METADISCURSIVE TECHNIQUES IN ROMANIAN PARLIAMENTARY DECLARATIONS

ANCA GÂȚĂ
"Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

1. Communicative patterns in parliamentary debates

Exploring communicative patterns in parliamentary debates has become a rich area of research recently, with the discourse of young parliaments in Central and Eastern Europe "still largely under-researched" (Ilie 2010: 193). The totalitarian regime in Romania affected not only the economy, the living standard and hence Romanians' mentalities, but also behavior and communicative practices. Romanian wooden language inherited from the socialist and communist regimes is the result of tough limitations concerning the communist activists' and the intellectuals' access to the public space to express their opinions freely. The phenomenon of parliamentary reinforcement in post-communist Romania has made it possible for new "discursive conventions" to be practiced. This study proposes to investigate specific features of Romanian parliamentary discourse with regard to metadiscursive practices, and particularly the techniques used in political declarations in the Chamber of Deputies of the Romanian Parliament.

2. Metadiscourse: definition, types, characteristics, and use

Metadiscourse has been studied under this label for more than twenty years now, being defined in a very broad way as 'discourse about discourse' or 'textual interaction'. A special issue of the *Nordic Journal of English Studies* (Ädel & Mauranen 2010) has been devoted to the study of this field, while numerous articles have been published lately on the topic of metadiscursive practices. These may be often encountered in everyday communication. According to the literature, these may be identified under a very large label, that of *textual interaction* – approached by an integrative (Mauranen 1993, 2010) / interactive (Ädel 2010) model, or under a narrower one, that of *discourse reflexivity* – approached by a non-integrative (Mauranen 1993, 2010) / reflexive (Ädel 2010) model of such practices.

3. Metadiscourse in parliamentary declarations

Metadiscursive practices seem to be a common characteristic in MPs' discourse, as referring to the Other's discourse is a regular verbal behavior in parliament speeches: "MPs' interaction is conditioned by what the interlocutors assume about each other's roles and identities, political world, as well as mental representations of the world" (Ilie 2010: 194). In ordinary circumstances metadiscursive practices may have the role of presenting a discourse

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more objectively or, on the contrary, that of casting doubt on it, criticizing it, qualifying it negatively, and thus of compromising the image of a political opponent who produced a particular discourse. Disqualifying the Other's discourse is equivalent to disqualifying and presenting the Other's character and person as unethical. Defining and "precizating" the terms used in one's own discourse (by using persuasive definitions and personal, more detailed definitions of some terms) may ensure for the speaker a more ethical image; this may be due to the way in which the speaker practices metadiscourse with the intention to produce an apparently well-organized, clear discourse. Parliamentary debates presuppose, on the one hand, a spirit of adversariality, which is manifested in position-claiming and opponent challenging acts, and, on the other, a spirit of cooperativeness, which is manifested in joint decision making and cross-party problem solving processes in order to reach commonly acceptable goals regarding future policies and suitable lines of action at a national level (Ilie 2002: 73). Since parliamentary declarations do not receive an immediate reply, using such techniques is a successful strategy for enhancing one's own ethos or attempting at diminishing or destroying the image of the Other.

3.1. ***Mentioning, quoting or pointing to one's own discourse (present or past)***

Mentioning, quoting or pointing to one's own discourse in a parliamentary declaration may be often identified in practice as a common way to present positively one's own ethos and / or to show that the speaker is or has been consistent in her behavior / beliefs / declarations.

3.1.1. *Detailing one's own wording and/or advancing justification for it*

This move is achieved by making reference to one's own speech acts. This may consist in usage declarative speech acts (see van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984: 109-110) such as definition[1], 'precization', amplification, explication, explicitization of the meaning of a particular term:

(1) ***Am spus președinte nelegitim*** *deoarece vă reamintesc că…* [1][2]
"**I said «illegitimate president**» because I remind you that …"[3]

3.1.2. *Introducing new content or meaning by using an anticipatory phrase*

In order to appeal to the audience, an anticipatory phrase may be used, having the appearance of rendering explicit the illocutionary force of the utterance, which is presented as

[1] Such definitions will more often be of a descriptive type, and not normative. Thus they will be made up by the speaker or writer so as to serve the local objective of the communicative situation. A descriptive definition indicates the meaning assigned to a word in particular circumstances and at a particular moment. (Naess 1953; 2005: 25ff) For the notion of *precization*, see also Naess (2005: 25ff), and the use of this notion in the pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation.

