

# “CATALUNYA NO ÉS ESPANYA”: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ARTUR MAS’S SELECTED SPEECHES

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**Abstract:** This article is a Critical Discourse Analysis of secessionist discourse in Catalonia in the light of a selection of speeches given by Artur Mas. This work aims at deciphering the linguistic strategies used by Mas to construct a separate Catalan identity in three of his speeches, namely his acceptance, inauguration and 2014 referendum speeches. The analysis of these speeches was carried out in the light of Ruth Wodak’s Discourse-historical Approach to Critical Discourse and yielded the identification of three sets strategies to which Artur Mas mostly resorts; singularisation and autonomisation strategies, assimilation and cohesivation strategies and finally continuation strategies.

**Keywords:** Catalonia, sub-state nationalism, secessionism, Critical Discourse Analysis.

**Resumen:** Este artículo analiza, mediante el Análisis Crítico del Discurso, las disertaciones secesionistas en Cataluña de los discursos de Artur Mas. En este trabajo, se pretende captar las estrategias lingüísticas utilizadas por Mas para construir una identidad catalana separada en tres discursos que presentó; en su investidura, su toma de posesión y antes de celebrar el referéndum de 2014. El análisis de estos discursos se llevó a cabo a la luz de la aproximación histórica discursiva de Ruth Wodak y dio lugar a la identificación de tres tipos de estrategias en estos discursos: las estrategias de singularización y autonomización, las estrategias de asimilación y cohesión y las estrategias de continuidad.

**Palabras clave:** Cataluña, nacionalismo sub-estatal, secesionismo, Análisis Crítico del Discurso.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The expression of sub-state nationalism is as old as the history of humanity, and is caused by the fact that, as Anderson (2006) suggests, complete homogeneity is not achievable in modern states. As a result of this, there have recently been political upheavals around the world, whose major causes were the desire on the part of minorities to assert their distinctiveness and achieve self-determination or even independence. Amongst these is the case of Catalonia, a semi-autonomous region of Spain. In fact, in 2010 Artur Mas, a Catalan nationalist, was elected as head of the local government, and since then, he and his political allies have been pushing for the total independence of the territory from Spain. It is for

this purpose that in 2014, Artur Mas organized an independence referendum in Catalonia, which subsequently proved to be merely symbolic, as it was declared unconstitutional by the Spanish State. Nevertheless, it goes without saying that the Catalan independence movement has been gaining ground (as evidenced by the results of the 2015 Catalan Parliamentary Elections) to the extent of being seen as a threat to the very existence of the Spanish state. This raises the question as to how within five years, Catalan nationalists have succeeded in fostering their distinctiveness and rallying more people to their fight.

Anderson defines nation as "an imagined political community- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (2006: 6). He further states the nation thus imagined is fostered through various media, including language. Therefore, the current consolidation of the idea of Catalonia as a distinct nation and country did not happen by chance, but was a result of a clear strategy, which Mas unveiled in his nomination acceptance speech and reproduced in other written and/or oral communication. The observation of the Catalan political debate thus made one understand how important are words and language in politics, thus confirming Fairclough's (1989) conception of language as a form of political action.

This article thus sets out to investigate how Catalan nationalism is constructed in discourse, with a closer look at three important speeches delivered by the afore-named Artur Mas, the then President of the Catalan Generalitat. These are Mas's nomination acceptance speech (2010a), inaugural speech (2010b) and referendum decree speech (2014). The speeches will be studied within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, in the light of Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach. But before getting into analysis proper, a brief presentation of Catalonia will be given, and it will be followed by a description of the theoretical foundations of the work being conducted.

## 2. PRESENTATION OF CATALONIA

Catalonia is a region found in the North-Eastern corner of Spain, just south of the Pyrenees, which separate it from Southern France. It is one of the most prosperous regions of Spain and attracts a lot of investment, given its strategic location between France and Spain and on the Mediterranean. Catalonia's peculiarity lies in its distinct language and long history of political struggle with the Spanish State.

### 2.1. History

It is known that from the 9<sup>th</sup> century, Catalonia was a confederation of several counties with the most influential being that of Barcelona. From the outset, those counties were vassals of Frankish Kingdoms who had reconquered the Iberian Peninsula after the Moorish occupation. Then, by the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, following the marriage of Ramon Berenguer VI (the (then) count of Barcelona) with Princess Peronella of Aragon, Catalonia would become part of the wider Kingdom of Aragon. Nevertheless, the territory maintained a local administration within the Crown of Aragon, as evidenced by the creation of the *Corts Catalanes* and the subsequent foundation of the *Generalitat* in 1359 by Pere III. This date, which is often mentioned in Catalan independence discourse, is according to Catalan nationalists a landmark in their history.

