Communicating Democracy: The Discourse of Political Leaders of the Baltic States

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Abstract. The term *democracy*, which is a compound noun consisting of two Greek words *demos* and *kratos* and standing for people and power, recently has acquired yet another meaning, that of a way of governing the state based on the will of people. Communication is one of the key elements of a democratic polity; whereas language serves as one of the key forms in the realisation of political communication. The public communication of political leaders of the Baltic States, specifically, the presidents as representative leaders, during the tree decades of restored independence has been focused on the idea of democracy, emphasizing the thematic areas of 'returning to the West,' 'returning to Europe,' and 'returning to democracy' as central elements of national identities of those states. The paper offers a corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis of presidential speeches given by the presidents of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania during the three decades of independence with the focus on the linguistic representation and discursive construction of democracy.

Keywords: Baltic States, democracy, corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis, presidential discourse.

Demokratijos komunikacija: Baltijos šalių politinių lyderių diskursas

Santrauka. Terminas demokratija, kuris yra graikiškų žodžių demos („liaudis") ir kratos („valdau") junginys, pastaruoju metu įgijo dar vieną reikšmę – tai žmonių valia grindžiamas valstybės valdymo būdas. Komunikacija yra vienas svarbiausių demokratinės valstybės elementų, o kalba – viena pagrindinių politinės komunikacijos įgyvendinimo priemonių. Baltijos valstybių politinių lyderių, konkrečiai – prezidentų, kurie atstovauja savo šalims, viešoji komunikacija per tris atkurtos nepriklausomybės dešimtmečius buvo nukreipta į demokratijos idėją, pabrėžiant „grįžimo į Vakarus", „grįžimo į Europą" ir „grįžimo į demokratiją" teminį aspektą kaip pagrindinius šių trijų valstybių nacionalinio identiteto elementus. Straipsnyje pateikiama Estijos, Latvijos ir Lietuvos prezidentų kalbų, pasakytų per tris nepriklausomybės dešimtmečius, kritinė diskurso analizė, daugiausia dėmesio skiriant kalbinei demokratijos reprezentacijai ir diskursyviniam jos konstravimui.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: Baltijos šalys, demokratija, tekstais paremta kritinė diskurso analizė, prezidentinis diskursas.

Introduction

The aim of this article is to present the results of a study on the linguistic representation[1] and discursive construction[2] of democracy in the speeches of the presidents of the Baltic States. Whereas

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[1] The choice of particular linguistic means to describe or define ideas, events, and values.

[2] To create or revive an idea, value, and ideology in the social practice and memory through the creation of content and the use of patterns and strategies of persuasion (argumentation and manipulation) and the linguistic realisation of these strategies.

democracy in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania is not only a governmental system or a 'quality'[3] implemented by the elected institutions, i.e., parliaments and governments, it may also be considered an element of their individual national identity, common regional Baltic identity, the supranational European identity as well as the regional Western identity.[4] Therefore, the study aims to analyse the occurrences of democracy and its lexical environment (co-text) in a purpose-built specialised corpus of speeches given by the presidents of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania after the restoration of independence of the Baltic States.[5]

In order to offer an outlook from two methodological perspectives (qualitative/critical and quantitative/statistic), a corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis (CACDA) was selected. The study applied a two-fold approach using a specialised purpose-built corpus of speeches given by the presidents of the Baltic States[6] both at the national and international level from 1991 to 2022 in order to carry out a corpus-driven and corpus-based[7] analysis and using the Sketch Engine[8] tool to store and analyse full-length speeches collected from the online archives of the homepages of the presidents of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The steps taken in the study follow the approaches used in CACDA and focus on the deliberate and explicit references to the word *democracy* and its derivations (searched by lemmas 'demokr'[9] and 'demokr'[10] in all corpora), its collocational environment and statistical comparisons as well as a more detailed qualitative analysis of the speeches, specifically, the examples that incorporate references to democracy in order to identify the linguistic means, discourse strategies and rhetorical techniques used in the speeches of the Baltic leaders and the reasons behind them.

1. Discourse, Language and Power: The Presidential Speeches

This chapter presents an overview of the notions of discourse, language and power as well as their relations. The role of language in political discourse and specifically, in presidential speeches, is also discussed together with the notion of identity construction as one of the functions of the presidential speeches.

In order to understand the notion of presidential speeches, it is important to elaborate on the concepts of discourse, rhetoric and genre. Discourse, like many other academic terms, such as ideology,

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3 See Farrelly, M. *Discourse and Democracy: Critical Analysis of the Language of Government*. New York: Routledge, 2015, p. 8, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315777948.

4 See e.g., Romāne-Kalniņa, L. *Construction and Representation of National Identity in the Speeches of the Presidents of the Baltic States: Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis* [Doctoral Dissertation]. Riga: University of Latvia, 2022, p. 207. Retrieved from https://dspace.lu.lv/dspace/bitstream/handle/7/61241/298-90560-Romane-Kalnina_Liga_lr11077.pdf?sequence=1 [accessed 27/01/2023]. See also Duvold, K.; Sedelius, T. Presidents between National Unity and Ethnic Divisions: Public Trust across the Baltic States. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 2023, Vol. 54, No. 2, p. 175-196, https://doi.org/10.1080/01629778.2022.2064523.

5 The restoration of independence in Lithuania took place on March 11, 1990, in Latvia—on May 4, 1991 and in Estonia—on August 20, 1991. Unlike Estonia and Latvia, Lithuania, emerging from the fifty years of Soviet occupation, declared its independence and full control over its affairs already in 1990 and did not go through a period of transition. Lithuania, as opposed to Estonia and Latvia, did not inherit difficult demographic situation, namely, 80% of the population at the time of the restoration of independence were of Lithuanian origin. Moreover, before the Soviet occupation, Lithuania paced conflict with Poland as regards to its territory and after regaining independence from the Soviet Union, it upheld the provisions in the Soviet-Polish border agreement, keeping the Lithuanian territorial borders intact. See more Ziemele, I. *State Continuity and Nationality: The Baltic States and Russia: Past Present and Future as Defined by International Law*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2005, p. 27, 38, 42; Norkus, Z. Why Did Estonia Perform Best? The North–South Gap in the Post-Socialist Economic Transition of the Baltic States. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 2007, Vol. 38, No. 1, p. 21-42, https://doi.org/10.1080/01629770701223502.

6 Also see Appendix: Table 3. List of the presidents of the Baltic States from 1991 to 2022.

7 Also see Appendix: Table 2. Corpus information.

8 Sketch Engine is an online corpus analysis software that allows to store linguistic data in multiple languages and provide tools such as keyword and KWIC analysis, word sketch analysis and collocational analysis of the user-created corpora and general reference corpora.

9 In Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian.

10 In this paper, lemma is interpreted from the point of view of corpus linguistics as the base form of a word (stem). In this particular case, the word democracy and its derivations in Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian is 'demokr,' whereas in English it is 'democr.'

identity and even politics, is a complicated term to define. Nevertheless, the conceptualisations of both discourse and genre 'however fuzzy and problematic, are central to the study of interaction practices in institutional settings.'[11] Thus, discourse may be seen as 'language use relative to social, political and cultural formations'[12] or language as a social practice, meaning that 'it is language reflecting social order but also shaping social order, and shaping individual's interaction with society.'[13] In other words, discourse is a process rather than a product and a circular one, meaning that it shapes social realities and, at the same time, is being shaped by social realities.

