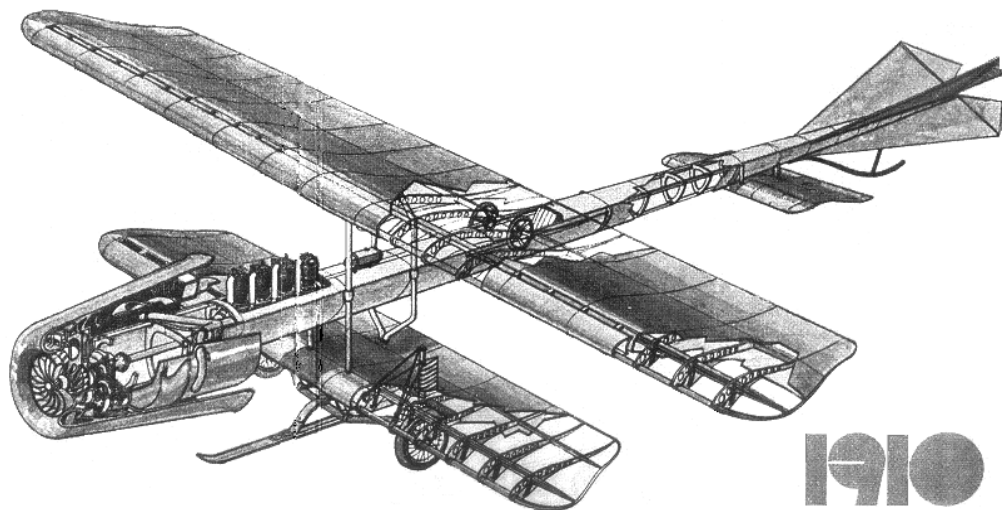


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## C O N T E N T S

### **CRITICAL DIALOGUE REVISITED: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Costanza CUCCHI

**Dialogic Features in EU Non-Native Parliamentary Debates ..... 5**

Elena GHEORGHITĂ

**Using Think-Aloud Protocols to Investigate the Translation Process:  
Methodological Aspects ..... 15**

Adrian LESENCIUC

**Critical Discourse Analysis Approach to the Romanian Philosophical  
Discourse Regarding Cultural Change ..... 23**

Raluca-Mihaela LEVONIAN

**From Star Wars to AEGIS: Romanian Media Discourse on the Current  
Dialogue between Romania and the USA ..... 33**

John McKEOWN, Ibrahim KURT

**‘Behold ECCO’: Using the „Educational Cultural Convergence” Model in  
Intercultural Education ..... 45**

Mariselda TESSAROLO, Eleonora BORDON

**Communication among Mediterranean Young People: New and Old  
Technologies to Build a Post-Modern Identity ..... 55**

Izabela LAZAR

**Towards an Ecological University: Discourse Analyses of University Mission  
statements ..... 63**

### **BOOK REVIEW**

Izabela LAZAR

**European Parliaments under Scrutiny ..... 69**

Vasile MACOVICIUC

**The Development of Intercultural Communicative Competence of Romanian  
Military Personnel Participating in Peace-Keeping Operations ..... 72**

## DIALOGIC FEATURES IN EU NON-NATIVE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

Costanza CUCCHI

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**Abstract:** *EU parliamentary debates are a complex form of dialogue in which representatives of European citizens delivering monologues during parliamentary sessions are simultaneously engaged in a dialogue with their colleagues and with the broader public of European citizens. EU citizens can watch online videos of the parliamentary sessions and read online verbatim reports, i.e. the official written transcripts of the sessions. Linguistically, however, the videos and verbatim reports differ significantly. The present paper draws on EUROPARL, a corpus I compiled which comprises the speeches delivered in non-native English during thirteen parliamentary sittings (about 75,000 tokens) held in 2006, transcribed from EP Live-Video, and the corresponding verbatim reports (about 69,000 tokens). Previous studies of the differences between actual speeches and the verbatim reports regarded national parliamentary debates, for example in the U.K. (Slembrouck 1992; Hughes 1996; Mollin 2007) and in Italy (Cortelazzo 1985), thus focusing on speech in native languages. With the exception of Mollin (2007), they were qualitative in nature. The present paper illustrates the results of a quantitative, as well as qualitative, analysis of EU parliamentary speeches delivered by non-native speakers of English and the corresponding verbatim reports. It is found that involvement devices (Chafe 1982), i.e. expressions such as ‘I think’, discourse markers like ‘well’, ‘you know’, ‘I mean’, emphasisers such as ‘of course’, ‘indeed’, ‘really’, ‘actually’, ‘definitely’, vague language like ‘thing’, ‘stuff’ and hedges like ‘a little bit’ are reduced. An analysis of ‘I think’ and ‘of course’ indicates that non-native speakers of English in the European Parliament make skilful use of involvement devices, in an attempt to engage in a dialogue with the addressees despite the fact that they are delivering monologues. Many of these dialogic features are lost in verbatim reports, where ideational, rather than interpersonal, meanings are emphasised.*

**Keywords:** *EU parliamentary debates, verbatim reports, discourse markers, ideational meaning.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The differences between what parliamentarians actually say and the corresponding verbatim reports have been the object of a number of studies that focus on national parliaments and – therefore –, deal with native languages. Cortelazzo (1985) was based on the recording of a debate held at the Italian Camera dei Deputati on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1982, broadcast live by “Radio Radicale”. Methodologically, it consisted in cataloguing the differences between the recordings of four speeches (450 minutes) and the corresponding stenographic reports. The speeches were selected by the author among the ones that

“were not simply read out” (Cortelazzo, 1985:90). In this respect, the author noted that

Most parliamentary speeches are not [...] in the form of a text written to be read out; but neither do they exhibit the features of spontaneous speech typical of informal dialogue. These speeches are, indeed, generally based on a written outline, which gives them a markedly planned character (which is absent, in such form, in spontaneous dialogue); but the written outline, very different from a written version, does not prevent a certain spontaneity on the part of the speaker [...] (Cortelazzo, 1985:88; my translation).

The purpose of Cortelazzo’s analysis was twofold. On the one hand, it stemmed from an

interest in the accuracy of parliamentary verbatim reports, often used as sources for the study of political language. On the other hand, the analysis aimed to contribute to the study of spoken Italian, which had previously been based mainly on the language spoken “in spontaneous and informal dialogue” (Cortelazzo, 1985:87).

Slembrouck (1992), deemed “an influential article on how transcripts of parliamentary reports are produced” by Bayley (2003:9), focused, instead, on the British parliamentary Hansard records and, therefore, on native English. Although no details about his corpus were provided, the examples in his study were taken from the sittings of 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1987. His method, termed ‘comparative’ (Slembrouck, 1992:102) because it involved a “detailed comparison of the printed text of the report against transcripts of the spoken debates” (Slembrouck, 1992:101), was the same used by Cortelazzo (1985). This method, taken from the field of discourse representation studies, enabled Slembrouck to reach a somewhat different aim from Cortelazzo’s, in that the author intended to contribute to the study of “discourse representation practices in an institutional context” (Slembrouck, 1992:101). In particular, he intended to compare ‘anterior discourse’ – “the discourse as it occurred before it was represented” and the ‘representation of discourse’ – “the textual construct which is embedded in the reporter’s text and which offers a particular version of the anterior discourse” (Slembrouck, 1992:102), thus unveiling the ideological assumptions underlying discourse representation.

In her case study devoted to parliamentary interactions in the House of Commons, Hughes’ (1996) purpose was similar to that of Cortelazzo in that it was embedded in a book illustrating the “major issues and points of contrast between speech and writing” (Hughes, 1996:1). Similarly to Slembrouck (1992), the study was aimed at investigating how the interaction between MPs was rendered on the written page, thus focusing on the conventions underlying discourse representation. For this purpose, Hughes broke up parliamentary

discourse into different discourse categories, namely ‘main’, the speech of a speaker called to participate in the debate, ‘intervention’, the speech of a speaker interrupting the main speaker, ‘response’, speech responding to an intervention, ‘organisation’, aimed at maintaining discourse between speakers, ‘unofficial’, for example facetious comments.

Mollin (2007) was a quantitative investigation based on the recording of the sitting of the House of Commons on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2006, of which the first four hours were transcribed and analysed with the software *WordSmith Tools*, and compared to the Hansard reports. The corpora of original transcripts and the corresponding verbatim reports amounted to 47,793 tokens and 35,661 respectively. Similarly to Cortelazzo (1985), the purpose of the author is “to assess the suitability of [...] parliamentary transcripts” (Mollin, 2007:187), in particular as a corpus linguistic resource. As the author notes, Hansard verbatim reports are downloadable from the Internet and would seem to be a convenient source of linguistic data. In the author’s words, in fact,

The corpus linguist is always looking for opportunities to compile new corpora of the English language. Most popular seem to be opportunities where we can access large amounts of text that already exist for other purposes, which we can then transform to suit our own. This holds especially for transcripts of speech, which save us the labour of transcribing ourselves (Mollin, 2007:187).

Interestingly, the authors mentioned so far, with the exception of Mollin (2007:189), who quoted Slembrouck (1992), were unaware of each other’s research, as testified by their bibliographical references. In addition, the authors carried out their studies for different purposes, which can be considered only partially overlapping. This points to the relevance of their studies from different perspectives, in that they can illuminate the nature of the language spoken in a specific formal institutional context, simultaneously throwing light on discourse representation practices in that context and in society at large.

Furthermore, the comparison between actual transcripts and verbatim reports can unveil some of the differences between spoken and written discourse and constitute a warning against the use of transcripts made by non-linguists for the study of linguistic features.

Despite their different purposes, the elimination of hedges and emphatic particles was a constant finding in previous studies. While all of these focused on parliamentary speech delivered in national parliaments, the present study deals with EU parliamentary speeches delivered in English by non-native speakers, thus aiming to contribute to the study of English as a Lingua Franca in the context of the European Union, the object of considerable scholarly debate (cf. For example Berns 2009, Modiano 2009, Mollin 2006, Seidlhofer 2007) and recently also tackled at institutional level (European Commission, Directorate-General for Translation, 2011). The study of the use of English in the European Parliament is particularly intriguing, since the EU Parliament is a well-known multilingual setting, where the use of English is by no means compulsory, but is the result of the speaker's free choice<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of the present study, stemming from a previous qualitative analysis (Cucchi and Ulrych, 2008) based on a sitting held on a single day, is to provide quantitative data illustrating the extent to which some dialogic features, which comprise emphatics and hedges, are reduced in verbatim reports and, additionally, to explore the functions which two of them, 'I think' and 'of course' perform in original non-native English EU parliamentary speeches. The study draws on EUROPARL, a corpus I compiled of the speeches delivered in non-native English during thirteen parliamentary sittings (about 75,000 tokens) held in 2006, transcribed from *EP Live-Video*<sup>2</sup> and the corresponding

*verbatim reports*<sup>3</sup> (about 69,000). Before the analysis of the corpus data, the findings of previous studies on emphatics and hedges in parliamentary speeches and in verbatim reports are summarised in section 2.

## 2. ACTUAL SPEECHES AND VERBATIM REPORTS: EMPHATICS AND HEDGES IN PREVIOUS STUDIES

Among other features of spoken discourse edited out in verbatim reports, Cortelazzo (1985:97-101) mentioned the elimination of "particles which are frequently found in spoken discourse: [...] discourse markers, hedges and emphatic particles" as being "the most frequent changes" (Cortelazzo (1985:97). Similarly, Slembrouck (1992:108-109) noted the reduction of "modal constructions, hedges, expressions of degree of commitment towards what speaker say", which he interpreted with reference to Halliday's model. Verbatim reports put a "premium on ideational meanings", as the title of one of the sections in his paper reads, and are characterised by "a general tendency to under-represent interpersonal meanings". In the examples provided, he mentioned the elimination of the expressions 'I hasten to stress', 'rather than', 'I think' (Slembrouck 1992:109), which, as he stated, "also function at the level of speech planning and discourse monitoring in the original speech".

Hughes (1996) found that the categories of discourse significantly reduced in the verbatim reports were those labelled 'unofficial' and 'organisation'. Regarding the latter, she noted that whole organisational turns, for example those when the Deputy Speaker acknowledges whose turn is to speak next, are omitted in verbatim reports, in that "they simply exist to carry forward the mechanics of the discourse itself" (Hughes 1996:60). Although Hughes focused on whole stretches of discourse rather than on specific expressions, it is clear that hedges and emphatic particles may have a discourse organisational function, and therefore, it is likely that they were missing from Hughes corpus, as suggested by her

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<sup>1</sup> According to Rule 146 of the *Rules of Procedure*, "[a]ll Members shall have the right to speak [...] in the official language of their choice. Speeches delivered in one of the official languages shall be simultaneously interpreted into the other official languages and into any other language the Bureau may consider necessary".

<sup>2</sup><http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/plenary/search-by-date#>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/minutes.htm>

observation that “the discourse categories containing the interplay of speakers as they organise their turn-taking” (Hughes 1996:62) are omitted in the verbatim reports.

In her corpus study of MP’s lexical and grammatical choices not retained in British verbatim reports, Mollin (2007:200) mentioned “amplifiers and stance adverbials” as being “high up on the list of words that Hansard does not like”. The emphasizing adjectives ‘very’, ‘really’ and ‘absolutely’, in particular, underwent “dramatic modifications”, being reduced by at least 75 percent. The reduction of the epistemic stance markers ‘actually’ and ‘clearly’, which “emphasis[e] what is important to the speaker and express[...] the speaker’s stance”, was less marked, but deemed “significant”.

### 3. INVOLVEMENT DEVICES

In a previous qualitative study contrasting EU parliamentary speeches in non-native English and the corresponding verbatim reports based on a single parliamentary sitting, I noted the reduction of emphasisers such as ‘of course’, ‘indeed’, ‘really’, ‘actually’, ‘definitely’ and hedges like ‘a little bit’. Expressions such as ‘I think’, discourse markers like ‘well’, ‘you know’, ‘I mean’ and vague language like ‘thing’ also tended to be reduced (Cucchi and Ulrych, 2008). Interestingly, these expressions fit in the category ‘involvement’ identified by Chafe (1982) in his analysis of some of the features “which seem especially important [...] on [...]

the two maximally differentiated styles: informal spoken language and formal written language”. In Chafe’s view, the category, which is the reverse ‘detachment’, comprises first person references, references to mental processes, devices used to monitor the information flow, emphatic particles, vagueness and hedging, and direct quotes. According to Chafe, their higher frequency in speech is due to the fact “that speakers interact with their audiences directly, whereas writers do not” (Chafe 1982:37). Involvement of the audience is accompanied, in speech, by self-involvement. In Chafe’s words:

The speaker is aware of an obligation to communicate what he or she has in mind in a way that reflects the richness of his thoughts – not to present a logically coherent but experientially stark skeleton, but to enrich it with the complex details of real experiences – to have less concern for consistency than for experiential involvement (Chafe 1982:45).

Biber (1988:107) also pointed out the importance of involvement in spoken texts and found private verbs, first and second person pronouns, hedges, emphatics and amplifiers, among others, to co-occur in spoken texts, typically characterised by an “interactive, affective, and involved” purpose.

Table 1 illustrates the presence of some involvement devices in the EUROPARL corpus and shows that, although originally present in the original speeches, they are in many cases edited out in the verbatim reports.

Table 1. The presence of involvement devices in speeches and verbatim reports

Expressions	Speeches	Verbatim reports
I think	168	60
indeed	98	38
of course	97	25
really	57	31
thing/s	48	40
actually	45	15
definitely	21	10
I mean	13	/
a little bit	10	4
you know	5	/
stuff	2	1

Of these expressions, only ‘I think’ and ‘of course’ are mentioned in *English CRE: The basics of typing and revision*, an unpublished document containing guidelines for revisers of EU parliamentary debates. They appear in a paragraph entitled “Remove redundancies”, which states that these expressions “often signal paragraph or sentence breaks. [...] It is thus perfectly reasonable, in most cases, to omit these words and, if appropriate, begin a new paragraph”. Since they are very frequent in EUROPARL, in section 3.1 and 3.2 their functions in the corpus is illustrated through examples from the speeches by non-native speakers of English of various nationalities<sup>4</sup> drawing on previous research conducted on native English. To enable readers to better appreciate the functions of the expressions under study in their original co-texts and compare the original speeches with the corresponding verbatim reports, the differences between the two are highlighted in italics in the examples.

**3.1 ‘I think’.** The expression, indicated by Aijmer as typical of spoken language (1997:1), attracted specific attention in the field of political discourse, namely European parliamentary debates in native English (Simon-Vandenberg, 1998) and political interviews (Simon-Vandenberg, 2000). In these contexts, it was the object of contrasting claims regarding its function, which could be interpreted as “resulting from the politician’s strategic use of hedges to avoid commitment to the truth of their proposition” (Simon-Vandenberg, 1998:297) or, as Simon-

Vandenberg (1998:305) did, as “a marker of authority and deliberation rather than of tentativeness and hedging”. Although Simon-Vandenberg (1998, 2000) set out primarily to determine whether ‘I think’ was deliberative or tentative in her corpus, she remarked that the expression “is particularly useful in the spontaneous give-and-take of dialogue” (Simon-Vandenberg, 2000:45).

The dialogic potential of ‘I think’ was recognised in works dealing with informal conversation or which contrasted its use in spoken and written discourse. Although he did not mention the expression as such, Chafe (1982) indicated “a speaker’s more frequent reference to him- or herself” (Chafe, 1982:46) and “[r]eferences to a speaker’s own mental processes” (Chafe, 1982:46) as signalling “speaker’s involvement with his or her audience” which is typical of spoken discourse ‘I think’ is clearly a combination of the two. In keeping with this interpretation, Kärkkäinen (2003:105-186) performed a detailed analysis, with particular attention to interactive functions, of ‘I think’, “the most common epistemic marker in American English speech” (Kärkkäinen, 2003:105). Biber (1988) also recognised the centrality of ‘I think’ in informal conversation, including this expression among those in the dimension he termed ‘Involved versus Informational Production’, which he described as “a very basic dimension of variation among spoken and written texts in English” (Biber, 1988:104). In addition, Biber (1988:105) stated that private verbs “are among the features with largest weights” on the dimension. However, unlike Chafe (1982) and Kärkkäinen (2003), Biber (1988:105) emphasised speaker self-involvement rather than the involvement of addressees, maintaining that “[p]rivate verbs (e.g. *think, feel*) are used for the overt expression of private attitudes, thoughts and emotions. In any case, addressee involvement and self-involvement seem to go hand in hand, as testified by the fact that Biber indicated typically spoken texts, as mentioned above, as having an interactive, affective, and involved purpose, where ‘interactive’ and ‘affective’ clearly point to the relationship with

<sup>4</sup> The tags used in the corpus were: MCS = mother tongue Czech; MDA = mother tongue Danish; MDE = mother tongue German; MES = mother tongue Spanish; MET = mother tongue Estonian; MFI = mother tongue Finnish; MFR = mother tongue French; MHU = mother tongue Hungarian; MLT = mother tongue Lithuanian; MLV = mother tongue Latvian; MNL = mother tongue Dutch; MPL = mother tongue Polish; MPT = mother tongue Portuguese; MSL = mother tongue Slovenian; MSK = mother tongue Slovak; MSV = mother tongue Swedish. In analogy with the previous tags, the following were used to indicate nationality in countries where more than one national languages are spoken officially in the EU Parliament: MBE = Belgian nationality; MCP = Cypriot nationality; MLX = Luxembourgian nationality.



addressees, while ‘involved’ refers to the speaker’s attitude.

The interactive functions performed in the corpus of non-native parliamentary discourse emerges from a close analysis of the speeches, excerpts of which are reproduced in the left column in the Tables 2 to 6. In the right column the verbatim reports are reproduced. In (1), where the openness of meetings of the Council is discussed, the speaker expresses his opinion that, in their current form, they are boring and that the situation would improve if they were open. The repetition of ‘I think’ serves a negative politeness function, in that

the speaker, by prefacing his statements with ‘I think’ and using ‘probably’ shows consideration for his fellow MEPs, who may have divergent views. The last occurrence of ‘I think’, prefacing a summary of the speaker’s proposal, occurs immediately after an assessment by the speaker of his own proposal (‘it’s a little bit like Johannes Voggenhuber’s proposal’). Interestingly, this statement is a shift to an earlier topic and brings in a partially new perspective, two of the partially overlapping functions of ‘I think’ identified by Kärkkäinen (2003:120-121;132), which in this case occurs immediately afterwards.

Table 2. Example (1)

Speech	Verbatim report
<p><i>Second point I wanted to make is as a matter of fact the Council meetings, having sat through hundreds of hours, are <b>probably</b> the most boring meetings that you can get. <b>I think</b> it would liven up the debate in the Council, because a lot of times in the Council people come there and read ready-made documents and it really is boring and and <b>and I think</b> it would open if we opened it up it would be a bit better.</i></p> <p><i>What I would like to finish off with is is this unrealistic proposal, it’s a little bit like Johannes Voggenhuber’s proposal. <b>I think</b> what we should have is the Council meeting in a <i>hemicycle</i> without assistants next to them and in complete openness. That would be a <i>true</i> open and transparent Council, and that’s what we need. Thank you. &lt;NNatEng&gt; &lt;MFI&gt; Alexander Stubb, 3/04/2006</i></p>	<p><i>A separate point is that, having sat through hundreds of hours of Council meetings, I can say they are probably the most boring meetings that you can get. <i>Openness</i> would liven up the debate in the Council, because people <i>often</i> come and read <i>prepared</i> documents. It really is boring and if we open it up it would be a bit better.</i></p> <p><i>I would like to finish with an unrealistic proposal, which is rather like Mr Voggenhuber’s proposal. What we should have is the Council meeting in a <i>chamber</i> without assistants next to them and in complete openness. That would be a <i>truly</i> open and transparent Council, and that is what we need.</i></p>

The partially new point made by the speaker may occur in a confrontational context, where “interactionally problematic topics” (Kärkkäinen 2003: 146) are discussed. In such cases, ‘I think’ constitutes a disaligning turn, in which a contrasting opinion is expressed and the interactional trouble is repaired through ‘I think’ as in (2). The MEPs praises the Prime Minister Erdogan for his speeches but then states that appropriate and prompt actions have not been undertaken, toning down the importance of

speeches and stressing that of deeds. In so doing, as highlighted by Kärkkäinen (2003: 146), speakers guide the interpretation of the recipients towards an agreement with the speaker. Kärkkäinen (2003: 156) also observed that, in such contexts, the function of ‘I think’ may occur close to semantic content expressing commitment. This is clear in (2), where commitment is conveyed through ‘have to’ and the repeated ‘must’. In so doing, the speaker appears to prevent disagreement on the part of the recipients.