In 1469 Fernando, ruler of Aragon, wedded Isabel of Castile, thus forming a Castilian-Aragonese confederation. This union did not however mean the disappearance of Catalonia, as the monarchs pledged to respect the various institutions and constitutions of the territories making up the confederation.

Nevertheless, after a period of relative tranquility, Catalonia became the centre of several politically-motivated conflicts. Given its geographical location, the leaders of France and Spain always wanted to exert more influence on Catalonia, thus the signing of many treaties and decrees which seriously affected its fate. In the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, the Treaty of the Pyrenees, resulted in the severing of the historical territory of Catalonia, as all its dependencies found in the North of the Pyrenees were annexed by the French. The hardest blow to Catalan independence was certainly the 18<sup>th</sup> Century *Nueva Planta* Decree by Phillip V, which made Spain a unitary country governed from Castile, thus abolishing all autonomous governments, including that of Catalonia. This is known in history as the first abolition, which resulted in Catalonia becoming a full part of Spain. Spain was no longer a confederation of the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, but a highly centralized state, a would-be nation.

Unexpectedly, the centralization of Spain had the effect of reinforcing Catalan nationalism, which became more assertive and evident in 19<sup>th</sup> century arts, architecture and language. This struggle earned the Catalans the restoration of their local government in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Subsequently, Catalonia became one of the hotspots of growing opposition against the Spanish monarchy, which led to the proclamation the Spanish republic in 1931. Therefore, unsurprisingly, when monarchist Francisco Franco got the upper hand after three years of civil war (1936-1939), he set out to abolish the autonomous government of Catalonia and crackdown on any attempt at asserting the Catalan identity. This came to be known as the second abolition, which lasted until the death of Franco and transition to democracy in 1975 (for more on Catalan history, see Amorós I Pla, 2009).

Nowadays, the Catalan Generalitat enjoys a considerable amount of autonomy within the Spanish state and, as of 2010, has been headed by Catalan nationalists, who do not see autonomy as sufficient, but aim at obtaining complete independence from Spain, thus the essence of this work, which is describing how Artur Mas calls for a separate Catalan nation in his speeches. Prior to delving into our subject matter proper, it is worth looking at all the theoretical considerations surrounding this work.

### 3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

This work falls within the broad framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, and specifically deals with nationalism and identity construction in discourse. Therefore, this section aims at discussing nationalism and identity construction and linking them to Critical Discourse Analysis. Later, the Discourse-Historical Approach, which was used in this write-up shall be presented.

### 3.1. Nationalism, identity construction and discourse

As opposed to what has been thought, identity is not to be taken for granted, as it is not concrete or real, but rather imagined. It is in this-wise that Anderson states that "in fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined" (2006: 6). Going from this principle, one can only infer that once imagined, identity is further constructed and reproduced in discourse. This again goes in line with Anderson (2006), who, through a wide range of examples, concludes that there are clear links between the origin of national consciousness, the collapse of Latin and the increasing publication of books in vernaculars. Language choice just as other aspects of discourse are very important markers of identity, as our study of Catalan nationalist discourse will reveal.

Phillips and Jorgensen (2002) concur with Anderson affirming that discourses shape society and create concepts such as ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, which are so rooted in people's minds that they usually forget that these are merely abstract and theoretical. They also indicate that given its flexible nature, identity is usually questioned, opposed and rejected.

The interdependence between discourse and identity is also discussed by Johnson, who posits that "a group is a social system involving regular interaction among members and a common group identity. This means that groups have a sense of "weness" that enables members to identify themselves as belonging to a distinct entity" (1995: 125). Jensen (2008: 14) concurs when she states that groups are formed only by the time a person voices their existence and communicates it through various media. She further notes that in constructing one's identity, it is always very important to establish a clear difference between our group and other groups, thus the notion of social antagonism. Social antagonism is characterized by a great emphasis on the peculiarities of a specific group, be they very tiny, and the ignorance of similarities that may exist between one's group and the others. For instance, when talking about language in identity construction, Chilton affirms that "Adjacent dialects are usually mutually intelligible, although speakers often perceive differences that may be exaggerated, associated with feelings of hostility and politicized" (2004: 9). Jensen (2008) further indicates that social antagonism, leads one group to blame the other for problems they may be facing. The above is particularly true of Catalan nationalist discourse, where language difference is highlighted and it is often suggested that Catalonia would not be feeling the effects of the current economic crisis if it was not part of Spain.

