

FRAMING AND AUTHORIAL ATTITUDES IN ROMANIAN OPINION DISCOURSE ON THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN ROMANIA AND THE UNITED STATES

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This article continues a previous study on the evaluations of the strategic partnership between Romania and the United States reflected in the Romanian media, by focusing on the authorial attitudes expressed and on the discursive strategies involved, especially on the framing strategy. Recent history appears to play a significant role in the interpretations of the contemporary events which the journalists advance. In the deontic sphere, a major dichotomy in use is 'democracy' versus 'communism', as a new articulation of the good – bad opposition. From this perspective, Romania's recent past is negatively viewed by Romanian opinion discourse. The texts enhancing the affective dimension construct a different view of the past, based on an idealized representation of the former times, which is contrasted with a negative depiction of the present. Similar to previous research on European media (Riegert, Pettersson 2011), this brief analysis shows that the strategic partnership with the United States is therefore valued from the viewpoint of Romania's needs and capacities. Although it is often perceived as incongruent with Romania's present conditions, media discourse also reveals the effort to integrate the new events in the previous common sense scripts of Romanian life.

Key words: opinion discourse, Romania, U.S.A., framing, scripts.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is widely acknowledged at present that media's role goes beyond mere dissemination of information, as they also contribute to the shaping of public opinion or of setting the agenda for public debates. Moreover, media provide not only descriptions, but also interpretations of events aiming to construct solidarity relations with their audiences which leads to a representation of journalists as an 'interpretive community',

able to create a sense of belonging to a group with a shared view' [1]. This function is salient especially in opinion discourse, which 'serves as a forum for sharing and casting ideas in imagined communities' [2]. In the case of the Romanian media, news and opinion discourse represents an interesting research area, especially from the angle of the evaluative and interpretive functions of media texts in connection to the cultural background of their production and reception.

My previous article [3] brought into discussion the evaluations of the military cooperation between Romania and the United States reflected in two Romanian print and online newspapers. Military issues do not usually receive a large coverage in Romanian media, except in cases of war and international conflict, still the strong cooperation between the two states attracted constant media coverage in the last years, especially in the news. The events which took place during 2011, especially the conclusion of the agreement regarding Romania's decision to host ground-based components of the Ballistic Missile Defense System on its territory, were debated not only in the news, but also in opinion pages and triggered comments, general evaluations and interpretations from authorities, experts and journalists. The reason for choosing this particular topic as an object of analysis in the previous and the present study was that a state's involvement in military actions or partnerships cannot pass unnoticed in the public sphere or be neutrally treated in the media. Cooperation and conflict determine media to reassert common beliefs and values, to reinforce solidarity, to reiterate the national identity in relationship to 'otherness'.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Representations of the United States in the European media have been examined in previous extended studies; for example, Riegert and Petersson's study (2011) [4] on Finnish, French, German, Russian and Swedish media, covering a

period from the Cold War to president Obama's first term. The results showed similarities in the depictions of the U.S.A. and also that media discourse in these countries expressed a state-centric perspective, focusing more on the national problems and identities in the relationship to the U.S.A. [4]. Research on the depiction of the United States in the Romanian media is still needed, especially a comparative approach which would be able to signal similarities and differences in regard to the media in other European countries.

The present article aims to investigate discursive strategies and the linguistic resources employed in Romanian opinion articles regarding the strategic partnership to the United States. The framework used is the one proposed by A. Carvalho (2008) [5] for the analysis of media discourse. This framework consists in two levels of analysis, the textual and the contextual one. Textual analysis examines the layout of the texts, the objects of discourse, the actors mentioned or represented in the texts, the linguistic dimension of the texts, the discursive strategies and the ideological standpoints. The contextual analysis is developed by taking into account the comparative-synchronic and the historical-diachronic dimensions. This study is focused on aspects at the textual level. In the first part of the study, the linguistic dimension of the texts will be discussed in connection to the objects of discourse and with the authorial attitudes stated. The main categories of authorial attitudes are considered to be epistemic, deontic and affective [6]. The epistemic attitude refers to the speaker/ writer's belief about

the truth of a given state of affairs, the deontic attitude encompasses the expression of judgments from a moral or ethical perspective and the affective attitude results from the expression of the speaker/ writer's emotions regarding a certain topic or situation [6]. In the next section, the discursive organization will be taken into account by the examination of the framing strategy.