Genre may be seen as 'a class of communicative events in which language (and/or paralanguage) plays both a significant and indispensable role and the members of which share some set of communicative purposes: position claiming, persuading, negotiating, agenda setting, opinion building, usually along ideological or party lines.'[14] Political discourse is one of the genres analysed and discussed most frequently, and the presidential rhetoric is one of the realisations of political discourse.

Rhetoric is an Aristotelian term referring to the art of persuasion or originally the art of public speech.[15] Speech, in turn, may be seen as rhetorical expression that may be subdivided into three types depending on the function and goal, temporal orientation, thematic areas and rhetorical means applied. These types are:

(1) deliberative or political speeches that focus on the future, on the topics of worthy and unworthy, goals of persuasion or dissuasion, and themes such as money, war and peace, and security and are considered as a type of advisory rhetoric using examples of the past to foresee the future;

(2) judicial or legal speeches that focus on the past, the topics of the just and unjust, goals of accusation and defence and themes such as the cause and consequences of an unjust behaviour, victims and the aim of the perpetrator using analysis of cause and evidence;

(3) epideictic or ceremonial speeches that focus on the present, aim to praise or blame and are given on ceremonial occasions.[16]

Presidents as symbolic and representative leaders of the states typically would give both deliberative and epideictic speeches, depending on the occasion and the audience. The common function of these types of speeches within rhetoric, however, is persuasion as an indispensable part of rhetoric reflecting both the hearer's perspective displaying the speaker's intentions and successful outcomes.[17]

One of such outcomes is a construction of collective identities (imagined communities[18]) aimed at a common goal, often also in opposition to the identity of the significant or common other, because identity is often seen as being about similarity and difference, belonging and exclusion (belonging to an in-group versus an out-group).[19] While self-identity (identity of the in-group) would typically refer to one's individual or collective identity, and the identity of the other (out-group) would typically entail an opponent identity and thus mediate between the conceptualisation of 'our good character versus their bad character,' it seems reasonable to agree that in a wider political context, presidential discourse aims at and is capable of reflecting and constructing larger collective identities. The examples of such identities are national identities, regional identities as well as supranational and global identities. Moreover,

[11]   Ilie, C. Parliamentary Discourses. In: *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, Vol. 9, 2ᵃ ed. / Ed. K. Brown. Oxford: Elsevier, 2006, p. 190.

[12]   *Ibidem*.

[13]   *Ibidem*.

[14]   *Ibidem*.

[15]   See Aristotelis. *Runas māksla – rētorika* / Transl. I. Rūmniece, V. Paparinska, L. Rotkale, O. Lāms, M. Laizāns, B. Kukjalko. Rīga: LU akadēmiskais apgāds, 2020.

[16]   See cf., Chilton, P.; Schäffner, Ch. Introduction: Themes and Principles in the Analysis of Political Discourse. In: *Politics as Text and Talk: Analytic Approaches to Political Discourse* / Eds. P. Chilton, Ch. Schäffner. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2002, p. 19-20, https://doi.org/10.1075/dapsac.4.

[17]   See Charteris-Black, J. *Analysing Political Speeches: Rhetoric, Discourse and Metaphor*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p. 8.

[18]   See in particular Anderson, B. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983.

[19]   See Wodak, R.; de Cillia, R.; Reisigl, M.; Liebhart, K. *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*. London: Routledge, 2009, p. 3, https://doi.org/10.1515/9780748637355.

political discourse in general is about linguistic choices made by politicians 'to create myths of a unique political image owned by the politician.'[20] However, given the fact that presidential discourse represents the language of state- or parliament-elected state representatives as political leaders, it is reasonable to argue that their linguistic choices are also intended to create and uphold myths of a unique image owned by the state both to the inhabitants of that state (to unite them) and to the international community (to gain recognition, support, and protection).

The linguistic analysis of political discourse, specifically, in relation to the construction of identity and its elements, takes place on three levels. The first level involves the analysis of themes or content (thematic areas) in the speeches that may be traced by the analysis of keyword and expanded into further analysis of discursive strategies and linguistic means and forms of realisation of these strategies.[21] The thematic areas are the macro topics introduced in discourse. The major themes applied in the political construction of national identities are the linguistic construction of *Homo Nationalis* (national spirit, ideal citizen), 'the narration and confabulation of a common political past, the linguistic construction of common culture, the linguistic construction of common political present and future and the linguistic construction of common national body'[22] (borders, territories). Furthermore, a discursive strategy in political discourse is seen as a 'more or less accurate plan adopted to achieve a certain political objective'[23] and can be separated into macro-level strategies[24] and micro-level strategies.[25]

One of the methodological paradigms focusing on the analysis of discourses is Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) and specifically, the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) that aims to analyse discourse of power and offer an objective criticism as of how this power is exercised in relations to the means and goals of the person or institution holding and exercising that power. In other words, CDS aims to 'unmask ideologically permeated and often obscured structures of power, political control, and dominance, as well as strategies of discriminatory inclusion and exclusion in language use.'[26] Thus, this study follows the principles of CDS and applies the DHA to identify the discursive strategies used in the presidential speeches. The five levels of discourse strategies typically analysed within the DHA are:

(1) the strategies of reference or nomination via such linguistic means as metaphors,[27] metonymies[28] and synecdoche;[29]

(2) the strategy of predication via linguistic attributions[30] of negative or positive traits to a discursive object;

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[20]   Ilie, C. *Parliamentary Discourses*, p. 190.

[21]   See Wodak, R.; de Cillia, R.; Reisigl, M.; Liebhart, K. *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*, p. 30.

[22]   *Ibidem*.

[23]   *Ibidem*, p. 31.

[24]   Macro-level strategies correspond to the social macro function of discourse that are, for instance, 'genesis, production, construction of social condition and … restoration, legitimation or relativisation of social status quo.' – *ibidem*, p. 8.

[25]   Micro-level strategies, in turn, refer to the micro functions at the level of a text and its linguistic features. The strategies identified at the micro-level of discourse analysis are the strategies of singularisation, autonomisation, assimilation, and dissimilation. See *ibidem*, p. 34.

[26]   *Ibidem*, p. 8.

[27]   Metaphor is a cognitive and linguistic tool that allows influencing the understanding and perception of the target audience by transferring the idea of a concrete notion to an abstract notion, thus creating familiar associations and allowing for linguistic manipulation, because 'metaphor operates at conceptual level to influence basic operations such as perception, problem solving, and memory.' See more Landau, M.J. *Conceptual Metaphor in Social Psychology: The Poetics of Everyday Life*. New York: Routledge, 2017, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315312019.

[28]   Metonymy, or name change (from Greek) is a rhetorical device that is based on association between two concepts thus replacing a name of a referent by other name that is closely associated with it either by concrete ere or abstract terms. Cf. Wodak, R.; de Cillia, R.; Reisigl, M.; Liebhart, K. *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*, p. 43.

[29]   Synecdoche is considered a type of metonymy, when the name of a referent is replaced by the name of another referent, which belongs to the same semantic field that is either semantically wider or narrower. Cf. *ibidem*, p. 43.

[30]   Linguistic attributions of negative or positive traits to people, events or object referenced in discourse may be carried out by the use of pronominal references, adjectives, metaphors, irony and other rhetorical techniques.