[2] [1] Sorin-Avram Iacoban – political declaration "Traian Băsescu is premeditating a coup-d'État against lawful state" (declarație politică intitulată „Traian Băsescu premeditează o lovitură împotriva statului de drept"), April 15, 2014. URL: http://www.cameradeputatilor.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7378&idm= 1,002&idl=1

[3] In the present study, the examples feature first the original Romanian excerpt followed by its English version, translated by the author of this study. Bold characters are used to indicate relevant items for the present analysis in point of metadiscursive practices. The brackets after the examples provided in Romanian give the reference of the parliamentary declaration serving as a source of the excerpt. These declarations are available publicly on the website of the Romanian Parliament. Each time a new source is indicated between brackets, the reference is provided in the footnote. For the subsequent excerpts from the same declaration only the reference in brackets is preserved, with no indication in the footnotes.

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an assertive. The phrase *I wish to make it clear* may be judged to serve the speaker's intention to present a political opponent as concerned with the contents of the utterance, but in a negative light. Such a use of the words presents the speaker as the instance who is aware of a fact the opponent pointed to is not aware of, although s/he was supposed to know it. This is why such a language use may stand as an indirect personal attack to the political opponent.

(2) ***Țin să precizez*** *domnului președinte nelegitim…* [1]
"**I wish to make it clear** for Mr illegitimate president…"

3.1.3. *Introducing and presenting new content or meaning as issued from an analysis*

The speaker presents his comments with respect to some issue as an analysis. If the speaker is a good linguistic observer, the improvised discourse analysis he is making resembles at some points stylistic, rhetorical or discourse analysis, with the use of a specific terminology:

(3) ***Am analizat în ultima*** *perioadă felul în care se exprimă reprezentanții clasei politice. De la* ***invocarea regnului animal*** *și până la* ***cuvinte sau expresii*** *care au o* ***conotație*** *nu tocmai morală, ce să mai vorbim de diplomatică, regăsesc în* ***discursul*** *și* ***declarațiile*** *unor colegi mesaje care mă determină să mă întreb dacă pe noi chiar ne preocupă educația copiilor noștri.* [2][1]
"**I have analyzed lately** the way in which the representatives of the political class speak out their thoughts. From **using references to** the animal kingdom to **words or phrases** which do not have quite a moral **connotation**, and so much less diplomatic, I can discover in the **discourse** and in the **declarations** of some of my colleagues' messages which make me wonder if we are indeed preoccupied by the education of our children."

3.1.4. *Making explicit the topic of the declaration at the beginning of the speech*

The MP who is given the floor may sometimes make reference to the topic or the issue approached in the declaration or to its title as early as the first sentence of the speech. Several such procedures can be encountered in the daily practice of parliament declarations.

3.1.4.1. Presenting explicitly the title of the declaration

This procedure allows the speaker to elicit the attention of the audience in a very direct way by at least three rhetorical strategies.

A. The title of the declaration may naturally include some key words pointing to the issue, the topic, or the perspective adopted in the declaration, so the speaker aims at directing the audience's attention in a straightforward way to the speech that is going to be presented:

(4) *Declarația mea politică de astăzi* ***se intitulează:*** "*Importanța dialogului social*" [9][2]
"My political declaration of today **is titled**: 'The importance of social dialogue'".

