Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Philologica, **13**, 2 (2021) 161–176

DOI: 10.2478/ausp-2021-0019

Saying 'No' to Immigration Quota: An Analysis of Evaluative Language in Hungarian and Romanian Political Discourse

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Abstract. One of the most controversial issues during the 2015 migrant crisis and the subsequent process of reformulating immigration policies by the European Union was that of the mandatory resettlement quota. Hungary and Romania formulated very different positions related to migration, but both were critical regarding the mandatory quota. This study analyses parts of declarations and speeches of two heads of state, Viktor Orbán for Hungary and Klaus Iohannis for Romania, concerning the quota issue, by employing the framework of evaluative language, which focuses on the dialogic, interpersonal aspects of utterances. Beyond the fact of rejecting the quota, Martin and White's (2005) taxonomy brings to the forefront the linguistic means through which the two speakers evaluate the subject (a problem of logistics that needs a pragmatic approach or a matter of cultural and national identity) and establish (dis)alignment as representatives of their countries ("official voices" of Hungary and Romania) with regard to the EU position.

Keywords: evaluative language, value position, alignment, European migrant crisis, resettlement quota

1. Introduction

The 2015 migrant crisis dramatically and quite unexpectedly placed the issue of immigration on the agenda of European countries, prompting them to state a more or less firm position on this subject and determining the EU itself to revise its migrant and asylum policy in order to reach a consensus among its members. The mandatory resettlement quota has been one source of discontent and determined some countries, Hungary and Romania among them, to vote against it during the meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council in September 2015.

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This situation offers the possibility to analyse two discourses with different contextual premises, that of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and of Romanian President Klaus Iohannis, in an issue which prompts a similar position: criticism towards the EU's mandatory resettlement quota policy. This study aims to identify specific rhetorical strategies and linguistic markers through which this negative evaluation is formulated considering the diverse situational contexts and the speakers' personal style.

2. The mandatory resettlement quota

The idea of a mandatory quota first emerged in May 2015, when it became clear that the countries dealing with the large influx of migrants were unable to handle the in-processing and accommodation of such an amount of people. It was planned that a given number of refugees would be distributed to all countries of the EU, based on the size of their population and their GDP. After a few preliminary discussions, the quota system was adopted during a meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 22 September 2015 despite the fact that several Eastern European states voted against it.

Although its intended purpose was to release pressure on the states that represented the main gateways for the migrants, the mandatory resettlement quota became a controversial issue that "literally split Europe", as Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov stated later, in 2018 (*Reuters* January 2018). Objections were generated by its mandatory aspect which goes against the national sovereignty of Member States and the principles that substantiate the free partnership among European states (Patrick, September 2015). Romania, for example, answered the EU call to solidarity among members, with a voluntary offer to shelter 1,785 migrants, but it was compelled to receive a number of 6,351. Hungary, on the other hand, refused the entire quota mechanism, considering it to be a misguided procedure, not likely to produce the desired results.

The debate around the quota system seemed to subside in September 2020, when the concept was replaced with a so-called "solidarity á la carte", consisting in voluntary participation to the effort and using financial incentives for members to receive refugees (*The Guardian* September 2020).

3. Evaluative language

The theoretical antecedents of the study of evaluative language are traceable to Halliday's systemic functional linguistics and Bakhtin's concepts of dialogism and heteroglossia. In his description of language metafunctions, Halliday names

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the interpersonal (besides ideational and textual) as one of the three fundamental roles that language plays in our lives. While the ideational helps us make sense of our environment and express our thoughts, through the interpersonal we connect to our communities and interact with our peers. The textual dimension represents the basic function in a text through which meaning and cohesion are created (Halliday–Matthiessen 2014).

In describing the way novels reflect the multifaceted social fabric of society, Bakhtin defines heteroglossia as "distinctive links and interrelationships between utterances" which disperse into "rivulets and droplets" constituting a symphony of voices (Holquist 1981: 263). Their constant interaction results in a dialogue which represents the complexity of our world.