Table 3. Example (2)

Speech	Verbatim report
<p><i>In the report of this Parliament adopted end of 2004, we said that the we urged for the</i></p>	<p><i>In Parliament’s report adopted at the end of 2004, we pressed for the development of the south east</i></p>

<p>development of the south east and for more cultural rights for the Kurdish people. It must be said Prime Minister Erdogan has made impressive speeches since that <i>moment</i>.  <b>But I think now</b>, on this difficult time <b>these words must be followed more than ever by deeds. We must invest socially and economically</b> so that people with their families <i>do</i> have a prosperous future <i>and so make them satisfied they don't</i> want violence for their children. <b>We have to invest in more cultural freedom.</b> &lt;MDA&gt; Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, 26/04/2006</p>	<p>and for more cultural rights for the Kurdish people. It must be said <i>that</i> Prime Minister Erdogan has made impressive speeches since that <i>time</i>. However, <i>at</i> this difficult time these words must be followed more than ever by deeds. We must invest socially and economically so that people and their families have a prosperous future, so <i>that they do not</i> want violence for their children. We have to invest in more cultural freedom.</p>
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**3.2 ‘Of course’.** Simon-Vandenberg and Aijmer (2007:40-42) point to the dialogic potential of adverbs traditionally associated with the expression of modal certainty, stressing that

[one] of the reasons for using adverbs expressing a high degree of certainty has to do with the ways in which speakers want to position themselves in the current discourse, vis-a-vis other voices, with the extent to which they wish to open up or close down the dialogue (Simon-Vandenberg and Aijmer: 33).

The meaning of ‘of course’ indicates that the speaker assumes that knowledge referred to is shared by the addressees (Simon-Vandenberg and Aijmer, 2007:176) to the point of being “so widely known or so widely agreed upon to be self-evident” (Simon-Vandenberg, White and Aijmer 2007:42). As an equivalent of ‘as you know’, ‘of course’ may function as a device aimed “to give the audience full credit for their own background knowledge” (Simon-Vandenberg and Aijmer 2007:204). In this use, it has a positive politeness function and can be considered a “marker of solidarity and equality” by which “[t]he speaker is treating the hearer as equally knowledgeable” (Simon-Vandenberg and Aijmer 2007:205), thus reducing the

asymmetrical power distribution between the giver and the receiver of information. Simultaneously, such use of ‘of course’ has a negative politeness function in that it prevents the speaker from being perceived as naive when providing information which is already known. (3) exemplifies such use, in that the speaker assumes that the audience of fellow MEPs is familiar with the positive effects on tourism of the extension of programme under discussion to all the Member States. Similarly, MEPs are thought to be well aware of the fact that cooperation on energy issues will also involve tackling climate change issues. It is to be noted that the repeated occurrence of ‘of course’ is found in an explicitly dialogic context, as shown by the request for permission to answer previous questions (‘Let me respond to a few questions’) and the request for forgiveness about repeating information which the MEPs present from the beginning of the debate are already familiar with (‘for those who might not have been here at the beginning I I wanted to reiterate that of course’). This last occurrence of ‘of course’ additionally has a reassuring function, already noted by Simon-Vandenberg and Aijmer (2007:209), since the speaker is engaged in persuading the audience that constant and careful attention is being paid to the issues at hand.

Table 4. Example (3)

Speech	Verbatim report
<p><i>Let me respond to a few questions</i> rather briefly [...] . As for tourism, <i>that also has been</i> mentioned, <b>of course</b> exchanges would be facilitated by extending the visa waiver program to all our Member States <i>and</i>, as to environment, we want to</p>	<p>Let me respond to a few questions rather briefly. As for tourism – <i>which was</i> also mentioned – exchanges would be facilitated by extending the visa waiver programme to all our Member States. As to <i>the</i> environment, we want to relaunch our</p>

<p>relaunch our dialogue with the US notably by relaunching the high level dialogue on environment including <i>of course</i> the issue of climate change. Our cooperation on energy will also <i>of course</i> touch on climate change issues from the standpoint <i>as I said in the initiation</i> of energy efficiency, <i>but</i> our overall dialogue needs to be broader than this <i>and</i> for those who might not have been here at the beginning <i>I I wanted to reiterate that of course</i> the question of the visa waiver and the visa reciprocity is one of those issues that we <i>steadily</i> not only mention but <i>is</i> there in the dialogue and will certainly be taken up again with President Bush. &lt;NNatEng&gt; &lt;MDE&gt; Benita Ferrero-Waldner 31/5/06</p>	<p>dialogue with the US, notably by relaunching the high-level dialogue on <i>the</i> environment, including the issue of climate change. Our cooperation on energy will also touch on climate change issues from the standpoint of energy efficiency. <i>However</i>, our overall dialogue needs to be broader than this. <i>For those who might not have been here at the beginning</i>, I would like to come back to the questions of visa waiver and visa reciprocity. <i>These are issues that</i> we not only mention on a regular basis, but <i>they are</i> there in the dialogue, and will certainly be taken up again with President Bush.</p>
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Stressing the fact that a position is shared may have an ideological function, in that construing certain positions as universally shared means “positioning any who might dissent from the viewpoint as at odds with common knowledge or common sense” (Simon-Vandenberg, White and Aijmer, 2007:40). In this function ‘of course’ is

synonymous with ‘needless to say/it goes without saying’ (Simon-Vandenberg, White and Aijmer, 2007:42). In the beginning of the speech reproduced in (4), it is common sense to think that human beings are an important issue and it would be odd to dissent from this position. ‘Of course’ invites the receivers to converge on this sensible viewpoint.

Table 5. Example (4)

Speech	Verbatim report
<p>Human beings. This <i>of course</i> is an issue that I fully agree is <i>is</i> very important and I <i>would</i> just like to mention that the European Union in this respect cooperates closely with the OSCE, which is very active in this field. &lt;NNatEng&gt; &lt;MDE&gt; Hans Winkler, 17/05/06</p>	<p>Human beings. I fully agree that this issue is very important. I <i>should</i> just like to mention that the European Union cooperates closely in this respect with the OSCE, which is very active in this field.</p>

‘Of course’ may also have an oppositional (Simon-Vandenberg, White and Aijmer, 2007:41) or concessive function, since the expression is often followed by ‘but’ (Vandenberg and Aijmer, 2007:209). In this case, “[t]he speaker backgrounds alternative voices, whether real or hypothetical, by presenting them as to be taken for granted, so that he/she can then foreground his/her viewpoint (i.e. the proposition introduced by ‘but’)” (Vandenberg and Aijmer, 2007:209). In (5), for example, the speaker first positively acknowledges what was done (‘The recast directive to simplify and modernise incorporates the relevant points in this area. The standardisation and definitions is important’) and then foregrounds her viewpoint in the proposition introduced by

‘but’, further reinforced by the remark ‘and this is important’. At the end of her speech, she indicates explicitly whose voice she is backgrounding, as well as summing up her main point (‘To put the issue of reconciling work and family life as a top priority, as Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner stated, is very good, but we desperately need sanctions’). It is to be noted that ‘of course’ is substituted with ‘clearly’ in the verbatim report, which not only is “much less frequent” than ‘of course’ both in speech and in writing (Vandenberg and Aijmer’s 2007:223), but also “does not have a solidarity building function such as ‘of course’ has” (Vandenberg and Aijmer 2007: 226). The general dialogical character of the speech is apparent in the multiple vocatives at the beginning of the speech, which are routinely

substituted by ‘Mr President’ at the beginning of speeches, as prescribed in English CRE.

Further, the speech closes with two adjacency pairs composed by question and answer.

Table 6

Speech	Verbatim report
<p><i>Commissioner, Rapporteur, colleagues, first of all thank you Mrs Niebler for an excellent work. The recast directive to simplify and modernise incorporates the relevant points in this area. The standardisation and definitions is important <b>of course</b> but, <b>and this is important</b>, what we need now is sanctions. To reconcile working life and family life is one of the most urgent issues of Europe today and Europe in the future. There is today no country in the Union that reaches the reproductive level necessary if we in the end want to avoid extinction. Women want to work and one more if women are forced to choose between working and having a family, they choose to work. One of the most obvious kinds of discrimination against women is the gender pay gap and for more than 30 years we’ve had a directive dealing with this, but <b>how much has the situation changed during this time? Nothing</b>. There has been no improvement in this area whatsoever. <b>Will the recast directive change this? It remains to be seen</b>. To put the issue of reconciling work and family life as a top priority, as Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner stated, is very good but we desperately need <i>sanction</i>. It’s nothing less than the future of Europe which is at stake. Thank you.</i></p> <p>&lt;NNatEng&gt; &lt;MSV&gt; Maria Carlshamre, 1/06/06</p>	<p><i>Mr President, I would like to thank Mrs Niebler for her excellent work. The recast directive to simplify and modernise the issue incorporates the relevant points in this area. Standardisation and definitions are clearly important but, most importantly, what we need now are sanctions. To reconcile work and family life is one of the most urgent issues of the Europe of today and the Europe of the future. There is today no country in the Union that reaches the reproductive levels necessary to avoid extinction. Women want to work. If forced to choose between working and having a family, an increasing number of women choose to work. One of the most obvious forms of discrimination against women is the gender pay gap. For more than 30 years we have had a directive dealing with this, but <b>how much has the situation changed during that time? Not at all</b>. There has been no improvement in this area whatsoever. <b>Will the recast directive change this? It remains to be seen. To put the issue of reconciling work and family life as a top priority, as Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner stated, is very good, but we desperately need sanctions</b>. Nothing less than the future of Europe is at stake.</i></p>

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Previous studies on national parliaments (Cortelazzo 1985; Slembrouck 1992; Hughes 1996; Mollin 2007) noticed that many features of spoken discourse, including hedges and emphasisers, were edited out in verbatim reports. With reference to Chafe (1982) it is here observed that these expressions belong to a larger category, comprising first person references, reference to mental processes, devices used to monitor the information flow and vague language. They may be collectively termed ‘involvement devices’ and are typical of texts with an “interactive, affective, and involved” purpose (Biber 1988).

In EUROPARL, a corpus I compiled comprising original speeches (about 75,000 tokens) and the corresponding verbatim reports (about 69,000 tokens), it was found

that involvement devices are invariably reduced, albeit to various extents, in verbatim reports. Their reduction obscures some the original linguistic choices on the speakers’ part, thus conveying to the readers of verbatim reports mere facts, partially outstripped of speakers’ emotional involvement and of the devices they use to engage their audience. The reduction of ‘I think’ and ‘of course’, suggested in the document containing guidelines for editors, is a case in point.

An examination of selected samples of ‘I think’ and ‘of course’ has shown the diversity of functions which they serve in non-native political discourse, already identified in native informal conversation and political discourse (Aijmer 1997; Kärkkäinen 2003; SimonVandenbergen 1998, 2000; SimonVandenbergen and Aijmer 2007; Simon-

Vandenbergen, White and Aijmer, 2007). ‘I think’ may be used as a strategy of negative politeness, thus showing consideration for fellow MEPs’ possibly divergent views, to introduce a shift in topic and to bring in a partially new perspective. The expression is also utilized in confrontational contexts where problematic topics are discussed with the function of toning down the importance of a contrasting viewpoint. ‘Of course’ indicates that shared knowledge is self-evident and may work as a marker of equality between the giver and the receiver of information or have a reassuring function, persuading the audience that something is the case. The expression may also have ideological implications, inviting convergence on a specific viewpoint, constructed as the only sensible one. Similarly to ‘I think’, it may also serve to background alternative voices and foreground one’s own. It is thus shown that non-native speakers of English in the European Parliament are pragmatically skilful speakers who fully exploit the high dialogic potential of the expressions studied, in a continuous effort to engage in a dialogue with the audience.

## 5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## USING THINK-ALOUD PROTOCOLS TO INVESTIGATE THE TRANSLATION PROCESS: METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

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**Abstract:** *In recent years the study of translation has undergone a considerable shift of interest away from prescriptive and rather anecdotal attitudes, towards more descriptive, scientific positions. One of the consequences of this shift of interest has been the increase in empirical research into the translation process. This was driven by the belief that what goes on in the translator's head while she is translating versus what scholars had claimed might go on is at least as crucial to the understanding of translation as a comparative analysis of the final product, the translated text, in relation to the source text. For a number of reasons that will be discussed below, the translated text provides a very incomplete and often misleading way into the translation process, hiding both successful strategies and problems. Insofar as it is not possible to directly observe the human mind at work, a number of attempts have been made at indirectly accessing the translator's mind. One such attempt, which is steadily gaining ground in translation research, is to ask the translators themselves to reveal their mental processes in real time while carrying out a translation task. Such a method of data collection, known as «thinking aloud», is not new to scholars working in psychology and cognitive science. However, insofar as its use in translation studies has only recently begun, its specific implications are still relatively understudied, and the research methodology employed somewhat lax.*

**Keywords:** *translation, automatic processes, think-aloud protocols.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is primarily methodological. First of all it provides a survey of the available literature on experiments based on the use of think-aloud protocol (TAP) to study translation, in order to offer the reader a summary of the achievements, prospects and limits of this body of research. Building on this discussion, it subsequently reports on the preliminary stages of a TAP experiment recently conducted, which was designed as an attempt to tackle some controversial issues relating to this procedure of data collection and analysis. Even though the results reported on here are still provisional and largely inconclusive, this pilot experiment is meant to be a step forward in the setting up of a more rigorous research methodology than has so far been employed in translation studies, as well as a contribution to

the ongoing reflection on the nature of research into the translation process.

### 2. THINK-ALOUD PROTOCOLS IN TRANSLATION PROCESS

The theoretical framework for TAP experiments is provided mainly by the work of Ericsson and Simon (1984/1993). According to their model, information is kept in different memory stores, with varying access and storage capabilities: whereas short-term memory is characterized by easy access and extremely limited storage space, long-term memory is characterized by more difficult access and larger storage space. Only information present in short-term memory, that is static and conscious «knowledge states» rather than dynamic and unconscious cognitive processes, can be directly accessed and reported. This distinction is crucial because the

cognitive processes to which these knowledge states are inputs and outputs, as well as information that is not currently being heeded, cannot be reported but must be inferred by the analyst on the basis of the verbalisations. A further assumption of this model is that, for verbally encoded information, which can be reported in the same form as the one in which it was heeded, the verbalisation does not interfere with the cognitive process, the only effect of thinking-aloud being to slow down the performance. The implications of this model are multiple, but in our article we shall only consider those relevant to our discussion.

It is only *concurrent* verbalisation of thoughts that can be claimed to exhaustively reflect the mental states of a subject carrying out a relatively long task («which takes longer than ten seconds to complete», according to Ericsson and Simon). On completion of such «long» tasks, part of the information moves on to long-term memory, leaving behind retrieval cues only in short-term memory. In such cases, *post hoc* verbalisation has been found to be difficult and often incomplete (Ericsson and Simon, 1984/1993:xvi). Moreover, ruling out the possibility that a subject is interpreting her own thought processes or even generating them anew, instead of retrieving them from long-term memory, can be extremely problematic under these circumstances. Secondly, in order to make sure that the reports actually reflect mental states without distorting them, it is important that the subject does not feel s/he is taking part in social interaction: albeit obviously a much more natural situation, conversation involves reworking thoughts to make them conform to socially established norms, a process which might sensibly alter the information attended to. The interaction between subject and experimenter (or between subjects) should therefore be avoided or at least reduced to a minimum.

Thirdly, practice and experience may affect the amount of processing carried out in short-term memory, so that fewer mental states will be available for verbalisation to subjects experienced in a task. This process, known as «automation», is explained by Ericsson and Simon (1984/1993:127) thus:

...before overlearning has occurred, processes have to be interpreted, with substantial feedback from intermediate processing stages in short-term memory. Overlearning amounts to compiling these processes, so that fewer tests are performed when they are being executed, hence less information is stored at intermediate stages in short-term memory.

Automatic processes are therefore faster and more efficient than processes which are under conscious control. However, they are also less flexible and more difficult to modify at need. Finally, this model takes into account the effects of personality and personal history over the data collected through TAPs. The amount of relevant information held in long-term memory cannot possibly be controlled for, as an experimental situation would require, nor is it possible to control for the amount of knowledge reported on in relation to the performance given. In other words, there exist individual differences in knowledge and capacity to verbalise thoughts that can heavily bias the data obtained. Clearly, the problem here is one of object of study rather than methodology: individual differences exist, and research should not conceal them. However, it seems advisable to try and limit the effects of individual differences as much as possible, and to take them into account during the analysis, in order to obtain more reliable data that are more easily subject to generalization.

Viewing translation mainly as a problem-solving process, some scholars have put forward the suggestion that it should be possible to study it by means of think-aloud method, and have set up experiments to test this hypothesis. The varying interests and backgrounds of those involved have resulted in a large variety of approaches, which can only briefly be surveyed here. In this subsection the achievements of the last two decades are considered.

Most of early studies were conducted with foreign language learners or translator trainees. This was mainly due to the availability of subjects and to the pedagogic concerns of the experimenters. However, the hypothesis was also put forward that the verbalisations produced by professionals would be less



informative than those produced by non-professionals, due to their more “automatised” processing style.

As the concept of translation strategy is highly controversial in linguistics, we shall only mention here in passing that the researchers whose work is surveyed below have either avoided a terminological discussion and used the term in a rather undefined, everyday sense, or endorsed the definition provided by Löscher (who, in turn, adapts a definition provided by Farch and Kasper, 1983), according to which a translation strategy is

...potentially conscious procedure for the solution of a problem which an individual is faced with when translating a text segment from one language into another. (Löscher, 1991:76)

Löscher himself (1986, 1991) reported on a comparatively large study, in which 48 German learners of English as a foreign language produced 52 translations either into English or into German. They were asked to produce a spoken translation of a written text while thinking aloud and were not allowed to use dictionaries (this was meant to ensure a larger number of problem-solving processes would be present in the protocols). The transcripts of the sessions were then analysed and a number of «translation strategies» were recognised.

In the experiment reported in Krings (1986), eight German learners of French as a foreign language translated a text either into or out of the mother tongue. The main focus of attention here is the identification of translation problems and translation strategies on the basis of think-aloud protocols. With regards to the former, Krings offers the following list of «problem indicators»:

- The subjects» explicit statement of problems;
- The use of reference books;
- The underlining of source-language text passages;
- The semantic analysis of source-language text items;
- Hesitation phenomena in the search for potential equivalents;

- Competing potential equivalents;
- The monitoring of potential equivalents;
- Specific translation principles;
- The modification of written target-language texts;
- The assessment of the quality of the chosen translation;
- Paralinguistic or non-linguistic features (Krings, 1986: 267)

A more complex classification of strategies is proposed by Gerloff (1986:252) who, in her methodologically-oriented paper on TAP studies, describes «text-processing strategies» as

...any metalinguistic or metacognitive comments made or specific problem-solving behaviors affected, during the decoding and rendering of the translation text.

The categories she identifies are *problem identification, linguistic analysis, storage and retrieval, general search and selection, text inferencing and reasoning, text contextualisation, and task monitoring*.

In their discussion of the use of lexical search strategies, Mondhal and Jensen (1996) distinguish *production* from *evaluation* strategies. The former are further subdivided into *achievement* strategies and *reduction* strategies (also discussed by Chesterman, 1998). Among achievement strategies, which are characterised by an attempt to remain as close as possible to the ST, are *spontaneous association* and *reformulation*. Among reduction strategies, which are characterised by their inherently remedial nature, are avoidance and unmarked rendering of marked items. Finally, evaluation strategies involve, for instance, reflecting on the adequacy and acceptability of translation equivalents.

Séguinot (1996) reports on another non-comparative study involving, this time, two professional translators working together at the same task. The underlying assumption in this case is that this everyday setting (the subjects are used to working as a team) would increase the environmental validity of the experiment, without limiting the experimental validity of the results obtained. As a result of this study

four types of translation strategies are identified as being typical of «professional» translation.

None of the studies described so far attempt to systematically compare strategies across two groups of subjects. However, finding out what it is that distinguishes professional from non-professional (student or layman) behaviour has always been a major concern of researchers in process-oriented translation studies. One way of investigating this issue has been to compare the performance of two groups on the same task.

In the study reported in Séguinot (1991), two similar texts were translated by students of translation at different levels of proficiency (at the beginning and at the end of their courses in specialised translation). French and English mother tongue speakers translated two advertisements from French into English. The main research focus was once again on the – rather loosely defined – notion of strategies. The author suggests that native speakers of English (as well as better students, the two categories are unfortunately not distinguished clearly) translating into their mother tongue show more efficient monitoring and revising strategies, and work more at the textual level, whereas non-native speakers seem to rely more on learned principles and lexical-level processes. This appears to be one of the reasons why translation industry has adopted the rule that one can only translate into one's mother tongue.

Insofar as automaticity of processing is believed to result from experience and proficiency in a task (Ericsson and Simon, 1984/1993), it is not surprising that researchers have tried to determine whether the performance of professionals is recognisably more automatic than that of non-professionals. In order to do so, they have analysed the amount of marked processing in the protocols of experiments where subjects were professionals and non-professionals. The most straightforward hypothesis (that professionals verbalise less than non-professionals) is not endorsed by Jääskeläinen and Tirkkonen-Condit (1991) and by Jääskeläinen (1996 and 1997), who make a distinction between routine and non-routine situations. In the former,

professionals do tend to verbalise less than non-professionals, whereas in the latter the amount of verbalisation is not necessarily smaller. Besides, the nature of the verbalisations tends to differ as well. The explanation offered is that

...while some processes become automated, other processes are evoked into consciousness, i. e. the translator becomes sensitised to new kinds of problems. (Jääskeläinen and Tirkkonen-Condit, 1991:105)

This conclusion is supported by the finding that semi-professionals (translator trainees) show more extensive processing than both professionals and non-professionals (Jääskeläinen, 1997). This may be because they are aware of the problems involved but have not yet automatised the necessary problem-solving strategies. Equally, professionals are assumed to be better at recognising the need to resort to non-automatic, controlled processes (i. e. problem recognition) than non-professionals. Automatic processes, as we saw above, are typically very efficient but little flexible so that there is the danger (pointed out by Wills, 1994:144) «of problems being forced into a certain structure, because it is believed to offer a solution». A typical example of this danger would be, for instance, the difficulty experienced by non-professionals in overruling automatic lexical associations (Ivanova, 1998:102), or «false-friends», a process requiring high control.

A further way into the translation process is offered by the evaluations (of self, task, source text, target text) verbalised by the subjects. According to Tirkkonen-Condit (1997:83), there is a quantitative as well as qualitative difference between professionals and non-professionals in these regards, due to the fact that «consciousness of the motivations and rationale of one's own performance seems to grow with translational experience».

