ON THE ARGUMENTATIVE-INFORMATIVE ROLE OF QUOTATIONS IN ROMANIAN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

SILVIA FLOREA[1]

Abstract. This article sets out to explore the argumentative-informative role of quotations in political discourse focusing on a select corpus of Romanian Parliamentary political discourses in which quotations serve as stance-taking in information transmission. Such an approach allows for an examination of the dialectical relation established between stance-taking and quotations as well as of the mechanisms of intertextuality, contextomy and the cognitive operations that quoting entails. Results indicate that quotations are built on a wide diversity of evidence construction strategies and can be effectively used to engage political opponents serving as an instrument of influence in Romanian political discourse.

Keywords: quotations, political discourse, information transmission, intertextuality, stance.

1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the expression of a speaker's stance in Romanian Parliamentary political discourse and evidentiality is approached in this paper from an interdisciplinary platform that discusses quotations within a discourse-based pragmatic theoretical framework inclusive of epistemic stance theory, intertextuality, information theories as well as interactional sociolinguistics. Specifically, I examine stance-taking and the strategic role of quotations in parliamentary political discourse, considering on one hand the interrelations between quotation sources and formatting, and the reproduction accuracy and use of metadata on the other. Likewise, under scrutiny is also the legitimizing function of quotations that reinforces the political actors' evidential standing and authority throughout their struggle for mobilizing epistemic control over the audience. The article is structured as follows: Section 1 discusses stance and stance-taking and Section 2 provides an overview of studies in Romanian political discourse. Section 3 introduces quotations and examines them in point of function and form while Section 4 discusses the results and the main quotation features that characterize the Romanian political discourse. The last section summarizes the conclusions.

[1] "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, Romania, silvia.florea@ulbsibiu.ro.
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2. STANCE

In linguistics, *stance* includes the features, strategies and forms that point to a speaker's commitment to propositional information and is defined as the mode in which a speaker positions himself in relation to an ongoing interaction with regard to epistemology, assessment, intentionality or social relationships. Speakers are said to take a stance whenever they explain an object in a way that reflects their attitude or connection to that object. Stance is hence an attitudinal feature that "includes features which refer to the ways writers present themselves and convey their judgments, opinions, and commitments. It is the ways that writers intrude to stamp their personal authority onto their arguments or step back and disguise their involvement" (Hyland 2005: 176). Consequently, stance-taking represents a public performance, which, undertaken by a social actor, is constructed as a social action that is "accomplished dialogically, through overt communicative means of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the socio-cultural field" (Du Bois 2007: 163). Stance-taking compels a speaker to indicate his information sources, whether this should be oriented to provide more weight to the statement or alternatively, to diminish his own responsibility/liability for the content. However, quoting someone else's words renders the quotation anything but neutral, as the quotation becomes reflective of the speaker's own stance. Methodologically, stance has emerged from a robust interest in evidentiality, being inclusive of a large array of linguistic processes, aspects and phenomena that have been so far approached as *epistemic stance* (see Biber and Finegan 1989; Dendale and Tasmowski 2001; Aikhenvald and Dixon 2003; Marín-Arrese 2011, 2015), *social interconnection* (Du Bois 2007; Johnstone 2009), *hedging* (Hyland 1998, 2005), *evidentiality and modality* (Chafe 1986; Fairclough 2003; Cornillie 2009; Haβler 2015), *appraisal* (Martin 2000; Martin and White 2005), *non-overt negative ascription* (Sperber and Wilson 1995), *commitment* (Caffi 2007) and *evaluation* (Hunston and Thompson 2000). Within closely scrutinized political areas and discourses, it has been shown that expression of a speakers' commitment towards the information they communicate can be regarded not only as a rhetorical mechanism of authority construction and persuasiveness (Marín-Arrese 2011; Reber 2014), but also as a form of manipulation operating at various contextual levels (Berlin and Prieto-Mendoza 2014). While Reber (2014) examines the more specific role that context plays in discourse production by addressing information asymmetry among participants and its discursive representations, Berlin and Pietro-Mendoza (2014) examine evidence construction in political discourses by using critical discourse analysis (CDA) approaches and instruments.