3. OBJECTS OF DISCOURSE AND AUTHORIAL ATTITUDES

The notion of 'object of discourse' is preferred by Carvalho [5] because of its ability to suggest that reality is constituted by the discourse, not simply referred to. The complexity of the military and diplomatic relations between Romania and the U.S.A. leads to their treatment by the media as a broad and composite object of discourse, encompassing various more specific subtopics as: the negotiations for the military agreement between the two countries and its conclusion, the visit made by the Romanian president to the USA with this occasion, the negotiations for the purchase of American F-16 military planes by the Romanian government or the participation of Romanian troops in conflict areas and their cooperation with the American forces.

In the analyzed texts, the types of attitudes expressed vary according to the choice of the specific object of discourse. The expression of an epistemic attitude is not very common in opinion texts; still this authorial attitude is visible in the articles which endorse the partnership with the U.S.A. by bringing forth economic

advantages as a main argument. In such cases, the evaluation is placed in the epistemic sphere by the use of facts and concrete data, for example chronological ones. Another trait is the lack of personal deixis and, as a consequence, the repetition of the name 'Romania' or of the syntagma 'the Romanian state' instead of the pronoun 'we', thus reducing the impression of subjectivity.

While deontic judgments are clearly stated, the expression of an epistemic attitude appears to be more cautious in the opinion texts on the topic of the strategic partnership. Caution in the degree of certainty expressed is salient in the two examples below, where the general positive evaluation is realized with the help of superlatives and graduation. The endorsement of the partnership and the positive estimation of its effects are, however, mitigated in these extracts by specific devices:

(1) „Cea mai importantă consecință nonmilitară a amplasării scutului antirachetă în România ar putea fi deschiderea fluxului de investiții americane către România”. [The most important nonmilitary consequence of the installment of the shield against missiles in Romania might be the opening of an American flow of capital towards Romania.] ('Banii de sub scut', *România liberă*, May 4, 2011 [7]).

(2) „Faptul că România va face parte, la nivel operativ, din acest sistem de apărare antirachetă, din 2015, este un câștig politic greu de estimat. Un câștig politic care poate fi transformat, de persoane capabile, e drept, într-un avantaj economic

deosebit în relația cu SUA, în special. [...] România nu a profitat de statutul de membru NATO. România nu este pe lista țărilor care au înflorit economic în urma semnării de acorduri militare cu SUA. România nu a profitat și nici nu profită de calitatea de membru al UE. Ba, mai degrabă, din contră. [...] România poate face următorul pas: poate trece la diplomația economică”. [“The fact that Romania is going to be a part, at the operational level, of this missile defense system, is a political gain difficult to estimate. A political gain that may be turned, by competent persons, it’s true, into a special economic advantage in the relation to the U.S.A., in particular. [...] Romania hasn’t taken advantage from its status as a NATO member. Romania isn’t one of the countries which have grown economically after signing military agreements with the U.S.A. Romania hasn’t taken and isn’t taking advantage from its status as an E.U. member. Rather on the contrary. [...] Romania might make the next step: might shift to economic diplomacy.”] (*Cum ar putea aduce scutul antirachetă bani pentru România*, *Gândul*, May 3, 2011 [8]).

