

# The Image of a Country created by International Media: The Case of Bulgaria

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## CHAPTER THREE

### CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Fairclough (2009) defines discourse as a semiotic process which reflects society and creates meaning. In this process language stands in a dialectic relation with social structures. More often than not CDA analyses the linguistic aspect of discourses using Systemic Functional Grammar, where “experience is the reality we construe for ourselves by means of language” (Halliday and Matthiessen 1999:1). The authors maintain that language seen as meaning and not as knowledge shapes human experience as a semantic system “since language plays the central role not only in storing and exchanging experience but also in construing it.”

#### Systemic Functional Grammar

Halliday’s theoretical model includes three metafunctions of language: the **ideational**, the **textual** and the **interpersonal** (ibid.:8ff). The comparison with Chinese elicits a fourth function – the **experiential** (ibid.:315), subsumed under the ideational metafunction. The ideational metafunction analyses the clause as construing experience by categorising the type of predication and the participants involved in the process. The interpersonal metafunction enacts the relationship between the speaker and the addressee, as seen with the modalities characterising the situation. Through the textual function the clause is represented as the information contained within as a message – highlighting something as new or old information.

Halliday presents the ideational function of language as structuring experience into three categories: sequences, figures and elements. While elements are simple components naming processes, participants, circumstances or relaters, figures signify configurations of those. They cluster around a specific type of verbal activity: material action, speaking or sensing – and the participants associated with it. Sequences, for their part, embody links among figures, where the development of the action denotes expansion, projection or equal/unequal relation. Grammatically, elements are realised in lexis as phrases or words, figures are clauses or sentences while sequences are higher-order relations among clauses or sentences.

A significant issue, however, seems to have escaped the notice of discourse analysts. Halliday and Matthiessen (ibid.: 206) classify qualities into three varieties:

- Binary (dead/alive)**
- Scalar (happy/sad)**
- Taxonomic (wooden, plastic, stone etc.)**

The latter are the most complex type, inasmuch as they bring external features into the process of classification. In their relation to reality, however, they are closely bound to facts – either a plank is made of wood or plastic. The binary attributes should be mutually exclusive and do not allow augmenting – \*a little bit dead. Scalar attributes, for their part, allow for a great deal of opacity. In line with lexical choices, we can say that the qualification “not at all happy” attempts to characterise in relation to the quality “happy”. In fact, the person can be attributed the quality “sad”, were it not for the speaker’s intent to discuss happiness, not sadness. Furthermore, scalar attributes have the potential to act as a smoke screen when mixing positive qualities with negative adverbials. Thus “swift reply” would qualify the action positively. However, an adverb, such as “overly” would make the qualification negative. Thus, what appears a positive attribute can turn negative by adding the respective modifying adverb. Unlike binary attributes, however, the speaker’s intent cannot be qualified in relation to the adjective – “swift”, in our example. It would appear that qualifications combining scalar adjectives with adverbs of adverse meaning create opacity, lack of clarity and are therefore indicative of

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vague language: “overly swift”, “overly confident”, “excessively self-reliant” etc. Such language usages have not been explored, but the potential exists of them being part of the political dimension of being indirect.

Processes can be presented as 6 types: material action or event, behavioural, mental perception, affection or cognition, verbal actions, relational processes of attribution or identification and existential process types. Each one has its typical participants performing functions determined by the verbal type. Thus, selecting from Halliday’s original examples, one may want to represent an action with the verb of material action:

*Birds are flying in the sky.*

In this case we are predicating a material action of the subject birds and specifying the circumstance of the action – the sky.

Alternatively, we may want to represent the same as an existential process:

*There are birds flying in the sky.*

An existent entity – birds, is represented with its quality – flying, in the circumstance – the sky.

Yet more options exist. We may decide to present the birds flying in the sky as the verbiage following a verb of speaking and a sayer:

*The priest told me birds were flying in the sky.*

We may choose to introduce this with a verb of perception, affection or cognition:

*The man saw birds flying in the sky.  
Elderly women love it when birds fly in the sky  
Students know that birds fly in the sky.*

In a different situation we may want to apply a process of attribution or identification:

*Birds are creatures flying in the sky.  
These are the birds which fly in the sky.*

Selecting a process type with the respective participants depends on the choice of the speaker and conversely – seeing the way a speaker has chosen to represent a life event can help analyse their intentions. Maybe we can go a step further – we may dive under the surface and discover which representation of a situation a speaker favours, which one fulfils his/her communicative intention, which one represents his/her idea of the state of affairs in the world.

Transitivity is “the part of the grammar that constitutes a theory of how one happening may be related to another” (Halliday and Matthiessen 1999). Thus verbs which take objects (transitive) are contrasted with those that do not (intransitive), which, in turn, are semantically reinterpreted as process types: material, mental, verbal, relational, and ergative systems. Depending on the nature of the verbal process, the participants in those processes can be ACTOR, GOAL, SENSER, SAYER, CARRIER and VALUE on the part of the Subject. When presented as objects, affected participants can be OBJECT, FORCE, PATIENT, RESULT or BENEFICIARY (Eggs 1994:228). Table 3.1 exemplifies these relations with illustration from corpora for this study:

ACTOR	MATERIAL PROCESS	GOAL	CIRCUMSTANCE
<i>Bulgaria and Romania</i>	Joined	<i>the EU</i>	<i>in 2007</i>

SENSER	MENTAL PROCESS	PHENOMENON
<i>Bulgarians and Romanians</i>	See	<i>the government's programme as a fantastic opportunity to cash in on the plentiful supply of work</i>

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VERBAGE	SAYER	VERBAL ACTION
"The amount I earn here on the farm in a week would take me four weeks to earn in Bulgaria,"	she (Marina from Bulgaria- E.T.)	Says

BAHAVER	BEHAVIOURAL PROCESS	PHENOMENON
She	reflects	on how lucky she feels to be working in the UK

EXISTENTIAL	EXISTENT
There are	65, 000 Bulgarians and Romanians

TOKEN	RELATIONAL PROCESS	VALUE	PHENOMENON
Bulgarian and Romanians	are	free	to enter the UK

VALUE	RELATIONAL PROCESS	TOKEN
One worker who has been granted a work permit	is	Marina Georgieva from Bulgaria

**Table 3.1. Types of verbal action.**

These relations can be modified with negation. Various studies employ this type of analysis to show what media make of events and characters (e.g. Soa 2013, Behnam and Zenouz 2008 etc.)

The ideational metafunction is the most basic linguistic layer. At a higher level, the clause can be viewed as a message with its thematic organisation. The first position in the clause in English is designated to the old information – the theme. This is the point of departure for the message and presents knowledge familiar to both speaker and recipient. The latter part of the clause presents the information imparted as new by the speaker. Thus, while containing the same components, the two presentations below have different thematic structure (Halliday 1985:39):

*A halfpenny is the smallest English coin  
The smallest English coin is a halfpenny*

While the former is glossed: "I shall tell you about a halfpenny", thus projecting the intended point of departure for the speaker, the latter should be about the smallest English coin. Postponing the subject has the effect of placing it in focus as part of the new information presented with the sentence:

*Once I was a real turtle.  
What the duke gave to my aunt was that teapot.*

Typical constructions exist in the English language which function as markers for the theme, such as *As for*, *What X did was...* However, Halliday identifies three types of thematic components. Ideational thematic components are typically subjects, adjuncts or complements. With respect to the interpersonal function of language, thematic functions are performed by modal adjuncts, such as *probably*, *broadly speaking*, *understandably* etc.; by the auxiliary verb dislocated for the interrogative form; by vocatives. The textual function also produces thematic parts. One group of thematic components called "continuative" are interjections, such as *well*, *oh*, *yes* etc. The components which link clauses, such as *and*, *because*, *even if*, are called structural themes. The third group are conjunctions such as *in other words*, *under the circumstances*, *nevertheless* etc. Thus, in complex sentences, the focus can only be determined after sequential analysis, because several components project thematic function directing to different rhemes and the information structure lies in the balance. Worth mentioning is the status of reported speech where the reporting clause is thematic, highlighting the significance of the actual quotation.

Halliday also discusses the use of metaphor as relating life events or things to the language describing them. Language, in his opinion, is a metaphor for life. However, he distinguishes between grammatical and lexical metaphors. Lexical metaphor applies to elements, where reality can be presented as a metaphoric expression. Grammatical metaphor occurs within figures and sequences.

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Halliday's involvement with the innate relationship between language and society (1978) is instrumental for CDA through his conception of grammar as systemic - seeing language as choices made among a number of paradigmatic options. Deducing why some choices were made and others – discarded helps construct a picture of the mental set-up of those who produced the texts.

## Nominalisations, Passivisations and Other Devices

Discourse analysts are particularly attracted to the notion that elements such as circumstances “are less closely associated with the process and are not inherent in it” (Halliday and Matthiessen 1999:54). This gives them assurance that if a participant is presented as a circumstance rather than as a participant, his/her role in the event is degraded. Likewise, Tesnière (1959) juxtaposes *actant* and *circonstant*, where the former is a genuine participant in the verbal action and hence - a “significant” component of the situation, while the latter is less important, a mere “fringe”. Moreover, when discussing metaphor, Halliday notes parallel structures, such as:

(recipient) *give milk to the cat* cf. *give the cat milk*

Both represent a similar situation but in the first wording the cat is a fringe element of the figure – of little significance and loosely attached to the process, whereas in the second clause the cat is an active participant in the process. Many analysts (e.g. Pietikäinen 2003) employ this distinction in their analyses. They claim that characters featuring as circumstances rather than as participants do so because the author meant to degrade their participation in the action.

Furthermore, Halliday reveals that presenting a thing (e.g. *make an incision*) rather than a process (*cut*) is a more abstract representation concealing the actual nature of the activity (1985:262-4). Loss of information has been observed concerning the agentivity of the actions, therefore claiming that the experience was deliberately presented without the doer of the action:

*Rapid bonding resulted/ as a result, the substances rapidly bonded.*

This has been known as the process of nominalisation (van Dijk 2008a, Leeuwen 2012, Fowler 1991) and discourse analysts have actively encouraged reading nominalised forms as efforts to conceal an actual process. Nominalisation is recognised as a transformation where “predicates are realised syntactically as nouns” (Fowler 1991).