3. PREVIOUS STUDIES IN PARLIAMENTARY POLITICAL DISCOURSE

In modern times, political discourse is a heterogeneous concept that has evolved from a static institutionalized type of discourse to an increasingly dynamic process to which several fields and subfields belonging to linguistics, media, discourse analysis, political science, socio-pragmatics, rhetoric and psychology are called upon to contribute both theoretical and practical understanding. In general, political discourse is considered to be a hybrid discourse type that includes elements of expert discourse, conversational registers

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and field-specific anchored discourse (Fairclough 2003; Lauerbach and Fetzer 2007). My study investigates a corpus of the Romanian parliamentary debates of the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate and the joint sittings of both Chambers, between 2015–2019, embracing: (a) a pragma-rhetorical approach in what regards context, implicature, sequentiality, argumentation, fallacy; (b) a discourse analytical perspective in what regards genre examination; and (c) a social psychological approach in what concerns evasiveness, manipulation, elusiveness and face.

Previous work on parliamentary discourse has approached the interactional dimension of discourse (Chilton 2004; Fetzer 2012), several aspects regarding the intertextuality in parliamentary political discourse (Constantinescu 2014; Berrocal 2016), the functionalist paradigm (Bayley 2004) or, a diversity of theoretical models and analytical instruments, including the pragma-rhetorical approach (Ilie 2010). Different sub-genres of parliamentary discourse, from regular debates (Constantinescu,2014; Ilie 2010; Berrocal 2016) to questions and oral interpellations to the government (Sivenkova 2012; 2013) have been under close scrutinizing research. Several other critical aspects regarding the Russian parliamentary discourse (Weiss 2013; 2016) the European (Ilie 2010), German (Sivenkova 2013) and the Romanian political discourse (Constantinescu 2014; Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu 2014) have been recently clarified in even more focused research. Particularly, in what regards the Romanian parliamentary discourse, Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu (2014) examines the strategic uses of evidentiality in the political debates discourse and the ways in which these contribute to the politicians' ethos and facilitate political manipulation whereas Constantinescu (2014) takes a more pragmatic approach and provides a cross-temporal examination of the Romanian parliamentary discourse, concentrating on the epistemic shifts and evidential drifts emerging from the data. More paremiology-centered studies (Dumitru 2011; Milică 2013) have additionally revealed critical insights into the Romanian political actors' communicative intentions as well as into the pragma-stylistic type of relations that the proverb is capable of mobilizing within segments of discursive intervention.

3. QUOTATIONS: FORM, FUNCTIONS AND CONTEXTOMY

Irrespective of whether politics is to be regarded as a struggle for power, domination and resistance, or alternatively as a form of co-operation of interested parties, in the subgenre of political discourse, quotations are generally employed to build a common discursive basis and strategically challenge contrasting argumentative stances. In so being, quotations have been generally considered as a meta-representation form, as they access prior discourses and import (hence meta-represent) them in another discursive context, contributing thus relevant contextual dimensions to (every so of ten competitive) discussions. Quotations are thereby credited with achieving an argumentative function. By resorting to a quoted source at a particular stage in an unfolding discourse, quotations are legitimized as quote-worthy being mobilized to challenge the argumentative reliability of 'Other' all the while supporting that of 'Self'. In general, quotations can be (a) *direct* (b) *indirect* and (c) *mixed*; a direct quotation is considered a non-assessing verbatim citation whereas the indirect quotation is regarded more like a reference to a certain prior contribution that is imported and assessed from the presenting speaker's point of view. Mixed quotations are hybrid and inclusive of both direct and indirect references. Additionally, Fetzer and

