

Adrian Toader

**Linguistic Realisations of Identity in  
Romanian and European Parliamentary  
Discourse**



Transilvania  
University  
Press

2024

## **EDITURA UNIVERSITĂȚII TRANSILVANIA DIN BRAȘOV**

Adresa: Str. Iuliu Maniu nr. 41A

500091 Brașov

Tel.: 0268 476 050

Fax: 0268 476 051

E-mail: editura@unitbv.ro

**Editură acreditată de CNCS, categoria B  
pentru domeniul Filologie (2020)**

Copyright © Autorul, 2024

Referenți științifici: Prof. dr. Andra VASILESCU  
Prof. dr. Răzvan SĂFTOIU

### **Descrierea CIP a Bibliotecii Naționale a României**

**TOADER, ADRIAN**

**Linguistic realisations of identity in Romanian and European  
parliamentary discourse / Adrian Toader – Brașov : Editura**

Universității Transilvania din Brașov, 2024

Conține bibliografie

ISBN 978-606-19-1713-6

81

The cover was made using free AI Art Generator and was edited by  
Roxana Oltean.

## **Acknowledgements**

*I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my scientific supervisor, Prof. Dr. Răzvan Săftoiu, a man of great character and invaluable insight. My sincere thanks to my family for their help and continuous support. To my father, who was always willing to exchange ideas throughout the writing process.*



# CONTENT

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: THEORIES OF IDENTITY .....</b>	<b>25</b>
1.1. Preliminary discussions.....	25
1.2. An interdisciplinary examination of identity .....	26
1.2.1. The individual <i>self</i> and the social <i>self</i> . Theoretical directions.....	27
1.2.2. Identity as social interaction. Psycho-sociological perspectives (Cooley 1902; Mead 1913, 1934).....	29
1.2.3. Identity as a culturally determined phenomenon. Anthropologic perspectives (Malinowski 1923; Sapir 1934).....	31
1.2.4. Role-playing and identities „in action“. A sociological perspective (Goffman 1956, 1967, 1981).....	34
1.2.5. Identity studies and postmodernism .....	37
1.2.6. Identity as structure and agency (Burger and Luckmann 1966; Giddens 1984, 1991) .....	40
1.2.7. On the concept of group identities (Sacks 1995; Tajfel <i>et al.</i> 1978, 1979, 1982; Lave and Wenger 1991, 1996) .....	43
1.3. Identity formation and the <i>core self</i> .....	47
1.3.1. Identity and rhetoric (Aristotle [1928]; Amossy 2001, 2006).....	49
1.4 Identities „in action“. Linguistic perspectives .....	56
1.4.1 On the concept of „face“ (Brown and Levinson 1978; Culpeper 1996; Yule 1996) .....	59
1.4.2 Identities and <i>othering</i> . A CDA approach.....	62
1.4.3 Identity as <i>dialogic</i> (Weigand 2010) .....	63
1.5 On the multidisciplinary studies of identity. Concluding remarks.....	65

## **CHAPTER 2: FEATURES OF PARLIAMENTARY DISCOURSE .....71**

2.1 Political discourse: an introduction .....	71
2.1.1 Political discourse as institutional discourse .....	74
2.1.2 Political discourse as public discourse .....	75
2.1.3 Political discourse as „goal-oriented“ .....	75
2.1.4 Political discourse as media discourse .....	77
2.2 Organisational settings of parliaments .....	79
2.2.1 The European Parliament .....	81
2.2.2 The Romanian Parliament .....	85
2.3 The multilayered parliamentary discourse .....	88
2.3.1 Multilayered identities .....	89
2.3.2 The multilayered audience .....	92
2.3.3 The multilayered parliamentary settings .....	98
2.4 Pragma-rhetorical features of parliamentary discourse (Ruxăndoiu 2012, 2013; Ilie 2006, 2010b) .....	102

## **CHAPTER 3: PROJECTING IDENTITIES WITHIN THE ROMANIAN PARLIAMENT .....107**

3.1 Projecting the individual <i>self</i> .....	107
3.1.1 Underlining personal attributes .....	108
3.1.2 Underlining professional experience .....	119
3.1.3 Underlining political affiliation.....	128
3.1.4 Representing the multilayered audience.....	135
3.1.5 Showcasing other professional identities .....	138
3.1.6 Discussion.....	143
3.2 Projecting collective identities .....	145
3.2.1 Inclusive „We“ as members of political parties .....	145
3.2.2 Inclusive „We“ as larger political coalitions .....	152
3.2.3 Representing the multilayered audience.....	158

