

# Sociopolitical Analysis of the Opposition Leader's Television Speech due to his Protest

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**Abstract:** *To bring the public's discomfort to the agenda due to the electricity price hikes of up to 440% in the last 8 years, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, head of the Republic People's Party (CHP), the main opposition party in Turkey, declared that he would not pay the electricity bill to protest. The electricity charges of up to 127% only at the beginning of 2022. Due to the unpaid electricity bill for three months, the electricity in his house was cut off on April 21, 2022. He gave a 6.1-minute speech on national and international television channels at 21.00(9 pm) on the evening of April 21, when his electricity was cut off. He announced his protest with his wife in his house in the dark because of the electricity was cut off and expressed that he was fighting for the electricity price hikes back. I am presenting a qualitative analysis of this speech to understand the socio-political effect and to what extent it achieved its purpose.*

**Keywords:** The sociopolitical effect, the main opposition party, CHP, democratic rights, right to protest, neo-liberal policies, impoverishment

## 1. Introduction

The privatization of electricity distribution is very problematic in Turkey. The privatization works of electricity started in 1989 (Afaenerji.com). Turkey Electricity Distribution Company (TEDAŞ) was included in the privatization program with the decision of the Privatization High Council dated April 2, 2004, and numbered 2004/22. With the transfer of Toroslar Electric Company to the private sector on September 30, 2013, all TEDAŞ subsidiaries were privatized. Turkey's Electricity became private for 26 Years, 15.8 billion USD. TEDAŞ, which is affiliated with the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, will be subject to the provisions of private law. The capital of TEDAŞ is 3 billion USD and it is completely owned by the state. However, companies that receive privatized electricity distribution lack equity. By 2022, the companies will buy 1 kW of electricity from the state for 4.2 cents and sell it for 19 cents (1.37 TL) (Tuncer 2022).

As of January 2022, electricity has increased between 50% and 127%. However, the minimum wage salary increase remained below 50%. While the public lost electricity, companies made a profit of 45 million USD. Moreover, the public undertakes the decreasing income due to the pandemic (Tuncer 2022). In 2020 alone, the electricity of 3.7 million households was cut off because they could not pay their bills (sözcü.com). This number is nearly one in 10 of the total electricity subscribers (tedas.gov.tr).

The cost of energy, especially electricity, which is far above the salary increases, is rapidly spreading poverty in the country. Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, head of the Republic People's Party (CHP), the main opposition party, whose practices similar to Gandhi's passive resistance policy came to the fore, was cut off because he refused to pay the bill with a similar behavior due to the electricity price hikes.

The power cut in the house of the opposition leader as a result of a protest attracted the attention of the national

media as well as the world media. For this reason, the speech followed by the world media is important.

## 2. Analysis of the Speech

Speech-language in political speech is a tool to spread hidden ideology. The impact of ideology can be positive, or it can also be negative for a nation. (Latupeirissa 2019).

We can analyze Kılıçdaroğlu's speech in five parts.

1. Phrases expressing greetings and goodwill; Sincere feelings of about 10 words at the beginning and end of the conversation.
2. Domestic political messages regarding the wrongdoing of the ruling party, Justice and Development Party (AKP), and President Erdogan's policies. There is a total of 16 sentences of the main message here. We are amid a social shock due to the wrongdoing of electricity privatization, inconvenience of tenders and corruption allegations, citizens unable to pay bills due to poverty, and failure to meet basic needs.
3. Sentences about injustice in the world and its causes. Here are sentences containing 23 sentences containing messages on neo-liberal policies, a call to action by the world democrats, underlining that the rich are richer and the poor are poorer, greedy politicians around the World.
4. Messages about his struggle and the reasons for his struggle. It was emphasized that with the justice march, stance against injustice, and the voice of the 3.7 million citizens who could not pay their bills due to electricity hikes, this is not a pain of civil disobedience and it is resistance.
5. Messages about what needs to be done. There are three main recommendations. Recovering the electricity hikes, resetting the VAT rate, and thus reducing the electricity prices, providing financial assistance to the poor with income below the minimum wage with electricity checks.

