus, it would be appropriate to only collect texts that conform to this specialized criteria, alongside time and/or place (Baker, 2006: 26).

An aspect of corpus-based analysis that can often be extremely useful in terms of discourse analysis is the diachronic one i.e. the process of checking changes over time. Considering the non-static feature of discourse, one way of investigating its development and changes is to use a *diachronic corpus* (Baker, 2006: 29). This type of corpus is built in order to be representative of a language or language variety over a

particular period of time, making it possible for researchers to track linguistic changes within it (Baker, 2006: 29). The use of this specific kind of corpora avoids the criticism that, a corpus based study, may not take into account the changes that languages encounter whenever society changes (Baker, 2006: 29).

A final type of corpus, useful for discourse analysis, is the *reference corpus*. It consists of a broad corpus containing millions of words from a wide range of texts, and it represents a particular language variety (Baker, 2006: 30). For example, the Bank of English is a reference corpus containing over one hundred and fifty million words and the British National Corpus counts over one hundred million words.

While building a corpus, it is important to take into consideration possible issues that may be encountered while selecting the texts. “Certain types of texts will present their own unique problems to the corpus builder” (Baker, 2006: 35). For instance, oral data are generally harder to obtain than written data, as speeches need to be transcribed. This means that sections of a spoken text may be unclear or present overlapping dialogue and pauses that may need to be transcribed as well. Furthermore, while transcribing, it might be necessary to continuously stop and rewind the audio file as the speaker normally talks faster than the typist writes (Baker, 2006: 35). Another problem we may encounter, regards the difficulty of “rendering different types of accents or other phonetic variation, which can add to the complexity of spoken data” (Baker, 2006: 35).

## **2.2 Measures for corpus analysis**

Some of the main concepts of corpus analysis I will be using in my analysis in the next chapter, are: *frequency*, *concordances*, *collocates* and *keyness*.

*Frequency*, is one of the most basic measures of corpus linguistics and one of the main starting point of any type of corpus-based analysis, as it can show a variety of interesting phenomena. A word list consists of a list of all of the words included in the corpus analysed, along with their frequencies and the percentage of how much every single word contributes towards the corpus (Baker, 2006: 51). The concept of *dispersion*, related to that of frequency, is just as important; frequency allows us to know if something is or is not frequent in a text or corpus, but it is equally extremely important to be able to determine *where* the word iteration occurs (Baker, 2006: 49). For instance, a particular word form might be more frequent at the start than at the end of the text, giving us specific information about how this word is used by the speaker and

maybe about the speaker itself. In some cases, “the occurrences are all clumped together in one small section of the corpus” where said word is probably the main topic of that specific text; in other cases, “the word is a constant feature”, appearing regularly throughout the entirety of the text and/or of the corpus (Baker, 2006: 49).

Frequency lists can be useful and helpful to determine the focus of a text, nonetheless they do not consider the ways in which words are actually used within the text itself. For this reason, it might be necessary to favour an approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative analysis (Baker, 2006: 71). A *concordance analysis* is one of the most effective techniques for close examinations; it consists of a list including all of the occurrences of a particular search term in a corpus as well as the specific context they occur in. In fact, the concordance results show the search term and a few words to the left and to the right of it, which allows the understanding of said context (Baker, 2006: 71).

An issue we may encounter with concordances is that patterns might not be as defined (Baker, 2006: 95). Accordingly, we might need to pay attention to other words that regularly appear near the target/search word. If the association of these words appears consistently and the relationship is statistically significant, “such co-occurrences are referred to as *collocates* and the phenomena of certain words frequently occurring next to or near each other is *collocation*” (Baker, 2006: 95-96). Therefore, collocations allow the researcher to understand meanings and associations between words that would otherwise be difficult to ascertain (Baker, 2006: 96) and collocates can be useful to summarize the most significant relationships between words in a corpus, which can rapidly give analysts a clear image of the connection and the context.

The last fundamental concept I will explore is *keyness*, specifically keywords. “A keyword list gives a measure of saliency, whereas a simple word list only provides frequency” (Baker, 2006: 125). This element of corpus analysis can therefore be used to compare various sides of an argument, i.e. political debates, or the different linguistic styles preferred by different speakers, i.e. the different ways of speaking of different politicians. Moreover, a keyword analysis can be carried out on texts of different genres and/or intended for different audiences (Baker, 2006: 147). Therefore, keyword lists can direct researchers to discover significant lexical differences between texts, and keywords can reveal a great deal about frequencies whenever the researcher might not notice or intuitively match said words and connections (Baker, 2006: 147).

Given all this information about corpora, how they are built and some of the main features of corpus analysis, it is essential to underline that, “as with all statistical methods, how the researcher chooses to interpret the data is ultimately the most important aspect of corpus-based research” (Baker, 2006: 148).

### **2.3 Using corpora for discourse analysis (previous studies)**

In this section, I will include significant points and results of the six studies listed at the beginning of Chapter 2. The use of corpus analysis in these papers, as we will see, allowed the authors and researchers to deeply understand various aspects of political speeches. The studies I selected are dissertations of graduates from different universities and research articles published in different platforms.

#### **2.3.1 Bush and Obama's political speeches on warfare**

The first study I will be focusing on was conducted in 2014 by Danijel Trailovic, student of the University of Vienna, in his Master of Arts' dissertation titled “Corpus-based analysis of political speeches of warfare by Bush and Obama”. In his work he examined pronouns, modal auxiliaries, metaphors, and euphemisms in warfare speeches delivered by the two American Presidents, George Bush and Barack Obama, from 2001 to 2013, specifically after the 9/11 strike and during the War in Afghanistan, Iraq War, Libyan Civil War and the Syrian Civil War (Trailovic, 2014: 2).

The corpus used for this discourse analysis included 24 speeches delivered by President George Bush, for a total of 79,600 words, and 21 speeches delivered by President Barack Obama, for a total of 79,200 words (Trailovic, 2014: 11).

Similarly to what I will be doing in my study in Chapter 3, Trailovic used both quantitative and qualitative approaches to analyse the political speeches in his corpus in order to show the manipulative use of language in the political field. More precisely he focused on how President Bush and President Obama had different preferences regarding the manipulative strategies they used in their respective speeches. Furthermore, he suggested how the Presidents might have been perceived by the public through said linguistic choices (Trailovic, 2014: 2).

His findings, achieved thanks to the use of a combination of Corpus Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis, revealed a strong correlation between certain pronouns and modals on one hand, and some metaphors and euphemisms on the other (Trailovic,

2014). He noticed strong correlation tendencies of the pronoun *I* was with *will* and *want to*, and that the pronoun *we* formed clusters with *will*, *must*, *have to*, *need to*, *should*, *can* and *could* (Trailovic, 2014: 79). Moreover, in the case of metaphors and euphemisms, his analysis showed that “metaphors and euphemisms exhibited a high degree of conventionality”, implying that these items might have an unseen influence on the human cognitive system as they are often hardly recognisable by the public (Trailovic, 2014 : 79), revealing a possible hidden agenda of the persuader.

In his conclusions, Trailovic (2014: 79-80) emphasised the different use of war metaphors in the speeches. Bush presented “himself and America as heroes, protecting his public image” and employed intimidation in order to evoke powerful negative emotions with the aim of justifying war i.e. use of the *war on terror* metaphor. Obama, on the other hand, used the *war is business* metaphor and the *war is hard word* metaphor to portray war as “business” and an “exhausting endeavour” (Trailovic, 2014: 80). Finally, based on his arguments, he concluded that Bush used a language that tended to reflect foreign policy and that he could have been perceived as more direct; on the contrary, “Obama was more focused on domestic policy and self-presentation” and could have been perceived as more social and professional (Trailovic, 2014: 80).

Trailovic's analysis supports his claim that “the language of the American Presidents is highly implicational and manipulative” (Trailovic, 2014: 79), as language usually is in the political sphere.

### **2.3.2 Identity construction in political discourse**

The next example of corpus-based discourse analysis I will provide is a research article published on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 by Shatha Naiyf Qaiwer in the International Journal of Language Academy and titled “A corpus-based discourse study of identity construction in political discourse”. The paper provides a framework for the construct of identity in the political field through stance and evaluation (Naiyf Qaiwer, 2019: 410). As in the previous study examined, the corpus includes President Obama's speeches, specifically 25 texts including 69,272 words, delivered from February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013 (Naiyf Qaiwer, 2019: 414).

The aim of this paper is investigating “which linguistic features, that involve the construction of identity, are related to expressing collective and individual beliefs and knowledge” (Naiyf Qaiwer, 2019: 410). In particular, the' results designed a framework

that “established the way attitudinal identity is constructed in Obama's discourse” (Naiyf Qaiwer, 2019: 411).

Again, the analysis of the pronouns *I* and *we* shows the frequent presence of these pronouns in political speeches; providing a number of examples and explanations, Naiyf Qaiwer focused on the concordances *we believe*, *we know*, *I believe* and *I know*.

In her conclusions, she states that focusing on the verbs *believe* and *know* provided an insight into the way Obama used first pronominal references in order to express his personal point of view and beliefs “in a way that related to his self-presentation and constructing his identity as a commander-in-chief” (Naiyf Qaiwer, 2019: 430). Moreover, Naiyf Qaiwer (2019: 430) observed that the construction *we believe* was “co-selected with deontic expressions such as *should* and assertions expressing stance on the part of himself and his party”, therefore focusing on duty and obligation. On the other hand, the construction *I believe* was “co-selected with cause conjunctions, whose proposition was self-presentation expression” (Naiyf Qaiwer, 2019: 430). While *we know* was “co-selected with epistemic expressions and predictions, therefore focusing on knowledge”, *I know* was “co-selected with prediction and cause expressions implying the certainty of one's own political competence” (Naiyf Qaiwer, 2019: 430).