3.2.4 Discussion.....	167
3.3 Projecting the identity of <i>others</i> .....	169
3.3.1 Personal attacks through self-referencing remarks („I“ vs. „You“) .....	170
3.3.2 Group attacks through inclusive references („We“ vs. „You“/“They“) .....	178
3.3.3 Pronominal interplays: Mixed attacks through self and group references („I“/“You“ vs. „You“/“They“) .....	183
3.3.4 Discussion.....	188

## **CHAPTER 4: PROJECTING IDENTITIES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT .....191**

4.1 Projecting the individual <i>self</i> .....	191
4.1.1 Underlining political affiliation.....	194
4.1.2 Overseeing national interests.....	200
4.1.3 Representing ethnic, religious, and regional <i>out-groups</i> .....	206
4.1.4 Showcasing other professional/social identities.....	213
4.1.5 Establishing rapport with the European Community .....	218
4.1.6 Discussion.....	223
4.2 Projecting collective identities .....	226
4.2.1 Underlining political ideologies .....	227
4.2.2 Establishing bonds with the audience.....	232
4.2.3 Invoking national affiliation: „We“ as Romanians .....	238
4.2.4 Invoking transnational affiliation: „We“ as MEPs.....	242
4.2.5 Discussion.....	247
4.3 Projecting the identity of <i>others</i> .....	250
4.3.1 Negative attributions of the <i>out-group(s)</i> .....	250
4.3.2 Positive attributions of the <i>out-group(s)</i> .....	257
4.4 Discussion .....	261

<b>FINAL CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>265</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>281</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>298</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>299</b>



# INTRODUCTION

## **Starting point and theoretical considerations**

In modern times, we are constantly surrounded by news, propagated through various media channels. Information is revealed almost instantaneously with the click of a mouse or the touch of a button, allowing us to follow the lives of public figures and assess their actions as we see fit. A subject of interest, often brought to attention in the media, concerns itself with the world of politics. People are invariably drawn to this as the future of their country and livelihood is determined by the decisions and policies of their political representatives. Parliamentary activity is no exception as it is frequently scrutinised in the public sphere. These norm-regulated environments, commonplace in contemporary democracies, can be seen as “fora for deliberation, legislation, problem-solving and decision-making” (Ilie 2010a:1), where politicians use their communicative competences to propose and vote legislation or address critical issues of national and transnational interest.

For this book, I found it relevant to focus on the discursive practices of some public figures that often capture the audience’s attention. Hence, the research constitutes a qualitative study of how Romanian politicians, with mandates in both the European and national Parliaments, use the flexibility of pronouns to mix their personal and professional identities during official sittings. To this end, I will look at how politicians invoke diverse facets of their multilayered identities with the intent of eliciting positive reactions from the targeted receivers. As the analysis will show, the active interplay between pronominal references constitutes mechanisms of persuasion, allowing parliamentarians to highlight their competences, advance personal and group objectives, express their points of view from different angles and

add subjectivity to their messages. A preliminary assumption is that, through pronominal interplays, speakers are able to put forward convincing performances by actively adding new layers to their public image perception. Although there are additional means of examining the process of identity formation (Wilson 1990, Chilton 2004, Weigand 2010), I start from the premise that the functions of personal pronouns in discourse extend past their features as referential and deictic language units, as they can be purposefully adopted by politicians to potentially achieve distinct outcomes, obtain positive responses from what is being said on stage, advance strategies of persuasion or mark aspects of their discursive style. Pronouns are seen as an intrinsic characteristic of political discourse which can, to great effect, “induce interpreters to conceptualise group identity, coalitions, parties, and the like, either as insiders or outsiders” (Chilton 2004: 56). Consequently, I draw on Weigand’s *Mixed Game Model* (2010) and view identity as a product of dialogic interaction, manifesting itself as dynamic, contextually bound, and actively negotiated in parliament. I further claim that, when speaking in public, individuals shape and re-shape their public image by attempting to maintain or reaffirm their position as the right person for the job at any given time.

It is worth noting that the strategic uses of pronouns were examined from different perspectives, such as *stancetaking* (Biber and Finegan 1988; Du Bois 2007; Kärkkäinen 2007; Vasilescu 2010), *subject positioning* (Tirado and Gálvez 2007; Epstein 2011; Angermüller 2011), *ventriloquizing and voicing* (Lauerbach 2006; Cooren 2010), or *person deixis* (Zupnik 1994, De Finna 1995). Other approaches centered on pronominal usage in varying political sub-genres like election campaigns (Steffens 2013, Săftoiu and Toader 2018, Kayam 2018), parliamentary discourse (Vuković 2012; Săftoiu