As just mentioned, a major problem has been the lack of an established research paradigm, resulting in a rather loose treatment of methodological issues (research design, data analysis, research report) and in a host of

studies setting their own categorisations in a theoretical void. Most of the research reports we have been concerned with so far describe the research design summarily, present findings in an anecdotal fashion, do not provide any statistical analysis of their data (and sometimes not even the data themselves) and leave central theoretical assumptions unexplained. The reader thus finds it difficult to assess the validity of the results obtained. Besides, the studies themselves sometimes seem to be loosely set up.

Another problem with most of the studies dealt with here is the excessive reliance on between-subject designs, used to compare the performance of professionals with that of semi-professionals and/or non-professionals. This is a very controversial design, which is nonetheless normally posited without further discussion. Even if we had an uncontroversial way of determining what professionalism involves — and we do not, resorting to external measures such as years of experience and official certifications only partially solves the problem — we would still have to take into account individual differences in the ability or disposition to verbalise, interests, involvement with the task, variable effects of the experimental condition and so on. This preoccupation is shared, for instance, by Krings (1987:167) who claims that «individual differences between subjects with regard to their willingness to verbalise might be greater than Ericsson & Simon seem to assume».

Lastly, it is necessary to mention a general methodological problem with the use of think-aloud protocols in translation research. As a method of data collection in cognitive science, think-aloud protocols are recognised as valid only inasmuch as they have been collected under very rigorous experimental conditions. When think-aloud protocols are used in translation research, these conditions are very often relaxed. Although this is partly due to the justified need to preserve environmental validity, this tendency should be checked, as it may result in the invalidation of the results obtained. Two examples will illustrate the point.

- According to Ericsson and Simon's (1984/1993) theoretical framework, social

interaction during the verbalisation should be avoided at all costs, as the need to communicate in a structured way is likely to interfere with the task being carried out in unpredictable and uncontrollable ways. However, a number of studies have investigated *dialogue* think-aloud protocols (Séguinot 1996, Kussmaul 1991) — a contradiction in terms — and claimed for them the same empirical validity as for *monologue* protocols.

- It has been claimed (Farch and Kasper (1987:15) that

...simultaneous introspection... in terms of concurrent talking or thinking aloud or verbalization of specific cognitions, presupposes that the modality of language use is not itself oral-productive.

This is because two concurrent tasks of the same kind may interfere with each other in ways still unpredictable at the present stage of research. However, the influential study conducted by Löscher (1991) required subjects to think aloud while carrying out a written-to-spoken translation task.

The study which makes the subject of this section is still in its infancy: analysis of the data collected has only just begun, and no conclusive results can as yet be presented. The concerns of this paper being primarily methodological, we shall be dealing here mainly with the design and set-up of the experiment. After describing the purposes of the study and the questions it addresses, we shall go on to discuss the methodology adopted, and finally point at some provisional suggestions with regard to experiment set-up.

Provisionally, the following hypothesis has been launched for the study: if we are able to deduce the algorithm of translation process, performed by humans, we should be able to design software that would be capable to produce translation of very specialized texts, without human post editing, paying greatest attention to attention units, automaticity of processing and affective factors.

Five undergraduate students in their last year of study and Master Degree students in their first year of study participated in the

study so far. The study was discontinued for two reasons. One of them is to review the experiment design and methodology with the view to make it more strict. Another reason is more down-to-earth: the students are on vacation.

Participants initially were selected randomly, based on their willingness to participate and a brief discussion, which was performed to ensure that they are comfortable enough with the general topic of the text to be proposed. Students were asked to translate a recipe and verbalize everything they do. Texts of recipes were collected in cooking blogs in Russian, English, Romanian. Students were allowed to choose the language they felt most comfortable with (surprisingly, many have chosen to translate a Russian or Romanian text into English). The conversation was recorded and transcribed. Each session lasted around 60 minutes, approximately 40 minutes would go for preparatory stage.

After the first few sessions we decided to stop the experiment and review the methodology. The reasons were the following. First of all, students seemed to have a great difficulty overcoming the idea that they are actually being tested. It was also quite difficult to have them talk all the time while they were translating. Thus, the experience of previous research turns out to be quite controversial. Students indeed are quite available, but the preparatory stage of the experiment takes up to an hour. Should the use of students as subjects be dictated by the objectives of the study, it is very worth mentioning to them that they are not being tested and you are not interested in their final product. It is the process that you are looking for.

There is another important aspect worth mentioning. Think aloud method was borrowed from psychology. For their purposes it is indeed extremely important that the observer does not talk to the subject and allows her verbalize everything there is to verbalize. The study of translation, in our view, is quite different. Dialogical communication should not be excluded, but by no means should it be intrusive. At initial stages it is quite welcome to support the

participant with short positive phrases, like: "You are doing quite fine!"

Even though some researchers suggest that professionals tend to verbalize less in the process of translation, they may and should be used as subjects. The only limitation is that the subject matter proposed to them should not be something they routinely translate. Professionals will not have the psychological barrier of the feeling of being tested and will require less preparation, as our tentative sessions showed.

The experience also proves that text suggested for the think aloud experiment should be brief. Up to a conventional page, which is 1800 characters. It is the process that is being studied, not the product.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

As already suggested above, no final results from the study just described are at present available for discussion. However, the aim of this paper has been to discuss some methodological issues relating to the use of think-aloud protocols in process-oriented translation studies. This research methodology has been shown to provide a very promising framework for the investigation of the cognitive aspects of translation, a field of study that could so far only be tackled speculatively. In the last few years substantial effort has been put in this area of research, resulting in a large amount of very valuable insights about the cognitive and affective factors involved in translation. At this early stage of research, the data have been mainly used in a rather informal way, as a source of suggestions and examples about the behaviour of translators: their strategies, affective involvement, units of analysis, evaluations, translation maxims and so on. The ultimate goal of this work has obviously been to shed light on the characteristics of successful translation processes in terms of their underlying constituents. For this reason, the main focus of attention of researchers has been the comparison between producers of «good» and «bad» translation, on the assumption that the quality of the products might correlate with some features of the processes.

There is nothing inherently wrong with this approach. However, now that experience with empirical translation studies has started to pile up, and a substantial number of «informal» hypotheses have been made, it would seem to be time for researchers in the field to start questioning the methodological assumptions of their work more systematically. It is time, in other words, to check the validity of these informal hypotheses by means of more controlled experimental designs and methods of data analysis.

The experiment whose early stages (experimental design and data collection) are described in this paper constitutes a move in this direction, its aim being to address a number of concerns with the experimental validity of the studies discussed in its introductory sections. Apart from the obvious necessity to adopt a scientifically sounder methodology of data collection, the way ahead in process-oriented translation studies would appear to involve the development of a relatively uncontroversial classification of process indicators. Such a classification could limit the proliferation of terminological distinctions in the literature, and provide researchers with an instrument for the systematic analysis and description of think-aloud protocols. Presently, these seem to be necessary steps if the discipline is to proceed beyond the somewhat rudimentary stages with which this paper has been concerned.

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## CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS APPROACH TO THE ROMANIAN PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE REGARDING CULTURAL CHANGE

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**Abstract:** Critical discourse analysis (CDA) contributes to the implementation of certain political, economic and scientific perspectives by giving the discourse a value of great importance for social change while involving not merely the support of verbal construct, but also its ‘materialization’ as social practice. Therefore, being focused on hegemonic discourse that analyzes unequal power relations, CDA does not usually concentrate on philosophical discourse, whose major aim is to validate a particular ‘logic’ or to allow for the self-referential relationship with the ability of communicating, maintaining a dialogue or thinking etc. Consequently, we witness the impossibility of a scientific development. This happens due to the contrast between the logic of a discourse about (something), which has become a discourse aimed at validating a viewpoint, or at “colonizing” the truth, through CDA, and the logic of openness toward (something), makes relative the truth implying discursive occurrences, by projecting the unique, abstract or ideal perspective outside such occurrences. Thus, philosophical discourse occurs essentially within the boundaries of an assumed power equality, which means it occurs outside the CDA’s area of expertise. Moreover, philosophical discourse does not involve assuming discursive effects; on the contrary, it assumes the perspective itself. Nevertheless, philosophy generates major discourses that propose (and sometimes achieve) changes. Such discourses are not valued from the CDA’s perspective, at the right moment. Instead, they are later on rediscovered and reinterpreted. Philosophical discourse, apparently lacking outcomes regarding social life, causes profound long-termed mutations to societies. In this respect, we propose for debate a major discourse of the Romanian philosopher Constantin Noica. The discourse under debate has been subjected to multiple reinterpretations, attributed ideologies and it continues to generate debates even nowadays. Accordingly, our intention is to organize the analytic construct and focus on a particular segment, namely, the philosophy of culture, and more precisely, one of the major debates of the Romanian philosophy, with regard to cultural change. Focusing on three classical philosophical discourses (What Is Eternal and What Is Historical in Romanian Culture, Noica, 1943), our article aims at identifying their reverberations within today’s political discourse. For this purpose, we intend to find answers to the following questions generated by our study: To what extent is the illocutionary power of the philosophical discourse present within the contemporary political discourse?, and, To what extent does today’s social context allow for the appropriateness of this type of discourse to the Romanian electorate? by analyzing nineteen speeches of the Romanian leader of the National Liberal Party, Crin Antonescu.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, (Critical) Discourse Studies, philosophical discourse, political discourse, critical effects.

### 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIETY AND DISCOURSE

The entire social activity reduces to to symbols. All social relationships are symbolically mediated. Regarding the

connections between society and symbols, we can draw a set of *linguistic equations*. First of them, according to Ferdinand de Saussure, could be expressed as:

**language (*langue*) = language (*langage*) – speaking (*parole*)** (1)

more exactly:

Évitant de stériles définitions de mots, nous avons d'abord distingué, au sein du phénomène totale que représentent le *langage*, deux facteurs: la *langue* et la *parole*. La langue est pour nous le langage moins la parole/ (Saussure, 1972:112).

Considering language (*langue*) as a social product, both a *form* and a *non-substance*, the Swiss linguist stressed the necessity of taking into account the interconnections between its constitutive elements. Therefore, Saussure laid the foundations of structuralism as theory, appealing the linguistic system as mediating structure between the objective reality and the subjective perception. The second equation, belonging to the French linguist Émile Benveniste, is based on the same distinction, *langue-langage*. The language (*langue*) is considered a system containing other structures that belong both to community and the individual, while the language (*langage*) is developed within a *langue*. In Benveniste's perspective, *langue* is the product of a certain culture that is conditioned by *langage*, subsumed to *langue*. Benveniste considered that the individual assimilates, perpetuates, and transmits the culture, through *langue*, while the discourse is a component of the *langage*, in an equation rewritten by Caune (2000:28) as follows:

***langage* = logos (disourse + ration) (2).**

The first two equations are important in order to establish the relationships between language (implicitly between discourse) and society/community. Benveniste's assertion, *la langue contient la société*, sustained by E.T. Hall's expression, *culture is communication, communication is culture*, applied through the equations (1) and (2), is designed to stress the liaison between the society and the forms of language that express the society. Without establishing lineages in terms of relations with Saussure's structuralism, the French scholar Patrick Charaudeau approaches equation (1), noting that his perspective can (and need to) be nuanced. In an article explaining his

theoretical position, Charaudeau splits from the French rationalist essentialism, but accepts the perspective of social subgroups, of the structuralist anthropologist Levi Strauss' cultural variants, contributing to the emergence of idea „*que l'identité culturelle est à la fois stable et mouvante*” (2002). Charaudeau places himself in the proximity of scholars considering that the natural relationship with cultural identity is achieved not through language but through discourse, pointing out the following: „*contre une idée bien répandue, il faudrait dissocier langue et culture, et associer discours et culture*” (2009). Charaudeau's clear-cut position is different from the moderate one of Caune, who considers that, despite the interdependence between language and communication, the authenticity of culture is outlined through individual aspirations and interests that lead to an adjustment of the relation individual-culture through small groups, culturally independent (Caune, 2009:91). On the contrary, Charaudeau considers that cultural values are not transmitted through language, but through discourse. In this respect, the discourse is variable, while language does not change depending on the addresser and addressee. Rewriting Saussure's equation from Charaudeau's perspective (2001:343) means, actually, taking into account a different equation, namely:

**discourse = language (*langue*) + language application (*speech*) (3).**

This perspective explains best how the effects of a previous philosophical discourse are reactivated within a new discursive framework – a political one – maintaining the language as an invariant. Therefore, in Charaudeau's terms, speaking about discourse community is more adequate than speaking about language community.

A community of discourse (sometimes seen as a community of discourse and practice, Skovira, 2010:370), represents a dynamic structure, with boundaries placed depending on the discursive context. Moreover, a community of discourse includes people sharing ideologies and context patterns (or



context models). Regarding our area of interest, this kind of association implies the profound elements that highlight the transmission of the cultural values through discourse. In this case, the philosophical discourse coagulates the language around the core of the cultural values. The community of discourse could be considered community only if deep fundamentals lead to fastening relations between individuals. Thus, this community of discourse is one of profoundly philosophically and culturally based discourse.

The philosophical discourse, that unifies membership and identity and permits the development of an ideology of the cultural area, constitutes a rhetorical genre. Yet, the philosophical discourse incorporates a weaker power of the enunciator, balanced by an emotional effervescence that carries the potential power towards other possible discourses. Moreover, assumed power equality represents one of the fundamental features of the philosophical discourse. The philosophical discourse does not involve any assuming discursive effects. Is therefore, the analysis of critical effects of a philosophical discourse possible, as long as the philosophical discourse does not involve power imbalance, direct social change or assumption? All these three characteristics of critical effects are subjects of *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA).

## 2. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE

*Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA) operates with a particular definition of discourse. Out of this perspective, the discourse is seen as an instrument used in performing macro-social changes, related to major social events. It represents a communicational construction that expresses a particular kind of social behavior. Therefore, the discourse analyzed by CDA is a hegemonic discourse, one that produces unequal relationships. Generally speaking, CDA refers to power relationships, to social inequality, to gender discourse, to racial engagements and to other kinds of discourses implying or (re)producing inequalities. In Maingueneau's terms, there is a particular

inclination towards social cognition and representation of power and dominance that could be roughly be expressed as follows:

Roughly speaking, discourse analysis would only describe practices, whereas critical approaches to texts and talks would show how these hide power relations, prejudices, discrimination, and so on. (Maingueneau, 2006:229)

Thus, CDA focuses on the colonist discourse, on the discourse that colonizes the discursive area related to a perception of truth based on a particular certitude (ideologically marked) and on a particular moral correctness. The critical discourses' purpose does not specifically to maintain or deepen the inequality, but this inequality is preserved through the discourse capacity to maintain the relations of power. CDA is characterized by the common interest in demystifying power ideologies<sup>1</sup> as long as the critical discourse represents the engine of society:

(...) discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. (Wodak & Meyer, 2009:6).

Maingueneau (2006:229-230) distinguishes three foremost levels of critical discourse that emerge from three steps in differentiation between discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis: (i) a level focused on the critical orientation in relationships with social phenomena, that are ethically or politically negative; (ii) a level implying the behavioral disciplines in the global project of society change, meaning *Kritische Theorie* in terms of the Frankfurt School; and (iii) a level regarding the research in discourse analysis area with the purpose of searching a critical orientation of discourses. Taking into account this taxonomy and analyzing the ideological

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<sup>1</sup> „Critical theories, thus also CDA, want to produce and convey critical knowledge that enables human beings to emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection”, noted Wodak & Meyer (2009:7)

dimension – one of the most important dimensions of critical discourse that lay the foundation of its hegemony – we could consider that the first level poses an important ideological charge, the second one is ideologically neutral<sup>2</sup>, and the third could be a meta-ideological level. In the intention to studying the critical effects of previous philosophical discourses on current political discourses, our interest results from an oscillation between the first and the third Maingueneau’s levels. We need to equally investigate the direct effects of political discourses, therefore the ideological charge of this discourse, and the indirect effects of philosophical discourse, a purpose that could be reached through the agency of a meta-ideological approach. In these terms, including the enunciator’s intends to obtain benefits from the ideological charge – I mean “ideology” in relationship with *critical discourse analysis* seen as “*an elaborate story told about the ideal conduct of some aspects of human affairs*” (Locke, 2004:33)<sup>3</sup> – of his discourse, respectively to use an important discourse that produces long time before other social effects, without necessarily aiming at the same effects, but conveying a meta-ideological reference.

As our topic is concerned, the philosophical discourse, approached through the political discourse, constitutes a form of transmigration from the ideologically neutral level (or from the meta-ideological one) to the level focused on the critical orientation in relationship with social phenomena. In order to study the possible critical indirect effects of the philosophical discourse, it is important to select an adequate research strategy depending on two sets of polar values: agency vs. structure, respectively broad linguistic

operationalization vs. detailed linguistic operationalization. Wodak & Meyer proposed the following taxonomy:

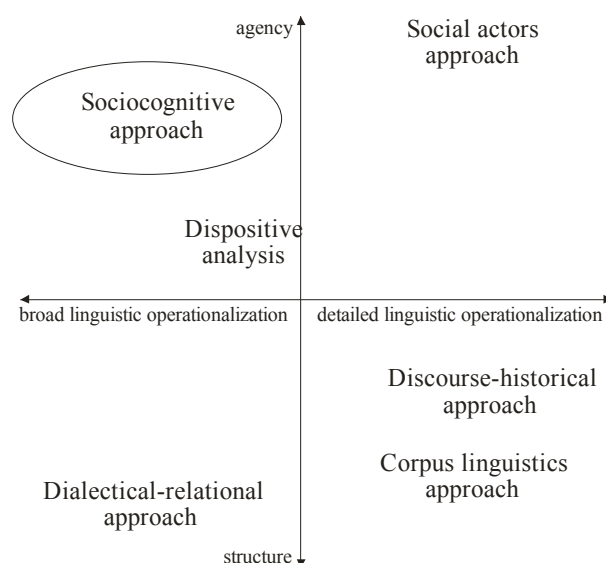


Fig.1 Linguistic depth of field and level of aggregation (*apud* Wodak & Meyer, 2009:22)

Due to the openness involved by the socio-cognitive approach as an analytical strategy, especially due to the possibility to plunge into a multidisciplinary field, we’ve chosen this perspective as being satisfactory for the purpose of our study.

### 3. (CRITICAL) DISCOURSE STUDIES PERSPECTIVE

With roots in philosophy, anthropology, linguistics, rhetoric, psycho-sociology, etc., *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA) can be approached through the agency of a broader disciplinary field, (*Critical*) *Discourse Studies* or (C)DS, based on a proposal of labeling initiated by Teun A. Van Dijk in 2009. (C)DS suggests that a critical approach does not imply only an analytical perspective, but also a critical theoretical engagement, external references, applications and methods. Logically, it is suggested that the family of analytical methods does not belong to CDA, but to (C)DS that, understood as disciplinary field, is not limited to a method, but to a „critical perspective, position or attitude within the discipline of multidisciplinary *Discourse Studies*” (van Dijk, 2009:62). This

<sup>2</sup> Regarding the second level, of *Kritische Theorie*, Maingueneau (2006:229) noted “*From this viewpoint, the analyst may study phenomena that, at first glance, might seem ideologically neutral.*”

<sup>3</sup> In a different perspective, more nuanced, the ideologies, seen as *worldviews* that represent *social cognitions* by van Dijk, are defined as „*representations of aspects of the world which contributes to establishing and maintaining relations of power, domination and exploitation*” (Wodak & Meyer, 2009:8)

multidisciplinary approach is closer than others (as CDA, for example, whose philosophical roots could allow such an approach) to our intention to analyze the critical effects of the philosophical discourse taken through the political discourse. This multidisciplinary approach is closer to ours that analyzes the critical effects through philosophical discourse over political discourse than trying vicinity through the CDA, whose philosophical roots may allow such an approach. In addition, (C)DS represents for van Dijk rather a *problem oriented* (or *theory oriented*) than a disciplinary field. Being on the way to truth – the truth of interpretation – and not imposing the truth approach the subject of our analysis by (C)DS (nu are predicat). It is worth mentioning that (C)DS is limited, according to Dutch scholar, to the analysis of a particular class of social problems<sup>4</sup>, whose overcome, however, is not the subject of our study. Intention of critical effects of philosophical discourse analysis, whose semantic macrostructures are taken through political discourse, is not apart from van Dijk projection. In this respect, now, it is not necessary to discuss the possibilities of broadening the field of study.

(C)DS field dimensions extend the possibilities of our subject, due to the interest in real language and real users of '*naturally occurring*' language, focusing on *larger units* (such as texts, for example) and not on words and isolated sentences, the linguistics extending *beyond sentence grammar* towards the study of action/interaction, extending towards study of *nonverbal aspects* of communication, the orientation towards interactional strategies, the study of *contexts of language use* (social, cultural, situative, or cognitive) functions, respectively the analysis of a large number of *phenomena of text grammar and language use* (Wodak & Meyer, 2009:2).

<sup>4</sup> (C)DS „aim to analyse, and thus to contribute to the understanding and the solution of, serious social problems, especially those that are caused or exacerbated by public text and talk, such as various forms of social power abuse (domination) and their resulting social inequality.” (van Dijk, 2009:63)

The most important dimension of (C)DS in terms of our analysis is related to the study of the language use context functions, issue to be dealt with later. From this perspective, van Dijk believes that the relationship between discourse and society is not direct, but mediated by so-called *context models*, by a set of contextual patterns (culturally shaped, and extended to a local or *micro* dimension and to a global or *macro* dimension), that

(...) are organized by a relatively simple *schema* consisting of fundamental *categories*, such as:

- a spatiotemporal setting
- participants
  - identities, roles, relationships
  - goals
  - knowledge
  - ideologies
- the ongoing social action. (van Dijk, 2009:73-74)

*Context models* are considered to be, *par excellence*, the interference zone between discourse and society and to play, therefore, an important role in critical discourse analysis. Moreover, these contextual patterns imply appealing to the discursive criterion of *relevance*, to a relative relevance, regarding knowledge, goals, desires, interests and personal experiences of participants in discursive act, filtered by the enunciator. In our case, the relative relevance derives from a general framework, a framework of culture, of common knowledge regarding culture, became particular through the subjective filter of participants in discourse.