Studies concerning evaluative language have been tracing various lexico-grammatical manifestations of attitude and stance (Bieber–Finnegan 1988, 1989) as well as discursive strategies which convey them (Lemke 1998, DuBois 2007). Analyses on evaluation have been predominantly conducted on media texts (Bednarek 2006, Martin–White 2005), with very few studies focussing on political discourse (Al-Shunnag 2014, Berlin 2020).

Perhaps more than other types of utterances, political discourse specifically reflects a many-faceted, interpersonal function of language since, even in the most banal situations, a high communicative value is attributed to it not only by those it explicitly addresses but by all those who may consider themselves involved in the matter. In politics, it is simply impossible not to communicate.

The prevalence of identity politics in today's society (Fukuyama 2018) entails that wielding language as a political tool has a lot more to do with attitude, emotion, and expression of involvement than with the domain of the ideational. Since its approach to language is one that explores the interpersonal, the study of evaluative language in political discourse can provide valuable insight into the way political leaders manage to adhere to, activate, or, on exceptional occasions, create conceptual frames underlying "communities of values and beliefs" (Martin–White 2005) by addressing their target audience.

According to the premise proposed by Martin and White, any act of verbal communication is dialogic in the sense that it contains the speaker's stance towards prior utterances, alternative viewpoints, and anticipated reactions. In terms of this taxonomy, the two speakers' positioning is analysed along the axes of engagement and attitude viewed as scaled systems within the text displaying "regions of meaning and the proximity of one meaning to another along a cline" (Martin–White 2005: 16). Graduation, the third value, allows the possibility to measure upscaling and downscaling and provides a "mapping" of interconnections among the lexico-grammatical realizations of the two domains on a textual and contextual level.

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In the two discourses analysed, both speakers express disagreement and criticism towards the mandatory quota system, which is embedded into very different evaluations of the issue of migration. The strikingly different assessments of the situation by the two speakers are as much influenced by the different degrees of involvement of their countries as by the dissimilar personal style each politician approaches the issue.

3.1. Engagement: Monoglossic and heteroglossic discourse

The speaker's intersubjective positioning is assigned to the category of engagement through which s/he engages other viewpoints, including that of the putative addressee, and creates a value position which is aligned with others or not. Alignment with alternative positions and the degree to which the speaker accepts them as valid can be traced in the text by the monoglossic or heteroglossic formulations of propositions.

Monoglossic utterances represent value positions which are acknowledged as factual, recognized, with no need to be engaged with. In such cases, either a totally aligned audience is assumed by the speaker or those holding alternative positions are simply excluded from the discursive community (Martin–White 2005: 157). The monoglossic nature of an utterance is largely influenced by the communicative objectives of the speaker and the nature of the proposition itself. As it is revealed below, the communicative contexts of President Iohannis's press conferences provide a predominantly informative frame for his utterances, which favours a monoglossic formulation.

Heteroglossic utterances acknowledge a diverse communicative backdrop which the speaker invokes or allows in order to construe his/her own stance: s/he may place him/-herself at odds with other viewpoints by disclaiming those assertions, entertain the possibility of their validity, distance him-/herself through simply attributing propositions to a third party, or proclaim his/her complete alignment with them.

In the context of this study, three aspects are indicated under the domain of engagement: linguistic manifestations of the speakers' value position, revealing where the politicians stand in the question of mandatory quotas; the degree of their alignment (agreement or disagreement) with the EU policy on the matter; the expected degree of solidarity of the putative audience, which is indicated by the speakers' attempts to negotiate the endorsement of those listening to them or, on the contrary, they take it for granted as a predetermined condition.