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Weizman (2018) identify two more types, the *mixed type of quotation* (*free indirect speech*) and the *focusing quotation*, which call for a more complex discourse analysis. While the former displays a contrasting time reference, with the quoted in the present tense form and the other references in their original tense form, thereby indicating temporal relevance, the latter is identifiable as a direct quotation that is forefronted "by a proximal demonstrative *this* and a pronoun pre-empting the quoted, for instance, *this is what he said*" (Fetzer and Weizman 2018: 5 *my emphasis*). There is also considerable variation in the form/formatting of the quotative, whose role is not only to introduce the quotation but also to suggest the quoters' attitudes and stances towards the quoted context. Both quotation content and the quoter's role towards content are critical in assessing the intended perlocutionary effect of the parliamentary speakers. The functions that quotations perform are source-, context-, and quoter-determined and they range from attacking an opponent or sustaining one's argumentative stance (Walton and Macagno 2001), to boosting the quoter's ethos (Constantinescu 2014) or aligning "with the audience by sharing past experience" (Fetzer 2012: 72). For the effective functioning of a quotation, according to Weiss (2016) a two step process is involved which includes, firstly, the recognition of the source and secondly, the proper source identification. While the two stages are of unequal importance in the process, he argues that quotation identification contributes additional information by evoking the political/historical/literary accomplishment or reputation of the quoted person as well as his/her philosophical or institutional affiliation. Considered from an inter-discursive angle, quotations may operate as sound bites in other discourse types (Fetzer 2012). Furthermore, as an intertextual process, quoting is the embedding of a text segment from a prior contextual situation into a newly built contextual architecture in which neither the original nor the newly created contexts remain completely identical. The newly framed inter-textual reference acquires a moderately or markedly new meaning, as quotations may additionally allow for a split of the quoter's voice into an affirming voice (belonging to the quoted person) and an interpreting one (the quoter's own voice). These two interplaying voices can then result in either convergent or divergent stances emerging from evaluations of a particular issue (Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu 2014). Direct quotations have been also considered contextomy-wise, namely from the viewpoint of the degree of faithfulness or accuracy of information in quote reproduction (McGlone 2005). Such an approach, peripheral in most studies but central in our approach, has been embraced as, in the practice of political discourses – perhaps more than with other types of discourses –, it is quite common for quotations to be used at variance with what was actually said. In this sense, given their oral nature, political discourse quotations are characterized by distortions, omissions, modified grammar, conversational expletives, word substitutions, semantic drifts, wrong attributions of quotations, revised content words or entirely fabricated quotes, all of which may carry a wide diversity of roles and stances.

5. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The aim of this study was to identify several quotation roles and functions in Romanian political discourse within an inter-textual perspective that takes stock of elements of information accuracy, self-presentation (face) and evidence (quotation) construction. It falls outside the scope of this analysis to consider the Romanian politicians'

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political views per se and their clashing ideologies, rather stance-taking was exclusively considered in terms of politicians' quoting performance and the interplay between the affirming and interpreting voice that foregrounds the quoted person and the quoter's own voice in various emerging stances.

Our examination was made on a corpus of political discourse that was part of the Romanian parliamentary debates of the Chamber of Deputies, between 2015 and 2019. The corpus consisted of a number of 543 political declarations made by politicians belonging to all the Romanian parties, available at http://www.cdep.ro. Form-wise, identified quotations range from maxims (222), aphorisms (42), proverbs (195), striking lines of poetry (14) to historical and political events statements (52) and putdowns (18) that are worth repeating on their own in the political debate context. For their effective examination (sampling, coding and interpretation), quotations were categorized as *self-initiated follow-ups* and *other-initiated follow-ups*, a follow-up being an anaphoric reference to other discourse portions that imports "relevant content, force and /or context into an ongoing discourse" (Fetzer 2012: 74). Our findings indicate that, in general, self-initiated quotations in political discourse are used to augment argumentation force

> (1) "*Aşa cum afirmam mai sus*, dacă guvernele anterioare au profitat de acest sistem slăbit şi au dat uitării cultura românească, actualul guvern iniţiază acţiuni pentru încurajarea acestui domeniu." [*As stated above*, if previous governments have taken advantage of this weakened system and forgotten about the Romanian culture, the current government will initiate actions to encourage this area.] (Chamber of Deputies, May12, 2015)

whereas *other-initiated follow-ups* are used to challenge reliability of others:

