METAPHORIC REPRESENTATIONS OF BRITISH, AMERICAN AND ROMANIAN IDENTITIES IN DIPLOMATIC DISCOURSES

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ALEXANDRA MORARU

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ARGUMENT

The paper proposes the analysis of a set of interviews given by British and American Ambassadors at the end of their Foreign Office careers in order to investigate the levels of power, dominance and inequality, as well as to prove the standardised structure of the diplomatic discourse. In this respect, the research will apply Critical Discourse Analysis and will concentrate on the mental models of discourse by analysing the use of metaphor, among other devices. However, the novelty of this work resides in the use of the latest linguistic trend – cognitive semantics – as its most important apparatus, as well as the application of Conceptual Metaphor Theory on the interview genre of the diplomatic discourse.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The present paper, *Discourse Analysis in International Relations Illustrated by Famous British and American Ambassadors*, investigates form a stylistic perspective a set of interviews given by former British and American Ambassadors who have had missions in Romania during Communism. The interviews that belong to the British Ambassadors are part of The British Oral History Programme (BDOHP), which the author has found at the Churchill Archives Centre in Cambridge. A searchable indexed catalogue with transcripts of the BDOHP interviews is available on the Janus webserver. The BDOHP contains a number of interviews with former diplomats or other officials who have played a significant role within the field of international relations. Despite the secrecy and confidentiality of diplomatic information, there has recently been a tendency towards greater openness in governmental affairs, and consequently interviewees are encouraged to be more transparent and overt in their reviews. This way the analysed texts represent more than a frank description of what the Ambassadors have accomplished for the British national diplomatic interests, but rather a personal recount of the former officials' life-career with spicy details scattered throughout their stories. The selected former British Ambassadors – Sir Andrew Philip Foley Bache (FO between 1963-1999), Sir John Birch (FO between 1959-1995), Sir Reginald Alfred Hibbert (FO between 1946-1982), Sir Albert Thomas Lamb (FO between 1938-1980), Sir Denis Wight (FO between 1939-1971) and Sir Oliver Wright (FO between 1946-1986) – have been career ambassadors and carried British missions throughout the world, in developed, developing and under-developed countries. Thus, the interviews do not represent only the British missions to Bucharest, but their entire diplomatic career in the service of the British Crown. The rhetoric of British Nationalism, British Imperialism and British pride can be surprised in their most natural expression within the discourse of several Foreign Officers who have had diplomatic missions in Bucharest and whose stylistic use of language is the case study of this research. The most important discursive strategy is the image of "Britishness" that appears to be embedded in the official discourse at a lexical and stylistic level as well as other symbolic images that appear to be marked at the lexical-semantic level of language, such as business mappings of the Foreign Office, the image of the Queen and instances of Romania seen through British official eyes. The core issue of the analysis which is surprised in the discourse of the interviews is the Foreign and

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Commonwealth Office, commonly called the Foreign Office or the FCO, mainly because it is the British government department responsible for promoting the interests of the United Kingdom overseas and which constituted the most important pawn in the framework of the British character outline that was stylistically expressed.

Following the same pattern, the interviews which belong to the American Ambassadors resemble the open format of the British interviews and they also present the entire diplomatic career of the interviewee. The selected American diplomats – Ambassador Orison Rudolf Aggrey (FSO between 1950-1981), Ambassador William A. Crawford (FSO between 1941-1960), Ambassadors David Funderburk (Ambassador to Romania between 1981-1985), Ambassador Jay K. Katzen (FSO between 1959-1983), Ambassador Roger Kirk (FSO between 1959-1989), Ambassador Leonard C. Meeker (Ambassador to Romania between 1969-1973) – have been American Ambassadors worldwide, engaged to represent the American political and economic interests. Moreover, they follow the principles of openness and the Ambassadors are supported by the interviewers to be candid and not to allow their instinctive respect for confidentiality. The discourse of the interviews belonging to the American Ambassadors point out their missionary attitude towards the entire world – a mission to bring freedom in the sense of democracy, free enterprise, and free markets. Therefore, Americans are proud of themselves because their creed sums up the human universal values: freedom of speech, religion, the press, and the right to vote. Thus, as opposed to "Britishness", "Americanness" is represented within the interviews by these universal values and by recurrent instances of power relations – America's hegemony, the American President's importance in the decision making process, or fighting against Communism. This second set of interviews was found on the webpage of The American Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, under the same heading as the British interviews – the Oral History Program – and they are available from The Library of Congress, American Memory Collection.