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3.2. Attitude: Affect, judgment, and appreciation

The speakers' value position is to a great extent indicated by a variety of attitudinal markers dispersed throughout the texts. Attitude is present in the texts through the regions of affect, covering elements that express emotions, judgment, assessing behaviour, and appreciation, pertaining to the value of things and phenomena – as quite often the presence of these elements is not only expressed by explicit, inscribed lexis. A graded analysis must also include implicit, invoked indications of attitude present at an ideational level. In these cases, the speaker's attitude is rendered by the actual meaning of his/her propositions, which invite or provoke the listener to have an attitudinal response. As one of the examples below demonstrates, lexical metaphors, often used by Prime Minister Orbán, may significantly amplify a speaker's and a listener's attitudinal position.

4. The corpus of the study

The generic categories of the speeches delivered on various occasions are quite distinct in the case of the two speakers. While President Iohannis spoke about migrants during press conferences, with mainly Romanian journalists present, for Prime Minister Orbán the genre varies according to the situational context.

In the case of the Hungarian politician, fragments from two speeches have been selected for the present study. Chronologically, the first one is held in Strasbourg on 19 May 2015, when the European Council met for an extraordinary session to discuss "the Hungarian question", namely the Government's intention to harden punishment for illegal border crossing, going as far as reintroducing capital punishment (*Euractiv* May 2015). At this time, Hungary was preparing to change the migrant policy, due to which the government initiated a national consultation sending a 12-item questionnaire to all of its citizens over 18. It was also two weeks before this event that the EU proposed the quota scheme (*The Guardian* May 2015).

Further excerpts originate from one of the regular meetings with the Hungarian ambassadors, which took place on 7 September 2015. At this time, the border fence was being built, and many migrants started marching towards the Austrian border without being registered. The Justice and Home Affairs Council, where the decision of the mandatory resettlement quota was adopted, met on 22 September.

The press conferences where President Iohannis tackled the official Romanian position regarding the migrant question occurred mainly in September 2015. Since it is not part of the Schengen zone guaranteeing free movement among EU countries, Romania's implication as an EU member extended only as far as the question of the mandatory quota was concerned, in addition to matters of

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national and regional security. The excerpts are part of meetings with the press occasioned by various issues that took place on 7, 10, and 23 September 2015.

5. The two protagonists as official "voices" for their countries

As representatives of their countries and as political actors adhering to specific ideologies, the two speakers could not be more different. In the last decade, Viktor Orbán has gained notoriety by his conservative, nationalist, Eurosceptic discourse, which has triggered him as a "brand" in European politics (Waller). After several reported incidents on the national border, Prime Minister Orbán caused indignation in Brussels when he announced and pursued his plan to build a fence, "a technical border lock", at the Southern border of Hungary (with neighbouring Serbia and Croatia). As a leading politician in the region, his anti-migrationist discourse surely influenced the most categorical opposition to the quota system among the EU countries, formulated by the countries of the Visegrád Four.

As opposed to the Hungarian Prime Minister, Klaus Iohannis is generally viewed as a liberal and a pro-European leader (*Euractiv* November 2015). Upon his re-election as president in 2019, a press release from the European People's Party called him a "pillar of stability and responsibility" (EPP November 2019) in the region, a reputation which has been accruing since his surprising entrance on the political stage in 2014. At this time, as a relatively unknown presidential candidate, his promise was a politics of "less show, less noise" (DW 2014), to which his moderate style of speech seems to align.

Both speakers[1] assume and take for granted the position of representing their country's official standpoint. In the case of the Romanian President, some self-reference through the pronoun "I" occurs and alternates with reference to Romania: "We regret, and I regret that this decision […] has been taken through majority vote",[2] which is later followed by "these mandatory quotas were refused by Romania from the very beginning" (September 23).[3] At times, he explicitly states this connection as in: "it was then that I first presented […] Romania's opinion, which I made my own" (September 7).[4] The most often used way to signal his role as the official spokesperson for Romania is his use of the inclusive "we" or "us", as in the analysed excerpts he is addressing Romanian journalists and informing the Romanian public: "the phenomenon is important to us because