> (2) "Astfel [...], *partidul en retard, consideră că* „românii trebuie să se bucure de o reducere a preţurilor la mărfurile alimentare abia din 2016" şi atunci cu 5%, pentru că, nu-i aşa, dacă au rezistat cinci ani cu preţurile de nivel european, de ce să nu mai reziste încă cinci?!" [Thus, *the party en retard, believes that* "Romanians should enjoy a reduction of prices for foodstuffs only in 2016" and then by 5%, because, if they have resisted five years with the European level prices, why not resist five more ?!] (Chamber of Deputies, May 5, 2015)

The force of argument is supported in quotations via a wide variety of cooperative vs. confrontational stances and meaning negotiations. In (1) and (2), the quoted information is being brought into the unfolding discourse so as to undermine the credibility of others and express dis-alignment towards both the quotation source and its content:

> (3) "În scrisoarea semnată de preşedintele [...] asociaţia doreşte să lămurească câteva aspecte în ceea ce priveşte aprobarea pachetelor de servicii. *S-a afirmat că* există un 'monopol' al medicilor de familie în asistenţa medicală. *În realitate*, nu poate fi vorba de monopol. Încheierea contractelor cabinetelor de medicină de familie cu casele de asigurări urmează un set de reguli stabilite de Ministerul Sănătăţii." [In the letter signed by the president [...] the association wishes to clarify some aspects regarding the approval of service packages. *It has been claimed that* there is a

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> 'monopoly' of family doctors in healthcare. *In reality*, it cannot be a monopoly. The conclusion of the contracts of the family medicine offices with the insurance companies follows a set of rules established by the Ministry of Health.] (Chamber of Deputies, March 24, 2015)

Although quotations are generally characterized by explicitness of source, time and place of occurrence, our corpus examination has revealed that under-specification and scarcity of information provided about the source of the quotation indicate a varying degree of intentionality in argumentative construction. To this end, reducing quoter and quoted material information in (3) and (4) (*s-a afirmat că* [it has been stated that]) helps the politician build a thematic progression of the inter-discursive reference in the form of a turn-taking strategy that boosts the oppositional content force intended by the speaker:

> (4) "*S-a afirmat că* medicii tineri nu pot intra în sistem. *În realitate*, cu excepția marilor orașe universitare (unde există un surplus de medici), comisiile mixte au identificat peste 429 de localități în care se pot deschide cabinete de medicină de familie [...]." *[It has been stated that* young doctors cannot enter the system*. In fact***,** with the exception of the large university cities (where there is a surplus of doctors), the joint commissions have identified over 429 localities where family medicine offices can be opened.] (Chamber of Deputies, March 24, 2015)

Our examination has also revealed interesting results indicating how, as an 'institutional genre', the political discourse allows for establishing an interactional process between politicians on the one hand and (targeted) audience on the other. This process is chiefly determined by the quoter's role towards quotation source, information management, content and illocutionary force. Being addressed to a mass audience and selected from a vast repository of wisdom, collective conscious, party leaders, public personalities, etc., we have found that quotations serve both as a medium for speakers' own speech report evaluation and equally as a reinforcement of the politicians' stance and credibility. Thus, from instances (5) where the attributed source of the indirect quotation is made explicit

> (5) „*Conform declarațiilor domnului Mugur Isărescu,* o conversie în lei a creditelor în franci elvețieni la cursul istoric ar genera pentru bănci pierderi de aproximativ 5,7 miliarde de lei..." *[According to Mr. Mugur Isărescu's statements,* a conversion in lei of loans in Swiss francs at the historical rate would generate for banks losses of about 5.7 billion lei ... .] (Chamber of Deputies, February 3, 2015)

to cases (6), in which the speaker invokes an opposing party's issued document without making a clear source specification,