Nominalisation is a radical syntactic transformation of a clause, which has extensive structural consequences, and offers substantial ideological opportunities.... Deleted in the nominal form are the participants (*who did what to whom?*), any indication of time – because there is no verb to be tensed – and any indication of modality – the writer's views as the truth or the desirability of the proposition.

In a pioneering work in the ideology of language, Hodge and Kress (1993:26) point to devices which give an ideological perspective to media texts. This approach to discourse has become very popular among researchers. Three specific devices are presented: passives, nominalisations and negative incorporations.

The passive transformation is said to have the following effects:

- it inverts the order of actor and affected – effect: the theme changes from actor to affected;
- the actor is no longer directly attached to the verb – effect: the link between actor and process is weakened;
- the verb *be* is introduced and the main verb is changed from a process to a finished result – effect: the process is presented as a state, not action;
- the actor may be deleted – effect: the cause of the action is hidden
- the structure is not transactive, but attributive – effect: the sentence functions to classify, not to show action

The nominalisation transformation, e.g. *Picketing will stop deliveries*, performs the following functions:

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- it deletes participants from the model – effect: the interest is directed from the participants to the process;
- a new noun is formed – effect: process is substituted for state, activity for object, specific for general, concrete for abstract;
- nominalisations are not marked for tense or modality – effect: speakers avoid indicating when or how likely an activity is;
- complex relations are collapsed into simple entities – effect: to hide the complexity of an actual situation;
- the new nominals acquire their own existence – effect: this further increases the opacity of nominals. Also simple causes are substituted for complex ones;
- the new nominals may become stable entities and even enter dictionaries – effect: change in the perceptual and cognitive inventory of the language.

Negative incorporations – e.g. *Miners ban overtime* – can perform the following functions:

- the negative particle is part of the word – effect: the word is perceived as a single unit, the negation is hidden (compare: *Miners do not allow overtime*)
- the word can be part of passive–active transformations – effect: refraining from action is seen in a positive light.

Later in time Van Leeuwen (2012) lists linguistic features which are indicative of suppression or back-grounding of social actors. They include passive structures, nominalisations and various other features used to hide the agency of an action. Tenorio (2011:184) lists six strategies for identifying ideological positioning: nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivisation, intensification and mitigation. Many of these observations have been challenged in the course of actual analysis. Still, they serve as a starting point for many researches.

## Discourse Analytical Questions

Fairclough (in Bloor and Bloor 1995:235) formulates questions which help analyse language that has political functions:

1. What experiential values do grammatical features have?  
What type of process and participant dominate?  
Is agency unclear?  
Are processes what they seem?  
Are nominalisations used?  
Are sentences active or passive?  
Are sentences negative or positive?
2. What relational values do grammatical features have?  
What modes (declarative, interrogative, imperative) are used?  
Are there important features of relational modality?  
Are the pronouns *we* and *you* used, and if so, how?
3. What expressive values do grammatical features have?  
Are there important features of expressive modality?
4. How are simple sentences linked together?  
What logical connectors are used?  
Are complex sentences characterised by co-ordination or subordination?  
What means are used for referring inside and outside the text?

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## Lexical Devices

Further aspects of language explored by CDA have been **over-lexicalisation** and **terms of reference**. Lexis is a major component of the ideational structure of language. The vocabulary amounts to a map of objects, concepts, processes and relations among them, specific for social strata, cultures or professional groups. Fowler (1991) was the first to explore a feature which he called *naming*:

Different styles of naming are conventionally associated with different social values in English, and in a systemic way; this is a highly charged sociolinguistic indicator, like the options between the second-person pronouns *tu* and *vous* in French, *du* and *Sie* in German.

He exemplifies the issue with calling Margaret Thatcher *Maggie* or *Mrs. Thatcher*. There is no absolute value attributed to either: they show close familiarity or derogation depending on the concrete context of use. That is why linguistic features are not steadfast indicators by themselves; rather, having established such features, the researcher can begin their analysis in the concrete parameters of the context. Culture specifics should also be born in mind while interpreting the intent behind a choice of a term of reference. For example, shortened first names (e.g. *Tony* for *Anthony*) project foreign influence in Bulgarian, and most people would be embarrassed to have their shortened name used outside their close-family and friend circle. The phrase “terms of reference” is later substituted for “naming” to avoid association with insults by giving people bad names. In effect, terms of reference perform a wider function than this, which explains its broad acceptance among the CDA community.

Fowler (1991:85) defines over-lexicalisation as an “excess of quasi-synonymous terms for entities and ideas that are a particular preoccupation or problem in the culture’s discourse.” As an example he gives various terms – often pejoratively used - of women or young people. Having established that a text is saturated with near-synonyms, we can diagnose that there is a preoccupation with the issue in the article. Fowler also mentions a process when a new term is introduced as signifying a purportedly new concept in social life. This is known as re-lexicalisation. As an example, he quotes the term “social ownership” offered by the Labour Party to substitute the overexploited and derogated term “nationalisation”.

## Pragmatic Devices

Going up the ladder of structural units of analysis – from lexis and grammar to texts and discourse, van Dijk’s (2003a) develops a more global outline of the tactics of creating an image:

- Overall interaction strategies
- Macro speech acts
- Semantic macro-structures – topic selection
- Local speech acts: accusations, statements, queries etc.
- Local meanings

Give many/few details

Be general/specific

Be vague/precise

Be explicit/implicit

- Lexicon:

Select positive words for us

Negative words for them

- Local syntax

Active v/s passive sentences – to de-emphasise responsibility

Nominalisations – to de-emphasise agency

- Rhetorical figures

Hyperboles

Euphemisms

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Metonyms

Metaphors

- Sounds and visuals

Van Dijk (2008:233) exemplifies the overall interaction strategies with the ideological polarisation in Tony Blair's speech, where the politician structures the discourse space into *Us* –democracies and *Them* – dictatorships. Formally, social actor representation can be effected through personal pronouns and other deictic devices. In his 'sociosemantic inventory of how social actors can be represented', van Leeuwen (1996:32) points out that social actors do not necessarily map onto grammatical actors; for instance, impersonalised actors can be non-human entities that are still represented as engaged in particular actions, be it as active actors or as passive goals.

A big part of CDA deals with the concept of macro-structures. It proceeds from the concept of coherence defined as "a semantic property of discourses, based on the interpretation of each individual sentence relative to the interpretation of other sentences" (van Dijk 1977:93). Thus, apart from providing a common world of existence, the coherence of a text also indicates the missing links that make the text 'hang together'. Macrostructures are sequenced due to the semantic relations that obtain among them. Thus establishing the micro-structure in a complex structure and the relations among the component parts presents a fair analysis of a text's coherence.

**Concrete speech acts:** accusations, statements, queries etc.

Unlike the macro speech acts, which may not contain phrases performing the respective function, this category seeks out concrete formulations. Bach and Harnish (1979) develop the following classification of speech acts, incorporating Austin's taxonomy and Grice's theory of conversation

**Constatives:**

affirming, alleging, announcing, answering, attributing, claiming, classifying, concurring, confirming, conjecturing, denying, disagreeing, disclosing, disputing, identifying, informing, insisting, predicting, ranking, reporting, stating, stipulating

**Directives:**

advising, admonishing, asking, begging, dismissing, excusing, forbidding, instructing, ordering, permitting, requesting, requiring, suggesting, urging, warning

**Commissives:**

agreeing, guaranteeing, inviting, offering, promising, swearing, volunteering

**Acknowledgments:**

apologising, condoling, congratulating, greeting, thanking, accepting (acknowledging an acknowledgment)

## Genre Specifics

The structure of the newspaper article has been described as an inverted pyramid (Bell 1991:167ff), where the greatest amount of information is concentrated at the top and each paragraph adds further details considered more "perishable" and capable of being disposed of, should space require curtailing the text. The major journalistic questions: who, what, to whom, when, where and how should be answered in the abstract, which forms the basis of the informational pyramid. Recent professional research has added several modifications; however, the fact of having the major details at the outset of the article remains.

Van Dijk (1977:78) develops this topic further in connection with his terms macro- and micro- structure. He writes: "... the highest or most important topic is expressed in the headline, the top of the complete macrostructure of the text is formulated in the lead, and the initial sentences or paragraphs of the text express a still lower level of macrostructure... A news text is a top-bottom mapping of the underlying semantic structure." He also voices the opinion that selecting what appears in the headline is a matter of subjective choice of the journalist and editor. In his analysis, van Dijk demonstrates that the analysed article is about more than one topic, but only one is chosen for the headline and this has been a deliberate choice.

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Discourse analysis also seeks impact in the use of typographic conventions, such as inverted commas. Conboy (2007:64) classifies the device as a form of modality which: privileges one particular reading of a story; signals a refusal to be drawn into any definitive comment; marks an accusation which one does not need to substantiate (2007:90).

## Corpus

All the materials about one topic concerning Bulgaria on the BBC website are collected for this study. The in-depth analysis of the linguistic features described above - from transitivity and lexis to macro-structures - will be indicative of the representations made of Bulgaria by the BBC. The question I will try to answer is: is there anything in these representations that creates negative attitudes to Bulgaria?

The articles for this corpus were selected because of their topic - Bulgaria's bid to join the Schengen zone. The search with key words Bulgaria AND Schengen on the BBC website over the period January 1st 2008 to December 31st 2011 returns 10 articles. Six merely mention the name of the country in enumerations, which is why they are not subjected to analysis. The remaining four are:

- 18 July 2008 "EU plans to block aid to Bulgaria" <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7512955.stm>
- 17 April 2009 'EU free movement of labour map' <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3513889.stm>
- 21 December 2010 "Romania and Bulgaria blocked from joining Schengen zone"  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-12055299>
- 9 June 2011 "Schengen zone: Delay for Bulgaria and Romania to join" <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13709768>

The articles quite exhaust what the BBC had to say on the issue of Bulgaria becoming a member of the Schengen zone over a period of three years. The attention given to the issue is, indeed, very little and the quantity would suggest that the BBC attaches little significance to it at all.

