

Speech acts of #REZIST movement

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The adoption of the Emergency Ordinance no. 13/ 2017 in the evening of January 31st, 2017 prompted the most powerful manifestations of popular protest Romania had witnessed since the Revolution of December 1989. The illocutionary force of slogans such as “Like thieves in the night”, “PSD – the red plague”, “Corruption kills”, and of hundreds of other slogans heard or read on placards and widely distributed in the social media, as well as the massive presence of peaceful protesters drew the undivided attention of the media throughout the world. This paper aims to employ pragmatics, combined with methods of Critical Discourse Analysis, in discussing the speech acts which make up the core corpus of the slogans of #REZIST movement, in view of revealing their contribution to the creation of a positive image of Romania in the international media.

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1. Theoretical framework

Speech acts were defined early in the development of linguistics as units of language which should be treated like a form of action, utterances that express an intention (Searle 1969). The immediate inference that comes to mind is that a speech act should be a fully-formed sentence, one able to convey meaning, but it can also be just a word or a phrase, as long as it achieves the speaker’s intention. Admitting that “to say something is always to do something” (Austin 1962), the following communication makes use of the division of speech acts outlined by the twentieth-century British linguist J. L. Austin to analyse the structure and the intention behind a category of utterances that has only rarely fallen under the lens of linguistic analysts, despite their significant illocutionary and perlocutionary force: the political slogans uttered and/or written on the occasion of protests. Without going into too much detail, as the theory is widely known, let us state that

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propositional acts, further divided into performative and constative utterances, are of lesser interest for the present paper, which mainly focuses on illocution, as distinguished from producing consequences in the sense of bringing about changes in the natural course of events, and perlocution, i.e., the elicitation of some behavioural response from the listener, or the effect brought about by performing an illocutionary act, and its consequences (intentional or non-intentional) on the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the participants. For methodological reasons, the corpus will be, therefore, grouped according to Austin's five classes of illocutionary acts, namely, Verdictives, Exercitives, Commissive, Behabitives, and Expositives.

The class of Verdictives includes acts (formal or informal) of giving a verdict, estimate, or appraisal (as acquitting, reckoning, assessing, and diagnosing). These may concern facts or values. The class of Exercitives includes acts of exerting powers, rights or influence (as appointing, voting, ordering, and warning). These presuppose that the speaker has a certain kind of authority or influence. The class of Commissive includes acts that commit the speaker to doing something (as promising, undertaking, consenting, opposing, and betting). The class of Expositives includes acts that clarify reasons, arguments, or communications (as affirming, denying, stating, describing, asking, and answering). The class of Behabitives includes acts having to do with attitudes and social behaviour (as apologizing, congratulating, commending, and thanking). These include reactions to other people's behaviour. (Berdini and Bianchi 2013)

By convention, illocutionary acts invite a response or a sequel (Austin 1975, 116), although this is hardly the case with slogans. When a protester shouts "Step down", usually followed by the name of the political figure they want to see gone, this imperative is not actually accompanied by the expectation that the addressee will conform to the request. It is rather the perlocutionary effect that is sought for here – the direct addressee, singled out by the noun in the vocative case, understands that s/he is no longer wanted in power, and so do the external, indirect addressees, i.e. the people and the media who see or hear the message, as listeners/readers are not passive recipients in their relationship to texts (Wodak 2006, 6). This takes us a step further, to the axiomatic "discourse as social practice" (Fairclough and Wodak 2006, 258). The relations between language and power need to be investigated so as to raise awareness of the changes they bring in people (beliefs, attitudes, values, etc.), actions, social relations, and the material

world (Fairclough 2003, 8). This opens the path for employing Critical Discourse Analysis, with its aim to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signalled, constituted and legitimized by language use (or in discourse)” (Wodak 2006, 2), as the most appropriate method of discussing political slogans. It is, otherwise, a fact that CDA has started to be widely applied in various speech act instances that can be construed as power relations. In a comprehensive theoretical outline of the method, Neagu and Colipcă list an extensive number of situations in which CDA can and does apply:

The subjects under investigation by means of CDA have covered [...] a wide range of subjects pertaining to the more general framework of dominance and power relations between social entities and classes, men and women, between national, ethnic, religious, sexual, political, cultural and sub-cultural groups. Its potential areas of application include relationships and themes which are relevant to the analysis of social power: women’s studies (Wodak and Benke 1997), anti-Semitism (Wodak et al. 1990), fascism (Maas 1984), xenophobia and racism, migration and asylum (van Dijk 1986, 1987, 1991, 1993, 1998; van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999; Jäger 1993), language in politics (Wodak and Menz 1990 Fairclough 1989, 1992a), language in organizations (Wodak 1996), etc. The data used in CDA has been provided by political speeches, parliamentary debates, media reports, editorials, school textbooks, advertisements, books of management gurus, transcripts of doctor-patient and workplace meeting interactions (van Leeuwen 2006, 290). (Neagu and Colipcă 2008, 86)