(3) argumentation strategies via topoi[31] as argument schemes;

(4) the strategies of perspectivisation or framing discourse representation via narration of events and utterances; and

(5) the strategies of intensification and mitigation via linguistic means of emphasis of limitation of the illocutionary force of utterances.[32]

All these strategies must be analysed within the specific historical, social and political context in order to interpret their goal and potential effect.

2. Democracy and the Baltic States

This chapter introduces the above-mentioned contextual background for the analysis presented in chapter three of this article, namely, the notion of democracy in the context of the Baltic States as a region and as independent republics.

The linguistic discussion on the topic of democracy may not be carried out without the discussion of the term of politics, which, in turn, seems impossible without an inquiry in the Greek philosophy as many political terms have originated there. The very term *politics* originates from the Greek *polis* referring to a *city-state* or 'an independent state organised around an urban centre and governed … by laws and republican political institutions.'[33] Similarly, the etymology of the word *democracy* dates back to the 13th-century Greek compound noun *demokratia* made up of the word *demos* referring to people and the word *kratos* meaning to rule and referring to power.[34] Nowadays this rule or power of the people is vested in the hands of elected representatives, who uphold relationship (communication) with people and represent their will. Discourse is the main element of that communication. Discourse originates from Latin *discursus* meaning conversation, reasoning and French *discourse* meaning the process of understanding, reasoning, and thought.[35] Consequently, democracy is necessarily connected with discourse.

From the latter half of the 20th century and the first part of the 21st century, democracy may be considered not only a system of government but also one of the central elements of the national identities of the Baltic States, specifically, due to their common political past. Unlike other nations for whom an independent state has historically preceded a unified nation (*Staatsnation*), the Baltic States may be classified under the more closed type of *Kulturnation*, where the ethnic ties in the form of common cultural traits have historically been the driving force for establishing a state.[36] While the establishment of separate independent republics occurred in the early 20th century and the restoration of independence in the early 1990s[37] with democracy being one of the key elements of the national

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[31] A concept widely used in political discourse analysis is topoi, that is defined as 'highly conventionalised parts of argumentation' and 'formal … content-related warrants … which connect an argument with a conclusion' or a claim. See Wodak, R.; de Cillia, R.; Reisigl, M.; Liebhart, K. *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*, p. 34.

[32] Cf. Jäger, S. Discourse and Knowledge: Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of a Critical Discourse and Dispositive Analysis. In: *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* / Eds. R. Wodak, M. Meyer. London: Sage Publications, 2008, p. 33-34, https://doi.org/10.4135/9780857028020.

[33] Lord, C. Introduction. In: *Aristotle's Politics* / Translated and with an Introduction, Notes, and Glossary by C. Lord. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013, p. vii.

[34] Cf. Dahl, R.A. *On Democracy* / With an Introduction, and Two Chapters by Ian Shapiro. USA: Yale University Press, 2020, p. 11, https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300257991.

[35] See Discourse (n.). *Online Etymology Dictionary*. Retrieved from: https://www.etymonline.com/word/discourse [accessed 27/01/2023].

[36] See more Fabrykant, M. National Identity in the Contemporary Baltics: Comparative Quantitative Analysis. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 2018, Vol. 49, No. 3, p. 305-331, https://doi.org/10.1080/01629778.2018.1442360.

[37] The periods of Soviet occupation of the Baltic States during and after World War II (from 1940 to1941 and from 1944 to 1990s) were described as a period of oppression that had the most significant influence on the formation of the current national self-identification of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. See more Mole, R. *The Baltic States from the Soviet Union to the European Union: Identity, Discourse and Power in the Post-Communist Transition of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania*. London: Routledge, 2012, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203121498.

identification of the Baltic citizens, the cultural ties of these nations date back to the 13th century, specifically, for Lithuania. Thus, the dates that symbolically mark the beginning of the national statehood, along with the historical state leaders and other national symbols, must be mentioned in the context of the Baltic States, namely, February 23 (de facto declaration of independence of Estonia in 1918), August 20 (the restoration of independence of Estonia in 1991); July 6 (the statehood day marking the coronation of King Mindaugas of Lithuania in 1253), February 16 (de facto restoration of the state of Lithuania in 1918) and March 11 (the restoration of independence of Lithuania in 1990),[38] November 18 (de facto declaration of independence of Latvia in 1918) and May 4 (the restoration of independence of Latvia in 1991).[39] Democracy in the Baltic States has acquired additional meaning that is closely connected with freedom of self-identification, freedom from the historical other and independence of the historically subordinate republics. Nevertheless, democracy as an element of national and supranational identity has only taken root in the political discourse of the Baltic politicians after the restoration of independence in the 1990s, leading up to and after joining the European Union and North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 2004, becoming a uniting element of the states within the 'democratic family of the Western states.'[40]

Democracy in the Baltic States is a quality and a value set out in the early period of the establishment of their statehood, specifically, the declarations of independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania that proclaim these individual states as independent and democratic republics based on the principle of a 'free will of people.'[41] Occupations[42] and the subsequent deportations of the Baltic people to Russia are seen as illegal disruption of that principle. Between 1940[43] and 1953, 'the Baltic States had lost about 30 percent of the national populations at the time'[44] including and perhaps specifically, the 'political, cultural and economic elites.'[45] It must also be admitted that 'no one could really assess the extent of the physical and moral damage inflicted upon the Baltic peoples by the end of the Soviet occupation … and even after years of their independence, any number of difficulties in the Baltic States can be linked to this damage.'[46]

3. Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis of Democracy in Presidential Speeches

This chapter presents the empirical study of discursive and linguistic representation of democracy in presidential speeches.

3.1. Critical Discourse Studies and Corpus Linguistics

While ready-made corpora that have been made widely available online through the second decade of the 21st century allow for the inquiry of the use of particular terms in large bodies of data and

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[38] See also Norkus, Z.; Ambrulevičiūtė, A. Claiming a Great Ancient Imperial Past as an Identity Element of a Small Modern Nation. The Case of Lithuania. In: *National Stereotyping, Identity Politics, European Crises* / Eds J. Barkhoff, J. Leerssen. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2021, p. 32-33, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004436107_004.

[39] See more Andrejevs, D. Revisiting the Social Organisation of National Memory: A Look at the Calendars of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. *Memory Studies*, 2020, Vol. 13, No. 6, p. 1305-1320, https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698018784116.

[40] See cf., Kasekamp, A. Survival against the Odds: The Baltic States at 100. *Slavic Review,* 2019, Vol. 78, No. 3, p. 640-647, https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2019.225.

[41] See more Ziemele, I. *State Continuity and Nationality: The Baltic States and Russia: Past Present and Future as Defined by International Law*, p. 17-20.

[42] Both by the Soviet Union and by Nazi Germany during World War II.

[43] The year of the first Soviet occupation of the Baltic States.

[44] Ziemele, I. *State Continuity and Nationality: The Baltic States and Russia: Past Present and Future as Defined by International Law*, p. 17.

[45] *Ibidem*, p. 17-20.