## Article 1.

The first article leads with a verb of mental action concerning Bulgaria:

*The European Commission IS PLANNING to block almost \$1bn in funds for Bulgaria as a penalty for failing to tackle corruption and organised crime.*

We understand that the event reported on the website is not an action but plans. Of all the content of the EC document, the BBC chooses to highlight what actually constitutes a threat to Bulgaria: to lose millions' worth of aid and to miss the opportunity to join the Schengen visa-free area – a much coveted horizon since Bulgaria's accession to the EU. To boost the gravity of the situation, the text attaches a qualification to the document that prompted the article:

*The commission's nine-page report, due to be published next week, is possibly THE MOST SCATHING EVER WRITTEN BY THE EU EXECUTIVE ABOUT A MEMBER STATE.*

Towards the end of the article, however, relegated to a place for less important details in a newspaper article, there is a hedge about the pungency of the document. Its modality is of weak uncertainty:

*Diplomats say the strong language of the draft report MAY BE WATERED DOWN by Wednesday, when the 27 European Commissioners, including those from Bulgaria and Romania, are set to adopt it.*

Further, Bulgaria is said to have experienced the measure the article threatens with, losing EU funds:



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*The EU HAS ALREADY FROZEN hundreds of millions' worth of aid destined for Bulgaria's roads and agriculture.*

Who is the warning trying to scare then? This becomes obvious through a running comparison with Romania:

*In a separate report, ROMANIA IS ALSO EXPECTED TO FACE STRONG CRITICISM, especially over the parliament's delay of corruption inquiries involving a former prime minister and other top officials, but THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION WILL STOP SHORT OF SANCTIONS.*

This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that the author of the article is a Romanian national: Oana Lungescu, BBC correspondent for the Balkans at the time. In a subheading to one of the parts of the text she quotes an unnamed EU official to utter a devastating comparison between the two countries:

*One EU official said that "Romania was marking time, WHILE BULGARIA HAD GONE BACKWARDS".*

The formal reason for bundling together the two countries is their common date of accession to the EU and the common approach adopted to both:

*Bulgaria and its neighbour Romania are subject to special monitoring because THEY DID NOT FULLY COMPLY WITH EU STANDARDS WHEN THEY JOINED THE BLOC.*

However, the article appears to praise Romania for being considered the better of the two due to the lack of threatened sanctions in the report about it.

The gravity of the warning is reinforced through over-lexicalisation: several lexical phrases quoting sums of money which can be lost to Bulgaria. They are scrupulously named throughout the article and their meaning severely contrasts with the claim that Bulgaria is the poorest country in the EU:

*The European Commission is planning to block almost \$1bn in funds for Bulgaria as a penalty for failing to tackle corruption and organised crime.*

*Now it is planning to withdraw the right of two agencies to handle EU funds worth almost \$1bn (610 million euros)*

*Almost \$400m (250 million euros) could be lost unless things improve by November.*

*Bulgaria, the EU's poorest country, stands to receive \$17bn in EU funds until 2011, and this is a serious warning that future funding is in jeopardy.*

The sum total does not add up – it is not clear where the announced amounts come from, however, large sums of money are flaunted as pending for a big loss for Bulgaria and the effect is fright of the scale of the threats.

But what did Bulgaria do to deserve such severe sanctions? Large chunks of the EU document are quoted between inverted commas, whereby the BBC distances itself from both content and formulation – accusations that do not need to be substantiated (Conboy 2007). The formulations are vague for several reasons. The conjoined predicative verbs are of mental, rather than material action:

*It concludes that Bulgaria "HAS TO MAKE THE COMMITMENT to cleanse its administration and ENSURE that the generous support it receives from the EU actually reaches its citizens .....",*

The nominalisation COMMITMENT presents an oblique statement; the medium avoids naming a definite action. The focus is on engaging with something through pre-posing the empty verb MAKE. The agent of the

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obligation is very broad – Bulgaria, not a ministry, or an official. The subject is not required to DO something, but to BE engaged – which is a state, not an action. The action comes with the complement realised by a metaphor - CLEANSE THE ADMINISTRATION. Such a wording abdicates from an actual formulation of a concrete action that needs to be taken. It only stipulates that something is not ‘clean’ in the administration. Thus the action required of Bulgaria is presented with a metaphor which any interpreter can fill with different meanings.

The second part of the complex predicate – ENSURE – is another verb of mental, not material action. It takes as its complement a whole clause underlining the generosity of the EU support. The directive continues with a negatively presented metaphor:

*... and is not SIPHONED OFF by corrupt officials, operating together with organised crime”*

The ideational metaphor SIPHON OFF summarises the longer claim: illegally redirect money for personal enrichment from public funds. There is a compact verb for the same proposition: *embezzle*, but it would deprive the wording of its picturesque value and, in effect, voice a legal qualification, inasmuch as embezzlement constitutes a crime. The negative formulation actually cancels the process of making a claim that such activities are taking place, refuses to prove the claim by pointing out how it is being done and suggesting ways to stop such criminal action. And this precisely is the danger of such contracted metaphoric messages – that they focus on a visualisation of the process but not on the mechanisms of their functioning that might direct to eradicating the evil. The passive form is employed to highlight the agency – the active re-write would have a simple Thematic Subject:

*Corrupt officials siphon off funds...*

Instead, introducing the agent with the BY structure places it in the rheme, at the end of the statement, thus emphasising its importance. Furthermore, it allows expanding the formulation with a non-finite clause: ‘operating together with organised crime’.

The structure of the article features the conclusion of the report as the fact of utmost significance, because it comes at the beginning where the most important facts tend to be placed in this genre – in the base of the inverted pyramid (Bell:1991). It is preceded only by BBC’s interpretation of the news item – how much money Bulgaria stands to lose. Then the EC’s report is quoted for the recommended course of action. This, however, has not been named with a specific material process but through the metaphoric phrases discussed above.

The rest of the article is dedicated to a description of the actual situation in Bulgaria. It is introduced with the subheading LACK OF WILL. The semantic structure is negative through the meaning of LACK. Highlighting negativity in an affirmative sentence makes the critique oblique rather than direct, head-on. The noun WILL, for its part, requires complementation – will for what? The complement comes in a different paragraph:

*.... there is little political will elsewhere to clean up things*

The general substitute THINGS does not point to a sphere that needs to be cleaned up. Moreover, once again a metaphor is used which gives a visualisation but does not name a material action that should be dealt with. This is another vague accusation without a specific claim or a proposal for concrete remedial action. The existential construction is marked with a tone of positivity – it is not negative: *There is no will*. The negativity comes from the quantification – LITTLE. The sense of vagueness is reinforced via the locative circumstance ELSEWHERE, which picks up no particular sphere of reference either. From the co-text of the phrase we can deduce that the area that needs to be cleaned up is to do with European funds:

*EU officials welcome recent changes, including the appointment of a respected diplomat, Meglena Plugchieva, as a deputy prime minister in CHARGE OF OVERSEEING EU FUNDS.*

What begins as praise, however, is continued with an adversative clause:

*BUT the report suggests there is little political will elsewhere to clean up things.*

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The discourse continues to be positively structured, but with an increasing degree of ambiguity. For the purposes of the analysis, the clauses will be paraphrased to try and decipher what problems are identified in Bulgaria in Table 3.2:

<i>“Despite the Commission’s repeated requests for improvement of the management and control systems, within reasonable deadlines, the Bulgarian authorities have not fully explained or clarified the situation surrounding the irregularities and have not taken all necessary steps to correct them,” it says.</i>	
<i>The Commission requested repeatedly improvement of ?the management and control systems?</i>	
<i>The management and control systems ?of the EU funds? need improvement.</i>	<i>The improvements should be done within reasonable deadlines</i>
<i>There is a situation? surrounding irregularities ? in management and control systems?</i>	<i>The Bulgarian authorities have not explained ?or clarified? this situation. They have not taken steps to correct the irregularities.</i>

**Table 3.2. Decomposed sentences expanding the modification**

The lack of proper modification makes it difficult to understand whether the management and control systems for the EU funds are problematic, or some other management and control systems – of the country, economy or something else. The loose conjoining of the temporal clause “within reasonable deadlines”, for its part, poses the question whether the functioning of the systems raises concern or the reaction of the Bulgarian government which is taking too long to come. If we presume that irregularities in management and control systems are envisaged, the general substitute SITUATION obscures which of the factors surrounding the irregularities worry the inspectors. The compound predicate “explained or clarified” layers the semantics of performing a verbal act rather than taking action in a specified direction. Thus, it appears as if the report raises worries that the Bulgarian authorities should explain some situation sooner, and this situation might somehow relate to management and control systems, which is another nebulous claim lacking the substance of material action and congruently formulated accusations.

The problem presented with this structure – with all the ambiguities – appears to be improvement of some management and control systems in Bulgaria. The next sentence continues the quotation from the draft report with an elaboration of the problem. The problem itself is reworded:

*... these problems of general weakness in administrative and judicial capacity*

While ADMINISTRATIVE is a synonym of MANAGEMENT – maybe not just concerning the euro-funds, JUDICIAL is a great deal more specialised than CONTROL, compared to the earlier formulation of the problem. What is more, the head of the noun phrase directs attention to a different problem – capacity. While at first clarifications of some situation seemed to be required of the Bulgarian government, now it appears that the administrative systems are not functioning properly, and what is more - the capacities of the administrators are the problem. At this stage of confusion in naming the problem, CORRUPTION AND ORGANISED CRIME are introduced in the article:

*The draft report goes on to say, “high level corruption and organised crime EXACERBATES these problems of general weakness in administrative and judicial capacity... Urgent action is needed because deadlines for contracting some of the funds are approaching after which the funds will be lost to Bulgaria”.*

The semantics of the verb EXACERBATE suggests expansion on a previous situation. While we assumed that the situation is the inefficiency of the management and control - possibly, the judicial systems, here the problems are re-worded differently: that the agencies which administer EU funds are staffed with incompetent workers, while HIGH LEVEL CORRUPTION can imply that high-ranking officials are bribed to turn a blind eye to their incompetence. ORGANISED CRIME is more difficult to interpret in relation to the incompetence of administrators.