Though not listed in the enumeration above, the analysis of political slogans of dissent suits Fairclough’s definition of CDA as “a resource for people who are struggling against domination and oppression in its linguistic terms” (1995, 1). Further on, if one regards political slogans as a form of interaction, they can also be considered as being role-assigning. The protesters are speakers (addressers) who address their addressees (in our case, the government in power), and the audience is also made active: on the one hand, the protest is targeted at the undecided, aiming at gathering momentum (*Ieșiți din casă dacă vă pasă! – Take to the streets if you care!*), on the other hand, its slogans are intended to reach out, to obtain the world’s sympathy and approval, or even the support of the international fora. A part of these slogans end up as headlines of international media, which enforces

and magnifies their illocutionary and perlocutionary effects, contributing to the creation of a positive image of the protesters throughout the world.

2. Contextualisation

It goes without saying that words without context are meaningless or, at best, less meaningful. If one takes, for instance, a slogan such as *Noaptea, ca hoții* [*Like thieves in the night*] and does not provide a situational context to it, one might not be able to understand the meaning of this incomplete, verb-less utterance. “The context of situation is the immediate environment in which a text is actually functioning. It focuses on the various elements (the setting or social environment, the identity of the participants) involved in the direct production of meanings in a particular instance of communication” (Neagu and Colipcă 2008, 92). The broader context, the cultural one, may be of help in that it provides some ideological and traditional background for interpreting the utterance. In this particular case, the unaware listener/ reader is capable of grasping the idea that the people are complaining of a theft, an action which traditionally performed at night, but, other than that, they cannot make much of the three words. This is the reason why, before attempting to analyse the short bits of utterances that are the political slogans used in a certain protest, historical and contextual information on the respective protest should be provided.

At the end of 2016, Romania had parliamentary elections, which are organised every four years, unlike the presidential ones, organised every five years. At that moment, the country was governed by a technocrat government, installed by President Klaus Iohannis at the end of 2015, when a catastrophic fire killed 64 people in a club from Bucharest, named *Colectiv*. The disaster took people to the streets in large numbers, requiring the government in force at that time to take responsibility for the many deaths, which were the result, on the one hand, of some shady arrangements between the club owners and the authorities that allowed them to function in improper conditions, and, on the other hand, of the bacteriological infections the wounded contracted in the Romanian hospitals, owing to another serious case of corruption, which was later revealed as the diluted disinfectants crisis or the Hexi Pharma scandal. The Prime Minister in force at the moment of the *Colectiv* fire, Victor Ponta, the representative of the Social Democratic Party, henceforth PSD, agreed to step down, which caused his downfall

in the party ranks, and the ascension of the current president of the party, Liviu Dragnea. The latter, known for his wealth and influence at the party level as a “local baron” (the name by which the riches of the counties, usually party members with great lobbyist influence, are known), had a criminal conviction of electoral fraud during the 2012 presidential impeachment referendum and a one-year suspended sentence, which prevented him from becoming Prime Minister and was, at that time, on trial for another accusation, abuse of office, which would have sent him directly to jail, provided that he was found guilty. In the elections of 2016, PSD won by a large margin, due to a low turnout produced by the massive absenteeism of the voters who considered *toate partidele, aceeași mizerie* [all parties, all scum].

Shortly after the appointment of the government, the majority coalition started exerting their executive power by imposing a questionable bill which aimed to change the Criminal Code: Emergency Ordinance no. 13/2017 (hereafter, OUG 13), which basically decriminalized the abuse of office, thus rendering Dragnea’s trial null and void. Instantly contested by the President of Romania, who had been the candidate of the National Liberal Party, the main political force opposing PSD, by the entire parliamentary opposition, and by the National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA), OUG 13 also determined the most powerful manifestations of popular protest Romania had witnessed since the Revolution of December, 1989. The protests took place under the heading #REZIST and enjoyed the participation of numerous members of Romanian intelligentsia. Among their most powerful instruments there were the slogans, which were generally acknowledged as highly imaginative and intelligent discursive bits. It is worth mentioning that the abrogation of OUG 13 did not put an end to protests, nor did it stop the party in power from attempting to enforce its effects by other means. The protests continued throughout 2017 and 2018, culminating on August 10th, 2018, when the government ordered the riot police to repress the manifestation by using force. However, since the corpus for the present paper had already been collected at that time, the analysis disregards the more recent additions to the slogans, focusing on the ones that made the headlines of the media in January and February 2017.