The extracts illustrate a balanced authorial attitude created through the combination of enthusiasm and skepticism. First, the use of modals places the economic consequences in the sphere of possibility, but not certainty. Then, the idea of economic gains is mitigated by a concession (‘by competent persons, it’s true’) which casts doubts about the Romanian officials’ ability to negotiate or

to exploit the opportunity for the national interest. In the final section of the second extract, the topic shifts from the partnership to the current state of Romania’s finance. The presentation of the external politics and economic strategies is composed by successive negative statements, with a similar syntactic structure (‘Romania’ as a subject, followed by a verb in the negative form). This parallelism draws attention to what the author perceives as a political failure and the contrast aids to highlight the importance of the military agreement. At the semantic level, the author creates a bridge between the failures of the past and the desired future development of the country.

The category of deontic attitude is manifest in the texts which discuss the military agreement focusing on the decision-making process. In the following extract, the author expresses disapproval by drawing attention to the sphere of ethics: it is stated that the decision is undemocratic because the citizens have not been informed about it and their opinions have not been taken into consideration.

(3) *„Un apanaj prezidențial și al unui CSAT amintind de unanimitățile entuziaste ale CPEx-urilor de altădată a fost acceptul pentru amplasarea scutului antirachetă american în România, la Deveselu”.* [“A privilege of the president and of a Supreme Council for National Defense reminding of the enthusiastic unanimity of former Political Executive Committees was the consent for the installment of the American shield against missiles in Romania, at Deveselu.”] (*Nenea Iancu de Deveselu*, *Adevărul*, June 1st, 2011 [9]).

What is criticized here is the behavior of Romanian authorities and not the project itself. Statements regarding the value of the project are not clearly expressed throughout the article. In this text, the negative judgment is realized by means of a comparison referring to recent history, more exactly, to the meetings of the Romanian Communist Party, which implies the lack of democracy, imposition, forced consent and thus it is likely to convey a negative meaning to the readers. Interestingly, a similar argument is used by another journalist in order to advocate the opposite point of view:

(4) „În sfârșit, dacă veți auzi oameni care să susțină că acordul privind scutul ar trebui supus referendumului pentru că România ar putea deveni o țintă pentru ruși, atunci ar trebui să știți că devotamentul acelor oameni este față de Moscova, nu față de Occident. Și-acum, poate ar trebui să vedem câți dintre politicienii, experții și jurnaliștii noștri au exprimat poziții identice cu cele enumerate mai sus“. [Finally, if you're going to hear people saying that the agreement regarding the shield should be an object of referendum because Romania might become a target for Russia, then you should know that those people are devoted to Moscow, not to the Occident. And now, maybe we should see how many of our politicians, experts and journalists expressed identical stances with those listed above.].” (‘Cine subminează parteneriatul cu America’, *România liberă*, September 16, 2011 [10]).

The authors of both texts make use of a particular type of argumentation, the ‘argumentum ad populum’, which is frequent in opinion texts and it is based on the topos of common well-being, common interest, honesty and solidarity [11]. Besides the generic reference to the ‘people’, both texts resort to the strategy of ‘boundary’ or ‘adversarial’ framing, aiming ‘to delineate the boundaries between “good” and “evil” and construct movement protagonists and antagonists’ [12]. The difference lies in the discourse labeled as adversarial: in example (3), the opposed discourse is that of the authorities, while the other text endorses the main official discourse and hence the antagonists are represented by a larger community which is not only restricted to some politicians but also including experts interviewed in the media and journalists, therefore a part of the media itself. Both texts propose an antagonistic representation of the Romanian society: for the first text, the power relationship between the state and its citizens is contested. In the other text, the society is viewed as consisting of two major groups, according to the agreement or disagreement to the cooperation with the U.S.A. The scheme which is applied in both cases is not merely good versus bad or ethical versus unethical, but democracy and progress versus communism, by means of the reference to the communist regime and to the influence of Russia, whose image is constructed in the discourse as close to that of the former Soviet Union.