All these semantic inconsistencies should be blamed on the EU report: EU officials formulated the problems with reference to graphic descriptions of the situation rather than through technical details; instead of naming the problems with unambiguous terms that would focus on the nature of the inconsistencies, they used

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ambiguous phrases with shifting reference; instead of pinpointing problems, they expounded on threats of financial losses. The BBC, however, chose to report the document without expressing an attitude to its cogency.

The BBC article continues with an effort at a more factual description of the situation in Bulgaria that has evoked such strong EU criticism. The next part is not a quote from the EU report and is compiled by the journalist. The subheading is MAFIA KILLINGS. However, the first paragraph is about fraud in projects to upgrade border controls. The link between the two is very problematic. Moreover, it is not clear whether this is a revelation of the EU report quoted in the article, because the following sentence gives as its source a different EU report leaked in the Bulgarian press. It is about fraud in the use of agricultural funds, not border control. The text then refers to something as “the document”, without making it clear which the rightful antecedent is. This document is about punishing corruption – without a reference to mafia killings again. Its authorship is mixed – firstly the BBC author glosses her interpretation of “the document”, then she quotes the formulation verbatim:

*The document alleges there is a political umbrella protecting corruption, saying there are “powerful forces in the Bulgarian government and/or other state institutions” who are not interested in punishing the corruption.*

The author’s gloss is a metaphor – POLITICAL UMBRELLA PROTECTING CORRUPTION; the original document is quoted to highlight the source of the problem - “powerful forces in the Bulgarian government and/or other state institutions”. Thus, the accusation that Bulgarian governmental organisations protect corruption has the EU reporters as its agent. The accusation is once again negatively formulated through a verb of mental activity: “are not interested in”. This was established as a peculiarity of the diplomatic language of the EU report quoted directly with the article. Obviously, the BBC journalist adopted the same manner of expression. However, the BBC takes a step back from the qualification reporting the document with the distancing verb ALLEGE. Then the accused person – the Bulgarian Prime Minister - is given the floor and he dismisses “the allegations”. The paragraph, however, develops with an adversative:

*But earlier this year, the powerful interior minister WAS FORCED to step down after revelations he had secretly met two alleged crime bosses and some of his officials were leaking confidential information to mafia suspects.*

The main verb features material action applied to a guilty minister – WAS FORCED. The rhematic part of the sentence highlights the nature of the revelations that forced him to step down – links with criminal elements. Thus the article, quoting an EU document – sporadically garnering accusations from other sources – highlights the theme of the incompetent and corrupt government.

However, the subheading “Mafia killings” still remains unsupported with an actual report of murder as the next paragraph informs that the general election scheduled for the following year will add to the troubles of the Socialist government. The term of reference signals the BBC estimate of its situation: “beleaguered government”. The accusations of a lack of administrative capacity, high-level corruption, belated reactions to EU communications, “political umbrellas” to crime form a line of reference to the Bulgarian government which over-lexicalises the displeasure of the EU officials – willingly voiced by the BBC. Outside the quotations from EU documents, the reporter mentions a threat to the government by the Bulgarian opposition:

*The opposition is preparing to table a motion of no confidence the day after the document is adopted in Brussels.*

Mafia killings occur in one paragraph only in the part of the article entitled with that phrase. They feature in a rhematic position, in an extended noun phrase:

*The European Commission will also raise concerns about the persistent failure to solve ANY OF THE 150 MAFIA KILLINGS RECORDED IN BULGARIA SINCE THE FALL OF COMMUNISM.*

The predicate is once again a mental action, this time – presented metaphorically and in a future tense: “will also raise concerns”. Nebulous is also the source of the claim – is this part of the report(s) under discussion in this article, is it the case that such a statement is to be included later, or will the concern be raised verbally or through a different document? At the same time, the nominalisation “persistent failure” is one of the expressions

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which add up to over-lexicalise the inefficiency of the Bulgarian government. In effect, the EU document accuses the Bulgarian government of incompetence but stops short of formulating it for diplomatic reasons, as EU institutions have no right to interfere with elected national governments.

Then the article splits from its announced topic – Bulgaria – and switches to its Northern neighbour, Romania, featured with a sub-heading:

*In a separate report, Romania is also expected to face strong criticism, especially over the parliament's delay of corruption inquiries involving a former prime minister and other top officials, but the European Commission will stop short of sanctions.*

The concession clause – that Romania may be criticised but not yet punished – contains an understated piece of information. Obviously the journalist knows that criticism has been planned but no penalty, but she acknowledges neither her source, nor the essence of the threat. That is what reinforces the conclusion that the article uses the report about Bulgaria – a reality at least planned and drafted – to issue a warning to the BBC journalist's native country – Romania. The article actually formulates this in its final sentence:

*Both countries will continue to be watched very closely and officials say the measures planned against Bulgaria SHOULD SERVE AS A WARNING TO OTHERS, BOTH INSIDE THE EU AND THOSE HOPING TO JOIN IT.*

This expands the number of recipients of the warning action beyond the journalist's native country, thus making her motives less selfish. Further, the European tax payer who needs accountability for his taxes is called upon as a motivation for the accusations against Bulgaria:

*But the general feeling is that something must be done, and seen to be done, TO MAINTAIN THE CREDIBILITY OF THE EU WITH ITS TAXPAYERS.*

The subject of the verbal action is a very ubiquitous entity – the general feeling. The topical structure is a general substitute – SOMETHING – and the circumstance of the action is a nominalisation: “the credibility” with its agent – EU TAXPAYERS – rhematised at the end of the statement.

In effect, the article issues threats to suspend funds for Bulgaria because of the inefficiency of the Government, based on a drafted EU report which is expected to be published after softening the harsh tone. The stance of the EU document is reinforced with facts quoted by the journalist as parts of other EU documents, or unsupported claims of facts, all – featuring the inefficiency of the Bulgarian government. Romania is introduced as a contrast – accepted in the EU with the same problems as Bulgaria, but not planned for sanctions yet. With a view of this analysis, the conclusion that the BBC provided their Romanian-born journalist with a medium to gloat over Bulgaria's ill fortunes in the EU is very feasible.

**Linguistic devices** for defaming established with this article:

**Overlexicalisation** – repetition of huge sums of money Bulgaria stands to lose if she does not heed EU warnings.

Using **verbs of mental action and states** rather than verbs of real action for the activities required of Bulgaria – *make a commitment, ensure*.

Use of **metaphor** when describing the actual flaws in the country: *siphon off funds, political umbrella against crime* etc., or recommended remedial action: *cleanse the administration*.

**Lack of logical links** between a subtitle and article – MAFIA KILLINGS is the sub-title of a passage about misuse of funds for border control and agriculture and only one sentence mentions murders.

The **passive** is used to highlight the doer of the action with a phrase postponed to the end of a sentence and suitable extended - SIPHONED OFF by corrupt officials, operating together with organised crime.

The **lack of necessary complementation** confuses about the actual situation: *lack of will* – for what?; *management of systems* – which systems? etc. In the following paragraphs complements are added of a different nature – systems of control, judicial systems or management of funds. This can be called **shifty complementation**.

The use of the **superlative** to highlight the gravity of the situation – *the most scathing report so far* – is undermined with the use of weak modality in a sentence hidden in the least salient place of the article – at the end – the strength of the document may be watered down.

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The **unannounced comparative focus** with the author's country, oozing through expressions such as:

*In a separate report, Romania is also expected to face strong criticism, especially over the parliament's delay of corruption inquiries involving a former prime minister and other top officials, but the European Commission will stop short of sanctions.*

## Article 2.

The second article presents Bulgaria – this time indiscriminately bundled together with Romania – as firmly blocked from joining the Schengen zone. It is not signed by a specific journalist. The headline is a non-finite clause with a past participle as predicate – **BLOCKED**, which is an indication that the action is completed and the feature has become a permanent characteristic of the object. The agent of the action is presented later - in the topic sentence: France and Germany. There the verb is of mental action – **HAVE DECIDED**. The complement reiterates the same strong verb – **TO BLOCK**, specifies the recipients – **BULGARIA AND ROMANIA** - and an extended goal – **FROM JOINING EUROPE'S PASSPORT FREE TRAVEL ZONE**.

*Romania and Bulgaria blocked from joining Schengen zone*

*France and Germany have decided to block Bulgaria and Romania from joining Europe's passport-free travel zone.*

Then the article proceeds to quote officials. Interestingly, the quotations include single words that appear between inverted commas, not whole statements. Each sentence is a paragraph; no linking words indicate logical connections among the propositions.

Firstly, the French and German interior ministers are quoted. The predicate attributes the adjective “premature” to the action of letting the countries join in 2011.

*The French and German interior ministers said it was “PREMATURE” to let them join Schengen in March 2011.*

Obviously the qualification is attached to a decision to let the countries join. What is rhematised is the temporal horizon. The adjective **MATURE** presents a graded pair with its denial – **IMMATURE**. The suffix **PRE-** just postpones the process of maturity until a later date. In effect, a binary adjective is transformed into a gradable one to avoid making a definitive statement. Actually, the claim is that the countries should not join the agreement, but the statement shifts the focus from the material action to its timing. The statement clearly does not predicate of the countries, but of a decision; no negativity transpires – it is all about timing.

The second sentence attempts to clarify what is expected of Romania and Bulgaria. It is formulated as a nominalised abstract phrase **MAKE PROGRESS**.