The paper finds its place among the series of discourse analyses which apply linguistic and cultural theories on different texts. However, the novelty of this work resides in its use of the latest linguistic trend – cognitive semantics – as its most important apparatus; as well as the application of Conceptual Metaphor Theory on the interview genre of the diplomatic discourse. Following the theoretical cognitive-semantic studies of George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, Gilles Fauconnier and others, as well as the Critical Discourse Analysis studies of Teun VanDijk, Norman Fairclough and others, the international stage of research within the field of

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applied cognitive semantics in discourse analysis is not necessarily interested in diplomatic discourses, but rather covers only political discourses with a high level of persuasion (Teun Van Dijk[1], Norman Fairclough[2], Paul Chilton[3], Ruth Wodak[4], Andreas Musloff[5] and others). Therefore, the present research opens a new chapter in the analysis of diplomatic discourses, which states the importance of conceptual metaphor analysis as their mental discursive structure. The most recent studies of discourse focus on the role of metaphors within the discourse framework (Elena Semino[6], Andrew Goalty[7], Andreas Musloff[8] and Philip Eubanks[9]) and that is why the present thesis has chosen such a new approach. However the novelty of this paper lies in the chosen genre of discourse, i.e. the interview, as well as the type of political discourse which has not been analysed – the diplomatic discourse. The third original point is represented by the political-geographical space, i.e. Romania during its communist age.

This research focuses on the importance of discourse analysis both from a linguistic and a socio-psychological perspective. As opposed to traditional linguistics, which studies inter- and intra-sentential boundaries, discourse analysis overpasses this level, due to its interest in naturally occurring language use. Thus, the corpus linguistic of this paper has been carefully selected out of a collection of interviews which belong to the British and the American Oral History Programs, and which represent real language situations that have been recorded both in their oral and written form. The central idea regarding discourse analysis is that the way people talk about the world does not reflect some objective truth about that world, but instead reflects the success of particular ways of thinking and seeing, as

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[1] Teun van Dijk, "Discourse and Manipulation", *Discourse & Society*, Vol. 17(2), 2006, pp. 359-383

[2] Norman Faircluogh, *Language and Power*, Longman, London, 1996

[3] Paul Chilton, *Analysing Political Discourse: Theory and Practice*, Routledge, London, 2004

[4] Wodak, Ruth and Meyer, Michael (ed.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* Sage Publications (2nd revised edition), London, 2009

[5] Andreas Musloff, "What Can Critical Metaphor Analysis Add to the Understanding of Racist Ideology? Recent Studies of Hitler's Anti-Semitic Metaphors", *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines*, Vol. 2, No.2, 2008, pp. 1-10

[6] Elena Semino, *Metaphor in Discourse*, Cambridge University Press, 2008

[7] Andrew Goalty, *Washing the Brain, Metaphor and Hidden Ideology (Discourse Approaches to Politics, Society and Culture)*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2007

[8] Andreas Musloff, *Metaphor and Discourse*, Andreas Musloff and Jorg Zinken (ed.), Palgrave Macmillan, 2008

[9] Philip Eubanks, *Metaphor and Writing: Figurative Thought in the Discourse of Written Communication*, Cambridge University Press, to be published in November 2010

well as their historical and cultural background that emerge above linguistics.

As this thesis is interested more in observing the speakers' personalities with the help of stylistics, the research focus will be directed towards the connections between language use and behavior. Thus, discourse analysis and cognitive semantics are suitable for such an approach because they represent the scientific background in the field of linguistics, which explain differences of attitudes depending on the context or linguistic situation. In this respect discourse analysis interlinks linguistics with social interactions. With the help of cognitive semantics, and mostly with Conceptual Metaphor Theory applied on the discourse of the interviews, the author deconstructs the text in the attempt to identify the cultural and psychological features of each speaker, as well as probe them against the cultural and psychological theories.

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