#### 4. CASE STUDY: PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE POLITICALLY UPDATED

In 1943, in a speech within a conference in Berlin, entitled “Ce e etern și ce e istoric în filosofia românească” (*What Is Eternal and What Is Historical in Romanian Culture*), the Romanian philosopher Constantin Noica said:

We do not want anymore to be the eternal villagers of history. (...) Economically and politically, culturally and spiritually, we feel that we cannot live in a patriarchal, villageois, ahistorical Romania. An historical Romania is

no more satisfactory for us, we need a current Romania.<sup>5</sup> (Noica, 1991:7-8)

This fragment from an ample and reasoned discourse is, in fact, a notorious piece of Romanian cultural philosophy on the conflict between *eternal* and *historical*, whose roots are present in the Romanian way of thinking from the early eighteenth century. Dimitrie Cantemir, prince of Moldavia and encyclopedic scholar, identifying a crisis of Romanian conscience, projects the Western system of values onto the Romanians, intending to get them out of apathy and of the influence of oriental values. If in Cantemir's text (1714/1973) the political and philosophical discourses are intertwined, after the eighteenth century this topic became only the a privileged one in the philosophical discourse, finding his highest expression in Noica's work, that formulated  $\emptyset$ , in a syntactical manner, one of the Romanian conscience's dramas. But, as Professor Grigore Georgiu noted (2007:239), the issue of the relationship between *eternal* and *historical*, as it was called by Noica, is one of the issues "that the Romanian nation, with its history full of discontinuities and fractures, failed to overcome it even nowadays, in the hour of its European integration".

Given this preamble whereby we announced the subject of our analysis, it is important for us to point out the methodological itinerary regarding the case study. **The overall objective** is to identify the coverage of the issue regarding the relationship between *eternal* and *historical* in the contemporary Romanian political discourse. The study corpus consists of a set of nineteen major discourses of the liberal leader Crin Antonescu, performed between 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2007 - 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2012. Studying the effects of a topic of the Romanian political discourse (originated in the philosophical discourse), **the units of analysis** are

Antonescu's political discourses, and **the units of interpretation** are the semantic macrostructures from these discourses that reflect the *eternal/historical* relationship. The sources of information are the liberal leader's discourses, recorded and transcribed on the website <http://crinantonescu.ro/Public/cat/16/Discursuri.html>. Intending a qualitative analysis on the critical effects of the philosophical discourse taken by the political discourse, the **research questions** are: *To what extent is the illocutionary power of the philosophical discourse present within the contemporary political discourse?*, and, *To what extent does today's social context allow for the adequacy of this type of discourse to the Romanian electorate?* The designed research is a standard one, using the **study of documents**. The research is based on the circular process proposed by Wodak and Meyer (2009:22): theory → [conceptualization; selection of theoretical concepts and relations, assumptions] → operationalization → [procedures and instrument] → discourse/text → [selection of information] → interpretation → [examination of assumptions] → theory, taking into account the (C)DS perspective of Dutch Teun van Dijk (2009:62-88). Concerning the phases of critical discourse analysis, the focus is naturally oriented towards *linguistically oriented phase* involving a fine analysis on context, text surface and rhetorical means, and not towards *content-oriented phase* that implies a structure analysis.

The first observation on the coverage of the Romanian philosophical matter regarding the cultural change under the mark of the *eternal/historical* relationship, mediated by Noica, in Crin Antonescu's political discourses is related to the presence of this issue in five paragraphs within three discourses of a total of nineteen, roots of this topic being found in three more discourses. Crin Antonescu, by refusing to quote<sup>6</sup> directly well-known phrases

<sup>5</sup> "Noi nu mai vrem să fim eternii săteni ai istoriei. (...). Economicește și politicește, culturalicește și spiritualicește, simțim că nu mai putem de mult trăi într-o Românie patriarhală, sătească, anistorică. Nu ne mai mulțumim o Românie istorică, vrem o Românie actuală", in original.

<sup>6</sup> Crin Antonescu even mocks at the practice of direct reference, of uncritical tacking of well-known phrases, anticipating the indirect connection with the text from the Romanian cultural philosophy (meaning a direct connection with the major ideas of the Romanian cultural philosophy): „Ar trebui, la final, să spun lucruri

of Romanian philosophy, relates indirectly to them. In fact, his professional and educational background recommends the analysis and the critical taking over of Romanian cultural philosophy's major issues, Crin Antonescu being a graduate of the Faculty of History and Philosophy, University of Bucharest, thus becoming a rarity in the contemporary Romanian political landscape.

This refusal of direct connection to the philosophical discourse – that implies the logic of openness toward (something), that makes relative the truth implying discursive occurrence, projecting a unique, abstract or ideal perspective outside occurrence, differing therefore from by the discourse that is created in order to validate a perspective, to „colonize” the truth - is due to the need to pass through the filter of contextuality, respectively through the filter of relativity ideas that will fuel a nascent ideology. This refusal of direct connection to the text (support for the philosophical discursive performance) or to some phrases from the original text, a text previously engramed? by a different author/enunciator, a text carrying by itself a great illocutionary force, leads to a different perspective on Romanian discursive approach. The Romanian philosophical discourse's critical effect in Crin Antonescu's speeches is created through discussed and indirectly approached text in a meta-discursive manner, revealing Noica's perspectives on cultural change. In Maingueneau's terms, we can observe the prevalence of the level focused on the critical orientation in relationships with

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*memorable, să dau un citat din vreu clasic – dacă aş face-o în latină aş fi chiar asimilat unui intelectual rafinat -, şi ridicându-mi vocea ar trebui să creez un moment dramatic” „In the end, I should say; memorable things, quote some classical author – if I'd do it in Latin, I would be even assimilated with a refined intellectual – and, raising my voice, I should create a dramatic moment” (speech on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, 2009, National Liberal Party candidates for Euro parliamentary election release). The liberal leader irony intends to make the amendment of discourses inconsistent with the current realities of Romanian nation and Romanian state, a good reason for designing his future campaign for presidency under a logo being a processed phrase from the Romanian cultural philosophy, *Romania of common sense*.*

social phenomena, with negative ethical or political issues (therefore, ideologically charged). Moreover, we can distinguish the presence of the meta-ideological level that permits recreation or targeting a new ideology, indirectly assumed. Antonescu's discourse, as shown in this undertaken analysis, is itself a discourse plus discourse analysis (at a critical level), through the critical relationship with a large corpus of inadequate Romanian political discourses.

Given that the post communist political language is approached to a little extent (Bidu-Vrâncău, 2004; Guțu Romalo, 2005 etc.), that the political communication studies (Beciu, 2002; Ficeac, 2006) “*does not pay much attention to language particularities*” (Zafiu, 2007:28), predominantly focusing on pragmatic issues, engaging in a linguistic analysis of Antonescu's discourse is both difficult and little satisfactory regarding the goals of our study. An analysis of reconsideration the relationship *eternal/historical* in the current political discourse is more important and more appropriate, more suitable in our approach.

There are, at the semantic level, two approaches of Antonescu to the already-announced topic:

- the first one, within the conjunctive logic, a personal redrafting of Noica's theme, requiring rebalancing and repositioning depending on the interpretative nuance, as follows:

I believe in *Romania of those who work*, in *Romania of those who learn*, in *Romania of those who try*, in *Romania of those who respect and are united*, in *Romania of those who have aspirations, have hopes, have plans for them, for their children, for their country*.<sup>7</sup> (speech on 17<sup>th</sup> of August, 2009, presenting the presidential program, entitled *Stă în puterea noastră să schimbăm puterea lor*<sup>8</sup>)

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<sup>7</sup> Eu cred în *România celor care muncesc*, în *România celor care învață*, în *România celor care încearcă*, în *România celor care știu să respecte și să fie solidari*, în *România celor care au aspirații , au speranțe, au planuri pentru ei, pentru copiii lor, pentru țara lor*, in original;

<sup>8</sup> *It is in our power to change their power;*

Nowadays, we know or we try to arrange in our mind and in our action what we can do for Romania, but, unfortunately, we know in addition what *today's Romania, the official Romania* can do for you.<sup>9</sup> (speech on 29<sup>th</sup> of August, 2009, held on the occasion of event *Crin<sup>10</sup> for Young*)

If *my Romania* I talked about and I will talk about all the time during this campaign and of my political life, is inclusively *your Romania*, defend it.<sup>11</sup> (speech on 29<sup>th</sup> of August, 2009, held on the occasion of *Crin for Young* event)

- the second one, of correction of his opponents' (mainly members of the Democrat-Liberal Party) poor understanding of the relationships between the two completely opposable Romanias, within a disjunctive logic, due to the optics of the „*arrogant, inefficient state*” (speech on 17<sup>th</sup> of August, 2009, presenting the presidential program, entitled *Stă în puterea noastră să schimbăm puterea lor*):

There is no *two Romanias*, Mr. Prime Minister. (...) You may think that there is a *second Romania. Sunday's Romania. Televisual Romania. Romania of Băsescu's spondulicks and of Geoană's giant weddings*.<sup>12</sup> (speech on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September, 2009, before the joint chambers of the Romanian Parliament, in debating of the motion initiated by the National Liberal Party)

This distinction realized by Antonescu, a fine distinction regarding the subject of our study, is able to bring up the two approaches: ideological and meta-ideological (configuring possible choices between ideological ways). His engagement differs from the cliché

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<sup>9</sup> Astăzi știm sau încercăm să așezăm în mintea noastră și în acțiunea noastră ce puteți face voi pentru România, dar, din nefericire, mai știm ce poate face *România de azi, România oficială* pentru voi, in original;

<sup>10</sup> Wordplay; In Romanian, Crin means *Lily*;

<sup>11</sup> Dacă *România mea*, despre care am vorbit și voi vorbi tot timpul acestei campanii și în tot timpul vieții mele politice, e și România voastră, apărați-o, in original;

<sup>12</sup> Nu există *două Românii*, domnule prim-ministru. (...) Dumneavoastră credeți poate că există și o *doua Românie. România de duminică. România de televizor. România Cașcavelei lui Băsescu și a nunților gigantice ale lui Geoană*, in original;

“*Romania*”, from the nominals “*Romanians*”, “*Romanian people*” etc. (possible accompanied by demonstratives with deictic value, as: that, these, etc.), used as marks of emphasis. The meta-discursive and meta-ideological dimensions of Antonescu's discourse save falling into populism generally specific to contemporary Romanian political discourse. Moreover, his irony saves gross approach. The attacks (at the limits of the disjunctive thinking of opponents) are done not explicitly, through evaluation, but implicitly, through repeated statements, intending the reconfiguration of thinking framework. Considering nonverbal performative aspects, such as emphasis, intonation, firm attitude, verbal flow control, expressive gestures (mainly the illustrators, nonverbal elements that accompany the discourse) etc., we can find an appropriation to the entry into the complex issues of intended cultural change.

Addressing to a specific target group (very large) in each case of analyzed discourses, associating to the group as member of it (envisioning, therefore, the ideological charge that will be approached), emphasizing their good intentions in relationship with the bad intentions and the inappropriate actions of the opponents, trying to globalize, to generalize the meanings, Crin Antonescu proposes a discourse with critical effects. These effects are evident not only due to the force of his own construction, but they are originated, as we observed, in the Romanian philosophical discourse on the Cantemir's conflict *eternal/historical* taken through Noica's discourse.

Remaining within the semantic macrostructures (and emphasizing the nonverbal elements that represent a particular subject of van Dijk's sociocognitive approach), we can find the expression critical effects of Antonescu's discourse despite the fact that the roots of this discourse are hidden in the Romanian philosophical discourse soil.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

In this respect, one can say that the critical effects of the Romanian philosophical

discourse are present due to the educational background of the Romanian liberal leader, due to his innate discursive abilities regarding the text construction and the appropriateness of the text to the context of performing, of expectations of electorate and undecided public. Using the critical effects of Philosophical discourse is not facile, not available to each candidate. Once the educational background permits, the discourse-society appropriateness is guaranteed. Organizing (and orientating) the community of discourse around a dynamic construct - where the authentic language possibilities are completed by a genuine discursive production (as in Charaudeau equation no.3), where the authentic value systems guide the engagement and contribute in increasing the illocutionary force of discourse – explain the direct effect on public. Liberal leader's political capital, gathered during the analyzed five years of opposition to the president of Romania, Traian Băsescu, respectively to the Democrat-Liberal Party, is not the expression of political opportune actions (from this point of view we can stress that Antonescu made mistakes and missed important opportunities), but it is the result of his discourse, anchored in the Romanian reality, where the critical effects of the Romanian philosophical discourse, known and internalized by him, lead to the first rank in the trust capital of Romania (over 40%), respectively to the first rank in vote intention for the future president of Romania (about 40%). Moreover, despite low expectations regarding the convergence between the Romanian electorate and the political discourse philosophically grounded, the deep Romanian roots and the theme argumentation appealing to the common knowledge represent two important indicators of effects to be achieved.

Generally speaking, we can firmly affirm that philosophy generates major discourses that propose social change. This kind of discourses has not short-termed consequences, but long-termed mutations into society that can be observed due to them. We can conclude that the political discourse based on a classical philosophical discourse may produce

(depending on the context and on the enunciator) major effects, critical effects concerning the social and political change.

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## FROM STAR WARS TO AEGIS: ROMANIAN MEDIA DISCOURSE ON THE CURRENT DIALOGUE BETWEEN ROMANIA AND THE USA

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**Abstract:** *This paper aims to investigate the representation of the relations between the USA and Romania in the discourse of Romanian media. The corpus consists of 63 news items and editorials which have been published in the online editions of two Romanian newspapers. The main research aims were: (1) to identify the topics which obtained the largest media coverage in regard to the diplomatic and military relationships between Romania and the USA; (2) to assess evaluation expressed in the media discourse by applying the evaluation parameters designed by Thompson and Hunston (2001). Four main topics regarding the relations between the two countries attracted extensive media coverage throughout the year 2011: (1) Romania's decision to host AEGIS Ashore components on its ground; (2) the diplomatic visit made by the Romanian president to Washington and his meeting with the US president Barack Obama; (3) the intention expressed by the Romanian government to purchase F-16 military planes produced by the US company Lockheed Martin and (4) the fact that Romanian citizens need US entry visa and the criteria they have to meet in order to obtain the visa. results show that the issues of contemporary military cooperation attract the most positive evaluations in the media discourse, especially in terms of its importance. The most controversial topics (in this corpus, the purchase of second-hand planes or the difficulty of obtaining a visa for the United States) are assessed in terms of certainty and/or expectedness.*

**Keywords:** *Romania, USA, military relations, evaluation, media discourse.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the key ideas of postmodernism sustains the nonexistence of a unique truth and therefore of a unique discourse on it; every individual speaker has a particular point of view which is conveyed through the selection of specific linguistic items from the total range of the linguistic resources the speaker disposes of. In Ruth Berman's words, "any state of affairs in the worlds of fact or fantasy can be described in multiple ways" (Berman 2004: 109). The postmodern perspective on subjectivity is also connected to a new conception about history and about the relationships between center and periphery. History is no longer seen as a serial connection of events but it is known that historical discourse may be – and, in fact, it is – as biased as any other discourse type. Discourses

issued by speakers which would have been considered previously as marginal have become the focus of attention, challenging former hierarchies (e.g. Vattimo 1993).

The aim of this paper is to investigate stance and evaluation in media discourse in connection to its function of reporting events or, in other words, of narrating contemporary history. The subject chosen is connected to the representation of the relations between the United States and Romania, two states with different capacities and status at the international political level. The discourse of Romanian media regarding this subject may constitute the scene of a clash between former and new representations of power and cooperation. On the one hand, the collective images enforced by the communist propaganda depicted the USA as an enemy. On the other hand, such cultural

representations are presently challenged and restructured as a result of a shift observed, for instance, by Fairclough (2001: 59): for various languages (and, implicitly, cultures), the power-based system tends to be replaced by a solidarity-based system which has as a consequence “a movement away from the explicit marking of power relationships”.

## 2. PERSPECTIVES ON STANCE AND EVALUATION

Though studies on stance are varied, two main directions are visible. One is a strictly text-based approach, having as its core the definition of stance formulated by Biber and Finegan (1989) as

the lexical and grammatical expression of attitudes, feelings, judgments, or commitment concerning the propositional content of a message.

This has led to studies interested in the analysis of certain terms or expressions in a given corpus, as the mere selection of a certain lexical device from the whole possible range of lexical choices available to the speaker is itself a form of stancetaking. The identification of the lexical and morpho-syntactical salient features of the analyzed corpus will be restricted to the formal expression of stance. The investigation of the lexis and the morpho-syntax represents a first step in understanding stance and it has the advantage that it is highly quantifiable.

Recent research has shown that quantitative investigation must be accompanied by qualitative analysis: „Quantifying stance is problematic because there is no simple correspondence between individual words, on the one hand, and stance functions, on the other” (Hunston 2007: 35). Another direction of research requires outrunning the mere description of grammatical features and taking into account the conversational as well as the social and cultural background leading the speaker to assume a certain stance. Instead of viewing the expression of stance as an isolated act, it tends to analyze it from an interactive and

intertextual point of view. Du Bois (2007) argues for the necessity to go beyond the mere grammatical analysis of isolated sentences and to contextualize the utterances investigated:

Speakers do not just perform generic stance types, they perform specific stance acts, which have specific content and are located in a particular dialogic and sequential context. (Du Bois 2007:145).

In order to achieve this goal, Du Bois proposes a more complex definition of stance, opposing to that of Biber and Finegan in the sense that it pays attention not to the microlevel of isolated lexical devices but to stance as a speech act and its insertion in the context of discourse. This view is grounded in Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism and it has the merit of acknowledging that any act of stancetaking is in relation to other acts or events prior or simultaneous to it. According to this definition, any act of stancetaking has three dimensions: evaluation, positioning and alignment. This idea will be used in the present article, where “stance” is used as a broader term, encompassing evaluation, but not restricted to it.

## 3. STANCE IN THE MEDIA DISCOURSE

Summing up the findings of previous research, Englebretson (2007: 6) identifies five main characteristics of stance: (1) stancetaking occurs on three levels: physical action, personal attitude or belief or evaluation and social morality; (2) stance is public; (3) stance is interactional; (4) stance is indexical and (5) consequential. These characteristics take specific forms when applied to the context of media discourse.

First, in media discourse, the personal and the social level clearly overlap, as the journalist expresses his/her point of view but at the same time s/he represents the media organization as his/her employer and, in turn, the organization endorses the point of view expressed by the journalist. Furthermore, this point of view enters in a relationship with the common beliefs and expectations of the society in which the media discourse takes

place. Every specific instance of media discourse takes place simultaneously at the three different levels of social organization outlined by Fairclough (2001: 20-21): the level of the social situation in which the discourse occurs, that of the social institution and the general level of the society.

The public character of the stancetaking act is a prototypical feature of media discourse and of the process of mass communication involved. The public character of stance may be linked to Goffman's notion of identity and "face", i.e. taking a stance is a manner of construing the speaker's personal or social face, the projection of his/ her identity. The relationship between the expression of a stance and the construction of face is a bilateral one: as every act of stancetaking contributes to the constitution of the personal "face" and at the same time the desired or projected "face" may constrain the individual to adopt a certain mode of behaviour and the expression of a certain stance. In order to constitute and maintain the projected organizational identity (or "face"), media are compelled to tackle problems of interest for their audiences.

The interactional dimension of stance is less visible for written media texts. Though online media are becoming more interactional and tend to pay more attention to their publics and involve their readers in the production process of the news (Robinson 2011), one-sidedness still represents a general feature of media discourse (Fairclough 2001: 41), as the readers' feedback is difficult to reach the media producer especially in the case of print media. The interaction should not be understood only as an interaction with the readers but also with other instances of discourse. The stance expressed in the media may be a result of the stance expressed by other social actors, like authorities, experts, other media institutions a.s.o.

The indexical character of stance is due to its possibility to refer to "aspects of the broader sociocultural framework or physical context in which it occurs" (Englebretson 2007: 6). A similar observation is also made by Du Bois, who notes that every act of stancetaking employs sociocultural values (Du Bois 2007: 141). These sociocultural values

are at the core of the unavoidable subjectivity which pervades all discourse forms, even the media ones. As Ettema points out, news are a category of texts which have to be coherent "within the system of meanings and values that produced them" (Ettema 2011: 271). Media discourse is primarily concerned with the level of facts, of the real events which it must keep the public updated about. At the same time, media do not realize a mere presentation of the facts, but also offer a filter for their interpretation. They thus act at the level of society norms and are lead by the common presuppositions about what is good and bad. When issuing evaluations on specific aspects of the social environment, media voice the level of the deep beliefs and attitudes, the collective mental models of a society. Last but not least, the public stance or the evaluations expressed in the media may have direct consequences on the persons and situations subject to evaluation but also on the instance which issued it. For instance, public persons often need a positive coverage in the media while, in other cases the institution may be legally held responsible if the negative evaluations are not documented.

#### 4. CORPUS SELECTION AND METHODOLOGY

The paper aims to investigate the representation of military and diplomatic relations between Romania and the USA in the discourse of Romanian online media. The corpus consists of 63 news items and editorials which have been published in the online editions of two newspapers: 41 articles selected from the site of *Adevărul* ([www.adevarul.ro](http://www.adevarul.ro)) and 30 articles from the site of *Gândul* ([www.gandul.info](http://www.gandul.info)). The journal *Adevărul* has both a print and an online edition, while the other one appears only in electronic format. All articles forming the corpus were available to the public by free online access. The combined keywords used for search were *Romania* and *USA*. The search was restricted to the articles published during 2011. The articles were selected first according to their titles, then a second selection was made in terms of their content.

Only articles that discussed extensively topics regarding the relations between the two states were retained. The starting hypothesis was that expression of stance in newspaper articles varies according to the text type (news articles vs editorials) and to the topic discussed.

The research aims were: (1) to identify the topics which obtained the largest media coverage in regard to the diplomatic and military relationships between Romania and the USA; (2) to assess evaluation expressed in the media discourse by applying the evaluation parameters designed by Thompson and Hunston (2001). The authors highlight the fact that acts of evaluation are realized along four main parameters. The parameters identified are: the good – bad (positive – negative) parameter, which is considered the basic one, certainty, expectedness and importance (Thompson, Hudson 2001: 22-25).

In the first research stage, the articles were read and grouped into categories according to their content. In the second stage, the assessment of evaluation was realized for each category separately. Evaluation was assessed by identifying the most salient expressions of stance, according to their frequency and to the context in which they occurred. Although stance and evaluation can be expressed at all textual levels, the investigation was focused on the lexical items selected in the media discourse and on the discursive level.

## 5. BACKGROUND

Diplomatic relations between Romania and the USA have not ceased to exist during the Romanian communist regime, but they have changed and developed considerably after 1990. At present, the cooperation between the two states is not limited to the area of diplomacy but also encompasses fields like economy, law and justice, science and education or social care. It is officially acknowledged by the ‘strategic partnership’, an agreement established in 1997 when president William Clinton came to Romania on a diplomatic visit. The intense military cooperation with the USA is also characteristic for the foreign policy adopted by the Romanian post communist governments

especially since 2004, when Romania became a NATO member. Romania sustained the United States in the fight against terrorism and took part to military operations in Irak and Afghanistan. Another aspect of the defense cooperation programs of the last two decades implies the presence of US forces on Romanian ground: for example, a NATO base was opened in the town Mihail Kogalniceanu, in the south-eastern part of Romania, in 2007<sup>1</sup>.