3. Corpus analysis

The corpus is made up of over 250 slogans, some collected by the author directly, others, selected from a book of photographs, edited by Curtea Veche Publishing,

entitled *#rezist. Proteste împotriva OUG 13/2017*. An analysis of all slogans used during the 2017 protests would be too lengthy for an article, but the sample is large enough to be considered representative, and the findings are thus easy to extrapolate. Because of the spatial constraints, only the most representative ones, which came to be cited in the articles or news reports of important international media, will be listed and analysed, which lowers the number of samples to 75. By cataloguing the slogans according to Austin's five classes mentioned above, we hope to identify the construction pattern and the intentionality behind the political slogans used by Romanian protesters. On the other hand, by critically and intertextually assessing the meaning and content of the same bits of discourse, their specificity within the broader, cultural context is in focus.

3.1. Verdictives

The class of Verdictives is the best represented in the list of the slogans which make up the present corpus, with a rate of occurrence of 24 out of 75 instances (Table 1). Making an assessment about the acts of the addressee, which, in the present case, is considered to be the government, the slogans falling under this category are, in general, fully-formed sentences, with verbs in the indicative, which may also allow their inclusion in the category of assertive utterances. The slogans have the power of unquestionable statements, they neither require anything, nor address the addressee directly, but state facts, and what is more, make accusations and criticise. Most of them are in Romanian, with three exceptions in English and one in French. *Enjoying corruption since 1989* is a clear intertextual allusion to Coca-Cola, enhanced by the use of the famous font on the logo of the famous beverage, and *My Romania rocks* indicates the speaker's intention to draw a demarcation line between two Romanians, one belonging to the people, which is modern and up-to-date, as suggested by the informal verb "to rock", and another one, that is not "mine" or "ours", but belongs to the adversary, which is, presumably, less cool (just to preserve the register). One of the most interesting in the category of slogans uttered in foreign languages, with a high rate of occurrence across the country (sometimes translated as *Când nedreptatea devine lege, rezistența devine datorie*) is a statement misattributed to Thomas Jefferson, *When injustice becomes law, resistance becomes duty*, whose origins are to be found in the Declaration of Independence – "that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new

Government,” which legitimises the people’s right to overthrow an illegitimate government.

Many of these utterances carry intertextual overtones, which is indicative of the speakers’ cultural awareness. Worth mentioning in this respect are: *We are the State*, a representation of absolute power, quoting the famous phrase *L’état, c’est moi*, attributed to King Louis XIV of France; *I resist therefore I am*, remindful of the Cartesian dictum *Cogito ergo sum/ I think therefore I am*; *Government ranked as criminal risk in the first degree*, which is a rephrasing of the warnings posted on buildings with high risk of collapsing in case of earthquake; *Welcome to Romania, they’ve just legalized theft!*, which quotes metal band Altar’s lyrics almost verbatim, replacing the original *aici s-a inventat hoția (theft was invented here)* with *legalised*, so as to better suit the ‘occasion’. In point of religious reference, one placard quotes Romanian Orthodox philosopher Petre Țuțea, with his wordplay on the meanings of the word *left* – the left would be unable, in the opinion of the right-wing thinker, to rule a country, since the sign of the cross is always made with the right hand.

Other slogans are simpler, the messages they convey do not require cross-cultural references or political culture, such is the case of *Abuse of power makes the country poor* or *You cannot buy all generations*. A few make use of colloquial language – which will become the rule in the summer of 2018 – on the principle that the addressee should be spoken to at a level that s/he can easily grasp. In the list below, it is the case of *Dragnea, you are not on your mother’s sheepfold! Mă-tii [your mother’s]* is a syntagm encountered in most Romanian profanities. It is the only one slogan in this category that has a direct addressee, signaled by the name of the PSD leader, in the vocative. The inference of the noun *sheepfold* is twofold: on the one hand, it refers to one’s estate, where one can do as one pleases, on the other hand, it points to the rural origins of the party leader, which, in modern-day Romania, can sometimes be interpreted as an affront.