> (6) "Începând cu motive precum 'PSD nu are toate fundamentările efectuate', 'PSD nu are toate analizele efectuate', această măsură reprezintă 'graba lui Ponta de a se reabilita' până la invocarea semnalelor 'clare și tranșante ale FMI', nihilismul național-liberalilor îi face să scadă în sondaje și să își piardă credibilitatea în fața electoratului." [Starting with reasons such as "SDP does not have all the explanations provided", "SDP does not have all the analyses carried out", this

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> measure represents "Ponta's rush to rehabilitate himself" until the "clear and sharp signals of the IMF"; the nihilism of the national-liberals causes them to drop in polls and lose credibility in front of the electorate.] (Chamber of Deputies, May 5, 2015)

the politician's subjective stance is in all cases directed towards a proposition that can be manifest only within a reasoning frame of relevance. Such a frame is strongly related to the evidentiary information and the truth of that proposition.

Another interesting aspect emerges if/when the examination of the corpus sub-genre of political declarations performs a separation of the institutionalized discursive features typical of the sub-genre (institutional dialogue-based commitments, deputies' party affiliation, etc.) from the more particularized stance of deputies that is often taken along ideological lines. In more specific terms, the institutional context of the political debates under scrutiny is regulated by Art 214 of the Chamber of Deputies Rules and Regulations which stipulates that a plenary session dedicated to the political statements and interventions of the deputies is organized every Thursday. The declarations and interventions are verbally presented and must not exceed 3 minutes. If the deputy exceeds the time allotted, the sitting president has the right to cut the deputy's speaking time. This has allowed us to notice that, if the politician's stance is removed from the institutional context – in which such time-constrained political declarations must conform to presentation rules while maximizing the speaker's impact on mass audience – the role of quotations has slightly changed, shifting from a traditional display of erudition and wide cultural knowledge to a more limited role, that of capitalizing shorter, more spontaneous text passages and meaningful information chunks. While this points to a direct link between quotation form and function, it also provides an explanation why the corpus under scrutiny abundantly displays a preference of politicians for indirect (7, 8) and mixed forms of quotations (9).

> (7) "*Actualul ministru al educației a declarat că* dorește 1% din PIB, aproximativ 10 miliarde de lei, pentru ministerul pe care-l conduce și că a fost solicitată această sumă la rectificarea bugetară. *În schimb*, Guvernul a tăiat de la Educație două miliarde de lei..." [*The current minister of education said* he wanted 1% of GDP, about 10 billion lei, for the ministry he runs and that this amount was requested upon budget rectification. Instead, the Government cut two billion lei from education...] (Chamber of Deputies, December 4, 2019)
>
> (8) „*Declarația ministrului educației [...] cum că* este „contrariat" că nu votăm puzuri [n.a. plan urbanistic zonal] în Consiliul Local, arată că este complice cu mafia imobiliară din zona de urbanism". [*The statement of the Minister of Education [...], that* he is "upset" that we do not vote for the local zoning plan in the Local Council, shows that he is complicit with the real estate mafia in the urbanism area. (Chamber of Deputies, November 21, 2017)
>
> (9) "*Mi s-a părut bizar să constat că* în CV-ul său se autoevalua pompos și fără o minimală și de bun-simț modestie și decență, invocându-și repetitiv excelentele sale calități. Iată-le: 'Excelente calități pentru lucru în echipă, excelentă cunoaștere a pieței distribuitorilor, cunoaștere excelentă a mapingului comunităților românești din lume. Calităţi de leadership. Excelente calităţi în a aplana conflicte, în a rezolva conflicte de muncă între acționari, management și terți. Excelentă cunoaștere a