*They said Bulgaria and Romania needed to make “irreversible progress” in the fight against corruption and organised crime.*

One reason for the nominalisation **PROGRESS** may be the attribute **IRREVERSIBLE**. Such phrases, however, pose the question whether the claimants think that there is no progress, or that the progress is reversible while it should not be. The nominalisation is complemented with another metaphor – **PROGRESS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION AND ORGANISED CRIME**. Progress in such a combat is something very difficult to define – the semantics give no idea what constitutes movement forward. What is formulated as a requirement is once again a metaphor which is not filled with a concrete sense.

Furthermore, **CORRUPTION** is another nominalisation which boggles the mind. The OED defines corruption as “(6. a.) perversion or destruction of integrity in the discharge of public duties by bribery or favour; the use or existence of corrupt practices, esp. in a state, public corporation, etc.” This action is left without an agent with the nominalisation. Furthermore, the verbal action is not explicitly clear: what constitutes

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“destruction of integrity”? Therefore, fighting such an ephemeral process, without a known agent or a clear outline requires a great deal of imagination.

Even smaller is the semantic clarity of the noun phrase ORGANISED CRIME (For a detailed discussion of definitions see Lea 2007). The noun refers to a host of activities characterised with the adjective ILLEGAL, therefore undesirable. The attribute, conversely, refers to order and arrangement. Thinking of it as a participle, the verbal action refers to a highly desirable process – putting things in order, creating harmony. Thus, we are faced with an oxymoron – harmonised criminality. The agent of “organise” is un-named and the essence of the verbal action – unclear. Therefore, Bulgaria and Romania are called upon to enter a fight with forces which make people immoral and organise illegal activities – an all too predictable type of struggle with an all too unfathomable agent. However, the BBC have marked as quoted only “irreversible progress”, which means that they find the phrase “fight against corruption and organised crime” sufficiently transparent and identify with it.

Following is a sentence contrasting the reactions of the two countries:

*Romania CONDEMNED the decision, while Bulgaria PROMISED TO “DO ITS UTMOST” to remove doubts about its membership.*

Romania is agent to a very strong behavioural action – CONDEMN, Bulgaria engages in the verbal act of promising. The verbiage features an expression between inverted commas: DO ITS UTMOST. Concordance lines from the BNC (Davis 2004) show that this phrase occurs in the language of diplomacy. More often than not it is used as a commissive, because it collocates with the first person possessive pronoun OUR or MY. On this occasion, however, the expression does not contain a first person pronoun but the inanimate form ITS, showing that it is a non-committed paraphrase. The semantics of UTMOST is empty, inasmuch as the word does not refer to any quality or object at all, but only serves to emphasise. The complementation continues in the same vein of vagueness. The material action REMOVE applies to the abstract noun DOUBTS, complemented with the nominalisation (about) MEMBERSHIP. Presenting the reactions of the two countries in one sentence reveals the fact that the author has sought a contrast – while Romania is indignant, Bulgaria is elusively compliant, employing the European parlance of vagueness. Further, the contrast implies the level of reaction: Romania reacts from its highest level (the President), while Bulgaria gets a spokes-person to voice the ambiguous position quoted.

The next sentence takes an even further distance from the event: the German and French ministers are said to have expressed this opinion in a letter to the EU Home Affairs Commissioner, which, in turn, is reported by the Agency France Press, abbreviated as a familiar reference.

Having reported the fact of blocking Bulgaria with the title, the article next announces the news that EU experts are to present a report on Bulgaria and Romania on which the EU countries are to base their decisions whether to let the candidates join the Schengen zone. In an adversative clause - with the linking word BUT – the provision is made that a unanimous decision is needed. No semantic contrasts can be found between the two parts of the sentence; therefore, the adversative can only be interpreted in the sense that admission is highly unlikely.

*Experts from EU states who visited Romania and Bulgaria are due to present a report in January that will be used by governments to make a decision on Romanian and Bulgarian membership of the zone, BUT it must be agreed by the Schengen members in unanimity.*

Compare:

*Experts from EU states who visited Romania and Bulgaria are due to present a report in January that will be used by governments to make a decision on Romanian and Bulgarian membership of the zone, AND it must be agreed by the Schengen members in unanimity.*

The subject of the clause is the pronoun replacing “decision” – IT – and the predicate is marked with the strong modality of obligation expressed by MUST. In effect, the force of the obligation applies strictly to the decision. The agency of the agreement is highlighted by postponing the presentation of the doer of the action in a “by” phrase. However, the most rhematic position is occupied by the circumstance of manner IN

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UNANIMITY. Given the exceptional status of unanimous decisions, its position is another reminder how difficult admission will be for the two countries.

As most media articles, this one also presents information on the principle of the inverted pyramid – the greatest amount is concentrated in the abstract with each paragraph adding details of lesser importance. Under the subheading “Grave consequences” four paragraphs expound on the words of the German minister, the Romanian reaction and the Bulgarian statement. The German position takes two paragraphs, which should be indicative of the significance attached to it by the BBC.

The verbiage of the spokesman of the German Ministry of the Interior is presented without inverted commas:

*A spokesman for Germany's interior ministry said there had also been a lack of progress by Romania and Bulgaria in reforming their judiciary, Associated Press news agency reported.*

The noun PROGRESS is negated with the word LACK and highlighted with the existential construction THERE HAD BEEN. The agent of the non-existent progress is introduced with the “by” phrase for more emphasis, while the problematic sphere is placed in the right-most position – of the greatest importance. The adverb ALSO signals that a claim different from the one made with the second paragraph has been made – “fight against corruption and organised crime”. It concerns a more specific sphere – the judiciary. This time a material action is also predicated – REFORM THEIR JUDICIARY. If the accusations are to be graded in the order of their significance, placing the metaphorically nebulous formulation “fight against crime and organised corruption” before “reforming the judiciary” is odd. Problematic is also the reference of the personal pronoun THEIR. It is unlikely that Bulgaria and Romania have a common judiciary; even less likely is the fact that the situation in each country is the same, so as to be referred to with a common nominative. That is why packaging the countries together leaves the impression that details are ignored and only most general claims are made as an excuse to keep the countries outside the Schengen zone.

The next paragraph explains the significance of the revelations. The lack of progress in the judiciary is reiterated with the qualification “deficit”. The modality is of possibility – “could have”. The attribute of the possession is a phrase in quotation marks: “grave consequences for the European Union’s security”.

*The spokesman said THOSE DEFICITS could have “grave consequences for the European Union's security” and raised concerns about an “overly swift” adherence to the Schengen area.*

Quotation marks are used because the BBC repeats the words spoken by the German spokesman, but speculation that distancing from such vague qualifications is also in order. The phrase clearly identifies which sphere of the EU this would affect – its security. The noun phrase “grave consequences”, however – also used as subheading for the second part of the text – is odd without the complement for several reasons. Firstly, because it is common knowledge that each deficit has its consequences and according to the pragmatics maxim of quantity (Grice 1975: 26–30), there is no need to verbalise it. Secondly, the answer to the question: “What kind of consequences?” needs to be factual, rather than purely qualitative, as is the adjective “grave”. Moreover, according to Halliday and Methiessen’s (1999), “grave” is not a taxonomic value, but scalar, presenting a scale of seriousness. Therefore, it cannot make a claim what the consequences might be but can only qualify them.

Selecting this for subheading has the function of parodying a discourse that is empty of logical motivation. The co-ordinated predicate is no less absurd:

*raised concerns about an “overly swift” adherence to the Schengen area*

The act of joining the area too soon is named with the nominalisation “adhesion” to allow for the pre-modification “overly swift”. SWIFT is an adjective of positive semantics, including also the meaning of lack of delay: “2. a. Coming on, happening, or performed without delay; prompt, speedy.” (Oxford English Dictionary). The negativity of the phrase proceeds from the intensifier “overly”, since the antonyms to swift are definitely negative: *delayed, slow, sluggish*. However, the statement does not make it clear whether “swift adhesion” would be acceptable, or “slow”, or “overly slow”. The discussion of the precise timing should be done in taxonomic adjectives and not in gradable terms of emotive value which leave the impression that something is wrong without explaining what.



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The article unfolds the level of detail quoting the reaction of the Romanian President verbatim, between inverted commas. The second paragraph of the article qualifies the act – a condemnation, while here the reader can see the actual words. The President speaks in the first person singular to emphasise the importance of his position. The predicate is a verb of mental action – BELIEVE, to highlight the statement as an opinion. The phenomenon qualifies the Franco-German letter as “an act of discrimination”.

*Romanian President Traian Basescu said: “I believe that the Franco-German letter sent to the European Commission is an act of discrimination against Romania.”*

The use of the noun DISCRIMINATION instead of the verb DISCRIMINATE directs attention to what the act constitutes and not to the performance. Formulating this as a legal offence makes the statement very powerful and befitting the authority of the speaker.

The statement of the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry, voiced through a low-ranking official – a spokeswoman – is also quoted literally and within quotation marks. Again the whole statement is given, while initially a single phrase is quoted at the beginning of the article.

*Bulgarian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Vessela Cherneva told AFP: “We are aware that the political situation in some EU member countries is complicated. For that reason, we will do our utmost to remove any doubts, including in the areas of the judicial system and society as a whole.”*

She uses the first person plural as her subject, as befits speaking for an organisation - or a country – in this case. Her predicate is also one of mental activity – ARE AWARE. However, the phenomenon is “the political situation in some EU member countries is complicated”. There is no connector to indicate a logical link to the question under discussion – the lacking progress in judicial reforms in Bulgaria and Romania; and the semantics hardly leads to such a link. The rest of the statement is prefaced with the explanatory connector – “for that reason”, which creates a fake logical structure of a cause – result conjecture. The semantics of the two parts are incompatible: the situation in western countries is complicated – Bulgaria will affirm its right of membership in the EU. Then follows the promise “to do our utmost to remove any doubts” – a statement quoted at the beginning of the article and repeated once again here, characterised as an emphatic diplomatic statement of little substance.