It may seem probable that the sphere of affect would not be frequently represented in editorials on military topics. Contrary to this

hypothesis, it appears that affect is involved in editorials and reports referring to objects of discourse which are specific and treated from a personal perspective: affect is linked to the personal stories inserted in articles on military topics which are meant to lower the degree of generality and appear more interesting and appealing to the reader. Such an example is represented by the texts about the local community in the area of Deveselu, which will host the ground-based components of the AEGIS project. After the installment of the US military base in the village Deveselu was announced, articles in the news media included not only information about the project, but also regarding the local community and the history of the military base which once existed here. The following extract comes from a larger article – documentary by its nature – and its organization is relevant for the depiction of this theme in the media; the general organization of the discourse, alternating information about the community's past and present life with testimonials of former army men, leads to the construction of a marked affective perspective:

(5) *„Baza militară construită de sovieticii lui Stalin, închisă din motive geostrategice în 2002, e redeschisă tot din motive geostrategice pentru americanii lui Obama. Localnicii sunt obișnuiți cu uniforma de soldat, fie ea de data asta a armatei SUA. Sunt însă pesimiști că traiul lor va fi mai bun odată cu venirea americanilor. Două tunuri stau de strajă la intrarea în satul Deveselu. Amintesc trecătorilor de piloți care «și-au frânt aripile» la*

baza militară de aici. Steagul NATO și cel al UE te readuc în prezent. [...] Scutul antirachetă le amintește deveselenilor de vremurile bune. A.P. a lucrat la aerodrom. A păstrat până în ziua de azi permisul de sergent. [...] Are amintiri plăcute de pe vremea aceea. [...] În 2002, totul s-a terminat. Consilierul administrației prezidențiale de atunci, generalul I.T., a anunțat deveselenii că baza se închide din motive strategice. Mulți civili și militari au rămas pe drumuri. [...] Aici locuiește și locotenent-comandorul în rezervă V.J. A pilotat MIG-uri 21, la baza Deveselu, nouă ani, aproape jumătate din carieră. Este dezamăgit de modul în care sunt tratați astăzi aviatorii în România. «[...] Când mă duc sau vin de la Caracal, involuntar privirea îmi fuge spre pistă. Un om care zboară uită să facă altceva, spune militarul în rezervă. Vă spun sincer, nu sunt nici pro, nici antiamerican, sunt român. Mă simt înfrânt»". [The military base built by Stalin's Soviets, closed in 2002 for geostrategic reasons, is reopened for geostrategic reasons too, for Obama's Americans. The inhabitants are used to the soldiers' uniforms, even if they belong to the US army this time. But they are pessimistic about the improvement of their life thanks to the Americans' arrival. Two cannons guard the entryway to the village Deveselu. They remind the persons walking by of the pilots who «broke their wings» at the military base here. The NATO and EU flags bring you back to the present day. [...] The anti-missile shield reminds the villagers of the good old times. A.P. worked at the aerodrome. He has kept his sergeant identification card till now.

He has pleasant memories of those times. [...] In 2002, everything was over. The former counselor of the presidential administration, general I.T., announced the villagers that the basis would be closed for geostrategic reasons. Many civilians and military personnel have become unemployed. [...] Reserve LCDR V.J. lives here too. He piloted MIGs – 21 at the Deveselu base for nine years, almost half of his career. He is disappointed by the way airmen are treated presently in Romania. «[...] When I go to or come from Caracal, I can't help myself from looking to the airport runway. A man who flies forgets how to do anything else, says the reserve army man. I'm telling you honestly, I'm neither for, nor against the Americans, I'm Romanian. I feel defeated. » („România sub scut: de ce aici și ce câștigăm“, *Adevărul*, May 16, 2011[13]).

The affective stance is created by lexical items which function as markers of subjectivity: adjectives ('pessimistic', 'disappointed') and verbs ('I feel defeated'). Moreover, these lexical items belong to the sphere of negative feelings which supports a key idea of the text, the construction of a particular type of narrative. This is a modern reiteration of the ancient myth of the golden age, praising 'the good old days' in opposition to the sadness of the present. This idea is sustained by the temporal deixis, which acquires an affective connotation in this context: 'The anti-missile shield reminds the villagers of the good old times', the former sergeant 'has pleasant memories of those times'.