[46] *Ibidem*, p. 27.

the comparison of that use with other available corpora, they typically lack detailed contextual information, thus not allowing to carry out a detailed qualitative analysis. Purpose-built corpora, while it requires comparatively more time to build, due to the process of data collection and classification, offer the possibility to analyse linguistic data not only in its specific textual environment or co-text, but also in the wider context of particular speeches, using the methods offered by the paradigm of CDS.[47] Thus, the study offers a statistical analysis of the occurrences and collocational environment of the term *democracy* in presidential speeches as well as the analysis of the macrostructures and microstructures[48] of discourse acts,[49] in which the term is embedded in the wider historical, political and socio-economic context. The aforementioned qualifies the research as a corpus-assisted critical discourse study of the discursive construction of democracy in the political rhetoric by the Baltic presidents in the period of thirty-one years.

The specialised purpose-built corpus of presidential speeches has been collected from the archives and homepages of the offices of the presidents of the Baltic States as well as from the archives of international institutions such as the United Nations (UN) and NATO. The corpus consists of 306 presidential speeches and 330,902 words in total. It is subdivided into four large sub-corpora and several minor sub-corpora according to the state, time and language.

3.2. Constructing Democracy in Presidential Speeches

It is useful to start the analysis with the corpus-based investigation of the use of the term *democracy* and its derivations; thus, lemma[50] 'demokr*' is used in the query in the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian language sub-corpora, and lemma 'democr*' is used in the query[51] in the English language sub-corpus. The results showing the relative frequency[52] of the words relating to the above-mentioned lemma indicate that democracy and its positional attributes have been most frequent in the international speeches of the Baltic presidents (2,170.4 per million words), and specifically, in the speeches of the presidents of Lithuania; namely, the relative frequency of references in the local speeches in Lithuanian is 1,887.14 occurrences per million words (by comparison the relative frequency in the Estonian speeches is 1,536.74 and in the Latvian speeches it is 1,304.91). In the international speeches given by the presidents of Lithuania, the relative frequency is the highest amounting to 2,709.58 occurrences per million words (in comparison to 1,720.11 in the speeches by the Estonian presidents and 2,171.59 in the speeches of the Latvian presidents). It is also interesting to note that when looking at the time frame, the most frequent references to democracy are found in the sub-corpus of speeches delivered from 1992 to 2002, prior to the Baltic States joining the EU and NATO (see Figure 1):

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47 Cf. Fairclough, N. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Routledge, 2013, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315834368.

48 Macrostructures of discourse are the global topics, themes or frames of discourse that can be seen as broader semantic categories, the use and effect of which is pre-planned and control the interpretation of further microstructures, or the linguistic features of particular texts. See van Dijk, T.A. Socio-Cognitive Discourse Studies. In: *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies* / Eds. J. Flowerdew, J. E. Richardson. London: Routledge, 2017, p. 29-30. Retrieved from https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315739342-3/socio-cognitive-discourse-studies-teun-van-dijk [accessed 27/01/2023].

49 Communicative act is a single instance or utterance of text that may contain a single or several arguments. See Chilton, P.A. Political Terminology. In: *Handbook of Communication in the Public Sphere* / Eds. R. Wodak, V. Koller. Berlin and New York: De Gruyter Mouton, 2008, p. 229, https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110198980.3.225.

50 Positional attribute is the basic form of a word (root), typically the form found in dictionaries. A lemmatized corpus allows for searching for the basic form and include all forms of the word in the result.

51 A search item in a language corpus: Lemma. *Sketch Engine Corpus Software*. Retrieved from https://www.sketchengine.eu/my_keywords/lemma/ [accessed 27/01/2023].

52 Word frequency per million words calculated automatically by the Sketch Engine corpus software to allow making objective corpus comparisons for corpora of different sizes.
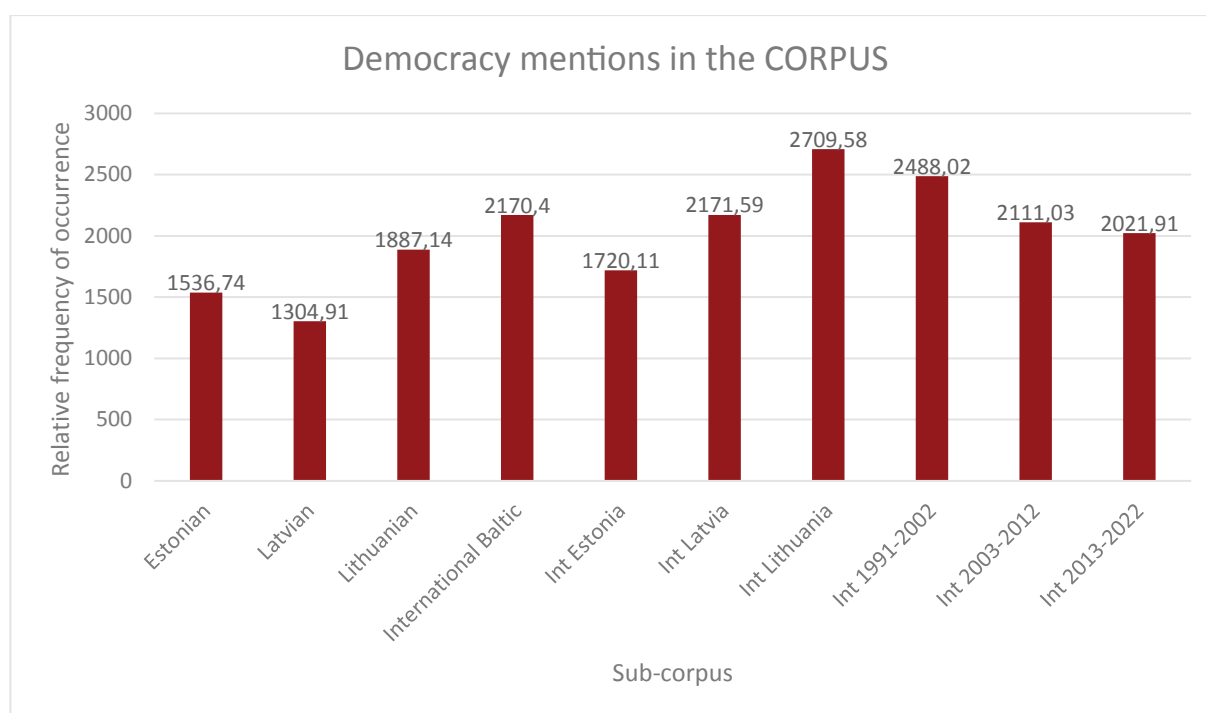
Figure 1. Relative frequency of lemmas 'demokr' and 'democr' and their attributes across time and space.

Based on the corpus-based frequency analysis, the collocational context (a collocation span[53] of five words before and after the word in query) of the aforementioned lemmas has also been investigated (see Table 1):

Table 1. Collocational context of democracy across sub-corpora.