B. The title of the declaration may be ironical by the use of a phrase, a word or a syntactic pattern. In (5), the MP appeals to the audience's sense of humor, by pointing in an

[1] [2] Dorin Silviu Petrea – upsurge to political maturity (îndemn la maturitate politică), April 23, 2014. http://www.cameradeputatilor.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7382&idm=1,087&idl=1

[2] [9] Cristina Nichita – political declaration: "The importance of social dialogue" (declarație politică: „Importanța dialogului social"), April 8, 2014. http://www.cameradeputatilor.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7373&idm=1,002&idl=1

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implicit way to the fact that a particular issue is not tackled as it should in the Romanian context. From the very beginning, the mention of the title has the function of announcing in a more obvious way the position taken by the speaker – in this case not against the reform of education in itself, but as it is pushed on forward as a continuous process for more than 20 years in Romania.

(5) *Declarația mea politică de astăzi* ***se numește*** *„Veșnica reformă a învățământului”.* [3][1]
"My political declaration of today **is called** 'The ongoing reform of education'".

C. The title of the declaration may be a rhetorical question, an exclamation or an urge to act in a particular way. In the following excerpt, the speaker is appealing to the attention of the public in an explicit way by using a rather strong word, Rom. *palmă* ("slap"), by means of which personification of *Romanian schooling* is also achieved.

(6) *Sunt două declarații pe care le-am depus, dar pe aceasta din fața mea – foarte scurtă – țin în mod deosebit s-o fac publică.* ***Am intitulat-o****: "Ce palmă a primit școala românească!"* [4][2]
"I have advanced two declarations, but I care very much about making this – a very brief one – a public declaration. **I have titled it**: 'What a slap for the Romanian school!'"

3.1.4.2. Announcing the topic in a full sentence, with more or less details

The explicit reference to the topic approached in the declaration may replace the mention of the title by bringing to the attention of the audience aspects not pointed to in the title and by providing some details meant to keep the audience awake and appeal to it by cultivating the element of surprise. In (7), the topic is evaluated explicitly as *very important*. In this way the speaker points to his discourse in relationship with the audience in the Parliament and with the larger public: the issue may be important for both these audiences. The phrase *a se referi la* ("to refer to") is used to make the audience more sensible to the immediate issues approached by the declaration. This technique maintains the relationship with the audience by mediating the introduction of the sensible aspect. It allows the speaker to make reference, in this case, to the subsequent topic, *the consequences* of a particular action, by not qualifying them explicitly as negative.

(7) *Prezenta declarație politică* ***se referă la un aspect foarte important*** *în ceea ce privește viitorul unităților de procesare din industria laptelui, cărnii și panificației și, indirect, la viitorul micilor ferme sau fermieri care oferă materie primă acestor mici procesatori.* [7][3]

[1] [3] Florica Cherecheș – political declaration: "The ongoing reform of education" (declarație politică intitulată: „Veșnica reformă a învățământului"), April 15, 2014.
http://www.cameradeputatilor.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7378&idm=1,007&idl=1

[2] [4] Ion Eparu – political declaration on the topic "What a slap for the Romanian school!" (declarație politică cu subiectul: „Ce palmă a primit școala românească!'"), June 11, 2014.
http://www.cameradeputatilor.ro/pls/parlam/structura.mp?idm=127&cam=2&leg=2012

[3] [7] Ioan-Cristian Chirteș – political declaration about the future of processing equipment in dairy, meat, and bakery industry (declarație politică privind viitorul unităților de procesare din industria laptelui, cărnii și panificație), September 9, 2014. http://www.cameradeputatilor.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7405&idm =1,015&idl=1

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"This political declaration **points to / refers to a very important issue** concerning the future of processing / operational units in dairy, meat and bakery industry, and, indirectly, the future of small farms or farmers providing raw material to these small operators."

3.1.4.3. Reintroducing the topic as an indirect rhetorical question

The advantage of this technique lies in the fact that the speaker does not only address the audience the question, but also asks the audience to remember the topic and the motivation for it or at least to provide a virtual answer to the question. The topic addressed in the title is thus made present to the attention of the audience – see Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca's discussion on creating presence in this context:

(8) *Poate vă întrebați de ce să optăm pentru transportul pe Dunăre și de ce acum?* [8][1]
"You are perhaps wondering why we should choose the Danube as a transportation route and why now?"