The pronouns analysed by Naiyf Qaiwer, *we* and *I*, are some of the most used pronouns in political speeches: while *I* is often used to express the speaker's personal ideologies and commitments, *we* allows him/her, as person in power, to create some kind of connection with the audience.

### **2.3.3 Metaphor analysis of English and Chinese political speeches**

In their ongoing corpus-based analysis, Kathleen Ahrens, Huiheng Zeng and Shun-han Rebekah Wong, from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the Hong Kong Baptist University, promote and examine the HKBU Corpus of Political Speech in order to analyse the use of metaphors in American and Chinese politics.

The corpus used in this study, and in many other studies conducted by the three authors, is an online archive of political speeches developed by the research team together with the Hong Kong Baptist University library. In total, 6,269,359 words of political speeches delivered by politicians from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the United States were collected for this online database (Ahrens, Zeng & Wong, 2018: 994). At the time of the publication of the paper I selected, “Using a Corpus of English and Chinese



Political Speeches for Metaphor Analysis”, published in 2018, the corpus contained four collections of speeches: “the English Corpus of U.S. Presidential Speeches (1789-2015), including six different types of sub-corpora; the English & Chinese Corpus of Policy Addresses by Hong Kong Governors (1984-1996) and Hong Kong Chief Executives (1997- 2014); the Chinese Corpus of Speeches given on New Year’s days and Double Tenth days by Taiwan Presidents (1978-2014) and the Chinese Corpus of Report on the Work of the Government by Premiers of the People’s Republic of China (1984-2013)” (Ahrens, Zeng & Wong, 2018: 994-995).

Their research examined how “concepts in one conceptual domain are mapped to abstract concepts in another domain” (Ahrens, Zeng & Wong, 2018: 994-995).

As previously studied by one of the authors (Ahrens, 2010), a cross-linguistic analysis of conceptual metaphor, based on a large corpus, would allow researchers to provide linguistic evidence of the mapping principles between the source and the target domains as well as evaluate the degree of cross-linguistically metaphors present in the corpus (Ahrens, Zeng & Wong, 2018: 997).

Ahrens (2011) investigated the lexical frequency patterns of two metaphor model and proved that Democrats and Republicans have a different vision of the world. As shown in Reagan and Clinton data, “they used metaphors based on value paradigms in two different metaphor models, respectively” (Ahrens, Zeng & Wong, 2018: 997). The findings in Ahrens' paper allowed a better understanding of the world's view of Democratic and Republican political leaders (Ahrens, Zeng & Wong, 2018: 997). Using the same corpus, Lu and Ahrens (2008) observed that “Kuomintang Presidents in Taiwan used *building* metaphors to instil a Chinese ideology” while the President from the Democratic Progressive Party preferred the use of *farmland* metaphors, emphasizing Taiwan’s agricultural background and its political independence (Ahrens, Zeng & Wong, 2018: 997). In addition, the analysis of metaphors in the Hong Kong English corpus, showed that the Hong Kong Chief Executives used more *journey* metaphors than *building* metaphors (Ahrens, Zeng & Wong, 2018 : 997). Ahrens and Zeng (2017a, b), analysing both the Chinese corpus and the English corpus, focusing on the target domains of *education* and *democracy* in both of them, made the following observation:

Hong Kong Chief Executives conceptualize education as *product* more frequently than PRC Premiers while both groups use the concept of *building* with similar frequencies. PRC premiers understand education more as *building*

than *product* (Ahrens, Zeng & Wong, 2018: 997).

Through the examination of the HKBU Corpus of Political Speech, they were also able to assess the different use of metaphors in the American and Chinese political scenes (Ahrens, Zeng & Wong, 2018: 997), providing further evidence of the influence of culture in the use of language.

#### **2.3.4 LGBT\* people in the speeches of Italian and British PMs**

Another example of the use of corpora in discourse analysis is Carmen Serena Santonocito's study. After using corpora and discourse analysis in her master's thesis in 2015, where she analysed the representation of LGBT people in the speeches of political leaders, in 2020 she resumed her previous study in her article "LGBT\* people in the speeches of Italian and British Pms: a corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis". The aim of this publication in the *Cadaad Journal* is to investigate how LGBT\* people were presented within the speeches of British and Italian PMs in "two traditionally androcentric and patriarchal context" (Santonocito, 2020: 187). The research questions she tried to answer were:

- How are LGBT\* people lexicalized and positioned in the institutional speech of each political leader?
- Which discursive devices are used to present LGBT\* people as social actors?
- What are the similarities and differences in the discursive construal of LGBT\* people in the two countries?

(Santonocito, 2020)

She implemented qualitative and quantitative analysis, paying close attention to possible similarities and differences between the British and Italian PMs discursive productions. The corpus used for her study consisted of "official speeches uttered by UK PM David Cameron and Italian PM Matteo Renzi", between 2013 and 2016 (Santonocito, 2020: 193). The search words she focused on were: *LGBT*, for the English language and *LGBT, diritt\* civil\** (civil rights) for the Italian language (Santonocito, 2020: 193).

The results of Santonocito's analysis confirmed that the diverse gender and sexual dimensions were constructed as problematic and deviant (Santonocito, 2020). She observed that PM Renzi, constrained by socio-cultural legacies, avoided clear references to the LGBT\* community and the only topic related to LGBT\* people discussed by

Renzi was civil rights. Furthermore the Italian PM showed a “high degree of vagueness and reticence” (Santonocito, 2020: 208). PM Cameron distanced himself from the LGBT\* community through the frequent use of the pronoun *they*, yet he engaged with the linguistic representation of LGBT\* people (Santonocito, 2020: 208).

As pointed out by Santonocito (2020: 206):

Both Renzi and Cameron raise awareness on the problematic condition of LGBT\* people, though MR expresses it indirectly via reference to the broad category of civil rights. DC, on the other hand, does not relate LGBT\* people to civil rights.

As shown in the analysis of the pronouns, the use of *they* is again used as a means to create a “space” between the speaker and the other group, highlighting different ideologies and often negative opinions about the latter.

### **2.3.5 Metaphors in George W. Bush's political speeches**

Once again, US Presidents' political speeches were at the base of discourse analysis. Specifically, George W. Bush's discourses were investigated by Sandra Fadda, in her 2006's publication “The use of metaphors in political discourse: the speeches of George W. Bush”. In her paper, she analysed the topics referring to foreign affairs and international policy to understand how political discourse is “metaphorized” (Fadda, 2006: 921). The corpus of study included six speeches delivered by President Bush between 9/11 and July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2002 (Fadda, 2006: 921).

As metaphors allow us to both explore features of discourse and understand certain meanings (Fadda, 2006: 929), she used qualitative analysis as well as quantitative analysis in order to have a more complete understanding of these metaphors. The use of “pseudo-cleft” constructions, a way to emphasize part of a sentence by using a *what* clause as its subject or complement with a form of *be* as the main verb, along with “a preference for nouns and changes in mood structure showed by the results of the analysis, presuppose certain attributes of the USA (e.g. America is strong, resolute and hegemonic through her triumph over terrorism) as well as a certain course of action (i.e. intervention) with a certain aim (i.e. global peace and freedom)” (Fadda, 2006: 930). At the same time, some realities were hidden to the receiver by the speaker to avoid the possible loss of the consensus of the American people (Fadda, 2006: 930). Moreover,

the use of the *fairy tale* metaphor in the topic of war, suggested the quest for said consensus “to carry out a policy of global and permanent intervention to protect and preserve” the economic and political interests of the USA (Fadda, 2006: 930). To justify his choice, the President portrayed the American intervention as a necessary action for worldwide peace and security. “The ideology of supremacy and intervention is transmitted through the metaphors” which are used to convey one clear message: “in spite of the attacks, American economic, military and moral superiority remains unchallenged” (Fadda, 2006: 930-931).

This study emphasised how metaphors pervade political discourse and how these can be used as a powerful strategy of persuasion in the political field.

### **2.3.6 Thai PM Gen Prayuth Chan-ocha's political speeches analysis**

The last study I will be reporting is Jonathan Rante Carreon and Chavalin Svetanant's 2017 research article “What Lies Underneath a Political Speech?: Critical Discourse Analysis of Thai PM’s Political Speeches Aired on the TV Programme *Returning Happiness to the People*”.

The main goal of their study was to “investigate the major elements of the political speeches of the Thai PM, Gen Prayuth Chan-ocha” (Carreon and Svetanant, 2017: 638). The corpus data for this study were taken from the speeches by Gen Prayuth in the TV programme *Returning Happiness to the People* collected from May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014 to May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015; it was composed of 10,672 words types and 325,398 word tokens (Carreon & Svetanant, 2017: 641). The translated English corpus used for the quantitative analysis was composed of 10,672 word types and 325,398 word tokens. The English translations were provided by Royal Thai Government, but the researchers highlighted the fact that “the lack of accuracy in the professional translations could have been deliberate, due to the fact that the messages were intended to address different groups of audiences” (Carreon & Svetanant, 2017: 641).

The researchers stated that “through his speeches, he is evaluated both by the locals and the international community for his display of interpersonal competence through choices he makes in the use of language” (Carreon & Svetanant, 2017: 653). These findings underline the importance of the linguistic choices made by public figures, as different word choices display different characteristics and attitudes of the speaker, who may be perceived by the audience in different ways. The speeches analysed suggested

that the Thai PM was “an ‘authoritarian’ speaker as shown by the informational, deontically modalised and dialogically contractive speeches” delivered to convey his government’s policies and to report on the actions done (Carreon and Svetanant, 2017: 653).

As the scholars noticed:

[...] there were not a lot of rhetoric strategies or persuasive linguistic techniques such as parallelism, antithesis and expletive, unification and cohesivation found in Gen Prayuth’s speeches (Carreon & Svetanant, 2017: 653).