1 All English translations of Romanian and Hungarian quotations throughout the article are my own, K. K.

2 *Regretăm, şi eu regret, că această decizie […] s-a luat prin vot majoritar.*

3 *Aceste cote obligatorii au fost refuzate de România din capul locului.*

4 *Atunci am prezentat prima dată […] opinia României, opinia pe care mi-am însuşit-o.*

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we are in the European Union. Still, in Romania, there is no pressure in this area" (September 7).[5]

In the case of the Hungarian Prime Minister, the use of "we" is completed by reference to "Hungarians", identifying himself as part of the nation: "Hungarians generally like being straightforward about difficult matters. This is what we are like" (Strasbourg speech).[6] In another instance, Viktor Orbán sets himself as an example of one who represents "Hungarian interests": "I can only recommend my own example to you […] the more you are being attacked, the more trenchantly you should formulate your point of view" (meeting with the ambassadors).[7]

6. A general evaluation of the phenomenon of migration: The two perspectives

The migrant crisis of 2015 and the ensuing events represent an important cornerstone in EU policy, as it has forced member countries to bring common decisions, and it has been testing their capacity to cooperate in matters of unprecedented complexity for the organization. The official position of the two countries on the issue of migration is very different, and their attitude towards the question of the mandatory quota constitutes the only similarity in their standpoints.

6.1. President Klaus Iohannis

Given the nature of the communicative context itself (press conferences) and the characteristics of the audience (journalists representing national media), much of President Iohannis's discourse on this topic is of an experiential/informational nature. The frame of these speeches is mostly provided by the factual narrative the President conveys in order to explain and inform the public about his own personal role and actions as an official representative of Romania in diplomatic negotiations pertaining to the subject of migration. Since Romania's involvement is an indirect one, as a member of the European Union, the President's role in the scenario of the press conferences is that of mediating between the Union-level events in Brussels and the public at home. These periodically occurring meetings with the press are the scene of a "running translation", if you will, of the events related to the migration crisis and their concrete effects on Romania.

5 *(…) fenomenul e important pentru noi, fiindcă suntem în Uniunea Europeană. Însă în România nu apare o presiune în această zonă.*

6 *A magyarok általában szeretnek egyenesen beszélni a nehéz dolgokról. Ilyenek vagyunk.*

7 *Én csak a saját példámat tudom Önöknek ajánlani, […] minél jobban támadják Önöket, annál erőteljesebben fogalmazzák meg álláspontjukat.*

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Due to this general trait, the evaluative dimension of President Iohannis's discourse is mostly neutral and expository, often monoglossic, since he is addressing a compliant audience that takes the information at face value: "I think it is adequate to recount a little the evolution of the discussions about the phenomenon of migration" (September 7),[8] he starts one of the meetings and continues in a similar tone. It can be stated that the President's account has a low-key attitudinal value as it presents no inscribed judgment. Should any reference to attitude occur, it is inserted into the frame of the narrative: "That's when I first presented – and I think I was very clear there – Romania's opinion."[9] The President's positive judgment of his own behaviour is only relevant inasmuch as it seeks to illustrate the quality – and the content – of the official position of the country, conveyed at this point as factual information.

As stated earlier, Romania did not distance itself from accommodating newcomers, and a great part of the discussions on the issue of migration converged around figures. In his declarations, while delivering a prepared speech or answering questions from journalists, the President's assessments of this process are primarily logistical ones, which do not relate to free choice or willingness but much rather to material and objective limitations. In the excerpt below, the use of the conditional or the hypothetical "let's say" are markers of willingness to search for solutions, which invoke high positive appreciation of Romania as being a responsible Union member which, despite its limitations, actively contributes to a satisfactory resolution:

> (1) These places are available in six reception facilities which exist in Romania today. Still, the problem is more complicated than the mere reception. […] it wouldn't be complicated, let's say, turning an old barracks into a reception centre, but Romania doesn't have the capacity to integrate these refugees into society. We, I repeat, have solidarity with other countries, but we have to assess how much we can do, and do as much as is now possible.[10]