3.1.4.4. Pointing to the primary, secondary or particular aspects referred to in a declaration

A declaration may often refer to previous events and speeches or can anticipate on aspects and issues to be tackled in the current speech or those to follow. The verb *to remind* is used to point to past events, but its meaning is somewhat extended to include "existential aspects" available to the memory of the audience, yet not organized in the paradigm the speaker makes reference to. Aspects which the audience is more or less aware of may be evoked to be later reorganized and structured into an argumentation. This is why utterances like (9) and (10) may point backwards and in advance in time to objects of discourse such as facts, events, speeches, particular existential aspects, as well as argumentations to follow. Again, terms such as *a aminti* ("to remind"), *a se referi la* ("to refer to") are used to make the audience more sensible to the immediate issues approached in the declaration. This technique maintains the relationship with the audience by mediating the introduction of the sensible aspect. It allows the speaker, in (9), to announce the subsequent topic as familiar to the audience, and, in (10), to make reference to *the consequences* of a particular action, by not qualifying them explicitly as negative. In (9), the aspects announced work as explicit starting points, or premises, in an argumentation. In (10), the consequences pointed to are part of an instrumental argument, i.e. an argument based on a cause-effect relationship, presented as an argumentum *ad consequentiam*.

(9) *... aș vrea **să vă amintesc doar câteva aspecte**...* [8]
"… I would like **to remind you just a few aspects**…"
(10) *Mai concret, **doresc să mă refer la consecințele care rezultă**...* [7]
"More concretely, **I wish to refer to the ensuing consequences**…"

3.1.4.5. Providing explicit examples serving as arguments meant to support a standpoint or a substandpoint

Advancing an argument as an example is a successful rhetorical technique. Providing an example is a common discursive technique and this can be done implicitly, without mentioning that an example follows or has just been provided. Presenting it explicitly is more

[1] [8] Dorin Silviu Petrea – apology for the development of a river transportation route on the Danube (pledoarie pentru susținerea dezvoltării unei autostrăzi fluviale pe Dunăre), September 23, 2014. http://www.cameradeputatilor.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7410&idm=1,162&idl=1

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effective. An argument may consist in a statement the propositional content of which might be considered untrue by the audience. The argument would then be less acceptable or weaker since the statement it relies upon needs support itself. An example acts as evidence in such a case and is more difficult to question or to attack, especially in the case under study, where there is no immediate reaction of the audience to the declaration. The same propositional content presented as an example taken from the reality or from the immediate context makes the argument more resistant to refutation (see Doury 1997) since it is difficult to attack evidence. Moreover, whether the example is known to the audience or not, there is some chance that the audience becomes interested more in the factuality provided by the example and lose attention for the general line of the argumentation or debate. In (11), the speaker implicitly qualifies the facts and the events negatively by using phrases and terms such as *appealing to dialogue*, *condemning the actions of*, *draw the attention*, *speak about humanitarian assistance*. He is also using the counter factual *I would have liked* and practicing a type of *praeteritio* to voice his stance towards both the events and his own speech acts. The use of these two devices combined allows him to take a distance from what he is saying and at the same time condemn implicitly the facts and events mentioned. The remaining declaration does not explicitly appeal to dialogue, condemn actions, draw the attention, speak about humanitarian actions, since in some way this has been achieved and it would be redundant. Instead, the speaker chooses to refer directly to the actions to be taken by the whole political community by the use of an inclusive *we: we cannot oversee…, we don't have the right to…, we cannot accept that…, …is not a temporary game*:

(11) *Să nu uităm, **de exemplu**, că majoritatea fermelor din România sunt, de fapt, ferme de subzistență care au între unu și cinci capete de bovine, care depind de aceste unități de procesare și, în acest caz, riscăm distrugerea șeptelului de animale din România.* [7]
"Let's not forget, **for instance,** that most farms in Romania are, in fact, subsistence farms holding between one and five cattle, depending on these processing units, and, in this case, there is risk that the cattle stock in Romania should be destroyed."