The narrative is first focused on the history of the air base and of the small community in Deveselu, as the base was built during the communist regime with the help of the Soviet Union and it was closed in 2002. The image of the heroic past is created by the use of metaphors: 'two cannons guard the entryway' or 'pilots who «broke their wings»'. Next, as the focus moves to the present days, personal stories are inserted in the narrative. There are two kinds of focus shifting in the text: from past to present and back and from the community to the personal level. The result is however coherent and contributes to the creation of a special type of framing, opposing not only the past to the present, but also the 'great' history based on 'important' events to the smaller, personal history of common people or, in this case, of pilots and soldiers who were forced to resign or to retire. The 'great' history appears to be absurd and cryptic for the people who become its victims; this idea is supported by the repetition of the syntagma 'din motive geostrategice (i.e. for geostrategic reasons)', implying that the people received only a vague explanation for the government's decision to shut down the base. 'Small' histories, represented by the life stories of the persons interviewed draw attention to their problems, their understanding of politics and of events which are now perceived as distant. As the second officer interviewed states, the topic of discussion is shifted from a clear-cut alignment (pro or against the U.S.A.) to the affective sphere of the people which seem to be no longer agents but subjects of history.

4. DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES

In Carvalho's framework, the main discursive strategy is labeled 'framing' and it is used for the operation of organizing the discourse 'according to a certain point of view or perspective'. Emphasis is put on the speaker/ writer's unavoidable effort to present the message from a particular point of view instead of the hearer's/ reader's interpretation. In contrast to other discursive strategies, which may or may not be present in the elaboration of a text, framing is a *sine-qua-non* condition of every discourse: 'what is at stake in the analysis of framing as a strategy is *how*, and not *whether*, an actor frames reality' [5] (*italics in original*). It includes two processes: the selection of certain aspects of the reality discussed and composition or their organization in a coherent discourse. Although opinion editorials include varied types of framing, only two specific types will be discussed here in detail and in connection to the notion of 'script'. One of these types of framing is based on coherence or on established similarities of two different scripts, the other one - on the incongruence or opposition of different scripts that are juxtaposed. The term 'script' is used here as defined by Victor Raskin, as a 'large chunk of semantic information surrounding the word or evoked by it. The script is a cognitive structure internalized by the native speaker and it represents the native speaker's knowledge of a small part of the world' [14]. Raskin distinguishes three types of scripts: individual, based on the personal knowledge and experience, 'restricted scripts',

which are common for the members of a small group and 'common sense scripts', which are internalized by a larger community or by the members of a particular culture. Common sense scripts are frequently propagated by the media and, as the next examples show, they provide a basis or a filter for the interpretation of contemporary social and political events.

In some opinion texts, the strategy of framing is employed with the help of what may be regarded as cultural scripts; more precisely, the authors use historical or literary references in order to interpret the actual events and to legitimate their position on the topic of military cooperation. The resort to cultural scripts is often manifest in the headlines. For instance, the headline (*Nenea*) *Iancu de Deveselu* (*Adevărul*, June 1st, 2011) [9] alludes to the nickname of a Romanian writer from the 19th century, Ion Luca Caragiale, famous until today because of the literary value of his comic prosa and theatre plays. The cultural script is present in the headline and in the closing paragraph and, in this manner, it guides the reader's interpretation: as mentioned above, the main idea of the text is that the decision-making process for the installment of the BMD system in Romania was unethical. References to the Romanian comic writer's works add a new dimension to the deontic stance: the fictional world of his comic works is a profoundly absurd one, where characters act like puppets on a string, uncultivated and unable to judge for themselves, although they show a great interest in politics. By the use of this script, these characteristics are viewed as representative for today's

Romanian society. Another article, *Ce-ar fi zis Ionel Brătianu despre vizita în SUA* (*Adevărul*, September 18, 2011), reactivates a historical script, reminding the readers about a famous Romanian politician, Ion Brătianu, and his activity in the period between the two world wars. His discourse is used as a source of authority, by being extended to the current state of affairs: the message of the text is that the alliance with a stronger state is not desirable, because the country has more important internal problems. The quotation of the historical character is taken to offer a filter for the interpretation of actual events.

