THE LEGIONARY DISCOURSE: CONTENT ANALYSIS

Paula MUREŞAN, PhD, „Babeş-Boyai" University of Cluj-Napoca

Abstract: The herein paper is an analysis of legionary discourse content focusing especially on the main personalities of the Movement. (Corneliu Zelea Codreanu and Vasile Marin).We have approached this subject due to the fact that the discourse, in general, and legionary discourse, in particular, offers important information concerning right-wing ideology. We have tried to identity and better understand the features of ideological, nationalist, political and xenophobic discourse of the leaders of Iron Guard.

Keywords: discourse, discourse analysis, legionary discourse, political class, democracy

Not only the charisma of the Right Wing leaders was important but also the intellectual conception of their discourse led to the transformation of the Iron Guard in a political force ready to destabilize the state order and to compete with the liberalism assumed by the Romanian political class.

The choice of this subject comes from a personal motivation but also from the wish to realize a quality research. Due to the fact that we shall deal in the herein paper with the discourse analysis, we consider that the definition of the terms is essential.

The discourse, in general, is the use of words to exchange thoughts and ideas.

1 :*archaic*: the capacity of orderly thought or procedure: rationality

2: verbal interchange of ideas; *especially*: conversation

3*a*: formal and orderly and usually extended expression of thought on a subject

b: connected speech or writing

c: a linguistic unit (as a conversation or a story) larger than a sentence

4*obsolete*: social familiarity

5: a mode of organizing knowledge, ideas, or experience that is rooted in language and its concrete contexts (as history or institutions) <critical *discourse*>.[1]

We shall try to give the most relevant definitions of discourse in order to show the complexity that involves this term.

For Frances Henry and Carol Tator[2] "Discourse is the way in which language is used socially to convey broad historical meanings. It is language identified by the social conditions of its use, by who is using it and under what conditions. Language can never be 'neutral' because it bridges our personal and social worlds."

John Flowerdew[3] considers that "There are various usages of the term discourse, but we will begin here by defining it broadly as language in the contexts if use….More restricted in sense, the term discourse can also be used to refer to a particular set of ideas and how they

[1]http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/discourse, 13.11.2013.
[2]Frances Henry and Carol Tator, *Discourses of Domination*. University of Toronto Press, 2002, p.25.
[3]John Flowerdew, *Discourse in English Language Education*, Routledge, 2013, p.1.

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are articulated, such as the discourse of environmentalism, the discourse of neoliberalism or the discourse of feminism''.

Jane Ogden[4] believes that "The term *discourse* is also used to refer to meanings at the more macro level. This approach does not study the individual words spoken by people but the language used to describe aspects of the world, and has tended to be taken by those using a sociological perspective."

As concerns the discourse analysis it is essential to mention that the approach of this subject has changed during times since its first mention by Zelling Harris in 1952. For Gillian Brown and George Yule[5] the "term discourse analysis has come to be used with a wide range of meanings which cover a wide range of activities. It is also used to describe activities at the intersection of disciplines as diverse as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, philosophical linguistics and computational linguistics."

Brian Paltridge [6] was also concerned by this subject. In his opinion "discourse analysis focuses on knowledge about language beyond the word, clause, phrase and sentence that is needed for successful communication…Discourse analysis also considers the ways that the use of language presents different views of the world and different understanding. It examines how the use of language is influenced by relationships between participants as well as the effects the use of language has upon social identities and relations."

We shall also present the third definition given by Michael McCarty[7] for whom "discourse analysis is concerned with the study of relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used."

Starting from these assumptions, we consider that it is extremely important to discuss some aspects linked to the legionary discourse due to the fact that an analysis of their discourse reveals more information rather than a first reading.