Nevertheless, the most interesting slogans in this category, most frequently quoted by the foreign media, are: *Like thieves in the night, PSD – the red plague*, and *Corruption kills*. The first two do not respect the grammaticality of a well-formed sentence, the verb being elided, which, in the Romanian original version, imprints a certain rhythm to the utterance, making it easier to chant. *Like thieves in the night* refers to the late evening hour when the government passed the ordinance, with the hope that the people and the media would not take notice and that they would have enough time to have it published in the Official Gazette,

which is the way of bringing any Romanian law into force. The slogan is, as already mentioned, based on the cultural stereotype of the thief who acts during the night, when the chances of being caught are lower.

PSD – The red plague is, by far, the most expressive slogan of the #REZIST movement. In Romanian, it is very short, and it also rhymes, which deems it appropriate for chanting. But more importantly, it carries, in just two words (the initials of the Social Democratic Party were not considered), significant cultural allusions. First of all, the rule of the party is compared to plague, which is a powerful conceptual metaphor of death and destruction. Secondly, the colour red has come to be considered the symbol of communism, and the party in question is the heir of the former National Salvation Front, which came into power after the anti-communist revolution of 1989, but which was soon proven to be ruled by former communists. A possible interpretation may also bring Poe's short story, *Mask of the Red Death*, to the table, but this would be speculative and would only reinforce the already mentioned metaphor of death.

Lastly, *Corruption kills* is the slogan that circulated during the protests occasioned by the Colectiv fire, which was taken up by protesters in the following year. The idea that an abstraction may kill is rendered simply but powerfully by an S+V simple sentence, the said abstraction becoming, metonymically, as concrete as possible.

1. Nu puteți cumpăra toate generațiile. / You cannot buy all generations.
2. Dragnea, nu ești pe tarlaua mă-tii! / Dragnea, you are not on your mother's sheepfold!
3. Noaptea, ca hoții / Like thieves in the night
4. Noaptea hoții votează ca mafioții./ At night, the thieves vote like the mobsters.
5. Enjoying Corruption since 1989
6. When injustice becomes law, resistance becomes duty.
7. Iubirea de țară în stradă se măsoară. / The love for the country is measured in the streets.
8. Statul suntem noi. / We are the State.
9. Ați reușit – ne-ați unit! / You've made it – you have united us!
10. Suntem copiii foștilor golani de la Universitate. / We are the children of the former punks from University Square.
11. Minciuna are picioare scurte, dar televiziuni multe. / A lie has no legs, but many television stations.
12. My Romania rocks!
13. PSD – Ciuma roșie/ PSD – The red plague

14. În democrație, hoții stau la pușcărie. / In democracy, thieves are in prison.
15. Abuzul de putere duce la sărăcia țării/ Abuse of office makes the country poor.
16. Și penalii plâng câteodată. / Sometimes even criminals cry.
17. Guvern încadrat în clasa I de risc penal / Government ranked as criminal risk in the first degree.
18. Corupția ucide. / Corruption kills.
19. #Rezist deci exist. / I resist therefore I am.
20. Bun venit în România, tocmai au legalizat hoția! / Welcome to Romania, they've just legalized theft!
21. Olimpicii emigrează, analfabeții guvernează. / The elites emigrate, the illiterates rule.
22. C'est si grave que même les introvertis sont sortis. / It's so bad that even introverts have come out.
23. Guvern penal, pericol social / Criminal government, social hazard
24. Cu „stânga” nici cruce nu poți să-ți faci, darămite să conduci o țară. (PetreȚuțea)/ One cannot even make the sign of the cross with the left [hand], let alone rule a country.
25. Nepotismul și hoția ne distrug democrația/ Nepotism and thievery will destroy democracy

Table 1. Verdictive slogans



Figures 1 and 2. Verdictives

3.2. Exercitives

The class of Exercitives also features a large number of slogans – 18 out of 75 (Table 2). The slogans in this category have direct addressees. Thus, some slogans address the government directly, either by giving orders or by issuing warnings,

should the demands of the protesters be not met. Others overtly require Europe's support in the struggle against corruption. These are rendered in English, so as to suggest an international addressee: *Europe, stand up with us to defend justice, Europe, S.O.S. and We are being hijacked. Europe, help!* There are also slogans that address the people who are not ready to join the fight. In this latter category, one may include the prompt to the undecided to go to vote in the next elections, thus implying that the serious situation of the country is a direct result of PSD winning the elections as a consequence of absenteeism. Another one along the same lines addresses "parents", i.e. the elderly, regarded as PSD's most faithful electorate, who must be persuaded that the country is ruled by thieves. In fact, this noun has the highest rate of occurrence in the texts of the slogans, alongside *corruption*, although the word, in both Romanian (*hoț*) and English, has the connotation of a rather petty crime, which is hardly the case when high-rank politicians are involved. In almost all instances in this category, the verb is in the imperative, and many of them, which target the government directly, require the abrogation of the ordinance, followed by their stepping down from office. In point of structure, they range from very short coordinated sentences – *abrogate, and then leave* – to more complex messages made up of more requests, reminding of the proclamations used by revolutionaries across Europe in the year of revolutions, 1848.