Sub-corpus	Collocations
Local speeches in Estonian (the Estonian sub-corpus)	kus (where), ning (and), kardab (fears), Vene (Russian), õigusriigi (rule of law), rahvaste (nations), Venemaa (Russia), inimeste (people), Balti (Baltic), meie (our), riiki (state), Europaa (Europe), oli (was), on (is), Eesti (Estonia)
Local speeches in Latvian (the Latvian sub-corpus)	atvērtu (open), sistēmas (system), atbilstoši (appropriately), darbības (actions), valsti (state), Eiropas (Europe), pasaules (world), valstu (states), esam (we are), mūsu (our), Latvia (Latvia)
Local speeches in Lithuanian (the Lithuanian sub-corpus)	keliu (way), valstybių (states), kuri (which), ypač (especially), valstybė (state), nepriklausomybę (independence), visuomenės (society), kaip (like, such as), Lietuva (Lithuania), ir (and), savo (its own, our)
All international speeches (the Baltic international sub-corpus)	rule, freedom, law, free, human, values, rights, institutions, market, reforms, state, principles, Russia, community, process
International speeches by the presidents of Estonia (Int Estonia)	rule, law, human, market, free, freedom, economy, Russia, rights, values
International speeches by the presidents of Latvia (Int Latvia)	rule, freedom, law, institutions, state, Western, and, rights, free, human, liberal, stable, process, strengthen

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[53]   A list of words surrounding a keyword or a word in query displays the context of five words surrounding the word in query.

Sub-corpus	Collocations
International speeches by the presidents of Lithuania (Int Lithuania)	freedom, community, free, values, reforms, human, market, rights, rule, Russia, young, neighbourhood, law, build
Speeches from 1991 to 2002	free, market, Russia, new, young, state, process, economy, reforms, human, principles, Russian, integrated, forces
Speeches from 2003 to 2012	rule, freedom, community, values, reforms, human, law, free, rights
Speeches from 2013 to 2022	rule, law, freedom, human, rights, values, strengthen, liberal, institutions, societies, based, free, process, Western, safeguard, respect

Table 1 displays significant differences as to how democracy is presented in local and international speeches, speeches across time and across the Baltic States. For instance, while the presidents of Estonia and Latvia present democracy as a national, supranational and global value and a system of state, a political body based on the 'rule of law,' specifically, when compared to Russia (notably, in the speeches of the presidents of Estonia), the presidents of Lithuania portray it as both an element that constitutes the state and a value of its people, focusing on the national Lithuanian identity alone. When looking at the international speeches, the comparison between the states that value democracy and all that is associated with it (rule of law, human rights, free market, liberal democracy, and Western countries) are compared to Russia (initially, as a young state striving for democracy and later failing to not only uphold the values but sliding back to totalitarian and authoritarian form of state, thus putting all its democratic neighbours in defensive position). For example:

> Esu tikras, kad šis Forumas, kurio tokia puiki darbotvarkė ir ją diskutuoja tokia garbinga auditorija, išsiverš iš tradicinės galvosenos ribų ir prisidės prie kūrimo *vientisos ir laisvos Europos vizijos*, kurioje *Rusija yra atsakinga ir demokratiška kaimynė*.[54] (I am sure that this Forum, having such a great agenda and being discussed by such a respectable audience, will go beyond traditional thinking and contribute to the creation of a *unified and free vision of Europe*,[55] where *Russia is a responsible and democratic neighbour*).[56]

This example shows hope expressed by the former president of Lithuania in Russia's ability to uphold its course towards democracy and respect the international attempts to unite the countries of free Europe that have emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Similar hope was expressed by the president of Estonia, Lennart Meri, during the first year of Estonian independence, yet followed by an embedded disbelief of implicit fear that Russia's stance might be insincere:

> The *re-recognition, if you will, of Estonia by the USSR* allows *us to rebuild relations in the spirit of mutual trust and equal partnership*, based on *normal*, state-to-state relations. I should stress here that *such relations depend very much* on *the development of democratic forces and traditions in Russia and the Soviet Union.*[57]

The lexemes (words) used in the example, for instance, the conditional clause 'if you will' display what the audience (in this case, the political leaders of the world) wish to hear rather what the speaker really thinks, namely, that Estonia and Russia lack mutual trust and equality in their state-to-state relationship. The president of Estonia further emphasizes that this 'normal' relationship depends on whether Russia (as the leader of the former Soviet Union) chooses a democratic path. Another hope for Russia to become a democratic state, which respects the territorial integrity of its smaller neighbours,

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[54]   Valdas Adamkus, Forum of Europe and Russia relations, 2006.
[55]   Here and thereinafter, the author's emphasis of specific linguistic means under the investigation is in italics.
[56]   Here and thereinafter translated by the author of the article.
[57]   Lennart Meri, UN General Assembly, 1991.

was expressed by the president of Latvia, Guntis Ulmanis, in 1992, when the Russian military personnel was still remaining in the territories of the Baltic States causing fear in its population and their new democratic governments that Russia might not remove its troops peacefully. The speeches of the presidents of the Baltic States delivered to international audience at the time expressed both hope and implicit fear:

> At critical moments in the past, *democratic forces in the Russian Federation* have demonstrated their ability to act decisively to *keep the Russian Federation on the road to democracy*. I am convinced that this will also be the case in *these, for Russia, difficult and complicated times*. Since February 1992, State delegations of Latvia and the Russian Federation have held eight sessions of negotiations on the subject of *troop withdrawal from Latvia*.[58]

The examples below illustrate how the initial hope for Russia (as a young state that has emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union) to join the 'family' of democratic states which respects the values and territorial integrity of its neighbours, has turned into a strong discursive and linguistic portrayal of Russia as an enemy and a threat, using metaphoric expressions, topoi of threat and topoi of comparison, and invitations to isolate Russia altogether:

> Please don't misunderstand me: this is not directed against Russia, and where democratic traditions are interwoven with Greco-Roman law, *Russian democracy is young and needs support*. Let this support be friendly and worthy but uncompromising: international law is and must be the basis of relations even when *one state is very small and the other is very large*.[59]

> *Instability in Russia may be a risk*. However, the *current form of stability where Russia feels able to invade its neighbours* and *to undermine our Western democracies* through corruption, energy blackmail, information war and influence operations, cannot be the status quo *we wish to maintain*. From the perspective of European security and stability, the most effective strategy towards Russia continues to be containment, economically, politically and militarily.[60]

> Kiev held one democratic election after another while *Russia is cruising on the slippery* slope of democratic backsliding, taking action even against such apolitical activities as those of the British Council.[61]

Moreover, the examples above use the personification (Russia feels able to invade its neighbours, specifically, the small ones) combined with the metaphor STATE IS A SHIP (Russia is cruising on the slippery slope of democratic backsliding), where the type of a ship (cruise) also signifies voluntary and leisurely choice. In addition, synecdoche used in the examples illustrates that Russia stands not only for its government (when the government and the president are addressed, Moscow, Kremlin, or Putin are often referenced to) but for the whole country and its population. Synecdoche is also used to address the political leadership of Ukraine through the reference to Kyiv.

Furthermore, democracy is often presented as the value of the present and the future as opposite to the historical regime ruling the Baltic States. This is often carried out discursively using topos of comparison.[62] For example:

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[58] Guntis Ulmanis, UN General Assembly, 1992.
[59] Lennart Meri, NATO meeting, 1992.
[60] Alar Karis, NATO Military Committee Conference, 2022.
[61] Valdas Adamkus, Speech on the EU integration, 2008.
[62] Topos (pl. topoi) are parts of argumentation that connect an argument (premise) with a conclusion (claim), typically including an implicit conditional (if a, then b or b, because a.) Topos of comparison is used to compare situations, states, time periods, and people and argue that if one situation is more advantageous than the other, then listener should opt for and support the former rather than the latter.