The cultural framing is based on a particular mode of selection and composition: contemporary social events or facts are linked to a set of previous cultural knowledge (about events, personalities, literature a.s.o.). This set is taken by the writer to provide a valid tool for the interpretation of the present. It mainly functions as an argument of authority, contributing to the construction of the writer's competence based on his/her knowledge. Moreover, it may also help to establish a special connection between the author and the audience as the ideal reader needs to share this knowledge in order to understand the message correctly. In the previous examples, it is not a casualty that the writers recur to references from the Romanian cultural space. This may be another feature adding to the state-centric view expressed in the text, helping to endorse the idea of necessary concentration on the internal state of affairs from the part of both authorities and people. By contrast, a text expressing agreement

with the Romanian - American cooperation includes two quotes, one from the British poet Alfred Tennyson and one from the works of the American-born poet T.S. Eliot. (*America și cauzele pierdute, România liberă*, April 1st, 2011 [15]).

The second type of framing under discussion consists in the combination of two scripts which are in a relation of opposition or of difference; in this case, coherence is ensured by the fact that both scripts are triggered by the same object of discourse. This strategy was used in reportage texts and editorials describing the village Deveselu. The discursive strategy underlying the entire text is visible in the headlines, too: e.g. *Cum s-a infiltrat CIA pe străzile comunei românești unde americanii instalează scutul antirachetă* [*How the CIA sneaked in the streets of the Romanian village where the Americans are installing the shield against missiles*] (*Gândul*, May 7, 2011); *Cum stă scutul american printre căruțe și bovine* [*How the American shield lays among carts and cattle*] (*România liberă*, May 4, 2011 [16]). This discursive strategy seems to be a more or less accurate description of facts and places, but, in fact, it is marked by subjectivity precisely because of the elements selected and because of their combination:

(6) „O căruță trasă de un cal costeliv cu coama sură își face agale drum pe povârnișul din fața unității militare de la Deveselu, aruncată undeva după dealurile Caracalului, unde semnalul mobilului e la preț mare. La doi pași, pe islazul din fața bazei, doi localnici pasc vacile. Totul se întâmplă la

doar câteva minute după plecarea coloanei oficiale, ticsite de autorități române și americane. Aceștia tocmai anunțaseră oficial amplasarea sistemului antirachetă în zonă.“ [A cart drawn by a skinny grey-maned horse is moving slowly forward on the cliff in front of the military unit in Deveselu, which lies somewhere behind the hills of Caracal, where the mobile phone signal is very rare. Nearby, on the meadow in front of the base, two villagers are tending their cattle at pasture. Everything happens only a few minutes after the departure of the official group of cars, full with Romanian and American authorities. They had just made public the installment of the anti-missile system in the area.] („Cum stă scutul american printre căruțe și bovine“, *România liberă*, May 4, 2011 [16]).

Not surprisingly, the general image does not differ very much from the image presented in the article from which extract (5) is taken. In the text above, the contrast between the scripts is not created by the use of explicit markers of affect, but by larger discourse units. Extract (6) represents the opening paragraph of a report about the village and the first elements selected by the writer shape the readers' representation of the events and guide their reading of the entire text. Two main scripts can be distinguished here, one regarding ordinary country life and another one regarding the shield installment. What draws attention is the fact that the insertion of the first script seems to be irrelevant from a mere journalistic perspective: the mention of a cart moving slowly or of cattle

grazing is not likely to be considered newsworthy. Such information becomes 'news' only after the incongruence relation is created by the juxtaposition of scripts. A strong contrast emerges between 'common sense' knowledge and recent information regarding the diplomatic and military event. This contrast is also sustained by the selection of lexical items with a negative superlative connotation (for example, the adjective describing the meagerness of the horse or the construction referring to the very low phone signal). On the one side, we have the script of rural life, which here encompasses tradition, lack of progress and underdevelopment while, on the other side, the script of the military cooperation involves development, innovation, technology and progress.