Others, such as *Fear, the people is rising* and the simple, but explicit *We are watching you* – a Big Brother in reverse – may be catalogued as warnings/ ultimatums. There is also a reminder of the Colectiv deaths, considered the responsibility of the same party, in the slogan *When you count us, add up 64!* 64 is the number of people who lost their lives in the fire or afterwards, in hospitals, and the counting of people is an allusion to the two televisions that have constantly supported the party in power, Antena 3 and Romania TV, which were in the habit of announcing much smaller numbers of people that were in the streets.

This category employs intertextuality to a lesser extent, probably because its imperative character is considered expressive enough. However, there is at least an instance of overt intertextuality with the Bible, in the quotation of the eighth commandment, *Thou shalt not steal*, which comes to reinforce the extensive use of the noun *thief*. An interesting slogan, despite its lexical simplicity, is *Well, this means trouble*. The translation is unable to render its meaning completely, which is why a short explanation is in order. In Romanian, the slogan is written in Transylvanian dialect, and Transylvanians are, stereotypically, considered to be the epitome of calmness, therefore, this may be considered a warning that the people has had enough.

Two slogans in this category made the news, while also being the ones with the highest rate of occurrence during the protests held across the country and abroad. *Paws off justice* points to the content of the ordinance, to its intention of changing the laws in favour of the lawgivers, which are conceptualised as animals/brutes, by the use of the noun *paws* instead of the regular human hands. The latter, *DNA should come for you*, rhyming in Romanian, alludes to the activity of the National Anticorruption Directorate, which have instrumented a lot of cases of corruption, thus becoming a sort of boogiemán for corrupt politicians, who are always at risk of being “taken away”. The slogan reminds of the adapted nursery rhyme *one, two, Freddy’s coming for you* and, as in the song in the horror film, the addressee is the potential ‘victim’. Nevertheless, the message of this slogan targets the DNA prosecutors, who are thus prompted to do their job.

1. Data viitoare, hai cu toții la votare! / Next time, let’s all go to vote!
2. Europe, stand up with us to defend justice!
3. Porunca a opta: să nu furi! / The eighth commandment: Thou shalt not steal!
4. No, amu îi bai. / Well, this means trouble.
5. Să vă fie frică, poporul se ridică! / Fear, the people is rising!
6. Când ne numărați, adunați 64 #Colectiv! / When you count us, add up 64 #Colectiv!
7. România, trezește-te! / Romania, wake up!
8. Părinți! Hoții guvernează țara copiilor voștri! / Parents! Thieves are ruling the country of your children!
9. Abrogați și apoi plecați! / Abrogate, then leave!
10. Pas de promesses. Des faits! Abrogez et puis partez! / Not promises! Facts! Abrogate, then leave!
11. Ultimatum! Abrogați OUG din 31.01. 2017! Retrageți proiectul grațierii! Demisia guvernului trădător. În această ordine și fără omisiuni. / Ultimatum! Abrogate the OUG of January 31st, 2017. Withdraw the pardon project. Resignation of the treacherous government. In this particular order and without omissions.
12. Grup infraccional, treci la tribunal! / Criminal gang, go to trial!
13. Vă vedem. / We are watching you!
14. DNA să vină să vă ia! / DNA should come for you!
15. Jos etichetele de pe justiție! / Paws off justice!
16. We are being hijacked! EU, help!
17. La muncă, lichelelor, nu la furat! Go to work, schlumps, not to snatch!
18. Europe S.O.S.!

Table 2. Exercitive slogans



Figures 3 and 4. Exercitives

3.3. Commissives

The next class, i.e., that of Commissives, includes, as per Austin's definition, the speaker's commitment to *do* something. Since the situational context is that of a protest, it is natural that the commitments on the part of the speaker are fewer, only 12 out of 75 in the present corpus (Table 3). As a rule, the slogans in this category are intended to make the addressee understand that the speaker is determined to keep on protesting until the requests in the category above have been met – *We will be here, day in, day out; We'll be furious until you leave* or the intertextual wish *Live long and protest* fall under this subcategory.