Nonetheless, the messages the PM conveyed were very clear, emphasising either his attempt of being truthful to himself and his honesty, or rather his total absence of care and interest (Carreon & Svetanant, 2017: 653).

As Carreon and Svetanant (2017: 653) observed, the Thai PM's speeches were completely different from the “catchy and snappy” ones of democratic leaders such as Obama. This distinction suggests, again, the importance of language in the political field and in any other field, as the linguistic choices we make can strongly influence how our messages are received by the public and how we, as speakers, are perceived by the audience. It also underlines the necessity of paying attention to the addressee as different audiences may imply the need for different linguistic choices.

### **3. Von der Leyen's political communication strategies: a corpus analysis**

The aim of this chapter is to analyse and understand Ursula von der Leyen's political communication strategies through the analysis of a corpus comprising her political speeches. In the first section, I will give some background information about President von der Leyen in order to identify the path that led her to the position of President of the European Commission. The second part of this chapter will combine qualitative and quantitative analysis and political discourse analysis. I will deeply analyse the corpus with the purpose of understanding how President von der Leyen utilises language to convey her messages and persuade her audience.

#### **3.1 Von der Leyen's background**

In this paragraph, I will explore the steps that led the European Commission's President to her prestigious status and position. I will be focusing on her childhood, education and political career: how she was introduced to politics by her family, stepped away from it to be able to find her own path, but then found her way back into the political scene.

##### **3.1.1 Childhood**

Ursula von der Leyen, née Ursula Albrecht, was born in Brussels, Belgium in 1958. She spent the first 14 years of her life in Brussels, where she learned to speak perfect French. Her father, German politician Ernst Albrecht, originally from Baden-Württemberg, became cabinet chief at the Commission of the European Economic Community in 1958 and a Director-General of the European Commission in 1969. He entered politics in his native Germany when he was elected to the Lower Saxony state legislature in 1970, and moved to Hanover with his family the following year. During his election campaigns, Albrecht regularly involved his entire family. In this way von der Leyen “was introduced to the basic rules of political show business in her early childhood” (Goffart, 2019). As a child, she attended the European School of Brussels. After her family moved to Hanover, she attended Grammar School in Lehrte, with a special focus on mathematics and science.

##### **3.1.2 Education**

Von der Leyen studied economics at the Universities of Göttingen and Münster, in

Germany. After the Albrecht family received a kidnapping threaten from the Red Army Faction, she had to move to London where she lived “under the name Rose Ladson and with the protection of Scotland Yard for over a year” (TheFamousPeople). Here she joined the London School of Economics. In 1980, she abandoned her economics studies without graduating. After she renounced her studies in London, she moved back to Hanover where she studied medicine at Hanover Medical School (MHH) and graduated in 1987 as a physician. She specialized in women's health. After, Von der Leyen “worked as an assistant physician (1988-92) at the MHH’s gynaecological clinic and in 1991 was awarded a doctorate in medicine” (Petrikowski, 2022). During her years at university, she met her future husband Heiko von der Leyen who, at the time, was member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany. In 1992, they moved to California with their first child after her husband had been offered a post at the prestigious Stanford University. In 1996 she focuses on market analysis at Stanford Health Services Hospital Administration. While living in the United States, von der Leyen has the chance to develop “almost perfect English skills as well as a deep understanding of America and the Anglo-Saxon mentality” (Goffart, 2019). “After her return to Germany, she served as a faculty member (1998–2002) at the MHH’s Department of Epidemiology, Social Medicine and Health System Research. In addition, in 2001, she earned a Master’s Degree in Public Health (M.P.H.) at Hanover Medical School” (Petrikowski, 2022).

### **3.1.3 Career in politics**

Ursula von der Leyen, after joining the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in 1990, became involved in 1996 in the politics of Lower Saxony, the federal state her father had governed from 1976 to 1990 (Petrikowski, 2022). During the 2003 state election, she was elected to the Parliament of Lower Saxony and served as Lower Saxony Minister for Social Affairs, Women, Family and Health. “After the CDU won the federal elections in 2005, she was appointed minister of family affairs, senior citizens, women, and youth in Chancellor Angela Merkel’s first cabinet” (Petrikowski, 2022). “She thrived in her fight for the right to public day care for children as also for reconciliation of work and family life and she went on to introduce the Child Advancement Act and the German Elternzeit, a paid parental leave scheme. She also advocated for blocking internet child pornography” (TheFamousPeople Website). In 2009, she was elected a

member of the Bundestag (the German parliament) and became Minister of Labour and Social Affairs. During such tenure, von der Leyen “started a long campaign for women’s quotas in management and supervisory boards of listed German companies, spoke out for a nationwide minimum wage and gay marriage” (Petrikowski, 2022). She also advocated for lowering barriers to immigration for some foreign workers in order to mitigate shortages of skilled workers in Germany and concluded an agreement with the Government of the Philippines (TheFamousPeople Website). In late 2010, von der Leyen assumed office as a Deputy Leader of CDU and, for several years, she was considered a leading candidate to succeed Merkel as Chancellor. “The latter also preferred von der Leyen's candidature for President of Germany in 2010, but the conservative wing of CDU/CSU blocked her nomination” (TheFamousPeople Website). In December 2013, von der Leyen became the first woman, in Germany, to assume the position of Minister of Defence. “In that post she endeavoured to reform the Bundeswehr (federal armed forces) while dealing with a number of challenges” (Goffart, 2019). During her tenure in office, in 2015, after severe NATO-Russian tensions developed in Europe, Germany declared a significant increase in defence spending. In October 2018, after a poor showing by the CDU in regional elections, Merkel announced that she would not seek another term as party leader. “Von der Leyen declined to campaign for the position, which was eventually filled by Merkel protégé Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer” (Petrikowski, 2022). After not excelling in her role as Minister of Defence, von der Leyen's popularity started to decline. During her stay at the International Paris Air Show in Le Bourget, she met the French President, Emmanuel Macron. “Von der Leyen, charming and well-informed, conversed in fluent French with Macron about NATO and security issues. According to subsequent reports from inside the Elysée Palace in Paris, Macron was apparently highly impressed by von der Leyen's acuity” (Goffart, 2019). He decided to introduce Ursula von der Leyen as an alternative German candidate to the European People’s Party’s top candidate Manfred Weber. “The term of European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker was scheduled to end in November 2019, and his replacement was to be selected by the European Council - the heads of government of the 28 member countries of the EU” (Petrikowski, 2022). After a long and complicated process, which saw the European Parliament unable to confirm the election of a candidate as new European Commission President, and after a fruitless summit of the EU Commission, von der Leyen's



nomination to succeed Juncker as President was not expected. On July 2019, Ursula von der Leyen was narrowly confirmed as President of the European Commission; she is the first woman to hold this post (Goffart, 2019). Von der Leyen resigned her seat in the German Bundestag on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019 and assumed office as President of the European Commission on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2019.

### **3.2 Corpus analysis**

This section of the third chapter includes the analysis of the corpus I created which aims at exploring the relationship between language and politics. For this study, I will carry out both quantitative and qualitative analysis as well political discourse analysis. As Lazaraton (2002: 33) states, while quantitative discourse analysis aims to understand *how often* something happens, qualitative discourse analysis focuses on *how* and *why* things happen. Hence, these analyses will allow me to explore the rhetorical organization of political speeches and understand how language is used by politicians in order to persuade. To do so, I will analyse the corpus and the individual speeches focusing on the rhetorical devices and pronouns that are used, the way they are employed and what form of appraisal von der Leyen chooses. To build the corpus, I autonomously collected 173 speeches delivered by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. The time frame I decided to take into consideration goes from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019 to the end of December 2021. The texts included in the corpus cover various topics including economics, health, European laws and programmes, and COVID-19 pandemic.

For the purpose of this study, I will firstly analyse the corpus with the quantitative approach. This method provides statistical overviews of large amounts of elements present in the speeches in question: number of words, frequent lexical words, concordances and keywords. Secondly, I will proceed with the qualitative approach, i.e. the exploration of the meanings produced by language use and communication. Lastly, I will explore von der Leyen's communication strategies through the appraisal theory, focusing on the attitudes, judgements and emotive responses made explicit in her speeches. To do so, I will use the system of *attitude* of the appraisal framework, and its three sub-systems: *affect*, *appreciation* and *judgment*.

### 3.2.1 Quantitative analysis

I will start this analysis of the corpus with the quantitative analysis, providing tables with statistical overviews of: the number of types, the number of tokens, frequent lexical words, concordances and pronouns frequency. As shown in Table 3.1, the average number of types in the speeches of the corpus is 459, and the average number of tokens is 1156. The longest speech is the “2021 State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen”, delivered in 2021 in Strasbourg, which counts 6495 tokens and 1661 types; the shortest discourse is the “Remarks by President von der Leyen at the joint press point with Ludovic Orban, Prime Minister of Romania”, delivered in 2020 in Brussels, including 218 tokens and 116 types. This important gap in the length of the speeches highlights how the duration of political speeches can vary considerably based on the context and the topic. In the “2021 State of the Union Address”, President von der Leyen is addressing all the States of the Union and dealing with a variety of subjects connected to the EU. In the second and shorter one, von der Leyen is addressing the press after a meeting with Ludovic Orban, Prime Minister of Romania.

*Table 3.1. Quantitative approach of the corpus*

<b>No. of speeches</b>	<b>No. of types</b>	<b>Average types</b>	<b>No. of tokens</b>	<b>Average tokens</b>
173	79433	459	199972	1156

In Table 3.2, I classified the 173 texts according to the main topic discussed in each of them. As shown below, the themes that are more frequent in von der Leyen's political speeches are: (a) Europe and EU, (b) health, (c) climate and environment, (d) economy, (e) partnerships and negotiations with different countries, (f) racism and social issues, (g) technologies, digital and energy, (h) women, (i) politics and law, (j) others.