The newspaper articles forming the present corpus were written and uploaded during 2011. This period was chosen especially because the events in the sphere of defense cooperation between Romania and the USA. The most important event consisted in Romania’s decision to take part in the AEGIS Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) System and to host ground-based components of the system on its territory. Romanian authorities announced that these components were going to be located in a US military base in Deveselu, a village in the region of Oltenia. This village was selected because it hosts a military airport which is no longer in use. The consultations between the Romanian and the American officials were carried on for about two years and the final agreement was signed in September 2011 in Washington, DC by Teodor Baconschi, the Romanian minister for foreign affairs, and Hillary Clinton, the American secretary of state. As a starting point for the research, it was assumed that such events would trigger various evaluations and acts of stancetaking from both authorities and journalists.

## 6. DISCUSSION

Four main topics regarding the relations between the two countries attracted extensive media coverage throughout the year 2011:

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<sup>1</sup> For more detailed information regarding the history of the diplomatic relations between Romania and the USA see, for example, <http://washington.mae.ro/node221>. A synthetic presentation of the programs developed in the area of defense cooperation between the USA and Romania can be found at <http://romania.usembassy.gov/policy/map/index.html>.

(1) Romania's decision to host AEGIS Ashore components on its ground;

(2) the diplomatic visit made by the Romanian president to Washington and his meeting with the US president Barack Obama;

(3) the intention expressed by the Romanian government to purchase F-16 military planes produced by the US company Lockheed Martin and

(4) the fact that Romanian citizens need US entry visa and the criteria they have to meet in order to obtain the visa.

A fifth category of news articles emerged, consisting mostly of declarations of US officials or news about activities of the US embassy in Romania. While acknowledging that such articles are equally important for stance research in the media, this paper is limited to the four major topics, for reasons of space.

The first two topics obtained significant coverage as they refer to events which took place during the year. The last two received less coverage as they were not totally new to the Romanian readers and not related to a specific event. News and comments regarding the purchase of military planes for the Romanian army date about three years ago and this decision has caused long debates in the Romanian media. The US entry visa represents another aspect of the diplomatic relations which the media depicts as 'unsolved' for the last twenty years. As a general characteristic, it is visible that the first two topics were described in news articles, mainly, in terms of symmetry of the relations, while the last two ones were perceived to reveal a marked asymmetry in the diplomatic relations between the two states.

**6.1 The AEGIS ashore system in Romania.** The Romanian government's decision to take part in the AEGIS project received coverage both in news reports and in opinion texts. The news articles on this topic were diverse: descriptive texts presenting the technical features of the AEGIS project, texts about the conditions of the final agreement and news articles presenting public interventions of the authorities on this topic. Not surprisingly, the event triggered many acts of stancetaking from various social actors.

According to Fairclough (2001: 42), the sources quoted by the media in news reporting „do not represent equally all social groupings in the population”. This was also the case in the analyzed corpus, as public officials were quoted in the media most often (in 25 articles) and hence their perspective was commonly adopted in the news reports, while experts and „common” people's voices were quoted only in two reports, one for each newspaper.

The evaluations of the project vary according to the text type and also to the voice quoted in the texts. Within these categories, evaluations are extremely coherent: positive evaluations were found mostly in the news discourse while negative or mixed evaluations were manifest in opinion articles and reportages. As a consequence of this pattern of distribution, it is visible that the project is positively evaluated in the authorities' discourse while lay people tend to position themselves as being rather skeptical about the outcome of the project or to make use of negative evaluations, refusing alignment with the official perspective.

The good-bad parameter is not explicitly applied in news articles and in the discourse of public officials, but the project is frequently evaluated in terms of its importance, which leads by implicature to a positive evaluation. The adjective „important” (important) has a high number of occurrences (23) in the evaluatory comments made by American and Romanian authorities, often in the superlative form:

(1.a) “[...] *am semnat astăzi acest acord important*”, a spus Hillary Clinton. “[...] we have signed today this important agreement”, Hillary Clinton said.) (Gândul, 13.09.2011).

(1.b) “*acest proiect strategic deosebit de important*” (this extremely important strategic project) (Gândul, 07.06.2011).

(1.c) “*în luna iunie, documentul extrem de important a fost parafat*” (in June, the extremely important document was signed) (Adevărul, 13.09.2011).

Another adjective used for evaluation is „esențial” (essential) which has 5

occurrences in the corpus. The following examples show that it is used for the same referent and its meaning is synonymous to „important”:

(2.a) *“un pas **esențial** în contracarea amenințărilor cu rachete balistice care reprezintă un risc din ce în ce mai crescut”* (an essential step in counteracting ballistic missiles threats which represent a growing risk) (Gândul, 13.09.2011).

(2.b) *“decizia amplasării scutului antirachetă este **esențială** în efortul combaterii pericolului terorismului”* (the decision of installing the ballistic missile shield is essential in the effort to fight against the danger of terrorism) (Gândul, 03.05.2011).

This positive evaluation of the project as being important is linked – sometimes explicitly, as in example (2.a) – to a negative evaluation regarding terrorist threats. In the examples above, the project is presented as a stage in a larger series of measures that are currently in progress. At the same time, the idea that the ground components may be used in case of war and the idea of a possible war are left in the background.

The expression of evaluation is more complex when the good-bad parameter is taken into account. The corpus was searched for the adjectives “bun” (“good”), “pozitiv” (“positive”) and “negativ” (“negative”). The first two adjectives did not occur in the news articles in regard to this topic. No occurrences of “rău” (“bad”) were found in the corpus, while the adjective “bun” (“good”) was used only in one case for an explicit reference to the AEGIS system:

(3) *“Primarul Beciu e mulțumit și convins că, odată cu venirea americanilor, multe lucruri **bune** se vor întâmpla în comună.”* (The mayor Beciu is satisfied and sure that, with the arrival of the Americans, many **good** things will happen in the village.) (Gândul, 07.05.2011).

Example (3) is an excerpt from a reportage in which evaluations of the project are elicited by the reporter from the local authorities and from the inhabitants of the village Deveselu.

The journalist asks them to express their opinions regarding the installment of an American military base in the village and also if they are happy about it or not. The adjective “bun” is used only by the mayor of Deveselu in order to express a positive evaluation, while the villagers seem more incredulous than him in front of the journalist. Moreover, the mayor’s utterance has a high degree of vagueness (“many good things will happen”). The adjective is not used for the description of the BMD system or of its effects, but in connection to the consequences that the opening of an American military base might have for the village.

The adjectives “pozitiv” and “negativ” have an interesting pattern of distribution in the corpus of news on this topic: 9, respectively 7 occurrences. However, this fact does not indicate that positive and negative evaluations are quantitatively close. First, the adjective „negativ” is mostly used with a verb in the negative form. Being thus denied, the adjective acquires a contextual different meaning, at least neutral if not positive and functions as a rhetorical device in the discourse addressed to the Romanian population by the authorities:

(4) *“[...] un sistem strict defensiv de interceptări care nu va avea niciun fel de efecte negative asupra populației”* (a strictly defensive system of interception which will have no kind of negative effects for the population). (Gândul, 04.05.2011).

Second, the adjective „pozitiv” is not used for describing the AEGIS system or its usefulness but regarding the possible consequences of Romania’s availability for cooperation in the military domain:

(5) *“acest stadiu nou [...] în relația politică dintre SUA și România va avea și urmări economice pozitive* (this new stage [...] in the political relationship between the USA and Romania will also have positive economical consequences). (Gândul, 15.09.2011).

News items are focused on the military event and sometimes on the technical features of the AEGIS system while editorials address

more the economic aspects instead of the military ones. The military and diplomatic dimension of the project is most often assessed according to the importance parameter, while the positive parameter is activated especially in regard to the economic benefits of the military partnership. This use of the two parameters can be observed in the following example:

(6) *În plan militar vorbim despre cel mai important eveniment din istoria recentă a României după aderarea la NATO. În plan economic vorbim despre o investiție consistentă [...] Faptul că România va face parte, la nivel operativ, din acest sistem de apărare antirachetă, din 2015, este un câștig politic greu de estimat. Un câștig politic care poate fi transformat [...] într-un avantaj economic deosebit în relația cu SUA.* (In the military field we are talking about the most important event in Romania's recent history after it has become a NATO member. In the economic field we are talking about a considerable investment [...] The fact that Romania will be, at the operational level, a part of this missile defense system, starting from 2015, is a political gain that is difficult to estimate. A political gain that can be transformed [...] in a remarkable economical vantage in the relationship with the USA.) (Gândul, 03.05.2011).

Although the terms “good” and “bad” are not explicitly used, the author selects many other terms, especially nouns belonging to the semantic field of economics, with a clear positive meaning: “investiție” (“investment”), “câștig” (“gain”), “avantaj” (“advantage”). This is a case of overwording and repetition, showing a particular interest from the part of the author with a singular aspect of the reality presented (Fairclough 2001: 96).

Lexical items expressing negative evaluation are more common in the discourse of common people or journalists who adopt thus the people's point of view. The following examples include the use of both the adjective “bun” and the adverb “bine” (“well”) but these terms still acquire a negative meaning given by the context:

(7.a) *"Scutul e bun, da' nu ține de foame"* (The shield is good, but not against the hunger) (Gândul, 07.05.2011)

(7.b) *"De ce să fim mulțumiți?" răspunde un bărbat [...] "De scut", spun. "Păi ce, ne dă să mâncăm?! Tot aia. Da' poa' să fie bine pentru copii, pentru nepoți. Aia da, e posibil."* (“Why should we be happy? a man answers. [...] “Because of the shield”, I say. “But what, does it give us to eat?! The same thing. But it might be well for the children, for the grandsons. That yes, that is possible.”) (Gândul, 07.05.2011).

(7.c) *"Bine, n-are cum să fie. Ce să aducă bun toate astea, armele-astea?" se întreabă, mai mult pentru sine, o bătrână [...].* (Well, that's impossible to be. What good should all these bring, all these weapons?" asks an old woman, mostly to herself [...]) (Gândul, 07.05.2011).

All the examples above belong to the same reportage as example (3). The use of the evaluations in this text, especially of “bun”, has the function to index the speakers' identity. The mayor of the village endorses the project and therefore expresses a point of view which is coherent with the perspective formulated by higher public authorities from the Romanian and the American government. Such an evaluation is contested by the inhabitants as they express a different stance, doubting that positive consequences of the project. Example (7.a) is a caption within the article and represents a quotation of one of the villagers. It consists of two clauses coordinated by an adversative conjunction (“da”/“but”), which realizes a shift of the topic of interest: the project is evaluated not in terms of its efficiency against terrorist threats but of its concrete benefits. In example (7.b), the evaluation as good is partially rejected and placed under the expectedness parameter, by the use of a modal verb and an adverb. In (7.c), the interviewee definitely rejects the evaluation of the project as “good” and this point of view is expressed not once but in two successive utterances. The second one is a rhetorical question, forcing an agreement from the hearer and, in this case, implicitly from the reader.

Negative evaluations are as well expressed in the discourse of other representatives of the society, but more complex lexical and rhetorical devices are employed in this case. The following two examples represent two similar negative evaluations of the AEGIS project, in terms of inefficiency. However, they differ in terms of the stance expressed: while example (8) expresses on the whole an epistemic stance, the following example is constructed through the frame of an affective stance.

When the project is negatively evaluated by a representant of public authorities, this becomes a news item *per se*. Extract (8) comes from the speech delivered by Jean Michel Boucheron, the vice-president of the NATO parliamentary meeting which was held in Bucharest, in October 2011. The speaker is trying to cast doubts upon the efficiency of the project or even to totally reject it. In order to achieve this goal, he chooses epistemic verbs (“a crede”/ “to believe”, “a ști”/ “to know”) and a generalization (“toți tehnicienii”/ “all the technicians”). He manages to present the project as inefficient without bringing concrete evidence to support his claim. Instead of it, there is a shift from a personal stance to a semi-institutional stance. At the beginning, the speaker emphasizes that it is a personal opinion, while, in the last utterance, he uses the plural, and thus places himself as the representative of a larger community (it is not clear whether he speaks on his behalf or as a representer of France or of the European countries participating to the meeting):

(8) “*Personal, cred că acest sistem de apărare nu servește la nimic în ceea ce privește securitatea. Toți tehnicienii știu că acest sistem lasă să treacă trei sferturi dintre rachete*” [...] “*Cred că sistemul antirachetă este ineficient împotriva unei amenințări care nu există. Prietenii noștri americani au încercat să ne atragă într-un «război al stelelor»*”, a spus Boucheron [...]. “(Myself, I believe that this defense system is good for nothing as regards the security. All technicians know that this system allows three quarters of the missiles to pass through it” [...] “I believe that the antimissile system is inefficient against a threat which does not exist. Our American friends

have tried to attract us in a ‘star war’”, Boucheron said.) (Adevărul, 09.10.2011).

The following editorial was written in regard to a tragic event, the death of two Romanian soldiers in Afghanistan, in May 2011. In the discussion of this topic, the journalist relates it to Romania’s hosting the AEGIS ground-based component. The negative stance expressed by the journalist has more than one target: he directs his criticism against the military cooperation with the USA, against Romania’s involvement in the war in Irak, against the Romanian government’s intention to buy military planes produced by an American company, against the US president Obama for the war against talibans and against the Romanian president for endorsing the military cooperation between the two countries. The text is parcelled by references to shield installment which function as a leitmotif, reminding the reader of the current issue. The expression “scutul-minune” (“the wonder-shield”) acquires an ironic and depreciative connotation as in the last part of the editorial it is used to form a rhetorical contrast to the second part of the utterance. The wordplay based on the repetition of the word “shield” acquires a tragic connotation. It is based on two different meanings of the word. The meaning in the first clause is the one which is frequent in contemporary media discourse regarding AEGIS: a simplified form for denominating the BMD System. In the second part, it refers to the expression used for the ancient Greek soldiers killed in the battle, thus emphasizing the character of a tragedy:

(9) “*Scutul – minune de la Deveselu nu-i va aduce înapoi pe caporalii Cătălin Ionel Marinescu și Constantin Lixandru. [...] Dar până să avem scutul – minune, soldații noștri ni se întorc pe scut.*” (“The wonder-shield in Deveselu will not bring corporals Cătălin Ionel Marinescu and Constantin Lixandru back. [...] But until we have the wonder-shield, our soldiers are coming back on the shield.”) (Adevărul, 10.05.2011)

Evaluations of topic I in terms of good versus bad are present in common people’s discourse. Authorities, which may be public



officials, experts or even journalists, evaluate Romania's participation to the project in terms of importance, efficiency and financial gains.

**6.2 Topic II: The Romanian president's visit in the the USA.** This event triggered different evaluations according to its chronology. Before the event, the media discussed it in terms of uncertainty while in the articles published after it, evaluations in terms of importance were explicitly stated. The main aspect playing a significant role in the stance taken by the Romanian media was the lack of detailed information about the Romanian president's scheduled meetings. The protocol for diplomatic visits requires public announcements made by the presidency in regard to the programme and the objectives of the visit. In this case, the meeting between the Romanian and the American president was announced to the journalists after it had taken place instead of before, hence the media perceived the timing as infringing the high diplomatic protocol. The news articles published before the event presented it by applying the certainty and expectedness parameters: it was evaluated as being of low certainty but of high expectedness. A typical lexical item used for evaluation is the verb "a aștepta" ("to wait") while other lexical items are selected from the field of uncertainty. Examples (11.a) and (11.b) include such items which can be interpreted in an ironic key:

(10) "*Agenda oficială a vizitei prezidențiale în Statele unite nu a fost deocamdată făcută publică. De asemenea, președinția nu a făcut nicio precizare privind o întrevedere a președintelui Băsescu cu omologul american, președintele Barack Obama, dar ea este de așteptat.*" ("[...] the presidency has made no announcement regarding a meeting of president Băsescu with his American counterpart, the president Barack Obama, but it should be expected.") (Adevărul, 10.09.2011).

(11.a) "*Marea întrebare: se întâlnește cu Obama?*" (The big question: is he meeting Obama?) (Gândul, 10.09.2011)

(11.b) "*Secretul lui Băsescu. De ce nu a spus nimic președintele despre vizita în SUA*" (Băsescu's secret. Why the president told

nothing about the visit to the USA) (headline, Adevărul, 14.09.2011).

Example (10) shows a subtle form of manipulation of evaluatory parameters in news discourse. A piece of information which is classified as low on the certainty scale is not likely to form the core of a news article. In order to avoid this result, the speaker (in this case, an official person) attempts a repositioning of the discussed subject on the expectedness scale, by using the conjunction "but" as a logical connector and thus offering a new and contrasting interpretation of the future events.

After the event, the importance parameter was implicitly activated the news discourse, especially by the enumeration of the president's meetings with US officials. Direct evaluations of the visit as important are sometimes also realized by the use of adjectives like "interesant" ("interesting"): "*Un moment interesant al vizitei a fost întâlnirea cu David Petraeus [...] (another interesting moment of the visit was the meeting with David Petraeus)*" (Adevărul, 13.09.2011). Less frequent are explicit evaluations by applying the good-bad parameter: "*Primirea președintelui Băsescu de către Barack Obama la Casa Albă nu poate fi decât o veste bună.*" ("The fact that president Băsescu was received by Barack Obama at the White House can only be good news") (Adevărul, 14.09.2011).

**6.3 Topics evaluated in terms of asymmetry.** Topics III and IV (the purchase of F-16 military planes and the desired abrogation of the US entry visa required to Romanian citizens received a similar coverage in terms of negative evaluations. The presentation of both topics in the media articles from the corpus seems to infringe the journalistic rules regarding the news value of an event. More precisely, no events connected to these subjects occurred during the period analyzed. However, the articles were triggered by the allegations of public officials regarding, in the first case, the necessity of purchasing military planes for the army and, in the second case, the possibility that the criteria for obtaining the US entry visa might be changed.

This contrasts with the idea that the news articles should report events as “categorical truths – facts – without intermediate modalities” (Fairclough 2001: 107) as articles on both topics included various expressions of modality.

Topic III is more discussed in the news than in opinion texts as it no longer represents totally new information. It is mentioned as a side comment in editorials, for instance, as an additional argument in a text whose main idea is that the partnership with the United States has no positive consequences for Romania (Adevărul, 24.03.2011). The main parameter applied is certainty: actually, the Romanian government had not taken a final decision about the purchase at that time. The news articles involve American and Romanian officials speaking but no official point of view representing the Romanian government. The high degree of uncertainty is realized by the use of modality markers. The expressions of modality are associated with indefinite temporal constructions:

(12.a) “*Este o negociere foarte complicată pentru că la un moment dat va fi nevoie de anumite aranjamente de ordin financiar.*” (It is a very complicated negotiation because at a certain moment some financial arrangements will be needed) (Gândul, 02.06.2011).

(12.b) “*România ar putea achiziționa, până la urmă, avioane F-16 noi [...]*” (Romania might purchase, in the end, new F-16 planes [...]); “*Gabriel Oprea speră ca România să poată cumpăra încet, dar sigur avioane F-16*” (Gabriel Oprea hopes that Romania may be able to buy slowly but surely F-16 planes” (Gândul, 26.11.2011).

Both examples include markers of expressive modality, the position of the speaker/ writer “with respect to the truth or the probability of a representation of reality” (Fairclough 2001: 105). Example (12.a) is a fragment of a declaration made by the US ambassador while example (12.b) refers to declarations of the Romanian minister for defense. Both speakers discuss this topic in terms of low certainty. Nevertheless, the public discussion is not limited to the certainty

parameter, to the question whether the government will buy US military planes or not, since both possibilities attract negative evaluations. The lack of military planes is depicted by the use of adjectives with a marked negative meaning: “critic” (“critical”) and “dramatic”:

(13.a) “*Se prefigurează o situație critică.*” (a critical situation is foreseen) (Gândul, 15.12.2011).

(13.b) “*[...] consecințe dramatice pentru imaginea și credibilitatea României în cadrul NATO*” (dramatic consequences for Romania’s image and credibility within NATO) (Gândul, 15.12.2011).

The decision to acquire F-16 planes is likewise rejected because the planes are not new. The following example comes from an editorial where it represents an argument for the main idea, that Romania is deceived by the strategic partnership with the United States:

(14) “*niște avioane F-16 second-hand care au făcut războiul din Vietnam*” (some second-hand F-16 planes that have taken part to the Vietnam war) (Adevărul, 10.05.2011).

The negative evaluation, in this example, is based on the writer’s assumption of the existence of a set of shared values with the readers. Two expressions attract the attention because their being negatively value-laden: the categorization “second-hand” and the reference to the Vietnam war which might embed an allusion to negative scenarios of war, conquest and politics of domination.

The fourth topic discussed in the corpus regards the US entry visa. More precisely, articles on this theme were the result of public declarations made by Romanian and American officials regarding a possible change of the criteria for receiving the visa. The theme attracted uniform coverage in the media, which did not explicitly involve the positive – negative parameter. The topic is instead evaluated in terms of a low degree of expectedness and high uncertainty regarding a solution, which consequently leads to a negative evaluations. A frequent lexical item

used when discussing it is “problemă” (“problem”) but equally interesting are the attributes associated with it:

(15.a) *”Una dintre principalele probleme aflate în suspensie pe agenda bilaterală româno – americană”* (One of the main problems pending on the bilateral Romanian – American agenda) (Gândul, 10.09.2011)

(15.b) *”Problema vizelor, o restanță istorică”* (The visa problem, a historical debt) (Gândul, 10.09.2011).

(15.c) *”Subiectul cel mai arzător pentru România în relația cu America [...]”* (the most ardent theme for Romania in its relationship to America) (Adevărul, 10.09.2011).

Example (15.b) is a caption which is interesting because of its ambiguity: it does not clearly indicate who is responsible for the “debt” or whose failure it was and therefore it manages to extend a negative stance towards both states involved. In other articles, the visa topic is brought into the readers’ attention in a specific form, which involves an allusion to a cultural script, that of the USA as a dreamland for the persons running away from Romania during the communist regime, in search for a better life:

(16) *”Noul sediu al Ambasadei Americii în România, care se întinde pe o suprafață de 4,5 hectare, pare o adevărată fortăreață ”îmbrăcată” în spații verzi. Granit, marmură, betoane și mult fier, toate dispuse într-un cadru eco. [...] (The new location of the US Embassy in Romania, which extends on an area of 4.5 hectares, seems a real „fortress” dressed up in green. Granite, marble, concrete and a lot of iron, all disposed in an eco environment.)*

*[...] Decenii la rând, pentru mii de români drumul către „țara tuturor posibilităților” a început pe strada Batiștei [...] De acum, cei care visează să se mute peste Ocean trebuie să meargă în zona Băneasa, pe Bulevardul Liviu Librescu nr.4-6.”* (Adevărul, *SUA deschid porțile ambasadei ecologice*, 07.09.2011) (Decades running, for thousands of Romanians the road to „the land of all opportunities” has started on Batiștei Street. [...] From now on, those who are dreaming to move out across the Ocean have to go to the Băneasa area, on Liviu

Librescu Bulevard, no. 4-6.) (Adevărul, 07.09.2011).