### 3.2. Some discourse analyses of identity

During our preliminary investigation, we have come across a good number of works discussing identity from a general discourse perspective. They include Jensen's (2008) analysis of Afrikaner identity in South Africa, Alameda Hernandez's (2006) investigation of how Gibraltarian identity is discursively represented by both insiders and outsiders, as well as Huang Hoon's (2004) study of the discursive construction of Singaporean identity in postal stamps. When talking about Spain, it is worth-mentioning Bejar's (2010) investigation of the discursive manifestations of sub-state nationalism in Spain with a look at Catalonia and the Basque Country. Nevertheless Bejar's study is more sociological than linguistic,

thus giving us the feeling that there have been very few Critical Discourse Analyses carried out on Catalan nationalist discourses.

The above notwithstanding, one of the reference works for discussing (from a mainly linguistic perspective) identity in discourse is Wodak *et al's* (1999) *The discursive construction of national identity*, where the Discourse-Historical Approach, was first used, in investigating Austrian nationalism.

### 3.3. The Discourse-Historical Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis

Designed by Ruth Wodak and her colleagues, Rudolf de Cillia, Martin Reisigl and Karin Liebhart, the Discourse-Historical Approach sets out to demonstrate how power difference is constructed, reproduced, modified and challenged in discourse. It is an approach that combines historical study, contextual analysis and linguistic analysis to make sense of discourse. As such “DHA often brings together areas of knowledge that are often considered to be separate: Linguistics and English Language; Sociology and Social Psychology; Political Science and History” (Charteris-Black, 2014: 123). The Discourse-Historical Approach is a combination of contextual analysis on the one hand and rhetorical linguistic analysis.

For Ruth Wodak, it is impossible to come up with a good analysis of a piece of discourse without paying great attention to context or, to borrow from Chilton (2009), *speech circumstances*. These include not only mere situational circumstances like time and place, speaker and audience, but also cognitive circumstances or background knowledge, which are very much related to historical and political context, as clearly stated in the following assertion, “first, the discourse-historical approach attempts to integrate all available information on the historical background and the original sources in which discursive “events” are embedded” (de Cillia et al, 1999: 156). It is for this reason that we found it wise to start this work with a brief historical and political presentation of Catalonia, whose knowledge is crucial for understanding subsequent analyses.

A proper understanding of context, be it political or historical, helps to guide analysis, which is made up of three steps, that is, the identification of the themes that are pervasive in given pieces of discourse (contents), then the description of the strategies which are used to foster those contents (constructive, perpetuating, transformational or destructive) and finally the presentation of the linguistic resources used to realize the given strategies. These are further discussed below.

#### 3.3.1. Contents

For the proponents of the Discourse-Historical Approach, the first step in any discourse analysis of nationalism is the identification of semantic macro-propositions that cut across various pieces of discourse. It is closely related to context analysis for, the latter helps researchers to know what ideas are pervasive in nationalist discourse, and eases their understanding of the text or talk they have in hand.

For example, in the study Wodak and her colleagues conducted, they came up with five contents for the discursive formation of national identity in Austria (Wodak et al., 1999: 31):

1. the linguistic construction of the '*homo Austraticus*' and '*homo externus*'.
2. the narration and confabulation of a common political past.
3. the linguistic construction of a common culture.
4. the linguistic construction of a common political present and future.
5. the linguistic construction of a "national body".

Unsurprisingly, Wodak's contents are very similar to the contents or themes that were identified in Artur Mas's speeches. In fact, Artur Mas strives to set out to establish a clear difference between Catalonia and Spain, and therefore between the Catalans and Spanish through referential and predicative attributes, whose underlying effect is presenting Catalonia and its people as intrinsically better than Spain. He also emphasizes the shared and distinct cultural (especially linguistic) heritage of the Catalans and praises past politicians who as him fought for political autonomy. Finally, Mas calls on all Catalans to unite in order to achieve the ultimate goal of independence. The above contents make one understand that the evocation of a common history, culture as well as self praise are pervasive in discourses of nationalism or identity building.

Wodak *et al.* (1999) then move further to indicate that contents are always used to achieve certain goals which she refers to as strategies. These are discussed under the next heading.