In the “Europe and EU” and in the “health” categories I also considered other factors, taking into consideration the period and world's situation in which these speeches were delivered. In the Europe and EU group, which counts 45 speeches, 13 speeches are connected to the pandemic and, in particular, discuss the NextGenerationEU Programme, a recovery programme to overcome the pandemic and help the European countries that were particularly affected by the crisis. In the Health group, which counts 25 speeches, 10 have the pandemic as their main topic, which underlies the profound impact this health crisis had in every field, including the political field, during the past

few years. In addition to the categories listed above, the topic of women as well as the topics of politics and law were often tackled in the corpus. The speeches included in the “others” category include: the solemn oath (1), anniversaries' celebration speeches (2), a religious celebration speech (1), a charity conference speech (1), an award ceremonies speech (3), an acceptance speech (1), achievement celebration speeches (2).

*Table 3.2. Main topics of the speeches*

<b>Topics</b>	<b>No. of speeches</b>
Europe and EU	45
Health	25
Climate and Environment	23
Economy	18
Partnerships and Negotiations	15
Racism and Social issues	14
Technologies, Digital and Energy	13
Others	11
Women	5
Politics and Law	4
<i>Total</i>	173

Table 3.3 shows the addressees of the speeches selected for the corpus, i.e. (a) the press, (b) the general public, (c) Europe, (d) international, (e) educational institutions. The categories “Europe” and “international” include a variety of institutions such as parliaments, committees, health institutions, European and world's leaders, political institutions, forums and conferences.

*Table 3.3 Addressees of the speeches*

<b>Addressees</b>	<b>No. of speeches</b>
Europe	92
International	48
Public	15
Press	13
Educational institutions	5
<i>Total</i>	** Expression is faulty **

By using AntConc, I also studied the list of words that appear to be relatively more frequent in the texts analysed. I searched for important and interesting lexical words that would be meaningful for the aim of this study and reported twenty relevant content words of the first one hundred more frequent words present in the corpus, as we can see in Appendix 1. As shown in Table 3.4, the majority of the items selected i.e. *Europe, world, union, global, together*, share a sense of togetherness, cooperation and unity, which are principles that President von der Leyen often underlines in her political speeches. Furthermore, eight of the twenty words are connected to the main topics listed above, i.e. *European, Europe, union, climate, digital, green, economy, pandemic*. Frequent verbs such as *work* and *make*, show von der Leyen's hard worker attitude and the importance she gives to the idea of creating something, working towards something; in addition, the high frequency of the question word *why* suggests that she often gives reasons for her affirmations and actions.

*Table 3.4. Frequent lexical words*

<b>Word</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Rank</b>
European	1420	19
Europe	1375	20
new	692	35
world	620	40
need	559	41
union	515	44
global	463	48
people	460	49
climate	448	53
together	436	59
digital	431	60
know	420	63
green	404	67
work	381	69
President	363	72
make	355	74
future	317	80
why	315	81

economy	282	90
pandemic	277	91

In addition, I compared my corpus with the BE06 corpus, “a one million word corpus of published general written British English [consisting] of 500 files of 2000 word samples taken from 15 genres of writing” (Lancaster University Website). The results of this part of the analysis allowed me to recognize the keywords present in my corpus; Figure 3.1 reports the 15 keywords obtained sorted by keyness.

Figure 3.1. Keywords

	Type	Rank	Freq_Tar	Freq_Ref	Range_Tar	Range_Ref	Keyness (Likelihood)	Keyness (Effect)
1	we	1	4563	3406	173	425	6827.993	0.044
2	our	2	2510	1358	171	325	4525.585	0.025
3	europe	3	1375	121	161	63	4155.796	0.014
4	european	4	1420	183	171	77	4042.425	0.014
5	will	5	1725	2160	166	381	1655.792	0.017
6	this	6	2584	4850	171	498	1456.112	0.025
7	is	7	3842	8995	173	488	1423.961	0.036
8	union	8	515	110	135	49	1311.329	0.005
9	digital	9	431	36	83	15	1310.100	0.004
10	climate	10	448	61	98	33	1260.795	0.004
11	global	11	463	126	113	51	1099.986	0.005
12	nextgenerationeu	12	265	0	57	0	953.302	0.003
13	pandemic	13	277	9	98	3	919.767	0.003
14	president	14	363	106	173	46	843.033	0.004
15	recovery	15	270	20	75	15	832.974	0.003

I then proceeded to examine the collocates of the keywords reported above.

The word *European* was largely used in correlation with the words *union* (201 hits) and the words *green deal* (84 hits), as shown in Figure 3.2; it was also often followed by the words *parliament* (57 hits), and *commission* (47 hits). Furthermore, the hit word was frequently preceded by *President of the* (13 hits) and *Plenary of the* (6 hits), as shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.2. Concordances with lexical word *European* (sort to right)

time, again we chose to go it together with the	European	Green Deal. We did that together as Commission, as
because of Brexit. – It is the climate change and the	European	Green Deal. – It is being at the forefront of
our ambitions for the future of our Union. Take the	European	Green Deal: we all know that we have to
from Lappeenranta, a Finnish city that was just awarded the	European	Green Leaf prize for 2021. The city is turning millions
entlemen, Dear friends, Congratulations to the organisers of the 2020	European	Green Week for a very successful edition. You have
strong in defending effective multilateralism. And this is why the	European	Union is proud to be the strongest supporter of
have made immunisation accessible to all across the globe. The	European	Union is proud to be part of this story.
orld Leaders' Summit Statement on the Breakthrough Agenda. And the	European	Union is proud to support all four breakthroughs on

Figure 3.3. Concordances with lexical word European (sort to left)

As a mother of seven and as President of the	European	Commission, I beg to differ. But I know the
no place on the Internet. As the President of the	European	Commission, I feel my responsibility in stopping terrorist and
by President von der Leyen at the Plenary of the	European	Parliament at the debate on the 75th anniversary of
by President von der Leyen in the Plenary of the	European	Parliament at the debate on the 10th anniversary of

The next lexical word selected was *Europe* which, as reported in Figure 3.4, was frequently preceded by the phrases *here in* (23 hits) and *future of* (20 hits). In addition, Figure 3.5 shows that the hit word was mainly followed by the phrase *is ready* (14 hits).

Figure 3.4. Concordances with lexical word Europe (sort center to left)

will protect at least 30% of land and sea here in	Europe.	We are ready to broker the same ambition at
status to at least 30% of land and sea here in	Europe.	We now want to broker the same ambition at
to protecting at least 30% of land and sea here in	Europe.	We now want to broker the same ambition at
become a deadly pandemic with tragic consequences also here in	Europe.	In a heartbeat, our lifestyles changed. Our streets emptied.
in Asia are even higher than they are here in	Europe.	Yet, there is something specific to the European situation.
while the virus has hit us hard, the people of	Europe	have hit back just as hard. I want to
compassion. And in the face of adversity, the people of	Europe	are showing how strong that can be. Small acts
Europe is now really stepping up. But the people of	Europe	are watching what happens next. And we all know
all in. But as I said earlier, the people of	Europe	are watching what happens next. And they of course
nds has given unprecedented prosperity to the people of	Europe.	But the Single Market can only function if the

Figure 3.5. Concordances with lexical word Europe (sort center to right)

change is the best global health opportunity of our generation.	Europe	is ready to lead and to make this the
de negotiations on an investment partnership. The point is, that	Europe	is ready to work on all of its partnerships,
is a moment to reach out, and make clear that	Europe	is ready to engage. Engage for recovery. Engage for
an unfair advantage. Just as we did with the GDPR,	Europe	is ready to take the lead to shape the

As shown on Figure 3.6, the word *future* often collocates with *of Europe* (20 hits). To further highlight the relevance of the idea of unity and togetherness present in the speeches, I included the following example (Figure 3.7) analysing the use of the word *future* connected to the image of what we own and create together, the image of *our planet* (6 hits) and *our union* (5 hits).

Figure 3.6. Concordances with lexical word future

pace is still accelerating. The most important thing for the	future	of Europe is that we have not allowed ourselves
the example and for urging us to aim higher. The	future	of Europe is in good hands. Now I would
option. Let me be very clear: This Conference on the	Future	of Europe is not just another conference for what
society. With your support, of course the Conference on the	Future	of Europe has a much, much broader reach. The
has a much, much broader reach. The Conference on the	Future	of Europe is, I think, the perfect platform – again,

Figure 3.7. Future and togetherness

biodiversity is at the heart of their future and the	future	of our planet. The most active ones are mobilising
nowhere is this clearer than when it comes to the	future	of our planet. The decision by Leaders to back
future. It is a statement about our ambitions for the	future	of our Union. Take the European Green Deal: we
European Council Presidency which will play a seminal role in the	future	of our Union. Honourable Members, The challenge ahead of
we also have our different views when it comes to the	future	of our European Union. But we must accept the

The last collocates analysed are *global* and *health* (56 hits), as shown in Figure 3.8. The first reason for this connection is, inevitably, the time frame in which these speeches were delivered which includes the pandemic years. The second reason is the particular interest of President von der Leyen for the health field due to her educational background, as explained previously in this chapter.

Figure 3.8. Concordances with lexical word global

move to action. This is why, just recently, at the	Global	Health Summit, the Commission together with the Italian G20
I would like to kick off by announcing a new	Global	Health Policy Forum. It will be an annual high-
level you!Opening address by President von der Leyen at the	Global	Health Pre- Summit Thank you, Mario. Thank you very
to uphold the multilateral framework that is so essential for	Global	Health Security - even when it was difficult to do

In addition, I analysed to the use of personal pronouns and possessive adjectives The use of the plural first-person is more frequent than that of the third-person (Table 3.5), reiterating the importance of making the addressees feel part of a group, a message present in a number of speeches included in the corpus. I will further analyse the use of pronouns in the next section of the chapter.