The selection of the lexical item “fortress” for the description of the US embassy is not casual and it represents the American space as one which is forbidden or extremely difficult to access to the Romanian citizens. The connotations of the noun are highlighted by the enumeration of the materials the building is made of, emphasizing the idea of coldness and distance.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

The relations between Romania and the USA seem to attract positive evaluations in the news, especially in the discourse of the public authorities, and more negative evaluations in editorials and reports, where personal opinions are introduced. News reports are not completely free of bias either, but evaluation is more present in the headlines than in the text of the article. The evaluations made by journalists in the news texts are more likely to be limited to certain lexical items, while they are more complex in opinion texts and reportages, involving the discursive level and the textual organization.

The issues of contemporary military cooperation attract the most positive evaluations in the media discourse, especially in terms of its importance. The good – bad parameter tends to be avoided, or not explicitly stated, when it refers to delicate or controversial subjects. The most controversial topics (in this corpus, the purchase of second-hand planes or the difficulty of obtaining a visa for the United States) are assessed in terms of certainty and/or expectedness.

Positive and negative evaluations of the Romanian – American relations can be ultimately reduced to the representation of power, solidarity and status of the two countries, to the perception of the relations as being balanced or not. A clash is perceived by the media – and, probably, also by their public – between two major sorts of discursive and cultural frames: cooperation versus dominance or, in other terms, symmetrical versus asymmetrical relations. The events connected

to the dimension of cooperation create a specific horizon of expectations, while the issues represented as unsolved or as Romania's asymmetrical status break this frame.

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## **‘BEHOLD ECCO’: USING THE ‘EDUCATIONAL CULTURAL CONVERGENCE’ MODEL IN INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION**

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***Abstract:** Following the model of “educational cultural convergence” (ECCO) created for use by teachers in classrooms (Kurt & McKeown, 2012), the authors examine current data related to issues of social inclusion within schools, and demonstrate the ECCO model as a workable tool for intercultural dialogue. ECCO (Diboll & McKeown, 2011a; 2011b; 2011c) is intended as a way to address cultural anxiety by a practical application of intercultural competence. By the use of the four questions used in ECCO, both students and teachers are encouraged to accept, to respect, to find mutual benefit, and thereby avoid the use of cultural clichés. ECCO has the potential to transgress the current cultural reality and create a viable new one. Research highlights the need for teachers to assess existing “cultural gaps” in classrooms between learner and learner, and between teacher and learner (Gabb, 2006; Turner, 2009; Montgomery, 2010). Cultural gaps exist more and more through informal education, which students experience via social networking, cultural organizations, and the media (UNESCO, 2010). Use of the ECCO model acknowledges these multiple learning spaces available through a hidden curriculum, and is based on the premise that the transmission of local and indigenous knowledge and values are valuable sources of mutual cultural learning (Friere, 2002; Martins-Shannon & White, 2008). Using sources including 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) data, and the Entreculturas model of intercultural education (Martins, 2008), the authors make the case that the road to social inclusion in schools may be enhanced by use of ECCO, and that PISA benchmark countries address issues of equity and inclusion.*

***Keywords:** educational cultural convergence, social inclusion, entreculturas, intercultural competency, cultural gaps.*

### **1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

Within today’s changing societies teachers must meet the needs of a culturally diverse student body. Beyond cultural awareness, or what may be generally termed “tolerance”, teachers more and more need to identify cultural implications and adapt pedagogical approaches to meet students’ cultural and academic needs (Gabb, 2006; Turner, 2009; Montgomery, 2010). To do so will create culturally responsive classrooms and promote success for all students (Cartledge & Kourea, 2008). The ECCO model (Kurt & McKeown, 2012) is intended to assist classroom teachers to move toward intercultural competency and to build cultural dialogue within the classroom

environment. The four questions of ECCO are a key to opening such a dialogue.

Gay (2000) defines culturally responsive teaching as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; it teaches to and through the strengths of these students. Gay also describes culturally responsive teaching as having these characteristics.

- It acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students’ dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning and as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum.

- It builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived sociocultural realities.

- It uses a wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles.

- It teaches students to know and praise their own and each others' cultural heritages.

- It incorporates multicultural information, resources, and materials in all the subjects and skills routinely taught in schools (29).

It is vital for teachers to consider cultural characteristics that may influence a child's learning style (Hammond, Dupoux & Ingalis, 2004). Teaching that addresses students' cultural backgrounds affects not only the learning process, but also the student's self-efficacy, that is, the student's belief in his or her ability to achieve a specified goal (Bandura, 1997). In many OECD countries, immigrant students have more restricted access to quality education, leave school earlier, and have lower academic achievement than their peers. This makes improving the education of immigrant students a priority. ECCO is thus a piece of a bigger intercultural puzzle and part of a demographic shift (discussed later) and the concurrent adaptations to these contemporary changes. Little work to date has been carried out internationally to examine the education outcomes of this population and explore education interventions to improve their performance. We believe that ECCO can be a pathway to intercultural competency that teachers can use immediately. ECCO will make a marked difference practically, efficiently, and without systemic change.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The ECCO model derives from four areas: Sociolinguistics and Communication Theory; educational reform developments; the "entreculturas" model; and, Cross-cultural Communication. Howard Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory ("CAT"; 1978, 1991) provides a starting point for ECCO (Diboll & McKeown, 2011a;

2011c). Educational reform literature is taken particularly from reports and data associated with the Organization for Economic and Cooperative Development (OECD, 2005; Çinoğlu, 2009), with issues related to the changing demographics of teachers and learners globally, and with data compiled from the Program of International Student Assessment – PISA (OECD, 2010a; PISA, 2012).

**2.1 Educational reform – the core engine of change.** Given this century's democratization of knowledge, there is a concurrent change in teaching via information liberation based on access to vast amounts of available information. Globally, a variety of e-tools and social media provide multi-modal learning experiences, and this increased participatory access to knowledge has made learning more relevant to learners and created an expanding schoolhouse where informal learning may have an equal or greater impact than traditionally found within the formal schoolhouse. Further, teaching is altering radically (OECD, 2005). Knowledge and information are keys to social inclusion and productivity and a key resource of economic growth (OECD, 2011). The teacher today is more and more considered as a co-learner, a creator of knowledge, and as a change agent (OECD, 2010c)

**2.2 Linguistic convergence.** Linguistic convergence (Giles & Smith, 1979) is a key factor in effective and positive cross-cultural communication. Sociolinguist Howard Giles points out that "convergent communicative acts reduce interpersonal differences" creating an atmosphere conducive to co-operation across cultures and language groups, while "divergent" acts in which "speakers accentuate speech and non-verbal differences", can be used as a defensive mechanism to reinforce an "us and them" dichotomy that inhibits effective communication (1991:7-9). The emphasis on communication is significant when we consider that classroom teachers are on the front-line for changing attitudes, using positive models and creating activities for students that demonstrate intercultural dialogue in the most ordinary of classroom lessons and circumstances.

**2.3 The “entreculturas” model for intercultural education.** The “entreculturas” working model of intercultural education is based on 17 years of experience in Portugal with the Entreculturas Project. In her analysis of the contributions of the project to enhance multiculturalism, Martins (2008) describes a framework for interventions in Portuguese schools. The ‘four pillars’ approach of the 1996 UNESCO report (Delores, 1996) *Learning: The Treasure Within* (“learning to be, learning to do, learning to live together, learning to know”) became part of the common theoretical basis which stressed the nature of multicultural education as a goal for democratic society grounded in a human rights’ philosophy. It reinforced the belief in the value of an equitable education for all learners and as training as a means to overcome social inequities. The Project unearthed many of the same findings that OECD data has confirmed regarding the utility and urgency of educating students from immigrant backgrounds.

However, diverging from the “entreculturas” model, the ECCO model focusses on the *individual* teacher’s capacity to deal with heterogeneity and diversity, not with systemic change. Martins points out (2008:205) that a change of values and perspectives at the individual or collective level is not teachable in a traditional sense and that the process takes time. We entirely support this view and agree that it takes time to build a common agenda, but that the work needs to begin forthwith. The use of the ECCO model with the four questions is a highly appropriate tool for action in the art of learning to live together.

**2.4 Cultural convergence.** Giles and Smith (1979) cite a number of factors that influence the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication: “similarity attraction”, “the more similar are attitudes and beliefs are to certain others, the more likely it is we will be attracted to them” (Giles & Smith, 1979:47); the “social exchange” process, “the rewards attending a convergent act, that is an increase in attraction or approval” (Giles & Smith, 1979:48); “causal attribution”, where “we interpret other people’s behaviour, and

evaluate persons in themselves, in terms of the motivations and intentions that we attribute as the cause of their behavior” (Giles & Smith, 1979:50); “intergroup distinctiveness”, wherein members of different groups, when they are in contact “compare themselves on dimensions that are important to them” (Giles & Smith, 1979:52). Building positive intercultural relations and effective communication depends on aligning these factors to achieve “optimal convergence” leading to positive inter-evaluation (Giles & Smith, 1979:53-4).

Wenger (1998) considers communities of practice to be groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. In this sense, classrooms are cross-cultural communities of practice, in each of which a unique social meaning is constructed in the interactions between students and teacher, and, perhaps more significantly, between the learners themselves.

### 3. THE ECCO MODEL

The ECCO model is based on an assumption that intercultural citizenship gives symbolic power, which proceeds political power, and further, that intercultural competence is a way to address cultural anxiety. The ECCO model directly addresses the four major themes of cultural rapprochement:

- (i) promoting reciprocal knowledge of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity”;
- (ii) building a framework for commonly shared values;
- (iii) the building of intercultural competencies; and,
- (iv) fostering dialogue for sustainable development (UNESCO, 2010b).

“Cultural Rapprochement” is referential to the 2010 *International Year of the Rapprochement of Cultures* (UNESCO, 2010a) celebrated world-wide through the activities of the United Nations.

Educational Cultural Convergence (ECCO) can be summarized as a multi-dimensional process “emphasizing the teacher’s role in facilitating optimal cultural convergence

within the community of learning practice involving both 'wider society' linguistic, cultural and social factors and the evolving cultural context that is specific to each learning encounter or each specific community of learners" (McKeown & Diboll, 2011c: 47). Cultural diversity is intended quite simply as what is to be shared in order to be a member of the culture, and intercultural dialogue is the process of exposure to other-ness.

The impetus for an ECCO model originates from a number of sources. The first as indicated in a previous study (Diboll & McKeown, 2011b) is a response to educators who wanted to move a cultural dialogue forward in the classroom environment (see EUCU Network, 2011). The second is based on the authors' combined professional experience and collegial interactions with educators in state-sector K-12 schools, and educational reform initiatives, in Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Turkey, Scotland and Canada. The third is to be found in the *Charter of Fundamental Human Rights of the European Union* (2007/C 303/01) adopted by EU Member States in 2007, wherein the proposition that "the peoples of Europe are resolved to share a peaceful future based on common values" is definitively stated.

The EU is concerned with contributing "to the preservation and to the development of these common values while respecting the diversity of cultures and traditions" (EU *Charter*: Preamble 1). *The Charter* elucidates further, "conscious of its spiritual and moral heritage, the European Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law" and "places the individual at the heart of its activities, by establishing the citizenship of the Union and by creating an area of freedom, security and justice" (*Charter*: Preamble 1).

Various EU enterprises are currently dedicated to fostering a climate of intercultural dialogue, and with more organizations being established. The European Union Children's University (EUCU.net, 2011) initiative is one such example of the way in which EU States are striving to offer an inclusive environment.

The European Society for Transcultural and Interdisciplinary Dialogue (ESTIDIA) was established "to provide an easily available discussion and meeting forum for researchers and practitioners interested in transgressing traditional disciplinary and geographical boundaries in order to explore the interrelatedness and interdependence of languages and cultures in various social environments or communities" (ESTIDIA, 2012). Another example is Human Rights Education Associates (HREA, 2012a), an international non-governmental organization that supports human rights learning, the development of educational materials and programming, and community-building through on-line technologies. HREA is dedicated to quality education and training to promote understanding, attitudes and actions to protect human rights, and to foster the development of peaceable, free and just communities (HREA, 2012b). However, what we deemed as still necessary and currently lacking, was a tool for classroom teachers to use toward the same end.

#### **4. THE ECCO MODEL: NOW ADD FOUR QUESTIONS**

To the ECCO model, the authors now add four questions adapted from the work of Byron Katie (2012) to make the model more directly and immediately applicable to the classroom environment. A teacher can pose the questions, either alone or with colleagues, or with students, to clarify cultural concepts, clichés, or to expose existing stereotypes. The questions put the model into practical action.

The questions are as follows:

1. Is my perception of this cultural situation true?

The teacher can investigate further a particular situation, time, and location, argument, or people or personnel and seek reasons for the reactions they experience.

2. Can I absolutely be certain that my perceptions, thoughts or emotions are true in this specific situation?

In this particular situation, we begin to identify a cultural gap by questioning further in what ways you would want the other person



to change, or do something differently.

3. How do I react when I believe these cultural assumptions? What happens to me personally? How can I explain this situation to myself... or to someone else?

In this situation, you explore possible advice you could offer to yourself or to the learner. A further extension is to determine what the learner would need to do in order to accommodate *your* needs. When you find a cultural gap, you are on the road to creating empathy with the learner and identifying your own stereotypes.

4. Who would I be without this perception or with a different perception or a different attitude about this cultural situation?

Here the learner may ponder on what it is that they don't want to experience again. The learner re-directs that same thought around to the self and explores the other point of view, or the opposite point of view. This sort of turnaround can be very powerful as there is a shift that occurs from cultural disempowerment to empowerment, from ignorance to co-created knowledge. It's no longer necessary to wait for people or situations to change in order to experience added cultural interaction. ECCO is a direct way to orchestrate the process.

Using these four questions helps to promote "co-intentional" education (Freire, 2002), a process wherein

...teachers and students, co-intent on reality, are both subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as it permanent co-creators. In this way, the presence of the oppressed in the struggle for liberation will be what it should be: not pseudo-participation, but committed involvement (Freire, 2002:69).

Civility, or what is often dubbed "political correctness", masks differences, and is not a practice that enables discourse across diversity. It is possible to keep up appearances of being cultivated and sensitive with a cosmopolitan veneer. However, this civility is not full engagement and serves to maintain

and reinforce conventional inequalities and cultural clichés or stereotypes, and limits understanding to levels of tolerance. The ECCO model is meant to engage both teacher and learner in co-intentional learning.

## **5. PISA (THE PROGRAMME OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT)**

PISA assesses the extent to which students near the end of compulsory education (at about 15 years of age) have acquired some of the knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in society (OECD, 2007a: 16). It seeks to assess not merely whether students can reproduce what they have learned, but also how well they can apply their knowledge in a variety of contexts (16). PISA results have a high degree of validity and reliability, and can significantly improve understanding of the outcomes of education across developed and developing countries. Begun in 2000, PISA measures student competencies in reading, mathematics, and science in three-year cycles. PISA also collects student, family, and institutional factor information that helps to explain differences in performance through questionnaires completed by students, families, and school principals. The student questionnaire focuses on their backgrounds, learning habits, and attitudes towards math, science, and literacy. The principals' questionnaire is used to collect information on demographic characteristics of students and characteristics of the learning environments at schools. A questionnaire for parents is used to demonstrate the relationship between student achievement and family factors.

PISA also examines equality in learning outcomes, including equity in the distribution of learning resources. Perhaps most importantly, it looks at equity in the distribution of learning opportunities by analysing the impact of the family and the socio-economic backgrounds of students and schools on learning outcomes. This analysis is crucial as immigrant populations in OECD countries have grown significantly in recent decades. Today, students from immigrant backgrounds comprise 10 to 20% of the

student population in many OECD countries. From 1990 and 2000, the number of people living outside their country of birth almost doubled worldwide to 175 million (OECD, 2008). Some countries observed changes of more than 5% growth in their student immigrant population in the period from 2000 to 2009 (OECD, 2008).

PISA offers a window to peer into school systems that effectively engage the potential of students from immigrant backgrounds and offers a dynamic perspective by assessing the performance of students from immigrant backgrounds. In this regard, PISA distinguishes between three types of student immigrant status: i) native students who were born in the country of PISA assessment, or who had at least one parent born in the country; ii) second-generation students who were born in the country of assessment but whose parents are foreign-born; and, iii) first-generation students are foreign-born and whose parents are also foreign-born.

The growing proportion of immigrant students poses challenges within education, as larger and larger immigrant student populations increase the diversity of the student body. Schools need to engage with this diversity to secure high-quality instruction for all students. OECD data reveals that immigrant students, on average, have weaker education outcomes at all levels of education. They often have more restricted access to quality education; are less likely to participate in pre-primary education; more prone to drop out before completing upper secondary; more apt to have lower academic scores; and more likely to attend schools with peers from less advantaged backgrounds (OECD, 2010e). With this shift in demographics, teaching immigrant students is becoming an important part of the reality facing teachers.

However, dealing with diversity is a challenge for educators and schools. Teachers often do not feel qualified or sufficiently supported to teach students from multi-cultural or bilingual backgrounds. Despite the expansion of education over recent decades, inequalities in educational outcomes and in educational and social mobility persist in many countries (OECD, 2010c; 2010d; 2010e). The

long-term social and financial costs of educational inequalities can be high. Those students without the competencies to participate fully in society may not be able to realise their potential and, as a result, are likely to generate higher costs for health, income support, child welfare and security (Levin, 2009; Belfield and Levin, 2007). Given that education is a powerful determining factor of life chances, equity in education can improve economic and social outcomes: education can either reinforce economic advantages across generations, or help improve social and economic mobility from one generation to another (OECD, 2010e; OECD, 2008).

Such disadvantages, along with cultural and ethnic differences, can create divisions and inequities between a host society and newcomers. These problems require consideration of how immigrants can be integrated into host societies in ways that are acceptable to both the immigrants and the populations in the receiving countries. Education is key to integrating immigrants into society and the use of the ECCO model can facilitate in the transmission of the norms and values that provide a basis for social cohesion.

In order to close the achievement gap, teachers need to establish a positive school and classroom climate that treats diversity as a resource rather than an obstacle for successful teaching and learning. Support for immigrant students should be provided not only in specialised courses but in an integrated way across the curriculum and throughout all-school and after-school activities.

As indicated in the ECCO model, parental and community involvement can influence students in the classroom as well as students' learning environments at home. The use of sensitive, relevant curriculum materials can have a positive impact on this reciprocal development. Teachers have immediate access to teaching materials through the Council of Europe, in particular, from the Human Rights and Service-Learning: *Lesson Plans and Projects* (HREA, 2007) for materials that could be used to augment stand-alone lessons or be used to focus on aspects of intercultural competency within a more integrated curricular approach.

## 6. DISCUSSION

The OECD review, *Closing the Gap for Immigrant Students: Policies, Practice and Performance* (OECD, 2010), highlights the diversity of immigrant populations in OECD countries and the challenges for education. The authors wholeheartedly agree with the findings of this report: “to effectively address the needs of immigrant students is not a ‘one size fits all’ kind of development”. A localized study also demonstrates the validity of a contextualized approach (Diboll & McKeown, 2011c). ECCO can assist classroom teachers to assess existing cultural gaps and to open intercultural dialogue from which both native and immigrant students could benefit. ECCO, however, is not a curriculum for intercultural teaching but is rather intended to build the intercultural capacity of teachers. We believe that ECCO has the potential to raising awareness of rights and responsibilities of immigrant children and could provide much needed feedback for further research in this area.

ECCO conceptually is based on an extended linguistic convergence into cultural convergence. In this way, the use of ECCO can strengthen language support in the classroom through a validation of the mother tongue proficiency. Teachers can value and validate mother tongue proficiency in academic language learning *along with* the convergence of language and content learning. ECCO is an expedient pathway for teachers to strengthen a pedagogical approach intended to accommodate diverse student needs.

We are currently examining the efficiency of the ECCO model in Turkish schools and look forward to sharing those results in the near future, and to hearing from other educators. In the meantime, we look for educators teaching in multi-cultural classrooms who may want to try putting the ECCO model into practice using the four questions. We would encourage educators to see for themselves the effect that the ECCO model may have on the quality of discussion, the cultural gaps exposed, the safe space created for a deconstruction of cultural

stereotypes, and the relief that the teacher will feel from cultural anxiety.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

We have seen is that the underlying challenge to manage cultural dialogue is for teachers to be able to understand and value the complexity of plurality and cultural identities. Of course, the awareness of one’s own assumptions is a first step to positively interact and learn from others. The four questions allows space for this questioning, either alone or with other learners, and, in this process, lies one of the benefits of the use of the ECCO model. Other benefits of the ECCO model are described in a previous study (Diboll & McKeown, 2011b). These benefits can be summarized as follows: increased ability to participate with flexible communicative skills between teacher and learners from different backgrounds; a more adaptive attitude in the context of cultural diversity; and, a sense of identity in which one can hold multiple cultural identities, simultaneously and reflectively.

In conclusion, current available data suggests that in countries that performed well in PISA, it is the primary responsibility of schools and teachers to engage constructively with the diversity of student interests, capacities and socio-economic contexts. In fact, many high-performing OECD countries have already developed support systems to foster the motivation of *all* students to become independent and lifelong learners. These countries tend to train teachers to be better at diagnosing learning difficulties so that they can be addressed through personalised instruction methods. They also help individual teachers to become aware of specific weaknesses in their own practices, which often means not just creating awareness of what they do, but also changing the underlying mindset. ECCO can be a part of this change toolkit by providing teachers with a pathway to address cultural anxiety and by encouraging teachers to meet the needs of the diverse learners in their care.