### 3.3.2. Strategies

The strategies being discussed here are the so-called macro-strategies which should not be confused with other linguistic strategies that operate at a more specific level. Wodak *et al.* further explain this in the following lines:

On the macro-level, we can distinguish between different types of macro-strategies employed in the discursive formation of national identity. These macro-strategies correspond to the main social macro-functions we discussed earlier, namely construction, perpetuation or justification, transformation and demontage or dismantling (1999: 33).

It is added that these macro-strategies, as their name implies perform four different functions. They,

construct and establish a certain national identity by promoting unification, identification and solidarity [...] attempt to maintain and to reproduce a threatened identity [...] transform a relatively well-established national identity and its components into another identity the contours of which the speaker has already conceptualized [...] aim at dismantling or disparaging parts of an existing national identity construct... (Wodak *et al.*, 1999: 33).

Thus, every discursive utterance is consciously or unconsciously aimed at constructing, maintaining, transforming or dismantling a given identity. After reading the speeches under study, we realized that they were overwhelmingly constructive and destructive. This notwithstanding, there were aspects of other strategies, mainly perpetuating (maintaining) strategies, especially when evoking the past. The constructive nature of Artur Mas's speeches can be explained by the fact that before he became the head of the *Generalitat*, previous

governments had been quite cooperative with the Spanish state, and had somehow abandoned the idea of total independence. Therefore, Mas came to power with two main objectives; constructing Catalan uniqueness and at the same time destroying assimilation from Spain.

Critical Discourse Analysis being first of all a linguistic area of investigation, Wodak and her colleagues do not fail to later indicate that the strategies mentioned above are always enforced linguistically, thus the subsequent step.

### 3.3.3. *Linguistic means of realization*

Lexical, syntactic and other grammatical features can express "unification, unity, sameness, difference, uniqueness, origin, continuity, gradual or abrupt change, autonomy, heteronomy, and so on" (Wodak *et al.*, 1999: 35) For instance, when lexical items or syntactic structures refer to people, places, they are referential. Referential strategies often say a lot about the ideology of those who produce them. For example, in Catalan nationalist discourse, the word "Espanya" (Spain) is often traded for "l'Estat" (the State), which may reveal a rejection of the very existence of Spain as a nation (see Wodak *et al.*, 1999: 37, for other strategies).

## 4. ANALYSIS

For practical reasons, this work was limited to discussing only strategies contributing to the construction of the Catalan nation, having in mind the fact that in sub-national discourse, construction on one side always implies destruction on the other side. Therefore, the analysis of the selected speeches yielded the identification of three sets of construction strategies used to this effect:

1. Singularisation and autonomisation.
2. Assimilation and cohesivation.
3. Continuation.

The above strategies are the major constructive strategies in Wodak's strategy classification, and it is therefore no surprise that they should be found in speeches which are mainly constructive. As further discussed later, Artur Mas uses linguistic resources to present Catalonia as a unique and special nation (singularisation), creates the illusion of a totally united Catalonia (assimilation) which is walking in the footsteps of the nation's pioneers (continuation), and calls for joint efforts to achieve greater autonomy and independence (cohesivation).

Although consistent overlapping was noted between these strategies, we realized each one of them is expressed by specific themes or topics. In other words, when reading and analyzing the speeches under study, we realized that specific themes could be directly related to one constructive strategy or another. Thus, instead of merely discussing the strategies, we decided to include sub-headings which clearly name the themes that are used to express the construction strategies, which appear as main headings.



#### 4.1. Singularisation and autonomisation

This constructive strategy is aimed at praising the Catalan territory and its people, and presenting them as intrinsically distinct from (and better than) the rest of the country it is part of and its people. In Artur Mas's speeches, Catalonia is painted as unique and gifted in all, as a territory which has nothing in common with Spain.

##### 4.1.1. Catalonia is unique in its kind

In all the speeches we studied, and in Artur Mas's discourse in general, Catalonia is presented as a kind of paradise on earth, the ultimate place to live, a territory with so many riches and so much to offer to Europe and the world at large. This is what Wodak calls *topos* of the idyllic places or *locus amoenus*. She defines it in the following terms:

...a "beautiful landscape" often mentioned in a more general sense to refer to the common national territory or serving to depict a rather abstract ideal political place where human beings live together happily, in affluence, in harmony and without conflicts [...] Where it occurs in the political speeches, it frequently not only serves the purpose of mere self-presentation, but is part of a comparative scheme by means of which a strategy of inter-national difference is realised (1999: 97).