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> legislației în domeniul media – în special Televiziune'. I-am transmis atunci, în cadrul audierii "excelentei" doamne, că nu i-ar strica nițică ponderație și modestie, întrucât atunci când te declari excelent la mai multe capitole profesionale, dai dovadă mai degrabă de autosuficiență și pare că nu mai vrei sau nu mai ai nimic de învățat. Mi-a răspuns plină de sine că nu are de ce să fie modestă și nu renunță la superlativele prin care se autodefinește." *[I found it strange to see that* in her CV she pompously assessed herself and, without a minimal and common sense modesty and decency, she repeatedly invoked her excellent qualities. Here they are: "Excellent teamwork skills, excellent knowledge of the distributors market, excellent mapping knowledge of the Romanian communities around the world. Leadership qualities. Excellent skills in conflict mitigation and resolution of labour conflicts between shareholders, management and third parties. Excellent knowledge of media legislation – especially of Television". I told the "excellent" lady during the hearing that she could use some more moderation and modesty, because when you declare yourself excellent in several professional chapters, you show nothing else but self-sufficiency and a desire to learn nothing else. She answered me full of herself that there was no reason why she should feel modest and that she was not going to give up the superlatives by which she defines herself.] (Chamber of Deputies, May 9, 2018)

Within the same argument, the opportunity to memorize short passages (or figures) of texts and quote them on the spot allows the speaker, in (8), (9) and (10), to contextualize an indirect quotation while confronting the opponent with criticisms in self- and other-presentations.

> (10) "Deși excelăm la capitolul educație, depășind multe alte state membre, speranța de viață se află la polul opus, iar riscul de sărăcie este printre cele mai ridicate din Uniune, *potrivit celor mai recente statistici publicate de Eurostat* acesta atingând 21,9% în cazul bărbaților și 23,2% în cazul femeilor, din acest punct de vedere fiind devansați doar de Spania și Grecia." [Although we excel in education, exceeding many other Member States, life expectancy is at the opposite end, and the risk of poverty is among the highest in the Union. *According to the latest statistics published by Eurostat*, the risk of poverty hits 21.9% for men and 23.2% for women, being from this point of view outpaced only by Spain and Greece.] (Chamber of Deputies, June 17, 2014)

The seemingly incoherent prosody of the examples above, notably (2), (6), (8), (9) and (10) is determined by parentheticals and hesitant starts, both of which are effectively expressed in speaking – by prosody along with posture, gesture and gaze – and hence widely factored out by audience. This makes the politicians' digressions, quotative insertions and rambles much easier to follow in person due to faint, personal cues. Since the political discourse under examination is spoken and political interventions were read/made upfront, about two thirds of the corpus quotations we have examined appear to be conversational in style (2), loosely threaded (6) and mostly digressional (10). This feature is also reflected by what, position-wise, could be otherwise termed as "sentence relapse into front position", or construal (Langacker 2017), or parataxis (Huddleston and Pullum 2002). The embedding of clauses within clauses as mobile and independent supplementations, as

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in (6) and (8), is elusive to traditional syntactic subordination and coordination and cannot therefore be interpreted except in terms of pragmatic rules. Such rules and principles operating as a strategy that allows for information structures to be appended to the politician's host argument as a non-restrictive, typically conjectural and discourse-controlled mechanism of linearization (Dehe and Kavalova 2006). This substantiates our argument that the use of quotations provides additional prosodical opportunities for politicians who, at the level of pragmatic interpretation, need theticals to facilitate a more dynamic perspective-taking process of audience engagement.

> (11) "La fel de îngrijorătoare este şi situaţia copiilor din România. *Un raport* publicat în cursul săptămânii trecute de organizaţia "Salvaţi Copiii", realizat pe baza datelor Eurostat, *reflectă că* în ţara noastră şi în Bulgaria trăiesc cei mai săraci copii din Uniunea Europeană." [The situation of children in Romania is equally worrisome. *A report* published last week by the "Save the Children" organization, based on Eurostat data, *reflects that* the poorest children in the European Union live in our country and in Bulgaria.] (Chamber of Deputies, June 17, 2014)

In what concerns the information accuracy of the quoted content, our analysis shows an identifiable general tendency, on the quoters' part, to observe the original, the most common modifications occurring in instances when speakers refuse to attribute quoted material (12), replace proper names with personal pronouns or tidy up quotation grammar. These are the least objectionable alterations performed on the quotations used.