Table 3.5. Personal pronoun and possessive adjective frequency list

Pronoun/Adjective	Frequency	Rank
we	4563	5
our	2510	12
I	1448	18
us	655	38
they	643	39
their	531	42
me	264	100
them	249	106

my	200	128
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Moreover, the singular first-person pronoun is mainly used by von der Leyen to express her personal states with the phrase *I am* as well as beliefs and actions, as shown in Figure 3.9.

Figure 3.9. “I” collocates

	Collocate	Rank	FreqLR	FreqL	FreqR	Range	Likelihood	Effect
1	am	1	326	17	309	125	1200.524	3.917
2	believe	2	67	0	67	41	206.036	3.479
3	think	3	78	3	75	40	202.351	3.107
4	know	4	135	22	113	70	196.681	2.150
5	say	5	67	15	52	42	174.200	3.112

The plural pronoun *we* is used with the deontic expression *have to*, with verbs of necessity and auxiliary verbs (Figure 3.10), while the pronoun *they* is often associated with/opposed to the plural first-person or followed by the verb *to be* (Figure 3.11).

Figure 3.10. “We” collocates

	Collocate	Rank	FreqLR	FreqL	FreqR	Range	Likelihood	Effect
1	have	1	972	103	869	158	670.302	1.354
2	need	2	448	57	391	120	506.208	1.812
3	want	3	363	31	332	98	342.384	1.630
4	are	4	796	163	633	157	334.130	1.024
5	do	5	281	78	203	96	242.555	1.549

Figure 3.11. “They” collocates

	Collocate	Rank	FreqLR	FreqL	FreqR	Range	Likelihood	Effect
1	are	1	206	52	154	80	246.037	1.901
2	they	2	104	52	52	35	171.544	2.331
3	their	3	77	37	40	43	113.355	2.173
4	we	4	42	14	28	28	106.351	-1.805



### 3.2.2 Qualitative analysis

In this part of the chapter, I will proceed to analyse the political discourses included in the corpus qualitatively by focusing on its structures, register, figures of speech and pronoun use. The focus of this discourse analysis is President Ursula von der Leyen's political communication strategies, how she uses language and persuasion tools in her speeches to reach her audience and convey her messages and ideologies. In the following section, I will provide various examples of some of the major models of persuasion used in politics already mentioned in chapter 1: metaphors, authority, problem-solution, three-part list and the use of pronouns.

#### 3.2.2.1 Metaphors

As explained in Chapter 1, metaphors create pictures in our minds which allow us to connect concepts that we might not have considered as related (Mooney & Evans, 2019: 49-50). Here we can see how von der Leyen uses a war metaphor to express the critical condition of a patient dealing with Covid-19:

But what is unique about this fight is that every single one of us has a role to play. Every single one of us can help repay that debt. By keeping our distance we can slow down the spread of the virus. The numbers in the last few days have shown that we can bend the trend – but only if we all do our share (von der Leyen, 2020).

In this example, the metaphor is also used to send a message to the EU citizens and explains+ what “every single one of us” can do to overcome the pandemic. She calls for everyone's participation in this fight. The term *fight* can be found 128 times in the corpus: it is often used by von der Leyen, both as a verb and as a noun, in connections with topics such as climate change, racism and discrimination, the pandemic as well as health issues in general. The image of *fighting* is a diffuse representation of a difficult situation that is being overcome with effort and resources.

Another instance of this metaphor can be found in one of her speeches discussing anti-Semitism:

The fight against anti-Semitism is as much for every other part of our community as it is for Jewish people (von der Leyen, 2019).

The European Commission President also uses an economic metaphor in the same speech:

Europe owes you all a debt of gratitude (von der Leyen, 2020).

She uses the economic metaphor of “debt” in order to express the figurative debt of gratitude towards the health professionals. These examples shows how economic references can be used not only while discussing about the economy.

Another metaphor used by von der Leyen in many of her political speeches, is the metaphor of the “heart”, as we can see below:

Because what is good for the planet is good for business and good for us all. The energy transition is at the heart of our European Green Deal. And this is why I am delighted to be able to talk to you today at the Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue. Sadly, because of the pandemic, only virtually (von der Leyen, 2021).

Here the heart represents the central point, the vital point, of the European Green Deal, underlining the extremely important role of energy transition in these political initiations.

Today I am here to tell you that Europe is with you in this endeavour. Because antisemitism strikes at the heart of our values: humanity, religious freedom, equality. Antisemitism is a poison for our society. It is up to all of us to fight it. To prevent it. And to eradicate it (von der Leyen, 2021).

Again, the heart is a metaphor for the main component, in this case of a human's values; in this speech von der Leyen uses this metaphor to underline the importance of values such as “humanity, religious freedom, equality” in the fight against anti-Semitism.

As we will see in Chapter 3.2.3, expressing emotions and feelings allows the speaker to show himself/herself as human and relatable; using metaphors that refer to the human anatomy, in particular to the heart as a vital organ, underlines the importance of the topic discussed. Correlating any subject to the human body or emotions creates a very powerful image that is easy to understand for any audience.

The metaphor of the “journey” is used seven times in the corpus. In the following example, it is used to describe the negotiations between the European Union and the United Kingdom after Brexit:

The European Union and the United Kingdom will stand shoulder to shoulder to deliver on our common global goals. This moment marks the end of a long journey (von der Leyen, 2020).

The journey metaphor is often used, as it is in this case, as a conceptual metaphor belonging to the source-path-goal schema developed by Lakoff (1980). The source represents the starting point, the goal represents the destination, and the path stands for the steps of the process leading to the goal. In this specific case, the source would be Brexit, the path are the EU-UK negotiations and the goal would be the agreement reached at the end of said negotiations. In other cases, this metaphor is used to describe different negotiations, agreements and/or projects developed in Europe, i.e. EU-UK trade and cooperation agreement, European Green Deal, European Bauhaus, climate action, as shown below:

Today is the start of a journey. But this is Europe's 'man on the moon' moment. The European Green Deal is very ambitious, but it will also be very careful in assessing the impact and every single step we are taking (von der Leyen, 2019).

On this long journey, we will all have to learn from each other. And Europe is ready to lead, and we are also – always – ready to share. We are ready to share our ideas and strategies on climate action (von der Leyen, 2021).

### **3.2.2.2 Authority**

Authority is another persuasion strategy that I identified in President von der Leyen's speeches.

Since the topic of women is the main focus of five speeches and due to von der Leyen's previous career in female health, her interest in women's health and the opportunities and difficulties for women is obvious; indeed, the word *women* is reiterated 152 in the corpus. In the speech delivered on the International Women's Day Celebration, she directly appeals to women:

Let us have a look at what women have endured in 12 months of pandemic: the female doctors and nurses, working double shifts for entire weeks and months.

The women entrepreneurs, who have fought back, reinvented their business and pulled out all the stops to save their employees. The mothers of lockdown children, who have had to learn the toughest and the most amazing job in the world with no support from the outside world (von der Leyen, 2021).

She continues mentioning Kamala Harris and Jacinda Ardern, women in power like herself, who proved that gender is not a limit.

Look at Vice-President Kamala Harris, look at Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and what they have done for their countries. Look at their grace, professionalism, compassion, and resolve. Look at all these amazing women in our families and communities and think again: This day is for them (von der Leyen, 2021).

By appealing to other women, von der Leyen communicates the importance of gender equality and of equal opportunities for men and women, underlining her fervid interest in the topic promoted in a number of her speeches.

In the next instance, taken among the 56 references to anti-Semitism and anti-racism, President von der Leyen cites the testimony of Italian Senator for life Liliana Segre, a Holocaust survivor:

90 year old Liliana Segre spoke in the European Parliament. She told us about her ordeal as a slave labourer in Auschwitz. She told us how she was forced to embark on one of the horrific death marches to Germany. “One foot in front of the other, we kept walking”, she said. “We ate snow, in order to drink water. Wherever there was snow and not blood.” Back then, Liliana Segre was 13 years old (von der Leyen, 2021).

The witness and authority in this example from her speech delivered at the 16<sup>th</sup> World Jewish Congress Plenary Assembly, is again a woman. Through this persuasion strategy, she is able to highlight the fundamental need to acknowledge the Jewish genocide and history in general, addressing specifically young people who might feel distant and be oblivious to this very important part of our history.

### **3.2.2.3 Problem-solution**

This section explores selected examples of the problem-solution method of persuasion in which, as explained by Partington and Taylor (2018: 59), “the persuader first

proposes and outlines a supposed problem” and later suggests the solution to that problem. The focus of the first example, is climate change, which is one of the most discussed subject in the topic corpus as seen in the quantitative analysis in 3.2.1.

And we face change and a new set of challenges. Climate change, for example: If there is one area where the world needs our leadership, it is on protecting our climate. This is an existential issue for Europe – and for the world (von der Leyen, 2020).

Second, she provides the solution to the problem:

Last month we launched the European Green Deal (von der Leyen, 2020).

The European Green Deal is mentioned 193 times in the corpus, which makes it a very significant topic in the climate change field throughout a number of her speeches.

Third, to support the solution, she explains how this proposal works and how it is going to fix the problem:

The European Green Deal is not only about emissions. It is about boosting innovation. It is about clean technologies. It is about green financing. It is about quality food. It is about modern mobility. The European Green Deal is our new growth strategy. It will create new businesses all across Europe and new markets across the world. The novelty and difference is that we will and can foster a growth model that is not consuming or extracting – but one that gives back more to the planet than it takes away (von der Leyen, 2020).

To better understand this persuasion tool, I will provide another example from President von der Leyen's 2021 State of the Union speech, the longest speech identified in the corpus in Chapter 3.2.1:

Europe can – and clearly should – be able and willing to do more on its own (von der Leyen, 2021).