We shall analyse the discourse of the leaders of the Iron Guard from content perspective. As it is known in the specialized literature, the content represents the information through the discourse. Here we deal with two types of the content: latent content (has to be sought beyond the words) and manifest content (opinions, believes). Each of them will offer important data concerning the vocabulary, the semantics and the cohesion of the text. Consequently, we shall focus our research on analysing the discourse of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, known as the Leader of the Movement, and Vasile Marin, one of the outstanding personalities of the Legion, especially on the following patterns: the political class, democracy and the political system. It is important to mention that the discourses that we deal with were published in books (*Pentru Legionari*, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu and *Crez de generaţie*, Vasile Marin).

From the methodological point of view we shall use the qualitative method materialized in the text analysis, meaning primary sources. Other sources that we used referred to general books on discourse, specialized studies and dictionaries. Another important aspect that we want to emphasis is the fact that we have made the translation from

[4]Jane Ogden, *Health and the Construction of the Individual*. Psychology Press, 2002, p.5.
[5]Gillian Brown and George Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. viii.
[6]Brian Paltridge, *Discourse Analysis*, Godmin Cornwall, 2006, p.2.
[7]Michael McCarty, *Discourse Analysis for Language Teacher*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 5.

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Romanian into English, trying to make a word by word translation, so that the text in English should be similar to the Romanian one.

We have to mention that the discourse of these two political leaders is a political discourse. It is impossible to speak about a political battle without having a political discourse.

The first item that is it to be analysed is the political class of the epoch. Wishing to reach power, (this is the main objective of each party) it is important to see how the opponents refer or relate to the in charge leaders. Their opinion on the leaders, especially on their modality to run a country is essential in understanding also the political system.

The Political Class

"The whole nation, in all that it had better, from peasants to intellectuals received with great sorrow he sad news of the amendment to Article7, but could do nothing because it woke up sold and betrayed by its leaders. What kind of curse on our head and what sins condemned us, the Romanians, to have such rascal leaders?"[8]

As concerns the vocabulary the nouns and adjectives are the dominant elements. The association of the adjective *whole* with the noun *nation* creates from the very beginning a powerful effect, offering to the sentence a value of absolute truth, even if we have real doubts that this was the truth. Another important aspect is that he used a collective noun *nation* in order to create the sensation of unity and solidarity, Although the adjectives are not used in comparative or superlative degree, they are strong adjectives offering to the text a pessimistic value. Moreover, Codreanu realizes a comparison between the nation, made up peasants and intellectuals (the good part of the nation) and the leaders identified as the Evil part. By this antithesis, the guilty persons acted in the detriment of the nation. It is to mention that he used the metaphor in order to characterize the leaders by using a strong word: *rascal*, consequently realizing the labelling in order to distract the attention from the important issues. Following the decisions taken by the leaders of the country, the Romanian peasantry and the working class are the ones to suffer because all these decisions are in favour of the Jews.

As the synthetic analysis is concerned the verbs are used in past tense meaning that the action took place, and there is no possibility to correct the situation. Moreover, he used the passive voice, meaning that the action is made by them (the leaders) having direct repercussion on us (the nation). The situation is seen only in terms of goods and evil. There cannot be negotiations with the others. The Romanian politician is corrupted, uninterested in his nation, preoccupied by his own person and by his relatives. For him, politics means business and not the well-fare of a nation.

The use of rhetoric interrogation also emphasizes the emotional effect on the audience and automatically induces the answer in finding the guilty persons.

He adds "*The Romanian, abandoned by his political leaders, remained alone in front of the Jewish well organized coalition, of the fraudulent manoeuvres and of unfair competition and fell defeated. It will come the time when these leaders must pay".*[9] From the very beginning of the sentence, he announces us that *the Romanian* was abandoned by the political class. This has a psychological effect tending to manipulate the receptors.

[8]Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, *Pentru Legionari*, Colecţia Omul Nou, 1990, p. 131.
[9]*Ibidem*, p.152.

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By the enumeration that he used, he speaks about a complot between two unequal forces: the sole Romanian, on one hand and the coalition, on the other hand, made against him. The final sentence denotes a strong conclusion by the use of the modal verb *must*. It is something that is guaranteed; moreover he projects his desires in future as a truth. It is a sort of foresight that he undertakes. Emotional feelings need to be activated in order to create a connection between him and his audience.