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## COMMUNICATION AMONG MEDITERRANEAN YOUNG PEOPLE: NEW AND OLD TECHNOLOGIES TO BUILD A POST-MODERN IDENTITY

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**Abstract:** *Socialization in post-modern society relies primarily on the individual and his potential of interaction and expresses itself through new forms of social relations that tend to go towards the outsider, meant as other than himself. Individualization brings traditional educational agencies to undergo changes: family and school are no longer the same and are no longer sufficient and this makes it difficult for each subject, particularly when young, to implement an identity project. However, every society, in every historical period, offers to contemporaries something on which they continue to feel unique (recognizing themselves as individuals) and, at the same time, in accordance with others (identify themselves as part of a group). Social networks are a new form of socialization that is configured as a socializing practice that utilizes networks to extend acquaintances and friendships. Social bonds and relationships, in doing so, are always potentially more extensible.*

*In order to support this thesis, we present the results of two researches: a quantitative analysis on an ad-hoc questionnaire compiled by 250 high school and University students, who live in Veneto (a region sited in the North of Italy) on their communicative preferences; and a quali-quantitative research which investigates the contents of “ MeYouMe-Mediterranean Youth Meeting” Facebook posts sent by young people, that discuss and share the social policies of the Mediterranean Countries. Both the studies had the aim to investigate the desires and reasons for encountering among groups of young people from different cultures.*

*Results will evidence the communicative skills of young people and how they succeed (or fail) in building a path of socialization in which various social networks, either primary or secondary, interweave and mediate what seems distant and incomprehensible.*

**Keywords:** *socialization, social networks, flexible society.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

**1.1 What is friendship?** The main relationships that humans exchange can be divided into primary and secondary. The first are those arising from parental bonds and given by blood ties, the latter are based on friendship networks built on trust. Many different forms of networks exists, influencing identity and behavior. With the advent of modern technologies human relationships cannot only take place "in real life" but are also expanded by widening or building new "distant" relationships.

In networks, friendship is a real search for sociality in a world that does not find any

correspondence with face to face relationships, so much so that it is possible to speak of 'sociality overload'. In social network many «friendship» requests are received by both unknown and known persons, and often no selection is made as being sought represents a pleasure. Many users, moreover, desire a large number of contacts, to be «connected to all», although face to face and network friendship have the same rules and it is not possible to maintain a close relationship with more than 5 people<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Dubar's law, the maximum number of friends an individual can manage is 148. But usually intimacy cannot be shared with more than 5 persons.

Friendship is the recognition of the other implying the responsibility of a choice and stands as bond desired by those experiencing a feeling and a favorable predisposition towards the other person (Nedelman, 1991). A friend is a mirror where each of us is reflected and friendship itself is a form of social bonding, and interdependent relationship involving trust, sincerity, caring, worth and the ability to get into someone else's shoes. The friend must be chosen outside of any constraint and instrumental evaluation because friendship, despite being an intense feeling, is fragile:

the intensity is determined by affection, by getting involved and by investing in terms of mutual recognition, all high-risk situations because often people do not know how to respond to others' changes or to recognize their own. The rules of the game can change ' without participants realizing it (Rebughini, Ghisleni, 2006:29).

Friendship is, in fact, a specific form of social bonding, a special interpersonal relationship that implies some features as constants: sincerity, trust and ability to get into someone else's shoes. Having friends means sharing impressions, moods, confidences and creative activities. It is a relationship where the symbolic exchange of narratives and actions give voice to a number of personality characteristics which otherwise would find no other social place where to manifest (Ghisleni, Rebughini, 2006:7).

The friendly sentiment is also a privileged observatory to describe the most general character of society. Simmel (1983) was interested in relationships that take place in the private and intimate sphere, and his interest in friendship dealt with social and emotional relationships subjected to the urban society transformations, considered a privileged space for subjectivity. The process of individualization, that characterizes modernity,

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The number of friends to keep in touch with is about 15 and trusted acquaintances are threefold. The dimension of sociality acquires the meaning of individual ability and thus becomes a measure of the position the individual occupies in the context in which he lives (Franks Schianchi, 201:169).

benefits of a specialization in friendships: with friends you share, mainly, specific interests (culture, sport, hobbies). The friendly bond is symmetric and intimate, based on trust and perceived and experienced in terms of a space where to express the self.

**1.2 Network friendship.** Narrating, recounting, describing themselves, creates relationships that are implemented between people and allow the rise of bonds representing the world of socialization. The social structure is implemented, mainly, by conversations and, as Collins (1980) states, sociology is firstly meant to explain the discourses among humans. A way to analyze the institutions is to consider the different types of conversation taking place in various social situations, each defined by all conversations that previously took place.

People engaging in conversations, of any kind, considered they 'friends' and chatting can be the result of conversational exchanges where individuals recognize friendship bonds showing sides of the self deemed positive. The rituals involved in "social chatting" are mutually rewarding exchanges that establish a light and pleasant bond, though weak. This weakness is due to the fact that the communication is symmetric as it takes into account exclusively meta-communication. Networks friendly relationship can exist next to more challenging intimate relationships because they don't excessive obligations. Online friendship request simply represents a declaration of mutual recognition

In face-to-face communications the identity remains fairly stable, but the same does not happen in social networks or, at least, this is not the rule since what an individual is, and how it appears to the perception of others, depends on information he is willing or intend to provide. This opportunity to choose which mask to wear in network communicative interaction makes it possible for the individual to play with his/her own identity and appearance. Self presentation and the identification by other users are expressed with the progress of the dialogue and are not established instantly as in face-to-face communication. This feature gives individuals the opportunity to hide in anonymity and to



select only those information related to their individual identity, social and physical, that they want to disclose, choosing among those available in real life. The tendency is, thus, to show a better self subjected to a “virtual embellishment” (Roversi, 2001: 97).

The opportunity offered by social networks to exchange and share experiences, enables a sociality within the virtual community that, generally, has no interest in a wider social dimension. Anyone who decides to be visible can enjoy a momentary popularity and live the illusion of being a protagonist, which allows him/her to overcome everyday life frustration. If once private life was irrelevant, in networks now it is shown because it represents us, it says who we are, and makes us worth interest. The view/check of others is worth exchanging privacy with recognition: we expose our private world to solicit the attention of others. Bonds considered weak become 'strong' in the network and are highly requested although rarely they lead to a lasting commitment (Franks Schianchi, 2011:221).

## 2. THE RESEARCH

In this work we report data from two studies on youth aimed of investigating the use of new communication technologies at both local and global level: the first local, (with data collected in Veneto-Italy) has been conducted using a self-report questionnaire prepared from scratch to evaluate how high school and university students use various communication technologies in their daily lives and, especially how new and old technologies influence the maintenance or

renewing of friendship networks. The probabilistic sample includes 250 subjects, 38.8% males and 61.2% female. Data were collected in Fall 2011.

The first question referred to the use, presented in Table 1 in descending order, of technological means showing mobile phone as the most used, followed by computer and the internet, iPod and MP3 player. Traditional landline appears last.

Table 1 How often/much do you use the following media?

Media	%
Mobile phone	96.5
Computer	94.3
Internet	92.1
iPod/MP3 player	77.1
Landline	72.2

Results showed that mobile phone is the most used technology with no gender differences.. Regarding the use of computers, 30% of males versus 12% of females uses it for more than two hours a day ( $p = 0.001$ ). As for landline phone use: even though 80% of males and 58% of females uses it for less than 30 minutes a day ( $p = 0.001$ ), 6% of girls still uses it for more than two hours a day compared to 2% of males. Girls utilize also the iPod more: 88% vs. 71% males ( $p = 0.001$ ). Mobile phone is generally used to send text messages (SMS) (95.6%), followed by voice calls (71.4%), ring calls (44.5%), and finally MMS (24.2%). One of the most relevant aspects investigated was its relational use as reported in Table 2

Table 1 Relational use of media

Mode	Friend	Family member	Acquaintance	Partner	Stranger
Voice call	73.5	<b>88.9</b>	40.7	50.4	19.0
Text (Sms)	<b>90.7</b>	58.8	27.0	60.2	10.2
Chat	<b>68.0</b>	16.0	9.4	43.1	8.0
Social Network	<b>67.6</b>	18.8	13.3	37.1	8.0
In person	<b>84.4</b>	76.4	57.3	57.3	12.4
e-mail	<b>34.7</b>	14.7	15.6	14.7	10.7

Results show that the voice contact (88.9%) is preferred with family members, while SMS prevails with friends, and meeting in person with acquaintances (57.3%). With a partner the first communication mode is by SMS (60.2%) followed by voice call (50.4%). With strangers contacts are rare (with occasional reports all modes). If students want to organize an evening, they tend to use primarily the phone (71.1%), followed by meeting in person (60%) and the chat room (35.6%). It is worth noticing that in this age group the Social Network is used to consolidate or relate with friends (67.6%) and chat contacts occur between people that know each already. From these results it is possible to deduct that contact/communication modalities are overlapping and in competition offering an ample array of choices in different moments/times of the day. With reference to the time of use, in fact, the Internet is preferred in the evening (62.1%) with connections that last less than two hours for 28.9% of users and less than 1 hour for 32.2%. It can be thus concluded that evening is the time of day most users have the greater amount of time to dedicate to friends or the web (Internet), despite the communication mean used.

The second study conducted has an international feature as it analyses the body of data derived from Facebook. Youth is the phase of life when future is designed. Despite the difficulties of this period, as they say "there is a whole life ahead of you", and still the desire to meet others. Such desire is also evident in the large international youth gatherings facilitated by major events organized through the Web and social networks. In this paper we will examine in particular how the Mediterranean youth meeting in 2008, resulted in ties among young from different States overlooking the sea and how these bonds strengthened.

In contemporary society we are witnessing a progressive sinking of those great ideals that have supported social groups throughout the Western modernity. The main social institutions have seen their denotative boundaries blurring and gradually citizens are taking on the support of the population.

Volunteer groups are organized and their civic and social engagement is based on their sensitivity and skills. In the international context, they represent a great resource for the community. In light of these assumptions it is interesting to understand what are the narratives these social groups use to build the world. Their anticipations and representation limit the pragmatic choices that will be implemented in the community context.

The peaceful and cooperative future is in the hands of young people that only by knowing and recognizing themselves can create a better life for all. Modern technologies are genuine tools of communication, friendship and peace. In the current world where is not always necessary to move from home to meet, thanks to internet, tools such as Facebook the most advanced services in the development of social network although they do not represent an arrival point in the transformation of computers into social mediums. One of the slogans used in the 2011 Meeting was: The Mediterranean, a sea of young people.

It is important here to remember, that as it happens in life, in SN most relationships are not friendships, and also that not all friends are equal. Friendship is based on trust, discovering to be in harmony and reciprocally available. Finding in a friend what the individual is lacking makes each other's differences a component as important as empathy, which allows for the exploration and admiration of such differences (Ghisleni, Rebughini, 2006:106). The circumstances in which friendship arises can be the most different, although usually it emerges from shared experiences, pleasant or not, but emotionally meaningful.

The voluntary aspect and element of choice appear initially in contingent circumstances in itself favorable to beginning a friendly relationship: friendship is sought, a particular person is chosen, recognized, studied and included in a relationship where the individual is continuously forced to confront the other through accepting each other differences, even when it was chosen for his/her similarity (Ghisleni, Rebughini, 2006:107).

The significance of a relationship not only depends on the means of communication used, because those who want to develop interpersonal relationships tend to adapt their communication strategies to the opportunities offered by the medium they are using. The pro-social behavior implemented by the social actors that communicate is present in every situation and by means of any tool used (Riva, 2010:104). The site can be configured as a virtual community, allowing virtual friends never knew in real life, to enter into a social network. Transforming the SN in "community" is a process that requires time and willingness to adapt to SN's interaction characteristics.

This second research aims at identifying the narrative repertoires used by volunteers and particularly by the Mediterranean youth<sup>2</sup> to build, using the web, actions of social change. Our research project is based the analysis of the discourses expressed through dialogues among young people in forums, discussions and web social networks. The research aims to observe how these online contributes represent a transformative process enhanced by young volunteers. With reference to the specific aim of the research, namely to delineate the narrative repertoires emerging from the youth volunteers in the Mediterranean following the youth meeting and in the light of what has been obtained from the procedures described here, we chose to proceed with the analysis of Lexical Correspondences using the software Spad (Bolasco et al., 1999).

With reference to this procedure, the Spad software lets you apply an analysis of Lexical Correspondences to a contingency table (called lexical table) where rows contain the graphic forms of the vocabulary and columns in the corpus represent the partition of variables in the analysis. For the construction of the contingency table where the analysis of Lexical Correspondences have been applied, we have identified two ways for the categorical variable "types", meaning ' texts

produced spontaneously by young. From the application of these procedures we obtained a vocabulary containing 3207 different graphic forms for the analysis of the following Facebook pages and groups: Me Region – Many Network (Middle East), NA Region – Many Network (North Africa), Many Network, MeYouMe – Mediterranean Youth Meeting.

Graph 1 (fig.1) below represents the factor analysis on the 50 most frequent occurrences on Facebook. The chart evidences that the majority of population has posted on Facebook and has expressed chorally some constructs at the intersection of the axes. Specific clusters are also evident, such as the repertoire of "schooling", composed of the constructs: "University", "skills" and "students" and "provide" (see cluster). Here are some exemplifying excerpts, "we work with volunteers from all universities", "exploring this opportunity and engaging academically, culturally and socially with our University"; "it is the largest University in Palestine. Students come from different regions of the country searching for knowledge and education: "a focal point for the University is the active and responsible participation of students to community life". The University is described as a place where to build knowledge and confront.

In Graph 1 looking at the spatial transposition of the factor analysis on websites, we noticed 6 repertoires of meaning, respectively three above the central axis and three below, in a symmetric form. In cluster A, including the words "community, political, person, law and democracy", we identified a repertoire oriented toward defining reality through institutional/bureaucratic, like some sort of formal and normative limit. Here are some phrases as examples: "a right of participation in the future of our country"; "the population has the right to contest"; "greater political involvement"; "political and institutional system"; "active and democratic participation"; "democratic transition".

In the upper axis we identified cluster B, composed of the words "religion", "should", "may", "must", a dimension of action where the religion itself became a constituent part. In

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<sup>2</sup> The 2011 edition was held in Cosenza, from the 27<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> of October, was open to 250 young people, half of them Italian and half from North Africa, the Middle East, the Balkans and southern Europe.

the text are evident statements as: "Arab world"; "unity is possible beyond religion"; "religion must stay out of our activity" in a sort of clear representation where for sake of

collaboration and dialogue, religion must be regarded as a personal peculiarity distant from arguments related to the community and politics (view cluster A).

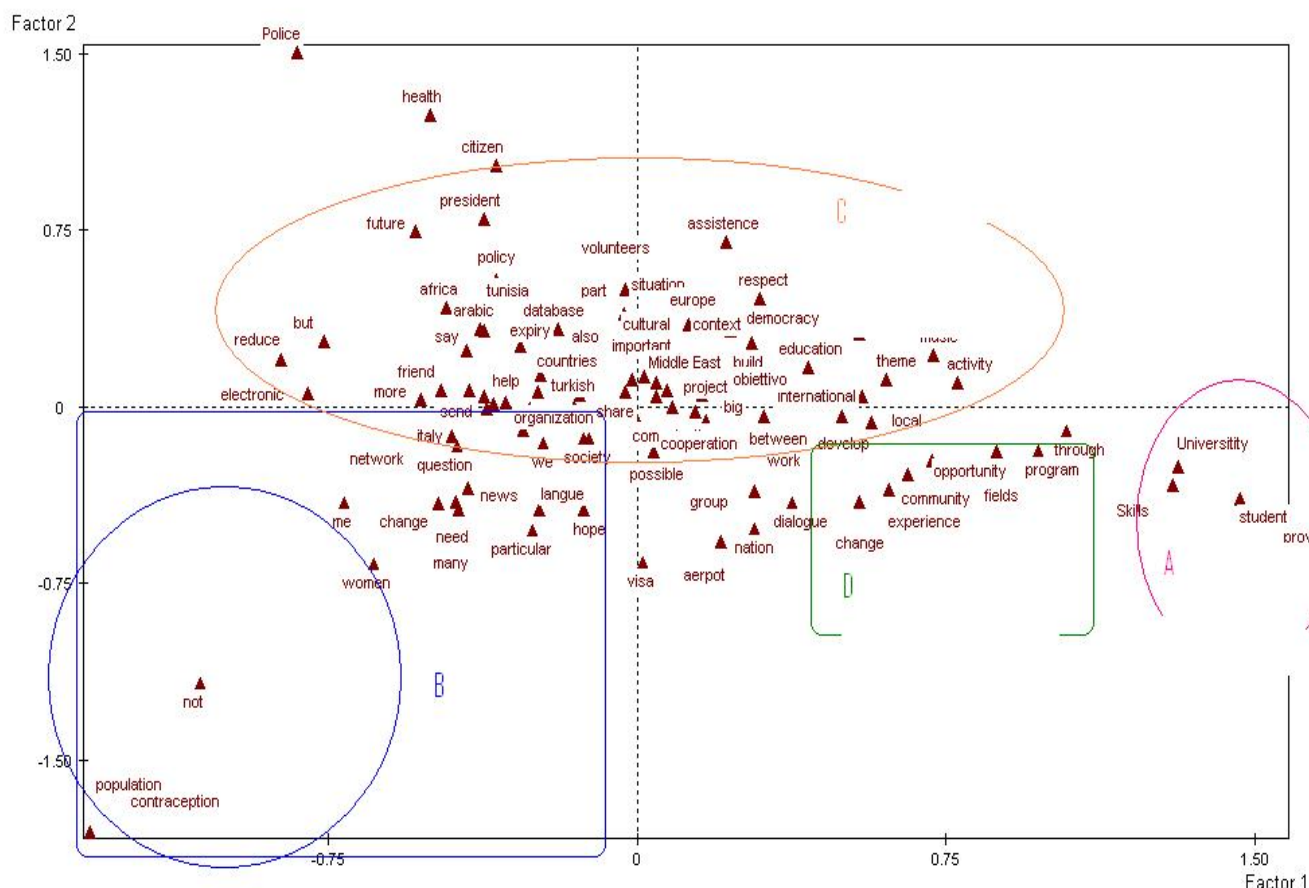


Fig.1 Factor analysis for Facebook posts

In cluster C themes such as culture and international opportunity emerged where an international comparison through listening and sharing of different cultures in order to promote a group culture freed from national borders is made possible. In the text we find the following arguments: "international cooperation"; "it is possible that international observers"; "that among them exchange experiences, culture"; "To facilitate the spread of a solidarity culture"; "Affirming the culture and practice of dialogue and mutual cooperation." It seem to evidence a definition of international dialogue as taking place only through an effective construction of a democratic culture based on cooperation.

Cluster D delineate the relevance of the argument or the substratum of generated

speeches. Cluster D consists of "Africa", "economic", "way", "national", "Europe", "big University". In the text some exemplifying examples are: "Italian economic context"; "social and economic plan"; "social and economic"; "national level".

From Cluster E a collection characterized by the synthesis of group thus shared actions emerged, not surprisingly consisting of terms such as "building", "experience", "designing", "theme", "common", "Exchange" etc. Here are some examples from the corpus "creating a network of volunteers"; "Creating a confronting network"; "knowledge and appreciation of differences, for social cohesion and peace; "more than 200 youths from 22 Countries to design new forms of active participation and create a network of

associations in the third sector". The latter phrase extrapolated from the text stands as a clear summary of the clusters analyzed expressing the group dimension of acting towards a shared goal.

Finally, in cluster F we found a set of words oriented towards the future that sees youth as protagonists and on which they open a discussion to create social change. The words characteristic of this cluster are: "debate", "work", "social", "future", "important", "cooperation", "role", "space", "process", etc. In the text, among others, we found the following examples: "youth starring role"; "starring role and youth participation"; "We design our future"; "social inclusion and respect for the environment in the entire social fabric"; "promoting intercultural dialogue".

### 3. CONCLUSION

Results from the first study show that students tend to entertain relationships with friends, family and acquaintances, people they are familiar with, using different type of media, while strangers, meeting face-to-face is more frequent! To those we are "close to" we can send messages, use voice calls and, of course, meet them in person.

The «warm» of community social network, used concurrently or alternatively to other forms of communication, offers a new relational perspective to the individual and brings comfort to the individual in a world that has made weak even the prevailing form of bond and protection, like family and community (Franks, Scianchi, 2011). Ultimately, if you were to establish the kind of relationship that unfolds in social networks you might think of focused social occasions acting more as those not focused. Goffman (1969) established precise rules for social occasions that he intended to be face-to-face, but that might be suitable even to virtual ones.

Results of the second study showed that Facebook is more informal, is more linked to the vitality and immediacy of youth friendship which, precisely because it is a "weak" link, contribute to the unification and the sharing of both everyday life and big events. This leads

youths to feel united and to recognize the importance of their own and others' difference.

Bauman (2004: 82) notes that:

it seems that the most fruitful result of virtual proximity is the separation of communication and relationship. Unlike old-fashioned topographic proximity, it does not require bonds to be already established, nor it implies establishing them. 'Be connected' is less expensive than being romantically involved, but also considerably less productive in terms of construction and preservation of ties

According to Pahl (2000) friendship can offer a chance to reflect on themselves and appears as a space of dialogue. In the processes of identification, friends are indispensable because they perform a function of reflectivity which help to keep contact with the evolving self, through the mutual recognition that depends on intensity of friendship and the expectations of partners. Those who care about friendship in Social networks will transform from mere spectators in directors and actors, showman, entertainers, making most of their participation an extension of interpersonal face-to-face communication: new media, promote in fact, the development of the sense of sharing and belonging, although remote participation is often seen and/or attributed to persons who suffer from exclusion and isolation.

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## TOWARDS AN ECOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY: DISCOURSE ANALYSES OF UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENTS

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**Abstract:** *This paper analyzes and compares four Mission Statements issued by the University of Alberta (Canada), Monash University (Australia), University of Bucharest (Romania), and Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Hong Kong). The epistemological foundation for the discussion is constructionist, as I first attempt to integrate the four mission statements within the synchronic taxonomy identified in Scott (2006), by probing grammatical and lexical evidence for complementary meanings. The philosophical stance resonates with Heidegger's temporal phenomenology of the authentic Being in interrelation with Becoming, with a focus on the "primordial way of understanding" (Gibbs, 2010) as well as on Derrida's view on the "university responsibility" (Derrida, 2004). The theoretical perspective also draws on Barnett's concept of "understanding" as the "intentional space of the university", which "can begin to offer a way forward in a university's self-reflections" (Barnett, 2011). Using the discourse analyses of the four Mission Statements as well as linguistic evidence, this discussion will compare their audience and rhetoric to accurately integrate these universities along the metaphysical – ecological spectrum.*

**Keywords:** *mission, vision, being and becoming, ecological university, authenticity, responsibility.*

*We live in a world where the foundation of a new law (droit) – in particular a new university law – is necessary. To call it necessary is to say in this case at one and the same time that one has to take responsibility for it, a new kind of responsibility, and that this foundation is already well on the way, and irresistibly so.*

*Jacques Derrida (2004)*

### 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The epistemological foundation for my discussion is constructionist, as I first attempt to integrate four existing mission statements within the synchronic taxonomy identified in Scott (2006), by probing grammatical and lexical evidence for complementary meanings. The philosophical stance resonates with Heidegger's temporal phenomenology of the authentic *Being* in interrelation with *Becoming*, with a focus on the "primordial way of understanding" (Gibbs, 2006) as well as on Derrida's view on the "university

responsibility" (Derrida, 2004). Also, the theoretical perspective draws on Barnett's concept of "understanding" as the "intentional space of the university", which "can begin to offer a way forward in a university's self-reflections" (Barnett, 2011).