3.1.4.6. Announcing the types of speech acts to be performed in the discourse framework

In (12), excerpted from a declaration on the occasion of Ukraine's National Day, the author is announcing his stance towards particular events judged as negative or with negative consequences by stating what speech acts his discourse consists of. Since the discourse might have seemed too direct and offensive on such a day, the speaker chooses to down-tone his comments in order to make them less aggressive. The strategy preserves the speaker's face and shows the speaker's concern with the face of the audience who presumably expect a more optimistic message on a national day.

(12) ***Mi-ar fi plăcut** ca în această zi, alături de membrii comunității ucraineni din România, să pot privi fără îngrijorare la viitorul european al Ucrainei, să nu fiu nevoit să **fac apel la dialog** și la găsirea de soluții pașnice care să ducă la încetarea imediată a confruntărilor, să nu **condamn acțiunile** grupărilor separatiste, să nu **vorbesc despre asistență umanitară** sau să **atrag atenția** asupra necesității prevenirii unei crize ale cărei efecte se pot propaga dincolo de granița ucraineană.* [6][1]

[1] [6] Ion Marocico – political declaration titled "Ukraine's Independence Day" (declarație politică cu titlul: „Ziua Independenței Ucrainei"), September 9, 2014. http://www.cameradeputatilor.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7405&idm= 1,008&idl=1

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"**I would have liked** on this day, joining the members of the Ukrainian community in Romania, to be able to watch without anxiety Ukraine's European future, not to be forced to **appeal to dialogue** and finding peaceful solutions leading to immediate cease of confrontations, not to **condemn the actions** of separatist groups, not to **speak about humanitarian assistance** or **draw the attention** on the necessity of preventing a crisis whose effects may propagate across the Ukrainian border."

(13) *Ceea ce se întâmplă de câteva luni în Ucraina și nivelul la care au ajuns aceste tensiuni* ***nu poate fi trecut cu vederea***. ***Nu avem dreptul*** *de a minimiza semnificația Euromaidanului și, mai ales,* ***nu putem accepta*** *ca libertatea și unitatea poporului ucrainean să fie decise prin prisma jocurilor geopolitice. Amenințarea integrității teritoriale* ***nu este un joc pasager*** *...* [6]
"What has been going on for several months in Ukraine and the level reached by these tensions **cannot be overseen**. **We don't have the right** to minimize the importance of the pro European uprising and **we cannot accept** especially that the freedom and the unity of the Ukrainian people should be decided through the lens of geopolitical games. Threatening territorial integrity **is not a temporary game**…"

3.2. ***Mentioning, quoting or pointing to the discourse of the Other (past or imaginary)***

Mentioning, quoting or pointing to the discourse of the Other / the Other's wording / speech act may be done in several ways, which will not be all illustrated in this study. The main functions of a report / quote / reference to another speaker's discourse might be:

a) qualifying the Other's discourse positively – valuing it; this can be done by an interpretation and an elaboration of the Other's discourse, by providing illustrations, explanations, in order to show confirmation and adherence to what it has been said and adopting the same or a similar position;

b) qualifying the Other's discourse negatively – criticizing, attacking, refuting it; this may be achieved by:

i) providing a specific interpretation of the Other's actual discourse, or

ii) evoking an imaginary discourse of the Other with the purpose of providing an unethical image of the Other. In the study material the latter function is performed in several ways.

3.2.1. *Argumentum ad hominem*

The argumentum *ad hominem* may be used in its abusive, circumstantial or *tu quoque* versions.