An interesting trend in the construction of the slogans of the 2017 protest is the permanent connection made between this uprising and the two large ones which took place in the dawns of Romanian democracy – the Revolution of December 1989 and the protests violently repressed by Ion Iliescu, former president of Romania and leader of the party (under its all denominations, from FSN onwards). If many slogans simply state that the protesters of today are the children of those who fought communism in 1989-1990, one actually emphasises *I am trying to do for my children what my parents could not do for me*, implying, once again, that the power of PSD nowadays is a consequence of the inaction of the elder generations. The elders, however, are also represented in the ranks of the protesters, which is made obvious by the slogan *I am not selling my grandchildren's future for my retirement plan!* It should be mentioned, for a clearer understanding

of this particular sentence, that the party in power promised significant raises of pensions, which made many retired people vote for them.

In point of intertextuality, remarkable is philosopher Mihai Şora's rephrasing of the Shakespearean *winter of our discontent* as *winter of our resistance*, the replacing noun adding a participative nuance to the implied discontent, which made the people take to the streets. Also interesting is the reworking of George Coşbuc's line from the poem *Decebal către popor*, "c-o moarte tot suntem datori" (We would be death-bound even so!). *Death* has been replaced in the slogan with *square*, the place of meeting for protesters, the inference here being that the presence amidst the protesters is a duty for everybody, and one as unavoidable as death.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Zi de zi aici vom fi. / We will be here, day in, day out. 2. Refuz acest abuz! / I refuse this abuse! 3. Live long and protest! 4. Ce nu au reuşit părinţii mei încerc să fac eu pentru copiii mei. / I am trying to do for my children what my parents could not do for me. 5. E prea bine-n închisoare, v-aş închide în spitale. / Prison is too good for you, I'd lock you up in hospitals. 6. Cu o piaţă suntem toţi datori. / We're all square-bound. 7. Iarna rezistenţei noastre (M. Şora) / The winter of our resistance. 8. Pe străzi rezist nopţilor reci în gând cu cei ce n-au mai prins anii '90. / I hold against the chill of night in the street, thinking of those who didn't make it to the 1990s. 9. Țeapa ta, eu rămân în țara mea! / You're screwed, I stay in my country! 10. Nu vând viitorul nepoţilor pentru punctul de pensie! / I am not selling my grandchildren's future for my retirement plan! 11. Până nu plecaţi, rămânem supăraţi. / We'll be furious until you leave. 12. Ne furaţi de-un sfert de veac/ acum vă venim de hac. / You have been stealing from us for a quarter of a century, now we'll get you. |
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Table 3. Commissive slogans



Figures 5 and 6. Commissives

3.4. Expositives

The class of Expositives includes speech acts that clarify reasons, arguments, or communications (as affirming, denying, stating, describing, asking, and answering). The slogans considered to fall under this category, are, therefore, explanatory statements, simple observations, which distinguishes them from the ones in the verdictive category, although they do not specifically make use of the verbs listed by Austin as indicative of this category – “I reply, I argue, I concede, I illustrate, I assume and I postulate” (1962, 150). In point of structure, this category features again fully-formed sentences, with verbs in the present tense of the indicative, suggesting general truths, regardless whether they are or not preceded by these verbs. In point of rate of occurrence, 15 out of 75 slogans in the corpus have been ascribed to this fourth category (Table 4).

The first in the list below, *Who are you to steamroller us?*, openly contests the legitimacy of the government, while other slogans just affirm the citizens’ right to peaceful protests and the impossibility of their being manipulated. *My mother does not want an increased pension, she wants grandchildren with a future* is another slogan which attempts to shake the foundation of the prejudice that the elders are to be blamed for PSD’s ascension to power. The metaphors, which tend to repeat, conceptualise again the situation in the country as a disease – *democracy is sick* – and the wrongdoers as *night rats*. This time, the register becomes more acute – not only are the politicians petty thieves, they are *rats*, which are considered filthy animals, carriers of serious diseases – such as plague. Thus, it is not

difficult to find the threads that bind all (or at least the majority of) slogans, yet another one being the assertion of PSD as the heir of the Communist Party and their leader as an embodiment of the former dictator - *Ceausescu isn't dead, he is Dragnea, but in drag*. Along the same lines, if a multimodal analysis was pursued here, one could not refrain from noticing many pictures of the party leader, Liviu Dragnea, photoshopped as to make him borrow the physical traits of Nicolae Ceausescu.