In the first place, she states what she believes to be the problem; next, she provides arguments supporting her statement, giving the audience the reasons to believe her:

I see three broad categories.

First, we need to provide stability in our neighbourhood and across different regions. We are connected to the world by narrow straits, stormy seas and vast land borders. Because of that geography, Europe knows better than anyone that

if you don't deal in time with the crisis abroad, the crisis comes to you.

Secondly, the nature of the threats we face is evolving rapidly: from hybrid or cyber-attacks to the growing arms race in space. Disruptive technology has been a great equaliser in the way power can be used today by rogue states or non-state groups. You no longer need armies and missiles to cause mass damage. You can paralyse industrial plants, city administrations and hospitals – all you need is your laptop. You can disrupt entire elections with a smartphone and an internet connection.

The third reason is that the European Union is a unique security provider. There will be missions where NATO or the UN will not be present, but where the EU should be. On the ground, our soldiers work side-by-side with police officers, lawyers and doctors, with humanitarian workers and human rights defenders, with teachers and engineers.

We can combine military and civilian, along with diplomacy and development – and we have a long history in building and protecting peace. The good news is that over the past years, we have started to develop a European defence ecosystem (von der Leyen, 2021).

The following step is presenting the solution:

But what we need is the European Defence Union (von der Leyen, 2021).

Ultimately, once she proposed the solution, she shows how said solution is going to solve the problem, providing concrete and practical experience:

First, we need to build the foundation for collective decision-making – this is what I call situational awareness. We fall short if Member States active in the same region, do not share their information on the European level. It is vital that we improve intelligence cooperation. But this is not just about intelligence in the narrow sense. It is about bringing together the knowledge from all services and all sources. From space to police trainers, from open source to development agencies. Their work gives us a unique scope and depth of knowledge. It is out there! But we can only use that, to make informed decisions if we have the full picture. And this is currently not the case. We have the knowledge, but it is disjointed. Information is fragmented. This is why the EU could consider its own Joint Situational Awareness Centre to fuse all the different pieces of information. And to be better prepared, to be fully informed and to be able to

decide.

Secondly, we need to improve interoperability. This is why we are already investing in common European platforms, from fighter jets, to drones and cyber. But we have to keep thinking of new ways to use all possible synergies. One example could be to consider waiving VAT when buying defence equipment developed and produced in Europe. This would not only increase our interoperability, but also decrease our dependencies of today.

Third, we cannot talk about defence without talking about cyber. If everything is connected, everything can be hacked. Given that resources are scarce, we have to bundle our forces. And we should not just be satisfied to address the cyber threat, but also strive to become a leader in cyber security.

It should be here in Europe where cyber defence tools are developed. This is why we need a European Cyber Defence Policy, including legislation on common standards under a new European Cyber Resilience Act. So, we can do a lot at EU level. But Member States need to do more too (von der Leyen, 2021).

The central point of this section of the speech, hence cyber security, is at the basis of the numerous digital-focused speeches mentioned in Table 3.2 where it is included in the “Technologies, Digital and Energy” group.

#### **3.2.2.4 Three-part lists**

A further persuasive structure to consider is the three-part list, often used in political speeches given that the human brain naturally identifies statements including three sections as more appealing and worth of trust.

As already mentioned in Figure 3.1, the pronoun *we* resulted as the most frequent keyword of the entire corpus. Von der Leyen heavily relies on the ideology of unity. For instance, she uses the three-part list device of persuasion in the following example to emphasize the idea of being connected:

Today, Europe is way more diverse than it was seventy years ago. We are a Union of 27 countries and countless nationalities. We are people of all skin colours. We are people of all faiths and none. Now more than ever, unity requires that we reject racism and embrace our differences. And this is already happening, in communities all across Europe (von der Leyen, 2021).

In the speech delivered at the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European League for Economic Cooperation, the President exhibits the positive outcomes of the European Green Deal, reiterating again the idea of unity as in the last example:

Despite the mixed results of COP26, it has confirmed that we are on the right track with our European Green Deal. Because not only do we have a common vision on how to tackle global warming. We also have a clear roadmap with targets agreed by all 27 Member States. And we have the necessary funds to make this sustainable future a reality (von der Leyen, 2021).

In the next example, this strategy is used to call up on European citizens to protect people, take care of each other and make Europe safer for every single person:

I want Europe to protect people from illegal content online and disinformation, making social media platforms more responsible for the content they host. I want Europe to protect people from hate speech and hate crime, adding them to the list of crimes in our Treaties. And I want Europe to protect our democracy from every kind of backsliding, and protect the rule of law at all corners of our Union (von der Leyen, 2021).

As already seen in Figure 3.1, the pronoun *I* is often used by von der Leyen to express her intentions, beliefs and actions; in this case, she expresses her will to see Europe and its people take action to reach a common goal.

The last example of tricolon *I* will provide proves the importance of the United Nations as a “project” able to improve a number of global issues:

When you see the majesty of the General Assembly hall you can't help thinking the UN is the most ambitious project that humanity has ever conceived. A project to end war on our planet. A project to end poverty and inequality. A project for global democracy (von der Leyen, 2020).

The term *project* is repeated 53 times in her speeches, mainly referring to the European Bauhaus, the European Green Deal and the NextGenerationEU Programme, which, as explained in 3.2.1, is the main topic of 13 out of the 45 speeches of the “Europe and EU” group (Table 3.2).

### 3.2.2.5 Pronoun use

The singular, first-person pronoun “I” is used 1448 times, the plural first-person



pronoun “we” is repeated 4563 times and the plural third-person pronoun “they” only appears 643 times, as reported in Table 3.6 below.

Table 3.6. Personal subject pronoun count

Pronoun	Number
I	1448
we	4563
they	643

The pronoun “I” is predominantly used by President von der Leyen in her speeches when expressing her feelings towards a specific topic or a strong personal point of view; she also uses the first-person pronoun to share her personal experiences and put forward her intentions as regards a particular situation. In Table 3.7 below, I provide some examples of the use of the pronoun.

Table 3.7. “I”

Speech	Example
Remarks by President von der Leyen at the joint press point with Ludovic Orban, Prime Minister of Romania	So <u>I am very happy</u> that we are going to have a chance to have a bilateral meeting today.
Remarks by President von der Leyen at the joint press statement with Moussa Faki, Chairperson of the African Union Commission	And <u>I am very grateful</u> for the intense discussion we have had, the exchange of experience. <i>I</i> cherish your knowledge <i>I</i> could listen to.
Speech by President von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary on the rule of law crisis in Poland and the primacy of EU law	But <i>I</i> can already tell you today: <u>I am deeply concerned</u> . This ruling calls into question the foundations of the European Union.
Speech by President von der Leyen at the 2020 Women's Forum Global Meeting	There is something <u>I have learnt</u> in twenty years of politics. Leadership is very often about finding the silver lining in every cloud.
Speech by President von der Leyen at the World Health Summit	This is why <u>I organised</u> , together with the G20, the Global Health Summit in Rome earlier this year.

As Da Fina (1995 : 380) states, “the pronoun *we* can convey empathy because of its

structural property of encoding the meaning: [speaker-addressee]”. Table 3.8 provides some examples of how von der Leyen uses this pronoun to involve the audience, usually inviting the listeners to take action; it is also often used to highlight something that the audience shares or possess. Furthermore, *we* is used by von der Leyen when referring to those in charge including herself, the European Commission, the European Parliament, Europe and any other institution in power.

Table 3.8. “We”

Speech	Example
Speech by President von der Leyen at the Porto Social Summit	<u>We have to act</u> on climate change.
Speech by President von der Leyen on the occasion of the Christchurch Call Second Anniversary Summit	<u>We have to build</u> strong communities, where each of us belongs and no one feels left behind. And <u>we have to fight</u> radical and distorted ideologies with positive ideas and alternative narratives.
Press remarks by President von der Leyen on the Commission's new strategy: Shaping Europe's Digital Future	<u>We do have</u> in Europe a long history of technological success and innovation. <u>We have</u> big businesses, <u>we have</u> a very strong industry.
Speech by President von der Leyen at the Women Political Leaders Summit 2021	As women political leaders, <u>we have to</u> make sure that this will not happen!
Press remarks by President von der Leyen on the Commission's new strategy: Shaping Europe's Digital Future	This is why <u>we want to</u> give our businesses, but also our researchers, and the public services better access to data.

The last pronoun I will be analysing is *they*. In this corpus, this pronoun is generally used by the Commission President when referring to a group that she and majority of the audience do not belong to. I provide some example in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9. “They”

Speech	Example
Speech by President von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary on the EU coordinated action to combat the coronavirus pandemic and its consequences	Above all else I thank and I pay tribute to our heroes: the medics, nurses and care-workers. They are the ones with bruises on their faces and tragic images in their hearts and minds.

Speech by President von der Leyen at the 2020 EU Agricultural Outlook Conference	Our farmers live in the heart of our societies. They are central for achieving our climate goals.
Speech by President von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary on the rule of law crisis in Poland and the primacy of EU law	Many members of Solidarność, the independent trade union, and of other groups were put in jail. Simply, because they stood up for their rights.

### 3.2.3 Appraisal analysis

As previously discussed, the appraisal theory is the analysis of “meanings in context and towards rhetorical effects rather than towards grammatical forms” (Martin and White, 2005: 94). As previously mentioned throughout my dissertation, expressing human feelings and emotions can be a powerful tool to gain the trust of the audience. This method of analysis can be described as an approach to analyse the way language is used to evaluate, adopt stances, construct textual personas and manage interpersonal relationships (The Appraisal Website, 2020). For my study, I used AntConc in order to find words that could be related to the *attitude* domain. This category of the appraisal system “includes those meanings by which texts/speakers attach an intersubjective value or assessment to participants and processes by reference either to emotional responses or to systems of culturally-determined value systems” (The Appraisal Website, 2020). I will use the sub-systems of *affect*, *judgement* and *appreciation* to investigate the way President von der Leyen, through language, explicitly presents her attitudes, judgments and emotive responses in the texts (The Appraisal Website, 2020).