Atbrīvojoties no totalitāra režīma, esam izaudzinājuši demokrātisku sabiedrību, kurā tiesiskums un cilvēktiesības ir augstā cieņā.[63] (*By getting rid of the totalitarian regime*, we have *raised a democratic society* where the rule of law and human rights are held in high esteem.)

As the example above illustrates, democracy is presented as the effect of getting rid of a totalitarian regime and allowing to purposefully (rather than by chance) raise a society, who respects the democratic values of law and human rights. Another, even more implicit example of comparison between the present and the past using topos of comparison and topos of history as a horrible place illustrates the contrast between the totalitarian and suppressive past, represented by the *depths of tragedy*, and the democratic present and the future, represented by the *heights of success*:

During this last century Latvia has made a remarkable turnaround. It has gone *from the depths of tragedy to the heights of success*. In a few short years, Latvia has grown into a *politically stable state with strong democratic institutions and practices*. Latvia has restored a *thriving market economy and a deep respect for individual rights and freedoms*.[64]

When Latvia regained its independence 11 years ago, it had to undergo a rapid transformation *from an occupied nation with a repressive political system to a liberal, parliamentary democracy that respects human rights and liberties*, and had to transform its *closed and planned, state-run economy to an open and free-market economy*.[65]

In addition, the examples above illustrate how topoi as argument schemes often include strong linguistic techniques aimed to emphasize the argument; in this case, the conceptual metaphor *from the depths of tragedy to the heights of success*, which, similarly as the topoi, is aimed to 'steer the argument to a particular conclusion'[66] by making a comparison between the typically negative low or deep and the growth and development as represented by the word *heights*. Further, this growth or heights is defined using topos of definition as descriptive emotional adjectives: *stable* state (as a political project), *strong* democracy, *thriving* market economy and *deep* respect for the right of the individual (implicitly as opposed to the experience in the Soviet Union). This type of opposition between democracy and totalitarianism, or authoritarianism has also been extended and emphasized in the context of Russia's war in Ukraine, which will determine the overall future of democracy (Russia's war in Ukraine is often metaphorically portrayed as the authoritarian values being at war with the democratic ones):

Šodien karš Ukrainā izšķirs, kāda būs nākotnes ģeopolitiskā karte, kāda būs Eiropas karte, *kur sāksies demokrātiskie Rietumi un kur beigsies autoritāro Austrumu vara*.[67] (Today, the war in Ukraine will decide what the geopolitical map of the future will be, what the map of Europe will be like, *where the democratic West will begin and where the authoritarian East will end.*)

As the examples illustrate, democracy for the Baltic States (as represented by their political leaders) is not only a political system and a national value per se, but rather a representation of where the states come from (the victimhood of the Soviet past), how they have struggled to regain freedom (and democracy), and how they value, cherish and intend to protect it:

During the cold war the Baltic Sea was a boundary. Nowadays the Baltic Sea unites rather than divides States. Five years ago the *"Baltic Way"*—a *human chain reaching from Tallinn through Riga*

63   Andris Bērziņš, ANO speech, 2011.
64   Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, UN General Assembly, 1999.
65   Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, UN General Assembly, 2002.
66   Neagu, M.-I. *Decoding Political Discourse: Conceptual Metaphors and Argumentation*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 2.
67   Egils Levits, the Restoration of Independence Day, 2022.

*to Vilnius—*symbolized the *shared road towards independence and democracy. Today this road has also regained its historical and economic significance in our region.* At the turn of the century the *Baltic Way will already be an established part of the global information highway.*[68]

This example illustrates that democracy is seen as a national value of independent and separate states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (as represented by the capitals Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius) as well as a common value of Baltic identity as represented by the inclusive pronoun we/our and the peaceful protest of the Baltic people that took place on August 23, 1989, which showed the common will of people and struggle for freedom, eventually culminating in the restoration of independence of the Baltic States.[69]

Another example that illustrates the contextual environment of the word *democracy* shows that democracy is portrayed as a value or an element of collective identity; however, not solely Estonian identity, but as a part of the hybrid EU identity and as a supranational identity:

Eesti on *demokraatliku Euroopa* kõige *väiksemaid riike*, millest järeldub, et peame eriti kokkuhoidlikult ringi käima varaga, mida ajalugu ja loodus on meile pärandanud kasinasti, nimelt *kompetentse ja isamaale andunud riigiametnikuga.*[70] (*Estonia* is one of the *smallest countries* in a *democratic Europe*, which means that *we have* to deal *especially sparingly* with the property that *we have scarcely inherited from history and nature*, thus *we have to be a competent and dedicated civil servants*).

The example also includes a reference to the size (geographical and demographic) of Estonia as well as the common political history as the elements of its national identity, thus emphasizing the importance to act according to the values of one's country. It also displays the national identity construction as the macro theme in the speech, where democracy and independence are referenced to as important elements of Estonian identity. Nevertheless, the micro strategy of implicitly[71] constructing the 'negative other,' or the negative legacy from the time of being occupied by the Soviet Union shows the opposition between the Estonians, who stand for independent, democratic and Estonian state, and those who wished to control Estonia. The reference to history contains the use of topos of history (if the land has historically belonged to Estonians, then Estonians have the responsibility to take care of it)[72] used within the thematic area of constructing *Homo Estonicus* or an image of a good Estonian citizen.

Democracy also symbolises the 'long awaited return to Europe'[73] and the return to the Western world. It was frequently mentioned by the presidents of the Baltic States[74] in their speeches given to different audience on different occasions from 1991 to 2022:

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[68] Guntis Ulmanis, UN General Assembly, 1994.

[69] See also Romāne-Kalniņa, L. *Construction and Representation of National Identity in the Speeches of the Presidents of the Baltic States: Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis*, p. 49.

[70] Lennart Meri, the President of Estonia from 1992 to 2001. Speech in the Estonian Parliament, March 1995.

[71] Implicit language is aimed at either euphemization or mitigation of a negative effect of an utterance or at obscuring the agency via such means as euphemisms, the passive voice, and use of pronominal references (we/they).

[72] Topoi are argument schemes that follow a pattern or formula in the form of an implied 'if-then' statement which link a claim or an argument with the conclusion to be derived from it. Topos of history follows a pattern 'if history has proved something to be true, then it is also true in present and future.' See more Boukala, S. Rethinking topos in the Discourse Historical Approach: Endoxon Seeking and Argumentation in Greek Media Discourses on 'Islamist Terrorism.' *Discourse Studies*, 2016, Vol. 18, No. 3, p. 249-268, https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445616634550.

[73] Cheskin, A. *Russian-Speakers in Post-Soviet Latvia: Discursive Identity Strategies*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016, p. 2.

[74] See frequency analysis in Romāne-Kalniņa, L. 'Return to the International Family of Democracies': Keyness Factor in the International Speeches of the Baltic Presidents. *Baltic Journal of English Language and Literature and Culture*, 2022, Vol. 12, p. 114-135, https://doi.org/10.22364/BJELLC.12.2022.08. See also Romāne-Kalniņa, L. Keyword Analysis in Presidential Rhetoric throughout Hundred Years of Independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania: Corpus Linguistic Tools in Critical Discourse Analysis. In: *Language for International Communication: Linking Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 2020, Vol. 3, p. 95-109, https://doi.org/10.22364/lincs.2020.08.