As Wodak suggests in the above quote, this *topos* is closely related to the *topoi* of comparison and positive difference. In fact, by presenting Catalonia as an idyllic territory, Artur Mas, implies that other territories (Spain?) are not as blessed as Catalonia is. The foregoing is clearly reflected in the following example taken from Mas' acceptance speech.

- (1) Sento, per tant, la necessitat i el deure de subratllar que tenim un gran país amb gran actius, en el qual podem confiar plenament. Tenim un país que conserva un alt grau de dinamisme i de capacitat d'iniciativa, de ganes de fer coses. Una cohesió interna que altres països més rics del nostre entorn voldrien per a ells mateixos. Un país creatiu i amb talent. Una base econòmica molt diversificada i en bona part oberta cap l'exterior. Un teixit associatiu viu i ben present a tota la geografia catalana. Una cultura i una llengua que segueixen definint la nostra identitat mil·lenària. Centres de formació, en les diferents etapes de l'ensenyament, d'alta qualitat i ben reconeguts. Una base científica cada vegada més sòlida. Una posició geogràfica que ens permet exercir la capitalitat mediterrànea. I una personalitat nacional no només capaç de sobreviure, sinó de projectar-se amb força cap al futur, ben empeltada d'aportacions i corrents molts diversos<sup>1</sup> (2010a).

Here, Mas praises Catalonia as a very dynamic country, then goes on to place the amount of cohesion within Catalonia above neighbouring countries: "una cohesió interna que altera països més rics del nostre entorn voldrien per a ells mateixos". This part confirms Wodak *et al.*'s assertion that the *topoi* of comparison and positive difference are very important in political speeches, when it comes to constructing the idea of a singular and separate nation. Mas ends by lengthily praising Catalonia's economy, culture, education and geographical

<sup>1</sup> See appendix for English translations



position. This praise is achieved not only by the use of positive descriptions such as “creative, solid, diversified, high-quality, etc.”, but also by syntax. In fact, the ellipsis of “Tenim” (we have) from the third sentence is clearly aimed at highlighting the several aspects which make Catalonia the ideal nation. The aim of this singularization strategy is to differentiate Catalonia from Spain, and consolidate a sense of national pride amongst the Catalans. This praise of Catalonia as an idyllic place is also seen in the 2014 referendum decree speech, as exemplified in (2) below.

- (2) ...Catalunya [és].  
una terra de democràcia, de respecte, de tolerància, de benestar, i de solidaritat (2014).

After having presented Catalonia as a blessing to its inhabitants, Artur Mas goes on to construct the idea that Catalonia should not be seen as a region of Spain but as a distinct country. In other words, he destroys the idea that Spain and Catalonia are mutually inclusive. This is further discussed under the next heading.

#### 4.1.2. *Catalonia and Spain are two distinct territories*

This is really the major goal of Artur Mas; presenting Catalonia as a country with a distinct population, a population whose members share linguistic, cultural and historical ties. By so doing, Mas suggests that Catalonia in itself is a nation, and should therefore be allowed to separate from Spain. Most of the strategies used to establish this difference hover around the words “Catalunya” and “Espanya” which, in Mas’s speeches, are mutually exclusive. To be more specific, toponymic reference, toponymic metonymy and personification play a very important role in Mas’s construction of Catalan difference. In addition to these, first person verbs and other parts of speech, tend to further widen the gap between Catalan nationalists and Spain.

- (3) Aprofitar del nostre potencial de capitalitat mediterrànea per **projectar-nos al món no com una regió perifèrica d’Espanya, sino com una nació central del sud d’Europa**?... (2010a).  
(4) I Sé que aquest **país** que està farcit de problemes, per també està plè d’esperances (2010b).

As our study of Mas’ speeches revealed, Catalonia often collocates with the words “nació” (nation) and “país” (country). Examples (3) and (4) clearly present Mas’s rejection of the idea that Catalonia is a region of Spain. In (3) he clearly positions Catalonia in the South of Europe and not in the North East of Spain as any Spaniard would. At times, to avoid any confusion, Artur Mas prefers to trade the word “Espanya” for “l’Estat”, which represents the current Spanish state and suggests an exclusion of Catalonia, as seen in (5) below.

- (5) ...El pacte constitucional entre l’Estat i Catalunya tal i com el llegeix l’actual Tribunal Constitucional no dona més de si (2014).

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2 My highlights.

- (6) Acabo de signar el decret de convocàtoria que ha de fer possible que el proper 9 de novembre tots ells catalans i les catalanes puguem pronunciar-nos sobre el futur polític que volem per nostre país (2014).