The connection between past and present protests is magisterially achieved by a particular slogan, with the verb elided, which lists a chronology of the expletives used by those in power against the protesters: *1990 – a punk, 2012 – an idiot, 2017 – a Soros fan*. The idea underlined is that the protests were, in fact, battles of the same war, against the same enemies. The Hungarian-American magnate, George Soros, has been repeatedly accused by PSD of involvement in the Romanian internal affairs, and, by association, the protesters against the PSD government have been considered his tools. Similarly, the very short, of internet inspiration slogan *Punk 2.0* points to the relation between the events of 1990, when Ion Iliescu (in)famously called the protesters punks, and the ones of today, which take place in the digital age.

In point of intertextuality, worth mentioning is the reference to Garcia Marquez's novel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, in the ironic wish *Many happy returns and one hundred years of solitude!*, which underlines the desire of seeing the party leader, Liviu Dragnea, incarcerated for a long period. Also ironic is the reference in *We aren't tired yet. Tough luck*. The last part of the slogan alludes to President Klaus Iohannis' *faux pas* during the electoral campaign for president, when he answered with "tough luck" the question why other teachers could not make a fortune out of tutoring, as he did. As many other blunders of the politicians, *tough luck* was quickly assumed by urban folklore. As President Iohannis is the greatest opponent of the PSD government, the speaker intention must be that of associating himself (or herself) with his opposition.

1. Cine sunteți voi să treceți peste noi? / Who are you to steamroller us?
2. Golan 2.0. / Punk 2.0
3. 1990 – golan, 2012 – ciupalac, 2017 – soroșist/ 1990 – a punk, 2012 – an idiot, 2017 – a Soros fan
4. Mama nu vrea pensie mărită, vrea nepoți cu viitor. / My mother does not want an increased pension, she wants grandchildren with a future.

5. Protestăm pașnic, dar ferm, pentru că suntem cetățeni onorabili. / We are protesting peacefully, but firmly, because we are honourable citizens.
6. Nu suntem manipulați. / We are not being manipulated.
7. La mulți ani cu sănătate și un veac de singurătate. / Many happy returns and one hundred years of solitude!
8. Noi n-am oboșit. Ghinion. / We aren't tired yet. Tough luck.
9. Ceausescu n-a murit, este Dragnea travestit. / Ceausescu isn't dead, he is Dragnea, but in drag.
10. Nouă ne pasă – România e acasă. / We care – Romania is (our) home.
11. I can't believe I still have to protest for this bullshit.
12. Șobolani de noapte, ați trecut la fapte. / Night rats, you've done the deed.
13. Șefu', mâine nu vin. E bolnavă democrația. / Boss, I call in sick – democracy is sick.
14. Îmi vine să urlu. / I feel like howling.
15. Ne-am învățat copiii să nu fure. Vrem o țară fără corupție. / We have taught our children not to steal. We want a country free from corruption.

Table 4. Expositive slogans



Figures 7 and 8. Expositives

3.5. Behabitives

Since this last category includes acts which have to do with attitudes and social behaviour, employing positive actions such as apologizing, thanking, commending, etc., the first impulse was to leave it out, as neither of the slogans spoken or written in Victoria Square or other places of protest could ever qualify as an apology, thanks or congratulation. In the end, only 5 slogans out of the 75 have

been considered suitable for this category, in the sense that they depict the attitude that united the 600,000 people who protested in the cold winter of 2017. The protest has been considered a social duty ever since, in some cases, non-participants being even anathematised for their inaction. The most powerful slogan – owing, of course, in part, to its emotional content, is the refrain line of Goodbye to Gravity song, *The day we die, – the day we give in is the day we die*. The band is that which was playing in “Colectiv” when the fire started – four out of five members lost their lives in the fire – and their song has remained ever since an anthem of the unyielding younger generation, and was made heard repeatedly during all protests that followed the disaster. Along the same lines of the assumed intransigency of the Romanian people is the humorous slogan *you must be insane to pull the finger of a people whose favourite desert is koliva*. Koliva is a sweet dish made of boiled wheat that is used by Orthodox people for commemorating the dead. Though amusing, the slogan seems to have a slightly threatening nature.

Out of the two slogans which may qualify as apologies, the former is clearly sarcastic: *Our apologies, we cannot produce as much as you can steal*. Rhyming in the Romanian original, this slogan was among the favourites for chanting in the streets, probably owing to the Romanians’ appetency for dark humour in inappropriate moments and contexts. The latter is among the largest pieces of discourse in the corpus: *Our dearest children! We have been in the wrong for 28 years. But you can defeat corruption. We are proud of you. Mom and dad*. It is structured as a letter, having addressees, a body of text made up of short, full of impact sentences, and signatories, and it comes to reinforce the connection between the two generations affected by corruption since the fall of communism.