The concluding sentence enumerates the members of the Schengen zone, where the UK is a non-member just like the excluded Bulgaria and Romania.

“Bulgaria” features in subject positions for predicates expressing necessity or obligation – *need* or *have to*:

*They said Bulgaria and Romania needed to make “irreversible progress” in the fight against corruption and organised crime.*

The article quotes another news agency – France Press – and is not signed by an author. Additionally, an attitude of distancing from the subject matter can be seen throughout and it is not by chance that one of the emptiest qualifications in it is selected as sub-heading, placed between quotation marks – “grave consequences”. Such expressions feature as the position of the participants in the action, deliberately left without proper logical links or connectors. On this occasion, Bulgaria is presented as the recipient of a blocking action from two powerful members of the EU, who give obscure explanations of their actions; a ministry official promises to remove doubts about the Bulgarian membership in the EU – a promise even vaguer than the explanations of the German and French ministers – while the Romanian President condemns the incident as discrimination. Thus an unappealing picture is given of the realities in the European Union, quite intact with the salient UK euro-scepticism.

**Linguistic devices** for defaming established with this article:

Use of **metaphor** when describing the actual flaws in the country

**Conjunctions** reveal developments as impossible: *to make a decision on Romanian and Bulgarian membership of the zone, BUT/AND? it must be agreed by the Schengen members in unanimity.*

Use of **gradable adjectives** rather than of taxonomic ones – the decision to let Bulgaria join the Schengen zone will have consequences described as *grave*. It is not clear what they will be – compromising safety,

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losing assets. The qualification is *grave*, whatever that spells in actual terms; accession will be *overly swift* etc. The adjectives refer to time, not essence – *premature*.

**Vague reference** - Bulgaria and Romania are to improve THEIR judiciary, as if they have a common judiciary, instead of two separate, clearly distinguishable from one another systems.

**Elusive complementation** – when the commission says that Bulgaria has not made “irreversible progress”, the complementation does not clarify whether the problem is that there is no progress, or that the progress is reversible when it should not.

**Oblique language functions** – the phrase DO MY UTMOST is a diplomatic promise to take action in a certain direction. Substituting MY for OUR or ITS does not really commit an entity, which cancels out the entire promise.

**Missing logical links** – the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs promises to take measure to remove doubts about Bulgaria’s bid to join the EU, because some EU countries have problems at home. Such statements are deprived of any logical consistency.

**Quotations** – inverted commas are used for claims that need not be substantiated. This is the way most of the qualifications about Bulgaria are presented.

**Paradoxical nominations** – *organised crime, crime and corruption* etc. Nominations whose reference is difficult to explain, the collocations are unmotivated but they become instilled in the discourse and recur as strong accusations.

Using **verbs of mental action and states** rather than verbs of real action for the activities required of Bulgaria – *raise concerns* etc.

Verbs of mental activity in the **positive** are a feature of the diplomatic language about Bulgaria.

## Article 3.

The headline of the third article highlights the phrase DELAY FOR BULGARIA AND ROMANIA, following the theme SCHENGEN ZONE.

The analysis of the information structure and thematic organisation of the abstract is presented in Table 3.3:

<i>The Netherlands</i>	<i>plans to delay until next year any decision on whether to let Bulgaria and Romania join Europe's passport-free Schengen zone.</i>	
Theme	Rheme	
	<i>On whether</i>	<i>to let Bulgaria and Romania join Europe's passport-free Schengen zone</i>

**Table 3.3. Thematic organisation of the abstract.**

Therefore the Dutch plans to delay permitting Bulgaria to join are in focus in the abstract. Bulgaria – once again in tandem with Romania – is part of the rheme at a second level of analysis. It is the recipient of an action of blocking out of an EU structure. The role given to Bulgaria is passive and the organisation of the article ousts the country out of focus with the information structure.

The next sentence presents what looks like a paradox – Bulgaria has been voted in, but the Dutch delay its membership. However, the logical structure of the sentence is not one of contrast:

*Dutch Immigration Minister Gerd Leers spoke of the delay just a day after the European Parliament had voted to let the two Balkan countries into Schengen*

The reader is left to recognise the juxtaposition between “delay” and “let into” without a proper contrastive linking word. An adversative link would be signalled, for instance, using ALTHOUGH:

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*Dutch Immigration Minister Gerd Leers spoke of the delay ALTHOUGH just a day EARLIER the European Parliament had voted to let the two Balkan countries into Schengen*

But the structure of juxtaposition was not chosen and the reader is left with the impression that this sequence of acts is not paradoxical but a normal procedure. Moreover, the positive vote is placed in a position of the highest information value after a pre-placed adverbial – “just a day after”. The only word signalling some degree of irregularity is timing: JUST, highlighting the fact that the decision to let the countries into the Schengen zone is repealed so soon after being voted. This is known as conventional implicature (Yule 1996:45) – like lexical presuppositions, certain words result in conveying additional meanings, e.g. *even, yet* etc.

The Dutch decision is then justified with the stipulation that Bulgaria needs the approval of each individual member state:

*Bulgaria and Romania – EU members since 2007 – need the approval of all 25 Schengen nations to join.*

The use of ALL – although it has not been established as a conventional implicature – is a factual presentation of the legal requirement, but probably also highlights the enormity of the task. The lack of the definite article – *all THE 25 Schengen nations* – as can be expected with the exhaustive reference of the phrase – speaks of an emotional expression rather than a factual claim.

Further, with no signalled relation to the previous text, the reader is confronted with the concern about immigration from the Arab world:

*Arab world turmoil has fuelled concern about illegal migration to the EU.*

This is a one-sentence paragraph whose topic bears no relation to the topics discussed so far – Bulgaria’s admission to the Schengen zone, the vote of the European Parliament and the position of the Dutch government.

The next sentence directs back to the topic of Schengen admissions:

*EU interior ministers are meeting in Luxembourg to review the Schengen zone rules.*

With an effort, a relation can be seen between reformulating EU policy to immigration and admitting Bulgaria to join. However, the connection with the situation in the Arab world still remains unclear. The effort to clarify it with the following sentence leads to a *non-sequitur*:

*Only minimal border checks are carried out within Schengen, though the treaty requires the member states to apply uniform controls on the EU’s external borders.*

The adversative relation between the two parts of the sentence expressed with THOUGH signals juxtaposition, which is clearly seen between the Schengen internal borders and the external ones. Concerning the claims made for both, however, we have respectively MINIMAL BORDER CHECKS and UNIFORM CONTROLS. One would have thought that the binary opposite to MINIMAL is MAXIMAL. However, demanding MAXIMAL CHECKS on the borders of countries sounds quite frightening. The adjective UNIFORM presents an alternative that is more acceptable. Thus the reader is forced to construe – not without a certain difficulty – MINIMAL as opposed to UNIFORM. Otherwise the sentence appears built on a logical *non-sequitur*.

As can be clearly seen, the line of argument about delaying the decision to let Bulgaria join the Schengen zone after an adverse vote in EU Parliament is followed by a totally different argument about EU regulations on border controls. While the second argument does not include Bulgaria explicitly in the text, the first one has the name of the country as a mute recipient affected by the action. Yet a third topic occurs about turmoil in the Arab World and illegal immigration, which further complicates the logical connectedness of the text in the absence of explicit connectors.

Moreover, the next two paragraphs are about two border disputes: between France and Italy - about immigrants from North Africa; and between Germany and the Netherlands – about re-introduced border controls. Bulgaria is no part of that discourse.

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Within the framework of the worries about border security, Bulgaria comes into focus as an example from the past of a border incident. Table 3.4. presents the thematic structure.

<i>Last year the Greece-Turkey land border</i>	<b><i>became a migration hotspot, fuelling EU concern about border security in neighbouring Bulgaria and Romania.</i></b>	
Theme	Rheme	
	<i>fuelling EU concern about</i>	<b><i>border security in neighbouring Bulgaria and Romania.</i></b>
	theme	Rheme

**Table 3.4. Thematic structure**

Once again the main rhematic structure is MIGRATION HOT SPOT, while Bulgaria is postponed to a second level of analysis. In effect, Bulgaria is a circumstantial addition to the migration concerns of EU countries.

While the discourse is about border controls and immigration, however, the words of the Dutch Immigration Minister introduce the topic of judicial reform measures in Bulgaria:

<i>Mr Leers said</i>	<b><i>“it is imperative that all adopted judicial reform measures in Romania and Bulgaria are effective and irreversible”.</i></b>	
Theme	Rheme	
	<i>that all adopted judicial reform measures in Romania and Bulgaria</i>	<b><i>are effective and irreversible”.</i></b>
	Theme	Rheme

**Table 3.5. Thematic structure**

So far, the oblique argument – not explicitly worded as such - that Denmark blocks Bulgaria (and Romania) from the Schengen area because of fears about its safety of immigrants from Arab countries entering from the Turkish/Bulgarian border stands quite well logically: unrest in some Arab countries; influx of refugees on the Turkish and Greek borders; Bulgaria as a new member – in need of improvement of border controls. A little less clear is the link to the judicial reform as a quoted reason for blocking the country. The Lisbon treaty divides the themes related to the area of freedom, security and justice into four fields: one is border control, another is police co-operation and the other two are related to judiciary matters (EU online). Therefore, judicial reform does not include border controls and this should be seen as a new accusation to Bulgaria, unrelated to the argument developed so far.

The subheading of the next section projects a degree of positivity:

## *MEPs give thumbs-up*

The expectation is that this part of the article is about approval for Bulgaria to join the Schengen zone. The metaphor THUMBS-UP is highlighted by the use of the empty verb GIVE. The metaphor has been preferred to “votes in favour”, which would have left the positive phrase in a circumstantial role.