Here, it is worth-noting that the distinction between Catalunya and Espanya has the effect of creating toponymic adjectives, which, as the nouns they derive from, are mutually exclusive. So, we have the Catalans (masculine "Calalans" and feminine "catalanes" (see example 6) ) on the one hand, and the Spaniards on the other hand. Then after having presented Catalonia as a united whole, Mas emphasizes the idea that there is great consensus amongst his territory's population, especially when it comes to self-determination.

## 4.2. Assimilation and cohesivation

In assimilation strategies, the goal is presenting the minority group as culturally, linguistically and historically homogeneous and united. Here everything is put in place to present the sub-nation as void of internal dissension or conflict. Cohesivation strategies on their part are mostly aimed at calling for more unity and cohesion between members of the minority group. In the speeches being studied, Mas goes to great lengths to present the Catalans as overwhelmingly in favor of independence. Reading him gives the feeling that the Catalans are one. He does not miss any opportunity of emphasize the linguistic and historical peculiarity of Catalonia and to call for more synergy between its people.

### 4.2.1. Catalunya is unanimously in favor of independence

The toponym "Catalunya" is often used metonymically to refer to the Catalan population as a whole. This metonymy tends to reinforce a sense of unity and consensus amongst the Catalans, when it comes to the desire to be independent.

- (7) Y una vez que Catalunya se haya manifestado democráticamente, encontremos los marcos de diálogo necesarios para construir el futuro (2014).

In (7) above, "Catalunya" actually means "people of Catalunya", but its use gives the feeling that Mas is talking about a single entity, obliterating the existence of internal dissension amongst the Catalans. When this is not achieved by metonymy, it is by personification, still with the toponym "Catalunya".

- (8) Catalunya quiere hablar, quiere ser escuchada, quiere votar [...] Catalunya quiere decidir pacífica y democráticamente su futuro político (2014).

The personification of toponyms has the effect of not only presenting the nooks and crannies of Catalonia as united but presenting the territory from an emotional perspective, and thus appealing to pathos. This is another topos or fallacy, that is, the fact that the emotions of individual members of a group are the same and can be presented as one.

Moreover, Artur Mas attempts to rally all the people of Catalonia to the independence struggle by his use of first person parts of speech, especially personal and possessive

pronouns or adjectives. It is worth-noting here that Mas mostly uses the first person plural, which includes himself, as well as the people of Catalonia. This linguistic strategy has been overwhelmingly seen as one of the clearest markers of separation and national identity building. So it is no surprise that pronominal and adjectival distinction is pervasive in Mas’ speeches. Let’s consider the following examples:

- (9) Les nostres arrels son profundes com ho és la solidesa del nostre sentiment (2014).
- (10) I ara ens toca a tots plegats, [...] , ens toca a toda la societat catalana, a tot el poble de Catalunya, posar el nostre país en marxa (2014).

Examples (9) and (10) above exemplify the mostly used first person pronouns and possessive adjectives in Artur Mas’s speeches. As mentioned before they are indicators of Mas’s desire to rally all Catalans to the independence cause and present himself as one of them, therefore they are in the plural. The possessive adjective “nostre” (our) very often collocates with “pais” (country) when talking about Catalonia. This is done with the purpose of saying that the territory belongs to all its inhabitants, and they will certainly benefit from its independence. “Ens” is the objective form of “nosaltres” (we), so would have as English equivalent “us”. In (9) above, it is used in deontic assertions whose purpose is calling on all Catalans to contribute to the progress of the nation.

In addition to the above, given the elliptical nature of the Catalan grammar, personal pronouns are often omitted, and in such cases, the verb form actually provides information about the person of conjugation. Thus, it was realized that so many verbs in Artur Mas’ speeches are used in the first person plural, thus confirming the politician’s desire to unify the entire people of Catalonia. Example (11) below illustrates such use.

- (11) Volem votar, volem decidir, i ara tenim el marc i el moment adequat per fer-ho (2014).

Here, Mas suggests that he, his political allies, and Catalan citizens want to vote, want to decide what their future will be like. The first person verbs “volem” (we want), “tenim” (we have) Therefore convey the message of a united Catalonia, unanimously struggling for self-determination.