> (12) "În final, doresc să transmit colegilor mei, ceea ce *un autor anonim spunea:* 'Dacă privim în direcţia bună, tot ce mai trebuie să facem este să mergem înainte' ". [Finally, I would like to convey to my colleagues, what *an anonymous author said:* "If we look in the right direction, all we have to do is go ahead". (Nota bene: quote attributed to Henrik Ibsen)] (Chamber of Deputies, December 3, 2014)

Other cases (13) indicate an addition of expletives to a statement,

> (13) "Acestea fiind menţionate, în timp ce PNL se opune oricărei propuneri benefice, întruchipând "Fetiţa care l-a luat pe «nu» în braţe", social-democraţii pun în aplicare, întocmai şi treptat, promisiunile făgăduite la preluarea guvernării". [These being mentioned, while the NLP opposes any beneficial proposal, embodying "the little girl who took NO in her arms", the social democrats implement, properly and gradually, the promises made upon taking over the government.] (Chamber of Deputies, May 5, 2015)

or a substitution of synonyms for the words that the speaker intertextualizes. Such strategies allow the politician to contribute a better (his own) frame of interpretation, maximize impact and mobilize epistemic control over the audience.

> (14) "*Conform* aforismului latin *Mens sana in copore sano*, prin care poetul roman, Iuvenal, atrăgea atenţia asupra importanţei conferite nu numai hranei, ci şi virtuţilor, *afirm* şi eu astăzi că poporul român are nevoie atât de hrană pentru corp, cât şi

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pentru minte." *[According to* the Latin aphorism 'Mens sana in copore sana', by which the Roman poet, Iuvenal, drew attention to the importance given not only to food but also to virtues, *I affirm* today that the Romanian people need food both for the body and for the mind.] (Chamber of Deputies, May 12, 2015)

An abundance of noun phrases, self-interruptions, apparent departures from the main argument, flashes of memory, side remarks are as many identified time-gaining discursive mechanisms used to facilitate the comprehension process in political discourse in quoting. Such is the frequent use of "afirm şi eu" [I too affirm] (14), "în final" [finally] (12), "nu-i aşa?" [isn't it?] (2), "many people are saying…", "believe me", "trust me", etc., which reinforce direct experience and sharing of quoted content. Likewise, the side-remarks of (10), (13) and the revision of content words (*cel mai bine*, in 15) to suit the politician's views indicate semantic drift from the original and factors content manipulation into stance-taking progression.

(15) "*Membrii asociaţiei afirmă că* ei înţeleg *cel mai bine* necesitatea reglajelor fine în sistemul sanitar românesc şi tocmai din această cauză înaintează propuneri şi scrisori." *[The members of the association affirm that* they understand best the need for fine adjustments in the Romanian health system and this is why they submit proposals and letters.] (Chamber of Deputies, March 24, 2015)

A core related problem in examining quoting and its associated potential for distortion concerns the referential function of these quotes – which can be aphorisms, proverbs, or references to well-known political leaders, putdowns of famous people, etc. – and their ideological association with present-day political situations, contexts or speech events. The references to the quotes are made with a view to strategically and historically re-contextualizing the force of the quote and hence legitimizing not only the quoter's political stance but also the content that these political declarations endorse. Our corpus examination has identified a number of 59 political declaration titles that bespeak the close relationship existing between proverbs (or sayings, aphorisms, etc) and the discursive sequences in which these are actualized. A selective assortment is illustrated below:

(16) "Punct şi de la capăt – România are un buget echilibrat" [Back to square one-Romania has a balanced budget] (Chamber of Deputies, 20 March, 2019) – reference to a syntagm used by Romania's President in his speech during the 2014 presidential campaign;
(17) "Pilonul II, între a fi şi a fi furat" (Chamber of Deputies, 16 May, 2018) – reference to the opening phrase of Hamlet's soliloquy;
(18) "Cu o floare nu se face primăvară fiscală" [One flower doesn't make it fiscal spring] (Chamber of Deputies, 16 May, 2018) – reference to the proverb "One flower doesn't make it spring";
(19) "Săracă țară bogată..." [Poor rich country…] (Chamber of Deputies, 20 March, 2018) – reference to a Romanian popular song line;
(20) "La umbra marilor arbori nu creşte nimic decât iarba" [In the shade of the big trees nothing grows but grass] (Chamber of Deputies, 18 March, 2014) – reference to a quote attributed to Constantin Brâncuşi;