In his assessments of the situation, the President maintains a neutral attitude, urging towards moderation, acknowledging the possibility of exaggerated reactions but at the same time distancing himself from them by the use of denial, the attitudinal sanction through the inscribed lexis (adjectives: *xenophobe*, *hysterical*), and the positive judgment of recommended conduct: "We can handle

8 *Cred că este bine să relatez un pic evoluția discuțiilor despre fenomenul migrației.*

9 *Atunci am prezentat prima dată – şi cred că am fost foarte clar acolo – opinia României.*

10 *Aceste locuri sunt disponibile în şase centre de primire, care există în România în ziua de astăzi. Însă problema este mult mai complicată decât simpla primire. […] Nu ar fi foarte complicat, să zicem, să transformăm o veche cazarmă în centru de primire, dar România nu are capacitatea să integreze pe aceşti refugiați în societate. Noi, repet, suntem solidari cu celelalte țări, însă trebuie să vedem cât putem noi să facem, atât să facem, şi mai mult nu putem acum* (September 7).

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this situation calmly and responsibly, showing solidarity towards countries with a high number of refugees. It is not the case to react hysterically, and it is by no means the case to reveal our xenophobic side" (September 7).[11]

6.2. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán

In the context of the great numbers of undocumented refugees crossing the Hungarian border, Prime Minister Orbán discusses this issue as a phenomenon of illegal border crossing: "Facts speak clearly: there is a huge migratory pressure on Europe. As compared to 2010, the degree of illegal migration has increased three times. In Hungary, the number of illegal border crossings has increased 20, that is, twenty times higher" (Strasbourg speech).[12] The excerpt maintains a seemingly factual, monoglossic formulation; yet, the repetition of the (implied) high number adds a high value graduation, which evokes negative affect (alarm), intended as a distress signal addressed to the – assumedly – unknowing audience and an attempt to gain their solidarity towards his position.

The use of tropes or various rhetorical strategies is often the Prime Minister's tool to win his audience over. In the meeting with Hungarian ambassadors, which is in many ways a diplomatic call to arms, he describes the situation as one in which Hungary is forced to endure actions beyond its control by stating: "They have kicked the door on us."[13] The use of this powerful lexical metaphor in order to suggest an act of aggression (on an ideational level) is consistent with his repeated call for defending the physical borders of Hungary as a concrete pursuance of the supreme national interest: keeping Hungary Hungarian (Strasbourg speech). In addition, it may bear a considerable attitudinal impact in engaging the audience to identify as part of the nation which has been mistreated.

The Prime Minister's discourse is mostly heteroglossic in that he uses various ways of engagement to present the alternative position, be that the one represented by the EU or general liberal doctrine, and then sets his own value position against it. The following excerpt seemingly entertains an alternative point of view as justified only to include a negative assessment: "We have no right to influence or even to state an opinion about other countries' experiments related to their wish to live together with a large community which has a different cultural and religious foundation than those who originally live there" (meeting with ambassadors).[14]

11 *Putem să tratăm chestiunea cu calm, cu răspundere, cu solidaritate față de țările unde există un număr mare de refugiați. Nu este cazul să reacționăm isteric, cum, sigur, nu este cazul să ne arătăm latura xenofobă.*

12 *A tények beszélnek: óriási migrációs nyomás nehezedik ma Európára. 2010-hez képest Európában háromszorosára nőtt az illegális bevándorlás mértéke. Magyarországon rövid idő alatt 20, azaz húszszorosára emelkedett az illegális határátlépők száma.*

13 *Ránkrúgták az ajtót.*

14 *Nincs jogunk arra, hogy befolyásolni akarjuk, vagy akár csak véleményt akarjunk mondani más*

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The inscribed negative appreciation of "experiment" aligns with further, more categorical statements of position: "[W]e keep to Hungary's present ethnical and cultural composition, and we do not wish to admit anybody's right to force us to change that."[15] In this proposition, which clearly illustrates Prime Minister Orbán's general position on migration, the speaker directly rejects any alternatives by the use of disclaim, indexed by a negation. Furthermore, it is an illustration of his method of combining two opposing positions in one proposition (we vs. anybody who should "force us to change").