The first sub category, *affect*, focuses on the emotional response and disposition and it is “typically realised through mental processes of reaction and through attributive relationals of affect” (The Appraisal Website, 2020).

In the following example, von der Leyen highlights the importance of maintaining a strong partnership with the United Kingdom after Brexit, claiming her love for this country:

In the period just before and after the referendum, I thought a lot about my time here in London. I say this not just because of my love for this country. (von der Leyen, 2020).

In the following examples from the speech delivered at the 16th World Jewish Congress Plenary Assembly, von der Leyen expresses her admiration for the Italian Holocaust

survivor, Liliana Segre, her strength and commitment to share her story:

For me, she is an inspiring example. I admire how she continues to tell her story to young people in Italy, how she helps spread the word about the Holocaust and about the fragility of our societies (von der Leyen, 2021).

The Commission President repeatedly takes pride in Europe's institutions, values and evolution, as shown in the example below in which she praises Europe's health system:

I am a medical doctor by training, and I have always been proud of Europe's health systems. They are among the best in the world (von der Leyen, 2020).

Instances of *affect* can also be negative, as we can see in the following example expressing the President's, the institutions' and the audience's *fear* of the consequences of climate change in Africa and Europe:

I just have to mention the growing desert. And all of us, in our continents, in Africa and in Europe, we see already and fear the consequences of climate change – the floodings, the draughts, the grief over losing species – we call it biodiversity (von der Leyen, 2020).

The aim of using expressions of affect in political speeches is to show the humanity of politicians, the human aspect of politics. Incorporating emotions and feelings allows the speaker to make the audience feel understood and closer to her/him. Manifesting the personality of politicians, portraying them as humans and not just as an institutional or political figure allows the listeners to recognize the politician as a peer, a human who has values, feelings and experiences emotions exactly like they have.

The attitudinal sub-system of *judgement* encompasses meanings which serve to evaluate human behaviour positively and negatively by reference to a set of institutionalised norms (The Appraisal Website, 2020). Thus, it is concerned with the assessments the speaker provides on some human participant referencing the participant's actions and ideologies (The Appraisal Website, 2020). “Under *judgement* we may assess behaviour as moral or immoral, as legal or illegal, as socially acceptable or unacceptable, as laudable or deplorable, as normal or abnormal and so on” (The Appraisal Website, 2020).

We saw volunteers working around the clock, local officials communicating honestly with citizens and media channels painstakingly explaining the results

as they came in (von der Leyen, 2020).

In the example above, von der Leyen positively judges how the officials handled the elections and communicated to the citizen with honesty during the U.S. presidential elections.

In the following example from her speech delivered at the launch of the Belgian Biopharma Platform, the President shows admiration for Belgian researches and entrepreneurs:

I count on you to engage in our new HERA initiative. And, of course, I count on you to mobilise your brilliant researchers and entrepreneurs (von der Leyen, 2021).

The absence or very low frequency of negative judgements in this corpus, suggests that President von der Leyen is more inclined to emphasize positive aspects of the various topics in her speeches. She tends to show a more optimistic side, not necessarily avoiding and ignoring the negative situations, but rather focusing more on the positive actions that can be made in order to overcome said less positive circumstances.

*Appreciation* is the sub-system focused on the evaluation of products and processes; it encloses values of general heading of aesthetics as well as non-aesthetic categories of “social valuation” (The Appraisal Website, 2020).

In this example, von der Leyen describes the city of Milan as *beautiful*, appreciating its physical aspect as well as its culture and history, during her speech at the opening ceremony of the academic year of the Bocconi University:

But first, allow me a few words about the beautiful and wounded city that hosts Bocconi, the city of Milan. Milan is a European capital (von der Leyen, 2020).

The next instance shows how the President openly expresses how honoured she is to open with her speech, before members and supporters of the NBE Collective, the first event of the interdisciplinary initiative which aims at building a sustainable and inclusive future:

It's an honour for me to open this first event of the New European Bauhaus collective (von der Leyen, 2021).

Again, another example of *appreciation* through the concept of “honour”:

It is an honour to participate in the first Nobel Prize Summit (von der Leyen,

2021).

In this last example, von der Leyen highlights the uniqueness of the NATO organisation at the Allianz Forum after being elected President of the European Commission:

It is the strongest defence alliance in the world. A unique organisation now with 29 Member States (von der Leyen, 2019).

### **3.3 Concluding remarks**

My analysis of Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's political speeches shows how, using language and a number of persuasion strategies, she is able to clearly communicate her ideologies and messages. The study has revealed how much von der Leyen values each country and citizen not only of the European Union and Europe but also of the entire world. Due to her academic background in the medical field, she is very involved in the global health scene, emphasizing again the importance she gives to every single person's rights such as health care. Moreover, her knowledge and her interest in gender equality and women's health and opportunities can be seen in many of her speeches. With the analysis of the pronouns the President used in the texts of the corpus, we can clearly identify the plural first-person pronoun *we* as the most frequent, suggesting her tendency to get the audience involved in her speeches, to make herself part of the collective. A further indication of this practice is von der Leyen's habit of including sections, in the discourses, in a language different from English. In a number of texts I analysed, we can find sentences and entire segments in German, her native language, French and Italian. The use of a language different from the western lingua franca, allows people in the audience whose first language is being spoken to feel more included, seen and connected to the speaker. In order to convey her messages and influence the listeners, Ursula von der Leyen uses a variety of persuasion methods, typical of political discourses.

My appraisal analysis of the corpus shows how the President portrays herself as one of the audience, as human, exploiting the explicit expression of her emotions and feelings in order to make the addressees feel closer to the political figure. She is able to make economics, health, law and other political topics accessible and understandable.

Thanks to her ability to manipulate language and her charisma, President Ursula von der Leyen easily conveys her messages and ideologies to heterogeneous audiences. We can

conclude that language, in the political field specifically, is an extremely powerful tool that, when used correctly and knowingly as Ursula von der Leyen does, can allow the speaker to influence any kind of audience.

## ***Conclusion***

The aim of my dissertation was to examine how language is used by politicians, in particular by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. The research question guiding my research was the following: “What communication strategies does Ursula von der Leyen in order to convey her messages and persuade her audience?” In order to answer this question, I firstly introduced political discourse, its characteristics and the main features of the language used by politicians. Secondly I explored what corpora are and how they can be used; I also analysed previous studies of corpus-based political discourse analysis. Lastly, I applied the theory explored in the first two chapters to my corpus through qualitative, quantitative and appraisal analysis.

The results of the quantitative analysis show how President von der Leyen is able to cover a wide array of topics in her speeches (e.g. health, economy, environment, social issues, racism, technology). They also suggest her ability to address different audiences changing her register in order to better convey her messages; furthermore, the keywords found and the prominence of the use of the inclusive pronoun *we* highlight a clear intention of creating a sense union, involving her audience in her speeches.

The qualitative analysis emphasises a number of models of persuasions used by von der Leyen in her speeches. The use of war metaphors and economic metaphors show an academic and knowledgeable character; the heart metaphor, on the other hand, shows the significance she gives to humanity and human values. With the examination of the authorities she appeals to in her speeches, I observed a deep connection with her fellow women, in particular with women in power. The use of pronoun points to Ursula von der Leyen's preference for an inclusive perspective since her most used pronoun is the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural *we*, which involves the audience and makes the speaker appear as “one of the people”, a fellow human, a peer. Further instances of her presenting herself as a fellow human being, are shown in the appraisal framework analysis: when expressing her emotions and feelings, she attempts to close the power gap between herself and her audience. Moreover, it is necessary to underline her ability to transform complex disciplines such as politics, economics or health into easy topics that allows her audiences to really understand her messages.

The findings of the present study strongly support the claim that persuasive and manipulative language pervades the political scene. The weight of linguistic choices in politics, as in any other field, is obvious: language and communication are the basis of



human relationships, including political ones. This affirmation was highlighted by the evidence provided in my dissertation which demonstrated how people in power are able to influence their listeners or readers simply through the clever use and manipulation of language. The linguistic choices made in political speeches are always made for a reason. That reason is persuasion, a fundamental art exploited by politicians as a means to their goals.

Furthermore, as maintained throughout my dissertation, culture influences the language and how the speaker uses it; for this reason I believe that the scenario in which President von der Leyen grew up, studied and developed her career has deeply influenced her linguistic strategies. Therefore, it would be interesting to compare her speeches and rhetoric to other politicians' discourse strategies, perhaps American or Asian politicians whose cultural background would probably be very different from von der Leyen's European culture.

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## Riassunto

L'argomento principale della mia tesi è la relazione tra politica e lingua, elementi fondamentali della scena politica. I tre capitoli che costituiscono la mia tesi approfondiscono i due temi sopracitati; più specificatamente, forniscono aspetti teorici del linguaggio politico e dei corpora e analizzano le scelte linguistiche del Presidente della Commissione Europea Ursula von der Leyen all'interno dei suoi discorsi politici. Il motivo della scelta di tali temi è il mio interesse e la mia ammirazione per le donne presenti nella scena pubblica e politica moderna, in particolare per Ursula von der Leyen, ritenuta una delle donne più potenti in Europa. Inoltre, il mio intento era quello di capire fino a che punto e in quale modo il linguaggio influisce effettivamente sulla comprensione dei messaggi politici da parte del pubblico e sull'eventuale persuasione di quest'ultimo.