Estonia has set itself high aims. We want to become an inseparable part of the *new, democratic, and integrated Europe.*[75]

Tapome *demokratiška* valstybe, kuri yra *girdima* ir *gerbiama*. Įsiliejome į politinę ir ekonominę *Vakarų pasaulio šeimą.*[76] (We have become a *democratic* state that is being *heard and respected*. We joined the political and economic *family of the Western world*.)

Latvija atgriežas Eiropā. Vēsturiski tās ir mūsu īstās mājas. Ģeogrāfiski mēs no Eiropas jau nekad neesam pazuduši.[77] (*Latvia is returning to Europe. Historically, this is our real home. Geographically, we have never disappeared from Europe.*)

These are American values; these are European values; these are Latvian values; these are our values.[78]

This 'return to democracy,' represented by Europe and the West, is particularly significant because of the word *return*, which implies and relates to the historical continuity of the states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and the confirmation of the illegal character of annexation and occupation of the Baltic States in 1940. It is also significant to emphasize that the presidents of the Baltic States compare the struggle against the Soviets (implied Russia) and the European democratic character of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to the struggle of Ukraine (mentioned 208 times, 864,83 per million words in the corpus), Belarus (mentioned 66 times, 274,42 per million words), Georgia (mentioned 72 times, 299,37 per million words) and Moldova (mentioned 29 times, 120,58 per million words) in the 21st century. For example:

Our collective failure to stand up for the underlying principles of independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of *Ukraine* would have far reaching negative repercussions for the international order. *The occupied territories of Ukraine, Georgia or Moldova* are *full of red lines that we have drawn, but never acted upon.* Again we are reminded that *if you close your eyes to crimes, they do not disappear, they spread, grow and finally they take over.*[79]

Our overarching aim was to make sure grave *human rights violations*—be it in Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Yemen, Belarus or elsewhere—*do not go unnoticed*. Considering *worrisome developments in our region already then*, we put much effort into keeping the *Security Council focused on our region—Belarus, Crimea of Ukraine, and Georgia.*[80]

In the *21st century, Russia maintains a 19th-century ideology of imperialism, colonialism and racism*. Russia invaded Georgia in 2008. It illegally annexed Ukraine's Crimea in 2014. It has used increasingly aggressive rhetoric towards other neighbouring countries. These are all manifestations of its *imperialistic and colonial ambitions.*[81]

The examples illustrate that the presidents of all three Baltic States use topos of history as a reminder that teaches the history lessons and topos of threat as a warning that the history has shown repeatedly that Russia is incapable of change and that if we—the democratic countries of the world—do not act, Russia will continue to be a global threat to its neighbouring countries and by extension, to the global peace. It is interesting to note that when discussing democracy and neighbouring states, the presidents of Lithuania seem to be most explicit. They reference both democracy (see also Figure 2) and the necessity to protect

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[75]   Arnold Rüütel, To the Ambassador of the USA, 2001.
[76]   Dalia Grybauskaitė, Restoration of Independence Day speech, 2015.
[77]   Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, Speech at the Latvian Song Festival, 2003.
[78]   Raimonds Vējonis, EU Conference, 2018.
[79]   Dalia Grybauskaitė, UN General Assembly Speech, 2015.
[80]   Alar Karis, Speech in the Conference of Small States in the UN Security Council, 2022.
[81]   Egils Levits, UN General Assembly Speech, 2022.

its neighbouring states most frequently. Moreover, as the previous research[82] has shown, this change in the presidential rhetoric of Lithuania is most striking as it moves from euphemizing (using understatements) the relationship with Russia and even presenting it as a friend in the early 1990s to portraying it not only as a potential threat but even as an enemy, specifically, in the speeches by Gitanas Nausėda. This may be explained as a result and a consequence of the historical and political context (the initial attempts by Russian politicians to form a democratic state and their gradual move to authoritarian regime, including aggressive and military involvement in the politics of its neighbouring countries) and the peculiarity of and attitude to the present time and also the historical identity of the states (Lithuania's political history and national identity date back to the 13th-century Grand Duchy of Lithuania).[83]

Figure 2. The frequency comparison of the representation of democracy across the Baltic States.

As Figure 2 shows, democracy seems to be linguistically and discursively strongest in the speeches of the presidents of Lithuania:

Klysdami ir taisydami klaidas, kasdien kartu mokomės, lygindami save su kitomis šalimis ir saugodami savo tradicijas, dirbame mums istorijos patikėtą darbą. … *Jūsų dėka Lietuva pasaulyje gerbiama kaip demokratiška ir pažangi šalis.*[84] (By making and correcting mistakes, we learn together every day, comparing ourselves with other countries and protecting our traditions, we do the work entrusted to us by history. … *Thanks to you, Lithuania is respected in the world as a democratic and progressive country.*)

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[82] See description of Lithuania and interview with the presidential speechwriter of the President of Lithuania, Gitanas Nausėda, in Romāne-Kalniņa, L. *Construction and Representation of National Identity in the Speeches of the Presidents of the Baltic States: Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis*, p. 131-136.

[83] See discussion on the history of Lithuania (and Estonia and Latvia) in *Lithuanian Identity and Values* / Ed. A. Savicka. Washington: The Council of Research in Values and Philosophy, 2007, retrieved from https://www.crvp.org/publications/Series-IVA/IVA-31.pdf [accessed 27/01/2023]; Jastramskis, M. Explaining the Success of Non-Partisan Presidents in Lithuania. *East European Politics*, 2021, Vol. 37, No. 2, p. 193-213, https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2020.1756782; Andrejevs, D. *Revisiting the Social Organisation of National Memory: A Look at the Calendars of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia*, p. 1305-1320.

[84] Valdas Adamkus, Restoration of Independence Day Speech, 2006.

Democracy is portrayed not only as a value (as described above) or political system, but as an achievement of the Lithuanian people rooted in history and pride that Lithuania (thanks to its people) is now a respected state in the democratic and progressive (developing and successful, as opposed to stagnating and totalitarian) world. Nevertheless, it must be argued that while the presidents of Estonia and Latvia often refer to democracy as a political system (more explicitly and overtly) and as a value, most often democracy is implied when citing other values that are specifically significant to Estonian and Latvian people due to the oppression of these values throughout history. For example:

Iseseisvuse taastamise päevil oli meie püüd detsentraliseerida võim, arendada *osalusdemokraatiat*, anda rohkem otsustusõigust omavalitsustele.[85] (In the days of restoration of independence, our effort was to decentralize power, to develop *participatory democracy*, to give more decision-making power to municipalities.)

The example indicates how democracy represents the power of people (*demos+kratos*) enabling them to express their will and to choose their destiny through smaller government units (municipalities) as their representatives rather than the centralized power held by the political leaders. For the purpose of illustration of this representation of the will of the people, the frequency of the word *people* in the corpus may be mentioned: 190 occurrences in the speeches of the presidents of Estonia (2,386.56 per million words), 189 occurrences in the speeches of the presidents of Latvia (2,126.58 per million words) and 140 occurrences in the speeches of the presidents of Lithuania (1,996.61 per million words). For example:

Lai ilgstoši pastāvētu, mums jābūt savai valstij, jo *valsts ir ietvars mūsu neatkarībai, brīvībai un demokrātijai*; jo valsts ir ietvars latviešu tautas, latviešu valodas un latviešu kultūras pastāvēšanai. Šodien un nākotnē.[86] (In order to exist for a long time, *we must have our own state, because the state is the framework for our independence, freedom and democracy*; because the state is the framework for the existence of *the Latvian people, Latvian language and Latvian culture*. Today and in the future.)