3.2.1.1. Abusive *ad hominem*

A particular subtype of abusive *ad hominem* may be used to attack a political adversary by pointing not directly to the adversary, but to one of his (speech) acts. In (14), the speaker qualifies negatively the language, i.e. the assertions or discourse of the political adversary (Romania's president) by presenting them metaphorically as belonging to a *pirate* – thus comparing him to a pirate and also alluding to one of the former occupations of the president (ship captain). The audience is expected to use extra-textual information – the large context – in order to fully interpret the phrase *pirate language*, by adding to the ordinary interpretation of this phrase information on the former occupation of the president. In this case, the abusive *ad hominem* is twofold: the usual non neutral interpretation of the phrase *pirate language* in non marked contexts, where the term *pirate* brings in negative emotional content adds to a

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non opaque interpretation which brings to the fore the image of the President as a former ship captain, adopting a tyrannical or despotic attitude.

(14) *... revine la **limbajul de pirat** amenințând în stânga și-n dreapta ...* [1]
"… comes back to his **pirate language** by threatening…"

3.2.1.2. Circumstantial *ad hominem*

A circumstantial *ad hominem* may be the case when the Other's discourse is presented under an unfavorable light. The Other's declarations are qualified negatively by

A. qualifying the Other negatively, instead of neutrally indicating the source of the speech act or by using a disqualifying phrase to point to the speaker's characteristics in relation with what was asserted:

(15) ***Ultimele declarații ale președintelui nelegitim** Traian Băsescu ...* [1]
"**The latest declarations of the illegitimate president** Traian Băsescu…"

B. presenting the Other's declarations as unethical:

(16) *Ultimele declarații ale președintelui nelegitim Traian Băsescu **întrunesc** fără echivoc **elemente constitutive ale unor infracțiuni din Codul penal**.* [1]
"The latest declarations (…) **have** unequivocally **constitutive elements of criminal acts defined under Criminal Law.**"

3.2.1.3. Pointing to inconsistencies: *Tu quoque* variant of *ad hominem* – Pointing to an inconsistency between one's previous and present words can be an effective strategy of attacking a political adversary in front of an audience, especially when one's words are taken out from the context and when the Other is not present to be able to oppose an inadequate presentation or report of his discourse.

(17) *... ați afirmat recent despre Gabriel Oprea că este lacheul domnului Ponta. **Păi, iar v-ați răzgândit?** Nu dumneavoastră ați spus că procesul de reevaluare băsist este infailibil? **Și acum, ce faceți?*** [1]
"… you have recently asserted that VPM Gabriel Oprea is the PM's lackey. **Well, have you changed your mind again?** You said that the reevaluation process by Băsescu's fan club was infallible, didn't you? **And what are you doing right now?**"

3.2.2. *Irony*

Ironical metaphors are used to point to a public declaration or assertion – the Other's assertive speech act is thus disqualified:

(18) *... noul dumneavoastră **joc de glezne politic**, lipsit de substanță, prin care ați anunțat că stați la dispoziția Parchetului pentru orice investigație...* [1]
"… your new / recent **political rock and roll**, lacking substance, by which you announced you were available for the DA for any investigation…"

3.2.3. *Quoting imaginary discourse*

Quoting an imaginary discourse by which the speaker assigns to another speaker some personal opinion may also consist in an attack to a political opponent. On the one hand,

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quoting the Other's discourse allows to validate one's opinion by assigning the content of statements to sources reputed as expert or considered to be neutral and/or reliable. On the other hand, quoting the Other's discourse may have as a goal to criticize it or the source. A particular type of quote or citation is incorporating into one's own discourse a stretch of discourse which has been never actually produced, a fictional discourse fragment in order to comment reflexively on it, use it as a starting point in argumentation or build up some ironical meaning meant to attack or to put pressure on a political opponent or discursive antagonist. In the excerpt below, the quotation is imaginary, as well as the act that leads to this imaginary discourse meant to voice the speaker's standpoint in a mediated way. Thus, in (19), the speaker does not explicitly commit to the standpoint voiced through the fictional stretch of discourse assigned to another speaker representing the other party.