According to Vasile Marin *"the political chaff, once reached power is on robbery. And for this, it does not spare anything: it corrupts justice, soils the army, infamies the administration, denigrates the church and degrades the school".*[10]

In order to emphasis the critical situation in which the country is, Marin makes appeal to the verbs. The use of present tense is essential to indicate that the action is repeated or usual. It also denotes today's problems. From this perspective, the emotional impact is huge. Moreover, the verbs have negative meaning and associated with the main institutions of the state create a gloomy present and future. It incites to action, creating in receptors minds a mood of despair. Having a pessimistic tone, created by the use of pessimistic verbs, the main purpose of his statement is to blame and criticizes the actual government.

Maris also uses the labelling *the political chaff* in order to emphasis the bad character of the leading elite. Another feature of his discourse is his tendency to generalize.

What he really wants to emphasis is that the incapacity of the leaders is in every field of activity: politics, economy and even cultural life.

Democracy and political parties

Democracy and political parties are two related subjects on which both Codreanu and Marin expressed their points of view.

Codreanu considers that democracy *„transforms millions of Jews in Romanian citizens and it serves the great finances."*[11]The negative aspects are materialized by the *Jews* and *great finances.* Again, the evil is known and those who do not belong to the Romanian culture are seen as a danger. The mixture of races is unconceived: moreover, the danger is expressed by the noun *millions* used with a negative connotation. Consequently, the anti-Semitism is uttered and expressed in a loud voice.

"Democracy crushes the unity of the Romanian people dividing it into parties, feuding it, exposing it to the block unity of Jewish power in a difficult moment in its history".[12]

Codreanu puts into discussion the form of organization and leading a society (the form of government). In order to show the incapacity of democracy in maintaining the order and peace, he makes appeal to the verbs in present tense and present continuous. The use of this tense is to emphasise that something is happening now, at this very moment. The verbs have also a negative meaning: to crush, to divide, to feud, creating the impression of war. It is interesting the use of noun *unity* in antithesis (Romanian unity and Jewish unity). It gives the impression of two blocks, two irreconcilable actors that are not able to create a dialogue. It is again *us*, in contradiction with *them*.

[10]Vasile Marin, *Crez de generaţie*, Tipografia Bucovina, Bucharest, 1937, ediția a IV a, Colecţia Munchen, 1977, p. 109.
[11]Codreanu, *op. cit.*, p.414.
[12]*Ibidem*, p.412.

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Continuing the same assertion, Codreanu considers that "*Democracy is incapable of continuity in effort* or *it puts the political man in the impossibility to do its duty to the people* or *it is incapable of authority".*[13] What he is really saying it is that he denies democracy, he fights for another form of government. He wanted an authoritarian form of governance. Codreanu was convinced that Romanian people are at crossroads. All state institutions: the monarchy, the church, the army, the judiciary and the administration system were questioned. According to him, they were all poisoned by the Jews. The Jews embody everything he rejected: democracy, communism, and in particular, the Romanian political system.

More than that "*Money, press and the votes decide the life or the death in democracy. The Jews have all these, and the Romanian political parties become simple tools in the hands of Jewish power. Since we, who have started the fight against the Jews, we see ourselves fighting against the government, parties, authorities, army, and the Jews stay still."*[14]

He used the enumeration twice and it is interesting the modality in which he used it. We speak again about an antithesis between Romanian and Jews: the evil is represented by the Jews, more than that they bought the political class. Therefore, the Romanians are fighting between them.