#### 4.2.2. *We do not speak the same language... so we shouldn't live together*

Language has always been an important tool in the hands of nationalists. This is why Chilton (2004) notes that slight linguistic differences can be used by nationalists to construct and enforce separation. The importance of language in the politics of identity-building can be seen in the current divide between Western and Eastern Ukraine over two related languages, i.e., Ukrainian and Russian. This situation is true of Spain, where independence movements, be they in the Basque country, Galicia and Catalonia have always used linguistic difference to fight for separation.

In his nomination acceptance speech (2010), Artur Mas makes it clear that language is an important part of his political agenda. He even suggests that the very existence of the Catalan nation depends on keeping the Catalan language alive. As the president of

the Catalan Generalitat, Mas's speeches are given in the Catalan language. However, in the 2014 referendum decree speech, he alternated between Catalan, Spanish and English depending on whom he was addressing. Therefore, Mas used Catalan when talking to the citizens of Catalonia, Spanish when addressing the Spaniards and English when sending a message to the international community. Mas's language choices purposely convey the idea that the first language of all Catalans is Catalan, which in reality may not be true, as it is known that the majority of Catalans are bilingual and some of them speak Spanish as their first language. But in Mas's discourse Spanish is a foreign language which can only be used when addressing citizens of a foreign country (Spain), as English is used to address members of the international community. In fact, pretending that Catalan is the first language of all the citizens of Catalonia is an assimilation strategy, which serves in fostering linguistic separation, whose role is crucial when lobbying for independence.

#### 4.2.3. *We should be united to achieve our objectives*

As can be seen in the different topics discussed in the preceding sections, Artur Mas mainly discusses the united and inclusive nature of Catalonia in his speeches. Nevertheless, though he puts every effort at portraying Catalonia as an already-existing nation, it is important to indicate that Artur Mas often suggests that some citizens of his territory may not be as diehard supporters of nationalism as he is, and therefore calls for more cohesion and solidarity amongst the Catalans. This is what Ruth Wodak and her colleagues refer to as unification and cohesivation strategies. In the speeches we studied, these are mainly achieved by deontic assertions and in (12) and (13) below.

- (12) I ara ens toca a tots plegats, al Govern, al president al capdavant, però a tot plegats en definitiva, [...]posar el nostre país en marxa (2010b).
- (13) I ho hem de fer tots plegats, des del govern i des del parlament, des de les institucions i des de la societat... (2010a).

In addition to the deontic expressions, "ens toca" (it is up to us) "hem de" (we have to), we note the repetition of the expression "tots plegats" (together) which contributes to making it clear that this is a call on all Catalans, irrespective of their social classes, origin or political affiliations to join the forces of independence. This is exactly what Mas says in (14) below:

- (14) Vull proclamar des d'aquí, el meu compromís amb aquesta idea de futur i d'esperança que representa Catalunya, una idea que ens pertany a tots, per damunt de partits i creences, orígens i accents (2010a).

Mas's speeches are therefore calls for unity and consensual fight towards independence, which, according to him will benefit to all. This independence, according to Mas, will be the logical result of hundreds of years of political struggle.

### 4.3. Continuation

Continuation is another important constructive strategy in nationalist discourse. It very much relies on history, as it is based on the fact that the nation is a legacy that has to be properly kept. Artur Mas does not break this rule in his speeches, as clearly seen below.

#### 4.3.1. *The struggle for independence has been going on for centuries*

In the speeches being studied, as well as in all the pieces of discourse he released, Artur Mas never misses the opportunity to present his fight as a historical one, which started more than seven centuries ago. The different strategies used to achieve this purpose are referred to as continuation strategies by Wodak et al. (1999). They include the use of metaphor, historical reference and ordinal numbers.

- (15) I jo, senyores i senyors, en sento com una baula més d'aquella cadena, d'aquel engranatge, que va començar fa més de mil anys, que ha de continuar durant molt més anys... (2010b).

In the above example, Mas metaphorically compares the Independence struggle of Catalonia to a chain, or a gear that had been turning and keeps turning, and where he is just a piece. In fact, Artur Mas likes going back to the foundation of the Catalan *Generalitat*, and never misses the opportunity to state that he is its 129<sup>th</sup> President, thus marking continuity.

- (16) Tinc l'honor de ser el 129è President de le Generalitat de Catalunya, institució creada en 1359 i que des de la primera presidència de Berenguer de Cruïlles ha estat réflex durant gairebé set segles de la voluntat d'autogovern dels catalans (2014).