The suggestion that Bulgaria, together with Romania, is eligible for admission is made through a direct quotation of the words of the President of the EU Parliament. This, however, is not done as a whole-hearted support for the country. In effect, the wording presents a negation of the claim that their integration should be delayed:

*“The Schengen system is providing the highest standards of border management. Romania and Bulgaria are meeting these standards today - hence, we MUST NOT DELAY their integration,” said parliament president Jerzy Buzek.*

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The President does not use the verb of material action verb “integrate” but a nominalisation. The reason for this is to be able to modify its meaning with “delay”. Thus, Bulgaria is not rejected, barred or any other negative action. “Delay” is a verb that only relates to timing. The choice of the predicate “delay integration” in fact reveals an intention of the Parliament, which is negated under the strength of the evidence that Bulgaria meets the requirements for admission. What MEPs actually want to do is delay Bulgaria’s integration but they are forced to abandon the delay – which is also reinforced by the strong modality of MUST.

The use of the continuous tense for “meeting those standards” is also odd – it would suggest a temporary activity, an action that is localised at a particular moment in time; it is not the case that the countries have this characteristic in general, they possess it at the specified moment in time. Therefore, the temporary nature of this characteristic is highlighted, as if it is of significance for the admission. Thus, instead of the claim that Bulgaria is eligible and should integrate into the Schengen zone, the EU President utters a statement that the delay cannot be maintained any longer.

Next, a further hedge to the countries’ integration is added with the chairman’s remark that Bulgaria would need to improve its border co-operation with Greece and Turkey – a reintroduction of the concerns raised earlier in the article.

The article ends with an enumeration of the countries which are not part of the Schengen zone – and the UK is one of these countries. Then the text reverts back to an earlier aside in the story – re-imposing border controls by Denmark, an act condemned by Germany. Mixing the two themes – re-imposing border controls within Schengen and fears of Bulgaria’s ability to guard Schengen’s external borders – lead to a broadly associative conclusion that rules for the former might be a solution to the latter in case Bulgaria were to gain admission.

In this article conceptual arguments are outlined which are definitely inconsistent: Bulgaria is voted as fulfilling the requirements for the Schengen zone, but the Netherlands blocks it from joining; fears are described of a lack of capacity to stop illegal immigration from outside Europe, yet, the Dutch block Bulgaria because the judicial reforms are not irreversible; the EU President proposes admitting Bulgaria by negating the claim that it should be delayed further. Throughout the article Bulgaria appears as an affected participant or in a circumstantial role, without an opportunity to make a statement or perform an action that might give a positive impression. It seems as if Bulgaria is not significant enough to be discussed in its own right but only as part of the larger problem of border security; and always in tandem with Romania.

Thus Bulgaria is a passive participant in the discourse about Schengen admissions on the BBC web pages. EU officials are quoted to urge for a fight against corruption and organised crime, but the flaws remain formulated metaphorically and thus present no real directive for action *per se*. The consequences of an admission are equally vague and the BBC presents them as such. An adamant aversion to let Bulgaria join the Schengen zone garnered in an empty discourse can be seen regarding this topic.

**Linguistic devices** for defaming established with this article:

Ousting Bulgaria **out of the focus** of the sentence: Bulgaria is a circumstantial complement to the theme or rheme, but not part of the actual information structure.

**Conjunctions** reveal developments in a paradoxical relation:

*Dutch Immigration Minister Gerd Leers spoke of the delay ALTHOUGH just a day EARLIER the European Parliament had voted to let the two Balkan countries into Schengen*

**Sweeping generalisations** – ALL 25 states, not all the 25 states.

**Illogical links**

*Only minimal border checks are carried out within Schengen, though the treaty requires the member states to apply uniform controls on the EU’s external borders.*

**Nominalisations** substitute processes:

*we MUST NOT DELAY their integration*

Verbs relate to **timing**, not **action**.

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## Article 4.

The fourth article is remarkable with its text structure which conveys a message totally different from the purported aim. The title is:

*EU free movement of labour map*

It contains a short introduction and a map with interactive links which call up information about each country and its policy towards immigrant workers. The EU member-countries before 2004 – i.e. the West of Europe during the cold war – are provided with links, while the newly included countries – in effect, the former communist bloc – have no links. This is the first level of separating countries – West and East, old Europe and new accessions, capitalist countries and ex-communist ones. The former allow or restrict workers from the latter. The article is built as a list of approaches applied to the ex-communist countries by the older members of the European Union. While the headline features FREE MOVEMENT OF LABOUR, the text is a catalogue of the restrictions to the free movement of labourers from the former communist bloc.

The terms of reference split the former communist countries into two groups – *the 2004 entrants*, on the one hand, and Bulgaria and Romania, also called *the 2007 entrants* – on the other. A summary table on the webpage presents the attitudes to the two groups in mostly positive terms: *open doors for 2004 entrants* and *open doors for 2007 entrants*. This is contrasted with the third rubric “subject to restrictions”. Each rubric is followed by an enumeration of the countries applying these policies.

The abstract features Belgium’s plan to lift restrictions on workers from “most of the new EU member states” and emphasises that it is the last to do so in the EU. However, the very next sentence has as its predicate “will keep restrictions in place”. The recipient of the verbal action is workers from Bulgaria and Romania.

*Belgium plans to lift restrictions on workers from most of the new EU member states - THE LATEST TO DO SO in the 27-nation bloc.*

*But it WILL KEEP RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE for workers from Bulgaria and Romania, the newest EU members, which joined on 1 January 2007.*

The next paragraph has a conjoined structure where the second predicate is “still face barriers”. The agent of the action is workers from the former communist countries and the circumstance are European countries.

*In May 2004 eight other former communist states joined the EU - and their workers STILL FACE BARRIERS in some European countries.*

The conventional implicature STILL suggests that this is a situation which will soon be overcome. A further hedge is the quantification of the countries where such barriers are faced – SOME countries.

The next sentence is about restrictions as well but presented in a rather devious way:

*Some of the countries which imposed no curbs on workers from those eight countries - or lifted them in May 2006 - imposed curbs on Bulgarians and Romanians.*

The main verb is “imposed curbs”, and the recipients are Bulgarians and Romanians. The subject is modified with a clause containing the same predicate in the negative – “imposed no curbs”, with recipient – *the 2004 entrants*. The second clause is synonymous but presents material action “lifted (the curbs)”. In effect, the agent has no clear reference – “some of the countries”. The reference is specified with the two types of actions – imposing no curbs or lifting them. The action these countries perform is to impose curbs again, this time – on Bulgarians and Romanians. The author did not even try to avoid the repetition. This complicated proposition, in effect, reifies the necessity of curbs, which happen to be imposed on Bulgarians and Romanians, after being initially lifted.

While suggesting that most restrictions are lifted in the abstract of the article, each sentence later in the text is about restrictions and curbs. Not surprisingly, the proposition which has “free movement of workers” as its theme is introduced with an adversative BUT:

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*But free movement of workers is a fundamental right in the EU.*

Paradoxically, the next sentence has a positive form of the predicate CAN BE MAINTAINED with the subject CURBS.

*So the curbs CAN BE MAINTAINED for a maximum of seven years - until May 2011 in the case of workers from the eight countries that joined in 2004, and until 2014 in the case of workers from Bulgaria and Romania.*

The amount of details about the maximal terms of retaining the curbs for the two groups of new EU entrants makes them a very special part of the text – in fact, they are the rheme of this sentence. Thus what is under discussion is how long restrictions on workers from the former communist bloc can be prolonged, rather than lifting them to create the free movement of labour presented with the headline. The EU directive for free movement is presented as an obstacle to placing restrictions. In effect, the rest of the article suggests ways to legally restrict the rights of workers and proposes justifications for that. The textual structure gives this impression – rather than orienting restricted workers how to gain access, and thereby taking the side of those less privileged, the BBC advises how to keep Eastern European immigrants away from the West without breaking EU laws.

Finally, the introduction rounds up with the metaphoric action “threw open their doors to Bulgarians and Romanians”, which is predicated of another vaguely denoted subject – “most countries”:

*Most of the countries which threw open their doors to Bulgarian and Romanian workers joined the EU in 2004.*

In effect, the referent of the action are the former communist countries and the sentence means that mostly former communist countries imposed no restrictions on their fellow ex-communist-bloc countries from the later wave of accession. Thus the former communist countries are presented as a cohesive group of their own, quite apart from the rest of Europe.

The text about each of the countries which were EU members before 2004 is structured on a common template. Firstly, there is a section about imposing and lifting restrictions on the 2004 entrants. The second section specifies policies towards the 2007 entrants – Bulgaria and Romania. They include issuing/simplifying work permits – in a fast-track procedure, in some cases; restricting the workers from benefits; allowing privileges for jobs difficult to fill with nationals of the country. The conditions for issuing work permits are scrupulously pointed out. Behind this positive formulation transpires the action of actually restricting labour from the communist countries, because this is what work permits are for – to allow only individuals with permits to work in the respective countries. In effect, work permits are an impediment to the free movement of labour, directing workers to industries where they are allowed is another restriction.

Imposing no restrictions is highlighted with a special predicate: *was one of the three countries*, which is repeated for each of the three countries, naming them at each recurrence. This is followed with explanations why restrictions became necessary for Bulgaria and Romania later:

*Sweden was ONE OF THE THREE COUNTRIES, along with the UK and Ireland, which chose to apply no restrictions to workers from the new EU member states...*

*The UK WAS ONE OF THE THREE COUNTRIES, along with Ireland and Sweden, to place no restrictions on workers from the 2004 entrants...*

*The Republic of Ireland WAS ONE OF THREE COUNTRIES which opened up its labour markets to all new member states immediately in 2004....*

This exceptional predicate is followed by an adversative structure:

*It did, HOWEVER, introduce new rules whereby immigrants from all EU countries - not just the new members - would be ineligible for benefits for two years.*

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*HOWEVER, workers have to register and only become eligible for benefits such as Jobseeker's Allowance and income support after working continuously in the UK for at least a year.*

Only the text about Sweden continues with a positive presentation:

*It has taken THE SAME liberal line with regard to workers from Bulgaria and Romania.*

Some of the country profiles also specify justifications for restricting labourers, and they include close proximity to the ex-communist countries, high levels of unemployment in the recipient countries, an unexpectedly big influx of immigrants etc. The explanations abound in detail about the enormity of the immigrant wave:

*After an UNEXPECTEDLY LARGE INFLUX of workers from Central Europe - AN ESTIMATED 600,000 in two years - the UK announced that it would impose restrictions on workers from Bulgaria and Romania.*

The theme is exceptionally long to cushion the impact of the verbiage of the main verb: *impose restrictions*, in effect – the rheme of this sentence. This creates the impression of hedging and conjuring reasons for this unpopular move.