The example proves the fact that democracy is only one of many values that constitute hybrid identity of the Baltic States. However, in the case of Estonia and Latvia, it also helps to strengthen the previously threated ethnic values, i.e., national language and national history, because those states were subjected to harsher massive immigration caused by the russification during the Soviet era. As a result of such intentional politics carried out by the Soviet political leadership, in the 1980s the ethnic population of Estonians constituted 61% of the total population of Estonia, the ethnic Latvian population constituted 52% of the total population of Latvia, while the ethnic population of Lithuania was 80% of the total population of the country.[87] Keeping this in mind, it is reasonable to rely on the conclusions of Kjetil Duvold and Sten Berglund[88] and Marharyta Fabrykant,[89] who have noted that the Baltic States, and specifically, Estonia and Latvia, while struggling to become authentic democracies that focus on *demos* (all people) have remained ethically centred, focusing on *ethnos* (only ethnic people). The reason why the ethnic criteria remains strong (with the higher percentage of civic engagement) in Lithuania and not in Estonia and Latvia as implicated above, is both the historical oppression of ethnic Estonians and Latvians

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[85] Arnold Rüütel, Independence Day, 2003.

[86] Egils Levits, Independence Day, 2022.

[87] See more *National, State and Regime Identity in Latvia* / Eds. A. Tabuns, J. Broks, A. Tabuna, T. Tisenkopfs. Riga: Baltic Study Center, 2001; Zepa, B. "Nacionālisma" konstruēšana Latvijas integrācijas politikā. *Latvijas Universitātes Raksti. Socioloģija*, 2007, Vol. 714, p. 44-53; Mole, R. *The Baltic States from the Soviet Union to the European Union: Identity, Discourse and Power in the Post-Communist Transition of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.*

[88] Duvold, K.; Berglund, S. *Democracy between Ethnos and Demos: Territorial Identification and Political Support in the Baltic States*, p. 341-365.

[89] Fabrykant, M. *National Identity in the Contemporary Baltics: Comparative Quantitative Analysis*, p. 305-331.

and the current complex situation of ethnic constitution of the minority and majority population in the countries.[90]

Conclusively, it must be stated that the current study unveils the representation of democracy as a term, as a value and as a principle of hybrid identities in the Baltic States, Europe and the world in the speeches of the presidents of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania using discursive and linguistic analysis of those speeches within the given historical, political and social context. However, it does not claim or generalise the overall situation in the Baltic States or the overall representation of democracy in political discourse.

Conclusions

The article illustrates how democracy is referenced and presented in the speeches of the representative leaders of the Baltic States, i.e., the presidents of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, both locally and internationally from the restoration of independence in the early 1990s to 2022. The main conclusions are the following:

(1) The presidents present democracy not only as a political system of the states but also and more importantly as a value of the nations (as imagined communities with shared value systems) and the state (as a political project);

(2) Democracy is a shared value of both independent and separate Baltic States (national identities of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), common Baltic identity (as regional and historically grounded identity), common European identity (as supranational identity) and common value of the Western world (regional and symbolic identity, typically in opposition to the East as represented by the authoritarian states, specifically, Russia);

(3) Democracy is often portrayed as a goal reached by the Baltic peoples in a difficult historical struggle and one that is currently aspired and fought for by Ukraine (before 2022, also by Belarus, Georgia and Moldova);

(4) Democracy as a value is frequently portrayed in a chain of values, such as freedom, independence, rule of law, human rights, individual rights and freedoms of people;

(5) The discursive strategies and linguistic means that are most frequently and explicitly used by the presidents to present and also construct democracy (as a value) are topos of comparison (with Russia today and with the Soviet past), topos of history as a terrible place (the Soviet past as traumatic history), and topos of history as a teacher (a warning that Russia has not respected and does not plan to respect the territorial integrity and democratic aspirations of its neighbours has been mentioned in the international speeches of the Baltic presidents to persuade the international political leaders); emotional adjectives, rhetorical questions, metaphors, parallel sentence constructions are also used as means of persuasion and manipulation of the target audience;

(6) The term *democracy* and its derivations are most frequently and explicitly referenced in the speeches by the presidents of Lithuania (both local and international speeches), while the presidents of Latvia and Estonia seem to portray this value less frequently and more implicitly.

Consequently, it may be stated that while this study is a representation of one of the topical issues in the current geopolitical situation in the Baltic States, Europe and the world not only due to the war between democracy and authoritarianism but also due to the revival of the role of the president, it has its limitations, because the presidential speeches represent a part of the official presidential communication and of political discourse; therefore, the results may not be generalised and applied to the totality of

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[90]   Ethnic population of Estonia was 68.5%, Latvia—62.7% and Lithuania—84.1%. See more Mix, D.E. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania: Background and U.S.-Baltic Relations (R46139). *Congressional Research Service*, September 29, 2022. Retrieved from https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/R46139.pdf [accessed 27/01/2023].

Baltic political discourse. In order to claim that democracy is the value of all or the majority of the Baltic peoples, other methodological tools, such as surveys, should be applied. Thereby, the study may be extended to more comprehensive research of representation of democracy in political discourse and the perception of democracy in Baltic societies in the future.

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Appendices

Table 2. Corpus information.

No	Sub-corpus	Number of speeches	Word count
1	International speeches (English):	156	21,6519
	1.1. International speeches—Estonia	52	72,701
	1.2. International speeches—Latvia	52	80,694
	1.3. International speeches—Lithuania	52	63,124
	1.4. International speeches from 1992 to 2002	35	53,551
	1.5. International speeches from 2003 to 2012	60	82,978
	1.6. International speeches from 2013 to 2022	61	79,990
2	Estonian speeches (local)	50	46,283
	2.1. from 1992 to 2022	15	15,822
	2.2. from 2003 to 2012	11	9,319
	2.3. from 2013 to 2022	24	21,142
3	Latvian speeches (local)	50	45,865
	3.1. from 1992 to 2022	15	14,354
	3.2. from 2003 to 2012	15	18,898
	3.3. from 2013 to 2022	20	12,613
4	Lithuanian speeches (local)	50	22,235
	4.1. from 1992 to 2022	2	2,109
	4.2. from 2003 to 2012	23	13,234
	4.3. from 2013 to 2022	25	6,892
TOTAL		**306**	**330,902**

Table 3. List of the presidents of the Baltic States from 1991 to 2022.

State	President	Years of service
Estonia	Lennart Meri	1992-2001
	Arnold Rüütel	2001-2006
	Toomas Hendrik Ilves	2006-2016
	Kersti Kaljulaid	2016-2021
	Alar Karis	2021-present
Latvia	Guntis Ulmanis	1993-1999
	Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga	1999-2007
	Valdis Zatlers	2007-2011
	Andris Bērziņš	2011-2015
	Raimonds Vējonis	2015-2019
	Egils Levits	2019-present
Lithuania	Algirdas Brazauskas	1993-1998
	Valdas Adamkus	1998-2001; 2004-2009
	Rolandas Paksas	2003-2004
	Artūras Paulauskas	2004
	Dalia Grybauskaitė	2009-2019
	Gitanas Nausėda	2019-present