Continuity is a very important aspect of identity building discourse, it aims at linking the present to the past, and gives a historical significance to a struggle happening in a given period of time. Since their ancestors equally fought for independence, Artur Mas suggests it is a duty for its fellow citizens to walk in the footsteps of their predecessors. Doing otherwise would be tantamount to squandering a legacy from the past, thus dishonouring the dead.

## 5. CONCLUSION

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, Critical Discourse Analysis aims at analyzing the discursive manifestations of power difference, in instances where domination or resistance are the ultimate goal. Resistance was the main focus here, as this work aimed at discussing attempts by Catalan nationalists at resisting Spanish domination and asserting themselves as a distinct nation deserving independence.

Three landmark speeches of Artur Mas, the leader of the Catalan independence movement were selected in order to be analyzed within the framework of Ruth Wodak et al.'s Discourse-Historical Approach. The main focus was unveiling the constructive strategies used by the politician in his speeches. Therefore, the analysis of Artur Mas's Acceptance, Inaugural and Referendum Decree speeches yielded the identification of three

major constructive strategies, namely singularization and autonomization, assimilation and cohesivation, as well as continuation. Singularization and autonomization strategies have the purpose of setting Catalonia apart from Spain, that is, presenting the former as idyllic, better than and different from Spain. These strategies are expressed by positive characterizations, comparisons and toponymic references. The main effect of assimilation strategies is making Catalonia appear to be fully united under the same flag, and unanimously in favor of independence. Assimilation strategies are seen in the use of toponymic personification and metonymy, as well as in language choice. When Artur Mas does not present the people of Catalonia as fully united, he calls for more cooperation between them (cohesivation strategies), which he thinks is crucial to achieving independence. He finally presents the independence endeavour as a struggle which started centuries ago in what we referred to as continuation strategies. These strategies include time diction, metaphors, reference to historical events or figures as well as ordinal reference to the number of presidents the Catalan Generalitat has got.

This study is thus another evidence of the very important nature of discourse in society and more specifically in politics. In fact, as van Dijk argues that discourse and politics are highly interwoven, leading him to see discourse as a "form of political action" (1997: 20). As long as Catalan status within Spain remains an issue, discourse will always play a crucial role in either maintaining the status quo or redefining the Catalan identity.

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#### APPENDIX: ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS (MY TRANSLATIONS)

1. I therefore feel the need and the duty to highlight that we have a country with many assets, in which we can fully trust. We have a country which has kept a high level of dynamism, entrepreneurship, and the ability to make things happen. An internal cohesion that other richer countries around us would like for themselves. A creative and talented country. A highly diversified economic base, which is open to the outside world. A pervasive live social fabric across Catalonia. A culture and a language that still define our millenary identity. High quality and well-known training centres at different learning stages. A scientific base getting stronger. A strategic geographical position on Mediterranean. And a national identity able not only to survive, but also to strongly project to the future, endowed with many different contributions and currents.
2. Catalonia is a land of democracy, of respect, of tolerance, of wellbeing and of solidarity.
3. ...to take advantage of our strategic geographical position on the Mediterranean to project to the world, not as a peripheral region of Spain, but as a central nation in the South of Europe.
4. And I know that this country is struggling with some issues, but it's also full of hope
5. The constitutional agreement between the State and Catalonia as found in the current Constitutional Court is not good enough.
6. I've just signed a referendum decree that will permit that, on November 9, we Catalans could decide on the political future we want for our country.
7. And once Catalonia has democratically decided, we will find the negotiation framework needed to build our future.
8. Catalonia wants to speak, wants to be heard, wants to vote [...] Catalonia wants to decide peacefully and democratically what will its political future be.



9. Our roots are deep even as our feelings are strong
10. And now it's up to all of us [...], it's up to the whole Catalan society, to all the people of Catalonia, to move our country forward.
11. We want to vote, we want to decide, and now we have a framework and it's time for it to happen
12. And now it's up to all of us; the Government, the President first, but it's definitely up to all of us [...] to move our country forward.
13. And we must do this together, from the Government to the Parliament, from the institutions to the society...
14. I want to state from here my commitment to this ideal for the future and hope that Catalonia represents, an ideal that belongs to all of us, no matter our political affiliations and beliefs, origins or accents.
15. And I, ladies and gentlemen, I feel like a mere piece in that chain, that gear, which started more than a thousand years ago, and which has to continue for more years...
16. I have the honour to be the 129<sup>th</sup> President of the *Generalitat* of Catalonia, an institution founded in 1359 and which, from the first presidency of Berenguer de Cruilles, has been reflecting for almost seven centuries the Catalan's desire for autonomy.