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(21) "A fost odată ca-n poveşti... A fost în România..." [Once upon a time, in Romania...] (Chamber of Deputies, 17 June, 2014) – reference to the beginning line of children's stories;
(22) "Ai carte, ai parte?" [roughly Knowledge is power?] (Chamber of Deputies, 17 June, 2014) – reference to a quote attributed to Francis Bacon;
(23) "Forme fără fond" [Forms without substance] (Chamber of Deputies, 3 April, 2019) – reference to a theory attributed to Titu Maiorescu, a Romanian literary critic and politician (1840–1917);
(24) "Tăcerea e de aur" [roughly Speech is silver, but silence is golden] (Chamber of Deputies, 21 April, 2015) – reference to a proverb;
(25) "O scrisoare pierdută" [The Lost Letter] (Chamber of Deputies, 24 March, 2015) – reference to a well known play by Ioan Luca Caragiale, a famous Romanian playright (1852–1912);
(26) "Râde ciob de oală spartă" [roughly Look who's laughing] (Chamber of Deputies, 10 March, 2015) – reference to a Romanian proverb;
(27) "Puterea corupe" [Power corrupts] (Chamber of Deputies, 17 February, 2015) – reference to "Absolute power corrupts absolutely", a well-known quote attributed to the 19th century British politician Lord Acton;
(28) "Fetița care l-a luat pe «nu» în brațe" [The little girl who took NO in her arms] (Chamber of Deputies, 5 May, 2015) – reference to a story written by Octav-Pancu Iaşi, a Romanian novelist and children's writer (1929–1975);
(29) "Corb la corb nu-şi scoate ochii" [roughly "Dog does not eat dog"] (Chamber of Deputies, 17 February, 2015) – reference to a Romanian proverb.

These political declaration titles are reflective of the dynamic and reciprocal relation existing between quotation use and politics. The references to proverbs, sayings, popular wisdom, well-known theories, fiction and drama titles and songs in (16) – (29) are embedded in a collective conscious that prompts political debates and arrests the audience imagination to a particularly desired emotion and stance. If discourse is an anthropocentric phenomenon, then the political discourse (and message therein) unfolding from these titles reflects not only the politicians' interests, goals and objectives but also their idiosyncratic interpretation of the quoted/referenced content, which affords a greater manipulative control of information and a desired theatrical effect on the audience. In particular, the reference to paremiological expressions, in (18), (22), (24), (26), and (29), is capable of ensuring a relationship of continuity and convergence between both the premise and the conclusion of the political discourse. The inherent theatricality of short-lined, plea-like titles such as the above is played as part of a two way communication process in which the audience is both a direct and observing addressee and the politician is the speaker who works for the public, trying to make a political impression and to break a silent, mental applause. The titles operate as concentrated forms of political statements, vexing, warming up or anchoring the addressee's attention to a fixpoint that anticipates the gist of the political declaration. The successfulness of such an argumentative drill (and device) depends on the speaker's/politician's knowledge and ability to make analogies, extrapolate, match quotation with political realities, use effective evidence construction strategies, manage polemical discourse, spark audience reactions and establish ad-hoc credibility.

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6. CONCLUSIONS

Quotations perform a significant role of intertextuality and operate as an instrument of influence in the Romanian political discourse. If the crisis in politics is a crisis of political language, we argue that quotations are apt to enhance political oratory and afford the leisurely digressions that politicians can use to engage political opponents or play desired audience emotions.

The results emerging from our examination indicate that the accuracy reproduction spectrum accommodates a variety of quotation functions that range from (re)-establishing the consistency, credibility and reliability of self and party to aligning with the public while articulating dis-alignment with other political party opponents. Whichever goal is pursued, the ultimate privileges of using quotations in political declarations remain the affordability of a polemic impact, the powerful interaction of information and political culture, the potential for manipulation and the discursive negotiation of an argumentative effect and political stance.

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