Except for the general greetings and wishes in the introduction and the last part of the 6-minutes 12-seconds

speech, unfortunately, most of the political approaches that the society expects crucially are criticisms of world politics, and they are not issues that can affect the Turkish public opinion in a serious economic problem.

A very serious trump card was given to the leader of the opposition. However, when the detail and effect of the speech are examined, it is seen that this trump card is not used very well. Because it was not a time and place to criticize income inequality and neoliberalism in the world. The details of how the ruling party (AKP) and Erdogan's policies have created an injustice should have included more promising messages.

### 3. Methodology

A small qualitative study was carried out by asking the question they given below, to those who were randomly contacted by phone within the first 24 hours of the day after the speech and if answered positively to the first question of the following questions;

- Did you listen to Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's speech with the power cut?
- Do you understand why he doesn't pay his electricity bills?
- Do you find it right?
- Do you find the electricity hikes correct?
- Do you find the privatization of electricity distribution correct?
- Do you think the conversation was generally effective and Do you think the conversation was overall message-giving?

#### Qualitative Data on the Effects of Speech

When asked about the effectiveness of the speech, 50 people, 25 female, and 25 male, aged between 35 and 91, who were university or college graduates, learned that 35 of them did not watch the speech live. According to the answers given by 15 people who had the opportunity to watch live, almost all of the listeners stated that they found Kılıçdaroğlu's protest justified. Again, all of these people said that they understood why Kılıçdaroğlu did not pay their electricity bills and that they understood that this was the voice of the total of 3.7 million people who could not pay their electricity bills. Again, all of the listeners expressed the same opinion, parallel to the fact that the public does not find the electricity price hikes correct, regardless of their political views. Eleven, or %73,4 of those who watched the speech live, agree that privatization is not correct, but all of those who watched the speech live, they emphasize the need for a more transparent tender. All of the listeners stated that they did not find the speech an activity that met their expectations.

### 4. Conclusion

Aristotle's arguments concerning (1) the content of persuasive public speech and (2) its role in political deliberation (Triadafilopoulos 1999). Political language can incorporate both ideology and power in their political speeches. In other words, and manifest power,

capabilities, and policies through language; furthermore, the political implications of politicians' speeches can be perceived better by common people (Sharififar 2015).

The speech must consist of short sentences and be in clear language. The speech should be short and focused on the attention of the audience. Kılıçdaroğlu's speech was short enough not to be a distraction, but on some issues, the target was out of interest.

The basic principle of not going beyond the main subject has not been fully complied with. Most of the speech moved away from the targeted topic and touched on the general ideology and world economy.

Ineffective speech and purpose should be observed. It was generally a purposeful conversation. Repetitions should be preferred in a way that will increase the effect. Kılıçdaroğlu paid attention to this. Despite all his justified arguments, it can be said that the last speech of the opposition party leader was not politically effective, or rather did not have the expected and expected effect (Charteris-Black 2013).

The inclusion of worldly messages in this short speech does not seem to have been met by the public who want to receive a message for a solution to the economic crisis. Politically, it is not correct to include messages against such general ideologies in such protests. Such messages are mostly true as written ideas and when ideologies are the main topic in small group discussions.

The three proposals, which were the most effective messages that the opposition leader could give, were to withdraw the price hikes, reset the VAT, and support the electricity check for the poor were stuck at the end of the speech.

In addition, the fact that injustices in the world were talked about much more than corruption made the listeners feel that the corruption and injustices in the country are part of what is happening in the world, and downplayed their seriousness.

Opposition leaders must make no mistake when each game becomes important during critical times in the country.

For this reason, media activities that are expected and watched to be effective require both serious preparation and sociopolitical counseling.

This small qualitative study showed that the speech of the leader of the main opposition could explain why he protested but did not fully meet expectations. The reason for this may be that the ideological problems around the world were given more space while explaining the internal problems in the speech. The reason why the majority of people did not watch the speech live can be considered as the fact that popular programs are on the air at the same time, the tarawih prayer coincides with the same time due to the month of Ramadan, and most people will watch the speech on the tape afterward.

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