Within this framework, I compare the four Mission Statements against the dimensions of *being* and *becoming* and identify features which will allow the classification of the universities under the categories of metaphysical – scientific – entrepreneurial – bureaucratic university, on the one hand, and/or the liquid – therapeutic – authentic -

ecological university, on the other. This study is an invitation to dialogue among the four universities, each with its specific instructional and communication foci, and research directions. I will thus profile the audience of the Mission Statements, discuss their rhetoric, and establish correlations between the authentic *self* and circumstantial *self* of each university (Barnett, 2011). I will draw on Ilie's reference to institutional discourse (in Garzone and Ilie, 2007), and I will use discourse analysis as methodology (Fairclough, 2003) and linguistic analysis as the principal method of investigation. The focus of the linguistic analysis will be on grammatical and lexical features (i.e., verbal forms and tenses, and lexico semantics, respectively) identified in the written discourse of the Mission Statements.

## 2. DISCOURSE ANALYSES: MISSION STATEMENTS

Following Scott's taxonomy (2006), this paper observes that, in its Mission Statement, the University of Alberta<sup>1</sup> has defined for itself a multilayered mission pertaining to applied research (locally, nationally and internationally) as well as to community-oriented projects; in this context, Canada is viewed as a global leader in innovation ("placing Canada at the global forefront"), and the university is orienting its efforts to democratization ("the whole people"). The Mission Statement encompasses the public service aspect when it states its commitment to community involvement and when it considers citizenship as one of its foundational concepts. Its internationalization goal is attained by giving an "international voice to innovation". Monash University's Mission Statement<sup>2</sup> also reflects willingness to serve its community, in both local and multi-cultural settings ("committed to the provision of the following high quality services and their continuous improvement across the various campuses of

Monash University. [...] bearing in mind the multi-cultural location and the wider Monash University Community.") The Hong Kong University pledges to "promote and assist in the economic and social development of Hong Kong [...] and to enrich Hong Kong's culture."

In profiling the audience for which these Mission Statements are intended, I identify a balanced approach, to satisfy both internal and external readers alike, i.e., current faculty ("already in place"); students at various stages: prospective ("outstanding students from Alberta, Canada, and the world"), undergraduate ("engage students through mentorship and peer-based activities such as clubs, ..."), graduate ("outstanding graduate students"), and post-graduate ("fellows, researchers"); and partners ("good stewardship of financial resources"). When mentioning "all Monash staff and students," the Mission Statement addresses academic and non-academic audiences alike, and, by aiming at potential students, it reminds of Barnett's note on university's entrepreneurial elements. Hong Kong University also includes references to "all students, undergraduate and postgraduate," who are considered "community leaders and lifelong learners" as well as "faculty" and "visiting scholars."<sup>3</sup>

The analysis seeks evidence in the Mission Statements' texts of the universities' authentic *self*, i.e., a *self* that is reflecting, deliberating, and "projecting on possibilities" (Gibbs, 2010). Thus, on the one hand, by appealing to linguistic devices (namely, the grammatical category of 'tense' for the verbs used and the lexical choices made in the Mission Statements), the University of Alberta defines itself as a research university at a dynamic entrepreneurial stage in its development, as well as an institution which strives to encompass the attributes of the intentional university (Barnett, 2011). Overall, its mission delineates a *becoming* university, which provides space for "academic travel" and "free spirits" (Barnett, 2011), while at the same time sharing multiple features with the therapeutic, authentic and ecological university. Moreover,

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.president.ualberta.ca/~media/University%20of%20Alberta/Administration/Office%20of%20the%20President/Documents/D2D/D2D\\_Vision\\_Document\\_2009c.pdf](http://www.president.ualberta.ca/~media/University%20of%20Alberta/Administration/Office%20of%20the%20President/Documents/D2D/D2D_Vision_Document_2009c.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://monash.edu/about/who/ambition.html>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.ust.hk/eng/about/mission\\_vision.htm](http://www.ust.hk/eng/about/mission_vision.htm)



when analyzing the statements issued by Monash University, phrasing such as “continuous improvement” refers to ecological features, “across the various campuses” (i.e., within the frame of the university). Hong Kong University, too, reflects the continuity and fluidity of communication among its faculty and staff who “may continually develop intellectually and professionally.”

**2.1 Linguistic evidence: Verbal forms and tenses.** Similar to other mission statements of North American universities<sup>4</sup>, the finite verbs (e.g., “discovers”) used in the University of Alberta’s Mission Statement are mostly in the simple present, a tense referring to actions of universal character, general truths, widely accepted rules or scientific knowledge, or simply actions that occur with regularity. I argue that simple present tense suggests the *being* of the university (Barnett, 2011); by employing the simple present tense, the writers have anchored the university’s mission in the current reality, using actions which occur with reliable frequency. Numerous verbs used in the Mission Statement issued by Monash University position the institution in the frame of *being* as well: “provides,” “has regard for,” “recognizes and values,” “creates,” “offers,” “achieves,” “supports and contributes.” A remarkable case is the University of Bucharest, whose Mission Statement relies of numerous defining constructions. This preoccupation with terms of recognition, of affirming the status quo, illustrate the necessity of presenting itself as a reliable institution. Confirming its credibility are expressions such as “The University of Bucharest [...] enjoys a considerable national and international prestige” or “Its graduates have included many prominent personalities: teachers and researchers at important universities all over the world.” This feature positions the University of Bucharest in a “point of reference” and therefore in the *being*

state, for a university needs to *be* first in order to *become*. The Hong Kong University development also corresponds to the *being* stage: “*to be* a leading institution for research.”

In contrast, the University of Alberta’s Vision makes repeated use of non-finite verbal forms, such as the infinitive (e.g., “to discover”) or the present participle (e.g., “discovering”), which may suggest more the *becoming* of the university (Barnett, 2011), a feature with a less definite time frame, where the infinitive is associated with future or projected actions or intentions, while the present participle may define methods by which important actions are to be accomplished. At the same time, the University of Bucharest’s Mission Statement seems to alternate between *being* and *becoming*. By identifying itself as “the initiator of a set of major measures [...] successfully adopted by other universities in the country, this Mission Statement suggests elements of a *becoming* university, with characteristics of the liquid university when focusing on “reform and development.”

Another relevant use of the simple present tense lies with the 35 action verbs positioned at the beginning of each goal in the Missions Statements of the University of Alberta and Monash University, and 30 infinitives of purpose found in the University of Bucharest’s and Hong Kong’s university’s statements. In the case of the University of Alberta, on the one hand, the plural subjects for each of the four categories/“cornerstones” allow for an ambivalent reading of these verb forms: both in simple present, indicative mode, and the imperative mode. On the other hand, the *all caps* highlighting applied to the first word (i.e., the verb) in each statement contributes to the more effective skimming of the Mission Statement. Both these strategies (i.e., ambivalent reading of verbs and *all caps*) aim at rendering an engaging context, from which each statement arises; these actions support the *becoming* of the university. Thus, they reflect its current conditions (“improve” as in the therapeutic university), support its authenticity (“making itself intelligible to the world” (Barnett, 2011), emphasize its developments (“enhance”, “foster”), and point to its changing

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<sup>4</sup>University of Toronto: <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/about/mission.htm>

University of Michigan: <http://www.umich.edu/pres/mission.php>

University of Prince Edward Island: <http://friends.upei.ca/support/forourdonors/missionstatement>

nature in real time, articulating the features of the “open-ended”, *ecological university* (“improve”, “recruit”, and “build”). The simple present verbs in the Mission Statement from Monash University points largely towards the *being* of the university (“provides,” “has regard for,” “recognizes and values,” “creates,” “offers,” “achieves,” “supports,” and “contributes.” Also relevant for this state (*being*) are the infinitives found in the University of Bucharest’s and Hong Kong University’s Mission Statements: “to attain and maintain”, “to prepare”, “to conduct”, “to ensure”, “to apply”, “to contribute”, or “to play a key role.”

### **2.2 Linguistic evidence: Lexicosemantics.**

The University of Alberta’s focus is first on the local community and self-growth; five initial goals suggesting activities intended for internal development (Cf. the developmental and authentic features identified by Barnett, 2011): “attract” (2), “recruit” (2), and “improve access” (1). To counterbalance this direction, the sections using openers such as “create”, “enhance”, “engage”, and “foster” refer to wider, intercultural, inter-disciplinary, and more universal contexts (Cf. Barnett’s ecological characteristics (2011)): “enhance a global perspective”, “enhancing cross-disciplinary initiatives”, “connecting to communities around the world”, “translating and disseminating our research outcomes”, “address global challenges and initiatives that foster mutual understanding, global peace...”. Furthermore, by including in its Mission Statement verbs such as “to look for solutions,” “to imagine alternatives,” “to become ready,” “to continuously enhance,” “to create institutional coherence,” “to perfect training,” or “to adjust, the University of Bucharest situates itself in a *becoming* position, ready to experiment further with this approach.

Another example, this time of a therapeutic description, can be recognized in the last item of the third ‘cornerstone,’ which states the University of Alberta’s goal to integrate the local external communities. As a result of its universal (authentic) trait, the university will not only “serve” but also “draw strength from the diversity of our external communities, in

particular aboriginal, Franco-Albertan, multicultural, rural, and northern communities.” Entrepreneurial attributes are also articulated through phrasing and word choices such as “needs-based and merit-based financial assistance”, “increase affordability”, “offer competitive fellowships”, “invest in world-class teaching”, and show “good stewardship of financial resources and capital assets”, and can be recognizable in the University of Bucharest as well: “to promote the image.”

### **3. CONCLUSIONS**

The Mission Statements published by the University of Alberta, University of Bucharest, Monash University, and Hong Kong University comprise a complex array of goals. These goals are presented in a dynamic, realistic, and integrated discourse, which echoes Barnett’s notion of “*feasible utopias*”. In an attempt to cover as much ground as possible, these Mission Statements ensure that no defining and relevant characteristic is left unmentioned: the vibrant energy when balancing between internal and external communities, the constant attempt at global alignment in research and communication, the permanent awareness of the need for resources, the intricate relationships among the people involved, and their continuous engagement with learning, imagination, and citizenship. Overall, modeling the sample analyses of these four Mission Statements, I will continue to search for more specific correlations between various other university Mission Statements worldwide, currently available, their discourse, and the theoretical framework outlining the characteristics of the ecological university.

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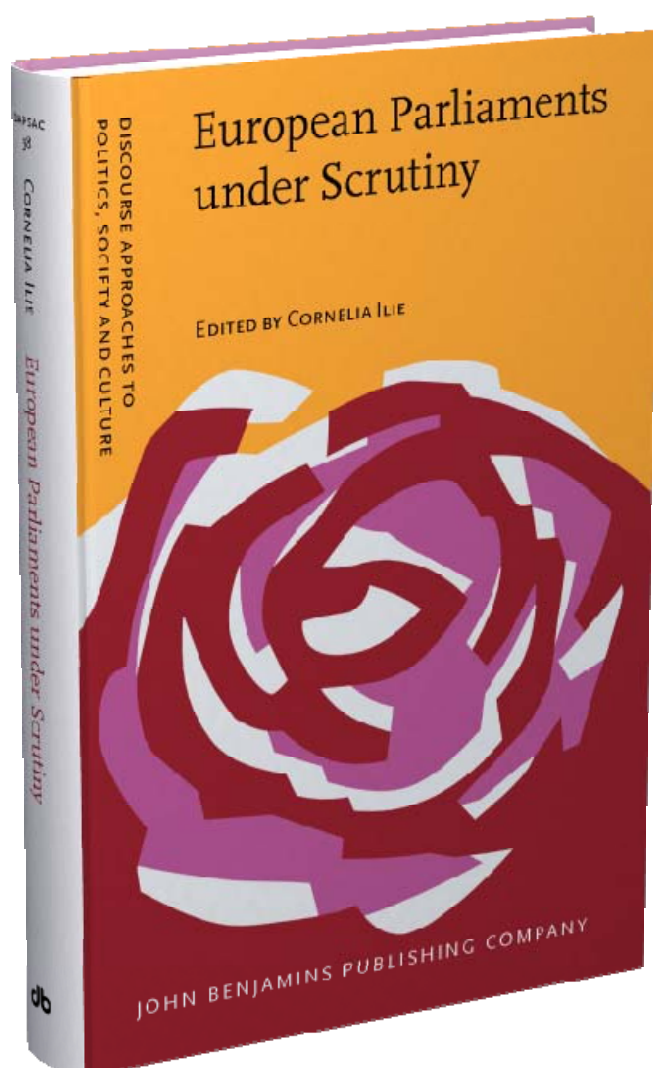
## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTS UNDER SCRUTINITY

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**Abstract:** *This article aims to present the book European Parliaments under Scrutiny, edited by professor Cornelia Ilie, PhD (Malmö University, Sweden / European Society for Transcultural and Interdisciplinary Dialogue).*

**Keywords:** *European Parliament, identity, parliamentary confrontation, parliamentary rhetoric and argumentation.*



### 1. INTRODUCTION

*European Parliaments under Scrutiny* is a collection of 11 studies examining an array of systematic investigations of distinctive interactional aspects of political activity in the parliamentary institution. These studies rely on diverse discursive scenarios when evaluating politicians' interactions and when appraising the outcomes emerging from these interactions. With expert editorial insight, Ilie has structured the volume in four principal sections, preceded by a comprehensive **Introduction**.

### 2. STUDIES

Part 1 is dedicated to presentations about **parliamentary roles and identities**. Teun van Dijk's article - *Political identities in parliamentary debates* – focuses on the British and Spanish Parliaments and explores discursive expressions of political identity during

parliamentary debates, as well as the social and political identities of the speakers. The theory of context models used in this analysis allows for a variety of concepts of identities denoting a speaker category; thus, during communicative events, context models 'mould' and complement the more contextual, interactional identities of the speakers. This explains how it is possible that, at one given time, one leader can embody "multiple political identities," such as that of a politician, an MP and/or a leader of a political party, etc. Cornelia Ilie's study - *Identity co-construction in parliamentary discourse practices* - identifies several essential aspects defining the driving forces of parliamentary interaction and the co-construction of participants' identities. Correlating pragmatic and rhetorical devices, the analysis outlines forms of argumentation between MPs and concentrates on three primary facets of parliamentary interaction: parliamentary confrontation (through adversarial interchange), parliamentary identities (through a consistent process of co-construction), and parliamentary positionings (through legitimate procedures and actions as well as linguistic devices). Maria Aldina Marques's article - *The Public and private sphere in parliamentary debate. The Construction of the addresser in the Portuguese Parliament* - uses deictic markers to demonstrate that the first person pronoun (singular and plural) contributes significantly to the interactional dynamics in the Portuguese Parliament and constitutes a structural indicator during the Interpellation to the Government session.

Part 2 contains analyses of *ritualised strategies of parliamentary confrontation*. Donatella Antelmi and Francesca Santulli's contribution - *The presentation of a new Government to Parliament from ritual to personalization. A case study from Italy* - approaches two speeches delivered by two Italian Prime Ministers, Romano Prodi and Silvio Berlusconi, belonging to opposite party coalitions, in an attempt to investigate the similarities and differences in argumentation and discourse strategies. Elisabeth Zima, Geert Brône and Kurt Feytaerts' contribution - *Patterns of interaction in Austrian*

*parliamentary debates: On the pragmasemantics of unauthorized interruptive comments* - presents findings of a study on the "pragmasemantics of unauthorized interruptive comments" taking place in the Austrian Parliament (Austrian National Council). Using relevant quantitative data and Du Bois's cognitive-functional model of dialogic syntax in correlation with the concept of resonance, the authors demonstrate that interruptive comments are primarily confrontational. Clara-Ubalina Lorda Mur's study - *The Government control function of the French Assembly in Questions au gouvernement* - explores MPs' discourses during the session of Questions au gouvernement in the French Assembly; for this analysis, the discourses selected belong to MPs of the party in office and to MPs in the opposition parties. The article identifies common discursive and linguistic features as well as distinct, specific ones recognizable in both categories of MPs.

In Part 3 the contributions explore *procedural, discursive and rhetorical particularities of post-Communist parliaments*. The chapter unfolds with Cornelia Ilie's study entitled *Managing dissent and interpersonal relations in the Romanian parliamentary discourse*. This minute analysis addresses interactional features of parliamentary discourse in the Romanian Parliament. Positioning the Parliament's activity in the post-Communist realities of the country, Ilie analyzes 'hedging' as a pivotal device for accommodating interpersonal communication and for averting confrontational situations among MPs. Cezar M. Ornatowski's article - *Parliamentary discourse and political transition: The case of the Polish Parliament after 1989* - positions the Polish parliamentary discourse in a similar, post-Communist context and focuses on changes in several types of behaviour contributing to the interactional control in the Polish Sejm: interruptions, turn-taking, applause, and humour, during the post-1989 period. In her section entitled *Czech parliamentary discourse. Parliamentary interactions and the construction of the addressee*, Yordanka Madzharova Bruteig juxtaposes characteristics of the Czech

parliamentary discourse during two important periods in the Czech history: the Communist regime (study samples from 1948-1953) and the early 1990s. The findings demonstrate significant differences in the parliamentary discourse specific to these two periods as a result of the political changes which occurred in the country, changes identifiable in Parliament in the construction of the addressee, levels of linguistic formality, or professional political communication.

To conclude, Part 4 presents two *contrastive studies of parliamentary rhetoric and argumentation*. By using the pragma-dialectical method of Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984, 1992), H. José Plug's contribution – *Ad hominem arguments in Dutch and European Parliaments: Strategic manoeuvring in an institutional context* - analyzes MPs' and MEPs' argumentative moves during debates in the Dutch and European parliaments in an attempt to establish when and how politicians operate strategically when devising personal attacks on their opponents. Isabel Íñigo-Mora's study – *Rhetorical strategies in the British and Spanish Parliaments* - employs the Discursive Psychology approach (Edwards and Potter

1992) in order to examine British and Spanish parliamentary practices during Question Time on the same topic of the Iraqi conflict. The aim of the analysis is to identify rhetorical strategies used by MPs in the two parliaments to address “objectively” the same event. The findings demonstrate that, albeit some similarities exist between the two parliamentary discourse practices, the differences between them are more numerous.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

The book comprises an excellent selection of discursive investigations that correlate their findings with thorough conceptual clarifications and engaging illustrations and corpus samples. *European Parliaments under Scrutiny* is a fundamental reading and a rich source of parliamentary corpus-based analyses for audiences interested in political and social studies, linguistics, language and rhetoric.

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## THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF ROMANIAN MILITARY PERSONNEL PARTICIPATING IN PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS

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**Abstract:** *The present book, Dezvoltarea competenței de comunicare interculturală a militarilor români participanți la misiunile de menținere a păcii, written by Adrian Lesenciuc, deals with the analysis of new challenges in the field of intercultural communicative competences regarding the military personnel participating in the peace-keeping operations.*

**Keywords:** *intercultural communicative competence, peace-keeping operations, ethnic, professional and communicative profile.*



### 1. INTRODUCTION

Adrian Lesenciuc is a young intellectual who already imposed in our cultural environment; he is a member of the Romanian Union of Writers, the author of some books of poetry and prose, as well as the author of some exciting essayistic syntheses on current issues – such as postmodernity, for example. His creative qualities are happily combined with his journalistic vocation and with his theoretical discourse expressiveness and rigor. His intellectual creativity is emphasized in/through exceptional journalistic/ publicistic experience. In the same context, I should note that Adrian Lesenciuc is the author of a university textbook regarding introduction to issues/theories of communication (Lesenciuc, 2008, 2010); I knowingly appreciate that, under the conventional name/title of didactic introduction, we can find the most complete and competent synthesis regarding theories of

communication within our specialized literature. Besides, the analyzed work, *Dezvoltarea competenței de comunicare interculturală a militarilor români participanți la misiunile de menținere a păcii* (The development of intercultural communicative competence of Romanian military personnel participating in peace-keeping operations), Brașov: „Henri Coandă” Air Force Academy Publishing House, 2012, reevaluates such ideational perspective, supplementing them with a beneficial operational dimension.

The manner in which the speculative temptation and the creative surprise are naturally continued in/through lucid investigation that exposes deep structures of some psycho-socio-cultural investigation realities, beyond any comfortable conventions and refusing, alike, partisan labels, is surprising in this work.

## **2. BOOK'S STRUCTURE**

The conceptual architecture of the work is divided into three main chapters/parts, each of them implying the radiography of an autonomous thematic field, although the interconnection is assumed and always present/invoked. First, the ethnic, professional and communicative profile of the Romanian military is investigated based on a significant sample (1.020 subjects), with hypotheses designed to identify invariants of attitudes and values, characteristic for the Romanian ethno-type, and the manner in which professional values and communicative variables from military organizations are perceived and valued within the collective mentality; the images and the self-images value traditional ethno-pedagogical essays, speculations, and projections with conclusions acquired by/through the experimental referential.

In natural extension, the work highlights the imperatives of the political realism in the age of globalization and of geo-political and economic restructuration of the Eastern European area; conflicts and peace-keeping operations are reflected as being defining components of crisis management; simultaneously, the military group is studied

from the angle of normative pressures and from the perspective of identity configuration; therefore, the inherence and the imperatives of intercultural communication effectiveness are self-imposed as problematic situations.

Finally, Adrian Lesenciuc proposes formative stakes for the Romanian military education, curriculum reorganizations and suggestions for actualizing the system of forming/developing intercultural communicative competence models, inclusively through training courses.

There is a logic of discursive trajectory in all these segmentations, therefore the explicative effort is, for the explications to evolve step by step through motivated amplification by evoding systematically the hesitations, the convenable blackouts and the argumentative leaps. A biographic and reflexive content of a synthesis which defines every chapter is mainly impossible. I highline instead the therapeutical dimension of each stage and its final conclusion.

## **3. CONCLUSIONS**

In fact, psycho-socio-cultural realities – including the military ones – are revealed in one way or another depending on how they are viewed, conceptually experienced, theoretically perceived and interpreted; the research findings/results are, therefore, dependent on conceptual structures projected on realities, cropping different aspects which, from other theoretic and methodological angles, would not be obvious and accessible for us. Based on a very extensive and scientifically significant bibliography, Adrian Lesenciuc proves an analytical freshness through which state of affairs and solutions to failures are lucidly identified. These proofs/records cannot be negotiated, because they are a part of a psycho-sociologic diagnosis. Naturally, the suggested remedies cannot be discussed anyway, simply because the author provides openings and theoretic/attitudinal perspectives and their operationalization is not his responsibility, but the responsibility of institutional structures.

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