(19) *... pentru **a-i completa un raport** în care să scrie: „Șefu', conform Constituției, sunteți un președinte nelegitim, deoarece ocupați acest post, deși hotărârea de suspendare nu a fost revocată de singura instituție abilitată pentru acest proces, și anume, Parlamentul României."* [1]
"… he [the president] has them **draw up a report** in which they should write: 'Boss, according to the Constitution, you are an illegitimate president since you are holding this position although the impeachment decision has not been suspended by the only institution able to do it, i.e. the Romanian Parliament.'"

Reporting an imaginary discourse and/or making reference to a set of imaginary verbal (inter)actions of a political opponent is an effective strategy of criticizing such a person. In (20), the speaker assigns to a political opponent an imaginary discourse, as well as (political) action under the form of an imaginary "project". The quote is ironical, since it views the political opponent, through the assigned stretch of discourse, as the initiator of a set of actions contrary to his own interests:

(20) *... viitorul dumneavoastră proiect politic intitulat „Rahova, for ever"*. [1]
"… your future political project titling «Rahova Prison, for ever»."

3.2.4. *Counter factuality*

Reporting past discourses and opinions predicting events which eventually proved not to be the case serves as a basis for dismissing the public image of those who were at the source of the predictions and also for rebuilding one's own image and political creed.

(21) ***Se tot vorbea** de guvernare USL până în 2016, se vorbea de armonizarea relațiilor dintre PSD și PNL, […] Dar iată că evoluția evenimentelor politice, […] dimpotrivă, a arătat cât de nesigură […] poate fi o alianță politică cu majoritate de 70% în Parlament.* [5][1]
"**Everybody would talk** about a government based on a social-liberal alliance by 2016, about the harmonization of the relationships between the socio-democrats and the national-liberals […] But the evolution of the political events […] showed, on the contrary, how uncertain […] can be an alliance with 70% majority in the Parliament."

[1] [5] Constantin Avram – political declaration : "The Liberal Implosion" (declarație politică: - „Implozia liberală"), June 11, 2014. http://www.cameradeputatilor.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids= 7392&idm =1,033&idl=1

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4. Concluding remarks

In line with most of the research in the field of metadiscourse, this study shows that the use of references in political discourse may have the roles of strengthening the position of the speaker in front of an audience either by pointing to opinions of the same type advanced by previous speakers or by dismissing adversarial positions and political opponents. Quotes or references to one's own previous discourse or to that of members of the same party may be used in order to define, explain, make more precise the use of particular terms or phrases. Anticipatory phrases may be employed so as to make clearer for the audience which the issue or the position of the speaker is. Previous or current discourse of the speaker may be presented in a scholarly way, to build up ethos. Quotes or references to the Other's discourse are used to destroy the existing ethos of the person and/or the party referred to. All the variants of the *ad hominem* may be present in political declarations, and the study shows that disqualification of the language of the opponent may serve to diminish the opponent's ethos. On some occasions, metaphors and irony play as important strategies used in political declarations to fighting verbally a political adversary. In all these situations, as mentioned, the speaker represents not only herself, but also the party she belongs to or the ideological perspective she adopts.

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METADISCURSIVE TECHNIQUES IN ROMANIAN PARLIAMENTARY DECLARATIONS

(*Abstract*)

This study investigates specific features of Romanian parliamentary discourse with regard to metadiscursive practices, and particularly the techniques used for dealing with presenting one's own and the others' declarations. Metadiscursive practices have the role of presenting a discourse more objectively or, on the contrary, cast doubt on it, criticize it, qualifying it negatively. In political discourse they may be used to compromise the image of a political opponent. Disqualifying the Other's discourse is equivalent to disqualifying and presenting the Other's character and person as unethical. Defining and "precizating" the terms used in one's own discourse (by using persuasive definitions and personal, more detailed definitions of some terms) may ensure for the speaker a more ethical image; this may be due to the way in which the speaker practices metadiscourse with the intention to produce an apparently well-organized, clear discourse. Using irony, metaphorical constructs, and counter factuality serve as techniques of building / enhancing one's own ethos, contributing to that of the political party a MP stands for and (attempting at) diminishing / disqualifying / destroying the political adversary, mainly in the absence of an immediate reply.

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