"Politicianism infects our national life ... the descent of this infection towards the Romanian youth means our annihilation and the victory of Israel".[15] His anti-Semitic reaction is uttered and at the same time assumed. The word with a strong emotional meaning is the noun *infection,* twice used to create the sensation of an imminent death. This is also a pattern used in the totalitarian speech when those who belong to other nations have to remain in a total silence. Another emotional element brought into discussion is the *Romanian Youth*, the only force in his opinion to fight against both the corrupted system and the Jews. Beyond the words, the purpose of Codreanu was to attire the new generation toward his ideology. Subsequently, the main aim was to incite to action. He comes with another strong sentence "*politicianism is killing us"*[16]with the intention of manipulating the receptor. Again the use of present continuous tense creates in this particular situation a pressure on the audience and the emotional relation between Codreanu and his supporters is already made.

Marin continues the idea of the Leader concerning the failure of democracy to defend its citizens against the danger of Jews and rich ones and asserts the following phrase "*democracy pushes to the surface and installs in command posts the golden mediocrity, bookworm, half-blind paper-phile and mandarin of university parchment".*[17]

He uses the metaphor, hyperbola and enumeration with the intention of over exaggerating the deficiency of democracy. Democracy promotes non-value. Beyond the words, the idea of using these figures of speech is to manipulate and excite the audience. In order to defend the nation and to offer its dignity it is necessary to have a strong state. Whom is to be blamed for? The answer is a simple one: of course, the politicians, the Jews and the form of government. Marin believes that the promotion in the society is not made on merits.

[13]*Ibidem,* pp.413-414.
[14]*Ibidem,* p.156.
[15]*Ibidem,* p.189.
[16]*Ibidem,* p.384.
[17]Vasile Marin,*op.cit.*,p.189.

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Accordingly, democracy is not able to educate the nation, to make it respect and cherish the values, awaken up in the minds of citizens the national sentiment and prepare the true elite of the country.

Moreover, he continues his idea declaring that *„Here we have the balance after 15 years of democratic leading! In pursuit of votes and cartels that give them ridiculous and deaf majorities, the governments of political parties abdicated from their prior duty: the assertion at any price of the prestige of national state."*[18] The exclamation point is used to express a strong feeling and also to attire the attention of the receptor of the message.

The leaders have lost all Romanian feelings and they are not interested at all in affirming the Romanian nation. Thus, the nation has lost its models, benchmarks which will lead to its collapse. Here we can talk about a form of nationalist discourse.

He becomes even more virulent to the political class, declaring that "*The Romanian political parties are the result of a mating between Masonry and the democracy which was foreign to our realities".*[19]

Again, the political class sold the interest of the nation, in the interest of its own. What is the meaning behind his words? That the people should follow them, should offer them the power in order to reach power and to change the form of government.

Conclusion

From the content analysis of Codreanu and Marin there are some conclusions to be drawn.

The discourse and content analysis of the discourse are two notions that changed their meaning over time. To give a precise definition of each of them is quiet difficult due to the complexity of the terms.

As concerns the discourses that we have analysed in the herein paper, the first assumption to make it is that the discourse of the Legionary leaders is a political one, due to the fact that through it they want to reach power. We can consider it a tool, among many others in obtaining power.

In general, the political discourses are structured within two themes: a negative and a positive one. There is a predominance of the negative aspect reflected especially when they refer to the leaders and political class. Consequently, the antithesis between us and them is a permanent aspect in each discourse. The purpose of this negative meaning is to create a bad image of the opponents. From the quotes we have remarked that there are some negative aspects that are frequently used: poverty, moral degradation, sabotage of the political state, complicity between the leaders and the Jews, dissatisfaction with regard to the form of government.

Another important aspect revealed by the content analysis is that they use a large variety of figures of speech (metaphor, hyperbola, enumeration and rhetoric question) in order to impress the electorate and at the same time to create an emotional relation. The verbs are used in present tense simple or continuous (when they want to transmit a negative aspect) to

[18]*Ibidem*, p.121.
[19]*Ibidem*, p.108.

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emphasis the critical situation of a decision taken by the authorities and in past tense when the negative aspect has repercussions on present.

The labelling of the leaders and the tendency to generalize each negative aspect are other two important features of their discourse. Furthermore they tend to see their opponents as the embodiment of the evil and guilty for the precarious state of the nation. The *scapegoat* is always the other.

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