This inevitable connection to the past is also rendered in this category by two other slogans. The former, made up of three coordinated main clauses – the verb is elided in the first two cases – creates an arc over time, whose common denominator is the verb *to fight*, although it is never mentioned: *Our grandparents, in the war, our parents, in the revolution, now it’s our turn*. The other is an intertextual reworking of the song that used to be the hymn of the 1990 protests, *Imnul golanilor [The Anthem of the Punks]*, adapted to the more recent expletives used by the politicians in power against the protesters. The structure of the lyrics, which is also observed in the 2017 reworking, opposes the insults (*ragged, hooligan, punk*, in the original, respectively, *tramp, animal, and punk* in the new version) to what the speakers consider to be the real insult

(*traitor, dictator, activist*, and respectively *liar, villain, brown-noser*). The last line in the original version, *better off dead than a communist*, has lost its power, *dead* being now replaced with the untranslatable *sorosist* (an adept of Soros).

1. Vă rugăm să ne scuzați, nu producem cât furați. / Our apologies, we cannot produce as much as you can steal.
2. Trebuie să fii nebun să te pui cu un popor al cărui desert preferat este koliva. / You must be insane get on the nerves of a people whose favourite desert is koliva.
3. Bunicii noștri la război, părinții la revoluție, acum e rândul nostru. / Our grandparents [fought] in the war, our parents, in the revolution, now it's our turn.
4. Mai bine haimana decât mincinos, Mai bine animal decât ticălos, Mai bine golan decât pupincurist, Mai bine sosoșist decât comunist. / Better a tramp than a liar/ Better an animal than a villain/ Better a punk than a brown-noser/ Better a Soros fan than a communist.
5. Dragii noștri copii! Noi am greșit 28 de ani. Dar voi puteți învinge corupția. Suntem mândri de voi. Mama și tata. /Our dearest children! We have been in the wrong for 28 years. But you can defeat corruption. We are proud of you. Mom and dad.
6. The day we give in is the day we die.

Table 5. Behabitive slogans



Figures 9 and 10. Behabitives

4. Conclusions

In the attempt to outline a linguistic framework of the construction of political slogans used during the protest of 2017 in Romania, and, at the same time, to analyse their meaning in the broader context of Romanian culture, by employing a method inspired by pragmatics and Critical Discourse Analysis, this paper has

discussed a corpus of 75 slogans, divided into Austin's five classes of speech acts. The findings show that most slogans fit under the first two categories, Verdictives and Exercitives. In terms of intentionality, this shows a predilection of the utterers for issuing statements and for giving orders. In point of syntactic structure, the Romanian slogans generally follow the pattern of fully-formed complex sentences, using verbs in the indicative or the imperative, when the verb is not elided for rhythm purposes. Although the effect was lost in translation, many of these slogans are rhyming couplets, which makes them easy to chant by large choruses of people. However, a greater impact – in point of occurrence and quotation in the media – was noticeable in the case of much shorter utterances, either in the form of simple sentences, S+V, as is the case of *Corruption kills*, or in that of elliptical phrases, such as *Like thieves in the night* or *PSD – the red plague*. In point of stylistic contents, many slogans employ metaphors and metonymies that conceptualise death or disease (*plague, rats, koliva*) or the prison (*solitude*). Other nouns which have been often found pertain to the domain of justice (*thief, justice, prison, corruption*).

When it comes to context, it is important to stress that the slogans used during the 2017 protest make constant reference to similar events that the country has witnessed since the fall of communism, the inference being that the adversaries, i.e., the communists, are still in power as they were at the time of the earlier events. To this end, but also to demonstrate the cultural and implicitly, the political awareness of the utterers, the texts employ intertextuality to a large extent, paraphrasing statements attributed to great historical figures, philosophical propositions, novels, poems, plays, the Bible, and lyrics of various songs. In point of national stereotyping, the analysis of the 75 texts underlines the fact that the Romanian who has chosen to protest and defend democracy, thus gaining the admiration of the entire world, is no longer the fatalist who passively accepts his demise, as depicted in the Romanian folklore ballads. The texts bear, in many instances, an aggressive tenor, that of a people that has had enough. Illustrative in this respect is a slogan which was not included in the initial corpus because of the difficulty to render it in translation, which reads *#neamsăturat*. Based on the homophony of *neam* (people) and *ne-am* (personal pronoun, 1st person plural + auxiliary verb *to have* for past tense), this slogan can be interpreted both as “weary people” and “we’ve had enough”. It seems, therefore, that the people weary of being mistreated by corrupt politicians has indeed had enough, and the proof is in the political action of which the slogans analysed here are an important part.

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