7. Evaluation of the idea of mandatory quota

Criticism and distancing from the European Union's policy to impose mandatory migrant quotas on Member States is the only common ground in the two speakers' position on the issue of migration. The following examples illustrate the two speakers' discourse traits in the more specific context of the mandatory quota policy. Both speakers construe a value position opposing the one represented by the European Union and use the strategies consistent with their own personal style in order to mark distancing from that policy. Besides their distinct styles, which influence the graduation and the attitude manifested in their discourses, situational context represents another relevant factor, mostly in construing the putative audience. The Romanian President addresses journalists at home, and his attitude is consistent with the expository role he assumes in rendering the events and facts to the public. The two examples illustrating the Hungarian Prime Minister's position on the quota, on the other hand, include one speech addressed to an audience that does not share the same value position, while the other takes place on familiar ground, in front of an audience with a high degree of solidarity.

7.1. President Klaus Iohannis

As demonstrated above, President Iohannis's general assessment and attitude concerning the issue of migration is a moderate one, as Romania is more or less a third party participant to the subject, with a goal to maintain "a balanced ratio between solidarity and responsibility".[16] The adoption of the mandatory quota policy, nevertheless, "calls into question a mechanism which turns the whole

országoknak arról a kísérletéről, hogy az ott élőktől különböző vallási, kulturális alapokon álló nagy közösséggel kívánnak együtt élni.

15 *[R]agaszkodunk Magyarország jelenlegi etnikai, kulturális összetételéhez, és nem akarjuk elismerni senkinek a jogát, hogy ránk kényszerítse ennek megváltoztatását.*

16 *raport echilibrat între solidaritate şi responsabilitate.*

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problem into a very complex one because it raises questions over the operating principles of the European Union" (September 23).[17]

The President makes a series of heteroglossic formulations, which place the two standpoints as oppositional. The following excerpts are parts of meetings with the press, which took place before the quota vote (September 10 – (1) and (2)) and immediately after it (September 23 – (3) and (4)):

> (2) I have acknowledged this project presented in the European Parliament with some dissatisfaction. The fact that, on the part of the Commission, such a – quite bureaucratic – project was worked out and presented, in my opinion, will not lead to a solution.[18]
>
> (3) What we don't consider to be a solution, and we don't find appropriate is to speak of mandatory quotas, calculated in a bureaucratic, accounting style, I could say, without consulting the Member States.[19]
>
> (4) We agreed from the very beginning to receive refugees within the limits of our resources. What has not seemed appropriate, and it still does not seem appropriate, is the mandatory-quota-based calculation, a mathematical one, which allows almost no consideration of the realities of each country.[20]
>
> (5) We regret, and I regret, that this decision, instead of using consensus, negotiation, and discussions, has been taken based on majority vote. I do not believe that imposing mandatory quotas or imposing a majority vote will solve this problem.[21]

On the one hand, the President reiterates the initially formulated position: there is no difference in meaning between (2) and (3); what is more, the explicit, disapproving inscribed lexis of negative judgment ("not appropriate", "bureaucratic", and "accounting style" as semantically similar to "mathematical

17 *Pune in discuție un mecanism care face întreaga problemă foarte complexă, fiindcă se pun în discuție principiile după care lucrează Uniunea Europeană.*

18 *Am luat act cu oarece nemulțumire de acest proiect prezentat în Parlamenul European. Faptul că din partea Comisiei s-a lucrat pe un proiect destul de birocratic care a fost prezentat, după părerea mea nu va duce spre o soluționare.*

19 *Ceea ce nu considerăm că este o soluție şi nu considerăm că este oportun e să vorbim despre cote obligatorii, calculate într-un mod foarte birocratic, contabiliceşte, aş putea spune, fără a consulta statele membre.*