This incongruence constructs an added 'news value' for the event but it also limits the information given to the readers. Instead of explaining the reasons for the installment of the system in this geographical area, the text creates a form of absurd humor as, after the emphasis is placed on the depiction of country life, the decision of choosing this area for the installment seems to be peculiar. The comic effects are more extensively developed in an editorial:

(7) „Pe celelalte șapte le știți (cimitirul pe strada Învierii, pușcăria pe strada Libertății etc.). A opta minune se săvârșește acum, sub ochii noștri: americanii însămânțează saci cu dolari. La vremea culesului, țărani din împrejurimile Caracalului vor recolta scut antirachetă.“ [You already know the other seven (the graveyard on the Resurrection Street, the prison on the Liberty Street a.s.o.)

The eighth wonder is done right now, in front of us: the Americans are planting sacks of dollars. At harvest time, the peasants in the surroundings of Caracal will harvest anti-missile shield.] („A opta minune de la Caracal“, *Gândul*, May 7, 2011 [17]).

This text mimics the style of the news reports and constructs an absurd reality by the use of incongruent scripts. What is overrated here is exactly the ‘news value’ of the entire event, presented by means of a hyperbole as ‘the eighth wonder’. The author manages to convey two possible interpretations of the ambiguous message: at the surface level, it appears to be enthusiastic and positive. At a deeper level, the message might be interpreted as less enthusiastic, because of the scripts combined: from a logical perspective, money or technological equipment cannot take the place of the harvest. The editorial offers an ironic reading of previous media texts which expressed positive evaluations of the project in terms of financial advantages.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The topic of the strategic partnership to the United States was discussed from varied perspectives in the Romanian media. It is visible that the authorial attitudes expressed in opinion texts vary depending on the object of discourse and that epistemic, deontic and affective attitudes are all represented, even if the topics are connected to the military sphere. Recent history appears to play a significant role in the interpretations of the contemporary events which the

journalists advance. In the deontic sphere, a major dichotomy in use was ‘democracy’ versus ‘communism’, as a new articulation of the good – bad opposition. From this perspective, Romania’s recent past was negatively viewed. The texts enhancing the affective dimension constructed a different view of the past, based on an idealized representation of the former times, which was contrasted with a negative depiction of the present.

Similar to previous research on European media [4], this brief analysis shows that the Romanian media’s view of the topic is markedly state-centric. Romania’s situation is highlighted by descriptions and evaluations of the internal state of affairs, at the national level, or of local situations and problems. A recurrent feature is the negative representation of Romania which may range from asserting the need of financial support to self-denigration. The strategic partnership with the United States is therefore valued from the viewpoint of Romania’s needs and capacities and often perceived as incongruent with the existing conditions. However, the two types of the framing strategy discussed show that the media attempted, in various manners, to preserve the common knowledge, the core beliefs and values of the community they belong to and, at the same time, to integrate the new event in this knowledge set. The use of the framing strategy based on cultural or commonsense scripts does not convey a marked rejection of the strategic partnership but it reveals, instead, the first steps towards integration.

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ENDNOTES

[1] All articles consulted were available to the public by free access. The online versions consulted were in Romanian language. The English translation is proposed by me. The names of the persons mentioned in the text or of the interviewed sources were given in the original articles. I have decided to retain only the initial letters, considering the disclosure of these persons' full names not relevant for the research topic.

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