Con lo scopo di evidenziare le scelte linguistiche e le strategie di persuasione utilizzate dalla Presidente von der Leyen, mi sono affidata all'analisi basata su corpora, sia in senso quantitativo e qualitativo. Ho concentrato il mio studio su un corpus composto autonomamente e comprendente 173 discorsi che coprono un arco temporale di circa due anni, dal suo primo discorso in veste di Presidente della Commissione Europea nel dicembre del 2019, all'ultimo tenuto alla fine del 2021.

Alcune delle fonti utilizzate trattano di linguistica e dell'utilizzo di quest'ultima per l'analisi del discorso politico; altre invece esplorano i corpora e le loro funzioni. Nel primo caso, i principali testi che hanno influenzato il mio lavoro sono stati *The Language of Persuasion in Politics*, di Partington e Taylor (2018) e *Language, Society and Power* di Mooney e Evans (2019). Le teorie contenute all'interno di questi due testi e riprese all'interno del primo capitolo della mia tesi, hanno trovato la loro applicazione all'interno del terzo capitolo del mio lavoro. Per il secondo capitolo, in cui mi sono occupata dei corpora, il testo principale su cui mi sono basata è stato *Using Corpora in Discourse Analysis* ad opera di Baker (2006).

Nel primo capitolo ho concentrato le informazioni per la comprensione degli argomenti della mia tesi ovvero linguaggio e politica; partendo dalle basi, ho dato le definizioni di *lingua* e di *discorso*, prestando ulteriore attenzione al tema del *discorso politico*. Mi sono poi concentrata sulle principali caratteristiche del linguaggio utilizzato dalle figure politiche e quindi sulla *retorica* ovvero ciò che i Greci definirono come la capacità di persuadere. Utilizzata fin dalla prima democrazia nell'antica Grecia, la retorica pervade



tutt'oggi diversi ambiti tra cui la legge e la politica. È interessante anche la teoria di Goffman (1967), trattata anche da Brown e Levinson (1987), di *face* e *facework*. Secondo questa teoria, l'oratore (in questo caso, il politico) avrebbe una sorta di doppia faccia e di conseguenza due diversi modi di comportarsi davanti ad un pubblico: mentre uno rappresenterebbe il soggetto competente, informato e autoritario, l'altro sarebbe la versione “umana” dello stesso soggetto, quella apprezzata dal pubblico in quanto facilmente riconoscibile come parte della massa. Data la rilevanza della persuasione all'interno del discorso politico, ho esplorato alcune strategie e strutture linguistiche utilizzate nei discorsi politici allo scopo di persuadere efficacemente i propri ascoltatori. Una di queste è l'uso di figure retoriche, come la metafora, che permettono al politico di rendere semplici e comprensibili temi complessi che altrimenti non verrebbero elaborati dal pubblico. La ricerca ed utilizzo di personaggi di rilievo e d'autorità, come la ripetizione della stessa frase o dello stesso concetto per tre volte, al fine rendere più credibile e rassicurante il proprio messaggio sono altre strategie di persuasione messe in atto dagli oratori. Un ulteriore elemento che ho analizzato e a cui è necessario prestare particolare attenzione, è la scelta di vocaboli.

Il secondo capitolo racchiudere le informazioni di base necessarie per comprendere le funzioni e l'utilizzo dei *corpora*, raccolte ordinate e complete di dati e materiali (ad esempio testi) utilizzati come riferimento per studi linguistici. Ho esplorato in breve la storia di questo strumento e i principali tipi di corpora utilizzati delle analisi linguistiche, oltre ad alcuni dei limiti di questi ultimi come la mancata attenzione all'evoluzione della lingua o la possibile difficoltà nella raccolta di dati orali. Mi sono poi concentrata su alcuni dei concetti principali dell'analisi dei corpora, nonché sulle funzioni maggiormente utilizzate in questo genere di studi e che possono fornire al ricercatore numerosi risultati, quali la frequenza di alcune parole e come queste vengono inserite e utilizzate all'interno dei testi di studio.

Al fine di mostrare come i corpora possano essere utilizzati nell'analisi linguistica del discorso politico, ho riportato i risultati e alcuni dei punti fondamentali di sei studi condotti negli anni passati. Alcuni di questi sono incentrati sullo studio del linguaggio dello scenario politico americano, in particolare sull'analisi dei discorsi degli ex Presidenti degli Stati Uniti George Bush e Barack Obama (Trailovic, 2014; Fadda, 2006). Uno in particolare è focalizzato sul diverso utilizzo e sulla diversa percezione delle metafore nella politica americana e in quella cinese (Ahrens, Zeng and Wong,

2018) mentre un altro analizza i discorsi the Primo Ministro Thai (Carreon and Svetanant, 2017), evidenziando come la cultura influisca sulle scelte linguistiche dell'oratore politico. Altri studi riportati trattano invece il tema di identità (Naiyf Qaiwer, 2019) e del riconoscimento delle persone appartenenti alla comunità LGBTQ\* (Santonocito, 2020), mettendo di nuovo a confronto figure politiche di culture diverse, in questo caso il Primo Ministro italiano e quello inglese. La scelta di questi studi è dovuta, oltre che agli argomenti che ho ritenuto interessanti e di rilievo, all'utilizzo di analisi quantitativa e qualitativa, metodologie usate nella mia analisi nell'ultima parte della mia tesi.

Il terzo capitolo include una breve biografia di Ursula von der Leyen, utile per la comprensione di quelle che possono essere le sue ideologie, il suo stile retorico e il suo linguaggio. Proveniente da una famiglia di rilievo all'interno della scena politica tedesca, la von der Leyen inizia i suoi studi in ambito economico per poi spostarsi nell'area medica. Trascorrendo un lungo periodo in Regno Unito e di seguito negli Stati Uniti, raggiunge un alto livello di competenza della lingua inglese, evidente nei suoi discorsi. Durante la sua carriera politica ha sempre lottato per i diritti delle donne, per il loro benessere e quello delle famiglie. Ha ricoperto diverse cariche importanti e in diversi ministeri: è la prima donna ad essere stata nominata Ministro della Difesa in Germania ed è oggi una delle donne più potenti d'Europa in quanto Presidente della Commissione Europea.

L'ultimo capitolo comprende inoltre l'analisi pratica del mio corpus composto da 173 discorsi della Presidente della Commissione Europea. Dopo aver catalogato i discorsi in base ai temi trattati e in base al pubblico di riferimento, mi sono concentrata sulla ricerca di parole chiavi presenti all'interno del corpus e delle parole più frequenti. Ho poi utilizzato alcune di queste ultime nell'analisi delle concordanze ed esaminato i principali pronomi utilizzati nella sfera politica riportando in particolare la frequenza, il *rank* di frequenza e i *collocates* della prima persona singolare e della prima e terza persone plurali. In seguito, con l'analisi qualitativa, ho cercato esempi pratici dell'utilizzo delle diverse strategie di persuasione precedentemente trattate a livello teorico. Ho quindi riportato diverse metafore che ho trovato ripetutamente all'interno del corpus e che riprendessero quanto analizzato nella sezione precedente, ovvero i temi principali. Ho inoltre riportato alcuni estratti in cui la Presidente von der Leyen faceva riferimento ad autorità quali Kamala Harris e Jacinda Arden, ovvero donne al potere

come lei stessa, e una donna sopravvissuta all'Olocausto. Un'ulteriore strategia utilizzata più volte nei suoi discorsi prevede l'esposizione di un problema e, a seguire, della sua soluzione affiancata da numerose prove dell'adeguatezza di tale soluzione; anche in questo caso, gli estratti selezionati riprendevano i temi principali introdotti precedentemente. Inoltre, ho analizzato alcuni esempi di *tricolon* con cui vengono rafforzati i messaggi che l'oratore vuole comunicare, in questo caso senso di unione, volontà personali, promozione di un progetto. L'analisi che ho condotto sull'utilizzo dei pronomi ha mostrato la prevalenza dell'uso della prima persona plurale, prova dell'intenzione di Ursula von der Leyen di mostrarsi al pubblico come parte di esso, come essere umano. Ulteriore prova di questa affermazione è data dalla prominente presenza di termini che riprendono la sfera affettiva, il giudizio positivo e l'ammirazione nei confronti di diverse persone e/o situazioni.

Attraverso la mia analisi, ho avuto modo di comprendere lo stile retorico della Presidente von der Leyen, obiettivo della mia tesi. La notevole presenza di elementi di persuasione all'interno del corpus, evidenziano quanto riportato all'inizio del mio studio: è evidente come il linguaggio persuasivo pervada lo scenario politico. Al suo interno, sfruttando queste strategie, le sue conoscenze e il suo carisma, Ursula von der Leyen è stata in grado di affermarsi come potente figura politica, divenendo la prima donna a ricoprire la sua attuale posizione di Presidente della Commissione Europea.

## Appendix 1 - Word frequency list of the corpus

Type	Rank	Freq	Range
the	1	11035	173
and	2	7223	173
to	3	6534	173
of	4	5290	173
we	5	4563	173
is	6	3842	173
in	7	3659	173
a	8	3604	173
for	9	2727	173
that	10	2691	172
this	11	2584	171
our	12	2510	171
it	13	2236	171
will	14	1725	166
are	15	1716	169
have	16	1667	167
on	17	1638	170
i	18	1448	168
european	19	1420	171
europe	20	1375	161
you	21	1351	170
with	22	1342	169
be	23	1298	167
all	24	1117	165
but	25	1047	164
as	26	943	154
at	27	940	171
not	28	863	159
by	29	843	170
can	30	824	153
from	31	814	152
s	32	742	146
also	33	728	155
more	34	719	158
new	35	692	140
has	36	672	148
so	36	672	148
us	38	655	155
they	39	643	135
world	40	620	134
need	41	559	134
their	42	531	123
an	43	528	155
union	44	515	135
want	45	514	131
about	46	485	135
or	47	465	124
global	48	463	113
people	49	460	130
one	50	456	140
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know	63	420	129
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many	87	292	121
thank	88	287	145
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