20 *Noi am fost din capul locului de acord să primim refugiați în limita resurselor noastre. Ceea ce nu ni s-a părut oportun şi în continuare nu ni se pare oportun este calculul pe bază de cote obligatorii, calcul matematic care nu ține cont aproape deloc de realitățile din fiecare stat.*

21 *Regretăm, şi eu regret, că această decizie, în loc să fie luată prin consens, în baza unor negocieri şi discuții, s-a luat prin vot majoritar. Eu nu cred că impunerea cotelor obligatorii, impunerea printr-un vot majoritar, rezolvă această problemă.*

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calculations") is very similar and is repeated in a few other instances. Another constant trait is the frequent use of negations throughout the texts that explicitly formulates the categorical rejection of the EU's strategy through disclaim.

Nevertheless, there is a graduation from lower value judgment (1) formulated before the decisive vote to the more explicit negative assessment after the decision to impose quotas was taken. The use of "some", "quite", and "in my opinion" in (1) is a hesitant, subdued formulation of disalignment with the EU project, reflecting the President's intention to maintain a neutral stance. These markers disappear from his September 23 declaration, where he contrasts his own value position of "consensus, negotiation, and discussions" with the "imposed majority votes" that represent the criticized alternative of the Union. The verbs "regret", "not believe" (4) additionally invoke negative judgment as opposed to the more neutral "acknowledge" (1).

7.2. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán

The different contexts of the two selected speeches highly determine the markers of distancing and the degree of attitudinal values expressed in the Prime Minister's discourse. The speech delivered in the European Parliament is a defence of his position in the migrant question, and more specifically the issue of mandatory quota, addressed to the audience representing the opposed value position, that of the European Commission. Consequently, the speaker places his criticism into a dialogical frame, in which the audience is construed as adverse and its position as opposed to the one he represents: "I came today to you because today you, here in Strasbourg, are speaking about my country."[22] The markers "you" and "my country" designate the two opposed sides, yet the speech continues with a feigned alignment, which is, in fact, mocking and covertly reproving: "I find it commendable that you are setting on your agenda important matters that really preoccupy European people."[23] The statement suggests the opposite, insinuating that the European Parliament does not actually tackle "important" matters.

In a reading which places it into the context of Viktor Orbán's general position on the quota, this statement is a low-key attack through irony to the inability that the European Union has demonstrated – in the Prime Minister's view – in solving this problem. In the different context of addressing Hungarian ambassadors, he notes more overtly: "Instead of saying how we must defend our borders so that we know who we're letting in and how serious the problem is, we are discussing this. We're talking at a slogan level. And about whether it should be mandatory or not."[24]

22 *Azért jöttem ma Önök közé, mert Önök ma itt Strassburgban hazámról, Magyarországról beszélnek.*

23 *Üdvözlendőnek tartom, hogy Önök olyan fontos kérdéseket tűznek napirendre, amelyek valóban foglalkoztatják az európai embereket.*

24 *És ahelyett, hogy arról beszélnénk, hogy meg kell védeni a határokat, hogy tudjuk egyáltalán, hogy kit engedtünk be és mekkora a probléma, erről beszélünk. Jelszavak szintjén beszélünk.*

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The most important discursive "gesture" in the Prime Minister's speech in Strasbourg is qualifying the quota policy as madness, which in itself may seem inappropriate for the given context. The following excerpts illustrate the mitigating strategies through which lower force graduation is combined with the strong attitudinal value of the word:

> (6) It is my conviction that what we now know as a proposition of the European Commission, is, in our straightforward language, absurd, close to what we could call madness.[25]

> (7) I'm saying this with due respect, but in my conviction it is madness to allow the asylum seekers into Europe and distribute them according to some artificially established quota.[26]

Formulations like "close to what we could call" preceded by a more neutral "absurd", "saying this with due respect" have the role of adjusting the force of the utterance which openly defies his audience. The repetition of "it is my conviction" places the speaker on a firm but at the same time defensive position assumed in facing a possibly hostile audience. Moreover, the two examples are further illustrations of the above mentioned argumentative style rendered through heteroglossic formulations in Viktor Orbán's discourse.

In the next example, the Prime Minister addresses a friendly audience, whose solidarity is assumed, and it demonstrates another characteristic of Orbán's discourse, the use of tropes, namely lexical metaphor, as a method of provoking attitudinal response:

> (8) The thing is that …we are a flock of sheep. All the 28 of us. And our leaders tell us that the quota is a good thing. That's why, now all 28 must repeat: "the quota is a good thing". And there is one that says: "Stop!" But clearly, the voice of the one with the bell around its neck is more important (…) Still, have we thought this through? Are we certain we have planned this well? Is it certain that the quota system will solve the problem of the thousands streaming in on a daily basis?[27]

Meg arról, hogy akkor ez kötelező legyen-e vagy nem.

25 *Az, amit most javaslatként ismerünk mint Európai Bizottsági javaslatot, az a mi egyenes nyelvünkön szólva abszurd, közel ahhoz, amit őrültségnek nevezhetünk.*

26 *Kellő tisztelettel mondom, de meggyőződésem szerint őrültség az a javaslat, hogy engedjük be a menekülteket Európába és osszuk szét valamilyen mesterségesen meghatározott kvóta alapján.*

27 *A helyzet az..., hogy mi egy nyáj vagyunk. Mind a 28-an. És azt mondták a vezetőink, hogy a kvóta jó dolog. Ezért most mind a 28-nak azt kell mondani, hogy: „a kvóta jó dolog". És van egy, amelyik azt mondja, hogy: Állj! Persze, annak nagyobb szava van, akinek a nyakában van a csengő… „Arra kell menni"… „Rendben van." De biztos, hogy jól átgondoltuk ezt? Biztos,*

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Qualifying the countries of the European Union as a flock of sheep suggests not only their submissiveness to a questionable decision but also the fact that they all need to act together, as the speaker himself explains later.[28] This explanation may also function as a lower-key adjustment (similarly to the previous examples) of a possibly offensive trope. Still, its main function is to attract further solidarity through the self-deprecating humour aimed to diffuse the seriousness of the issue and create a more comfortable distance from it by evoking familiarity, even for a moment.

The series of rhetorical questions imposes a more sombre tone and urges the audience to consider the serious consequences of the inadequacy of the quota scheme, an inadequacy suggested by the very use of this enumeration. Yet again, the Prime Minister chooses a heteroglossic formulation that evokes the polarity of the value positions represented by him and the European Union.

8. Conclusions

Provided by the situational context of their countries and their personal discursive styles, the speakers construe an oppositional value position to the European Union's quota policy, which is equally explicit but very different in its attitudinal engagement. Generally, the Romanian President maintains a neutral style, which is predominantly expositional, often resorting to monoglossic formulations. When expressing his criticism of the mandatory quota policy, he makes use of inscribed lexis suggesting clear negative judgement of it and provides a heteroglossic perspective by juxtaposing alternative assessments of the two value positions he tackles.

The Hungarian Prime Minister produces a predominantly heteroglossic discourse by sharply contrasting the two opposed value positions (his own and the Union's), making use of various rhetorical strategies and tropes such as irony, rhetorical questions, or lexical metaphors, which provoke high attitudinal response. His diverse range of discursive strategies aims to engage and often antagonize alternative stances, in the present case the EU's position towards migration and the mandatory quota.

hogy jól kigondoltuk ezt? Biztos, hogy a kvótarendszer megoldja a zöldhatáron ezrével naponta beáramlók problémáját?

28 *Mert abban igaza van a másik huszonvalahánynak, hogy az a probléma olyan, aminek megoldása érdekében mindannyiunknak érdemes erőfeszítéseket tenni.*

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