The justifications for restricting Eastern Europeans include quotations from EU officials:

*“In practice Germany has given as many people work as other big countries,” EU EMPLOYMENT COMMISSIONER Vladimir Spidla said in May 2006.*

Here the distinction between East and West, ex-communist and capitalist countries is construed in terms of size – BIG COUNTRIES.

The tendency to give an excess of explanations for why restrictions were imposed is visible. The accumulation of such details raises the argument that keeping new Europeans at home is a policy which can be better motivated in practical terms, inasmuch as only one reason is given for the adverse opinion – the fundamental human right of free movement.

The recurrent textual component of restrictions for Bulgarians and Romanians makes it a natural part of the textual scheme, and, thereby - of the overall message of the article. Imposing and lifting curbs for the 2004 entrants is taken for granted, as is the fact that restrictions should be in place for Bulgarians. The text structure reifies this state of matters in reality.

The tendency to steer away from the tell-tale reference “former communist countries” is not quite successful. It occurs 5 times, whereas the coinage “2004/2007 entrants” is used 8 times. Moreover, they split into two groups – those who gained admission in 2004, on the one hand, and Bulgaria and Romania, the 2007 entrants – on the other. In fact, “former communist countries” is used as an umbrella term for the two groups, while “entrants” collocates with 2004 to denote the first group.

In effect, this article revives the split between the East and the West of Europe. The West is presented as vehemently struggling to fend against a massive invasion of workers from the East, against the backdrop of EU's requirement for free movement of labour, which they are trying to overcome with politically correct formulations of the restrictions they need to protect against the easterners. Neither the positive terms of reference, nor the structure of the text conceal the fact that free movement of labour from the East to the West is undesirable. Bulgaria is among the worst affected, being part of the second wave of accession together with Romania.

**Linguistic devices** for defaming established with this article:

**Paradoxical nominations** – *free movement of labour, open-doors policy* - when the reverse is meant.

**Conventional implicature** – STILL face barriers.

**Conjunctions** reveal developments in a paradoxical relation:

*BUT free movement of workers is a fundamental right in the EU.*

**Abundance of detail** - how the EU's requirement for free movement of labour can be circumvented



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**Exclusive nominations** - ONE OF THE THREE COUNTRIES which chose to apply no restrictions to workers from the new EU member states – to reify the fact that the action is not natural.

**Overlexicalisation** – concerning the reasons why workers from the 2007-accession countries cannot be allowed to the labour market.

Imposing a **template** to reify roles – presenting the former communist countries and the policies to keep them out of the labour market in “older European countries”

**Relexicalisations:** *2004 admissions* and *2007 entrants* for the former communist countries; open-doors policy – special measures to restrict labour from Eastern Europe.

Attaching **modal verbs** to the genuinely desired action - *the curbs CAN BE MAINTAINED for a maximum of seven years*. The desired action is to maintain curbs.

## Conclusion

In the discourse about Bulgaria joining the Schengen zone Bulgaria features in four articles published over a period of 4 years. An article a year is a frequency which reveals little interest in the topic and country. The talk is of blocking Bulgaria from joining the Schengen area, alongside financial penalties for various wrongdoings. The succession of the events is this: firstly, threats are issued; then Germany and France block Bulgaria; then the Netherlands delays Bulgaria’s accession. At the same time, the European Parliament votes Bulgaria as meeting the criteria for joining the Schengen zone and a report is commissioned by the EC which would advise member states on the preparedness of the countries for joining the Schengen zone – after the major members have issued their negative decisions. What keeps Bulgaria out is the need of a unanimous decision of all the EU countries – presented as out of reach for Bulgaria and Romania.

Overwhelmingly, Bulgaria occurs as a circumstance as can be seen in Table 3.6. Tesniere (1959) juxtaposes **actant** and **circonstant**, and, as can be seen, Bulgaria is never **actant** but always - **circonstant**.

Clearly, Bulgaria is not in the centre of the reality created by the BBC with its discourse, but comes on the fringes of a different argument – in our corpus, the case of guarding the borders of the EU from illegal immigrants. However, being in prepositional positions does not always give the country the function of a fringe element to the discourse. As can be seen in example 7 in the table, the prepositional phrase introduces the doer of the action in a passive construction, postponing the entity to the rheme and thereby highlighting the agency.

Nr	Main part	Prep. Phrase
1	<i>fuelling EU concern about border security</i>	<i>in neighbouring Bulgaria and Romania</i>
2	<i>all adopted judicial reform measures</i>	<i>in Romania and Bulgaria</i>
3	<i>there are “powerful forces</i>	<i>in the Bulgarian government and/or other state institutions”</i>
4	<i>The European Commission is planning to block almost \$1bn in funds</i>	<i>for Bulgaria</i>
5	<i>The EU has already frozen hundreds of millions' worth of aid destined</i>	<i>for Bulgaria's roads and agriculture</i>
6	<i>Costly projects to upgrade border controls are also under suspicion of fraud, raising fears</i>	<i>about Bulgaria's chances of joining the Schengen border-free area</i>
7	<i>there had also been a lack of progress</i>	<i>by Romania and Bulgaria</i>

**Table 3.6. Bulgaria in circumstantial roles**

Likewise, the nominalised phrases in which the country name occurs also are not a part of a grand mystification. The nominalisation “delay” only appears to hide the agency of who is imposing a delay but in effect it places the agents of the action in a rhematic position, thus giving them a position of a new and significant piece of information. In effect, on all occasions the agency is clear. Thus my data forces me to admit

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that post-prepositional placement and nominalisations are not necessarily a sign of sidelining participants. In effect, in my corpus they serve as components postponing the respective parts to positions of greater significance in the text structure.

Bulgaria is often subject to passive structures presenting the country as affected by the actions of the European Union or its organs:

*Romania and Bulgaria blocked from joining Schengen zone* (headline)

The occasions when Bulgaria is given the role of subject include cases when Bulgarian officials make statements and are quoted by the BBC, semantically characterised as SAYER:

*Romania condemned the decision, while Bulgaria promised to “do its utmost” to remove doubts about its membership.*

*Bulgarian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Vessela Cherneva told AFP: “We are aware that the political situation in some EU member countries is complicated. For that reason, we will do our utmost to remove any doubts, including in the areas of the judicial system and society as a whole.”*

*Bulgarian Prime Minister Sergei Stanishev dismissed the allegations*

Further, the cases when Bulgaria is bestowed agentive role also present negative action on the part of Bulgaria:

*...the Bulgarian authorities have not fully explained or clarified the situation surrounding the irregularities and have not taken all necessary steps to correct them – which is a direct quotation of an anonymous EU official.*

*...Romania was marking time, while Bulgaria had gone backwards.*

Thus, the number of subject positions is equal to the number of circumstantial ones. The semantic nature of the verbs, however, places Bulgaria in a position of explaining wrongdoings, or being affected by the actions of others. It is subject to ascriptive claims, in effect – prevaricating about its state - or to passive structures when the country is affected by the actions of others. The fact that Bulgaria is highlighted as the agent of regress or hiding negative facts from its people contributes to building a particularly bad image.

Another issue is that the agencies chosen for reference by the BBC from Bulgaria are officials, representatives of the power bloc in the country. On one single occasion does the BBC evoke the opposition:

*The opposition is preparing to table a motion of no confidence the day after the document is adopted in Brussels.*

The fleeting reference to opposition is isolated and there is no follow up to reveal its impact. And while the official authorities are accused of such wrongdoings, the opposition remains only once and very vaguely mentioned at all.

A specific technique of back-grounding is that Bulgaria appears as the second part of a co-ordinated phrase: *Romania and Bulgaria*. When this is not the case, a clause is added comparing the two countries. Except for the first article, the two countries are indiscriminately bundled together, to the extent that the two judiciaries appear common and indistinguishable from each other. The comparisons, as shown above, are entirely in favour of Romania. Notable, however, is the fact that the only signed article is written by a Romanian national, Oana Lungescu, introduced as the BBC's European affairs correspondent. It may be a coincidence that the correspondent happened to be Romanian, who clearly presented events to give Bulgaria a bad image so as to let her country appear positive in the contrast, but the BBC provided the medium.

The terms of reference to the country are mainly toponyms or personal names. Appositions attributed to the country name add mainly negative qualifications:

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*Bulgaria and Romania - EU members since 2007  
Bulgaria, the EU's poorest country*

Both present facts about the country. The first focuses on how late Bulgaria managed to gain admission to the European Union and has direct relation to the timing of its claim for the Schengen zone. The second proceeds from statistics and has relevance for the topic of losing access to EU funds. Neither projects positive attitude, both position Bulgaria negatively in the minds of the readers.

In the third place, other references leading back to Bulgaria include the phrase:

*"...make sure the generous support it receives from the EU actually reaches its citizens and is not siphoned off by corrupt officials, operating together with organized crime"*

These are the qualifications in a report about Bulgaria, but the fact the BBC report chose to quote them is significant about the attitude to Bulgaria. And further:

*"..powerful forces in the Bulgarian government and/or other state institutions" who are not interested in punishing the corruption.*

In the corpus, we also find references to specific Bulgarian people who are mentioned in the coverage of the country. They include the then Prime Minister Sergey Stanishev. Apart from being quoted to reject claims about Bulgaria, his government is called "beleaguered":

*...the troubles of Mr. Stanishev's beleaguered government*

Their troubles, indeed, were many and the government could not win re-election. But the BBC fails to draw a distinction between Mr. Stanishev's government and Bulgaria, garnering its articles with the public statements only of these officials. Indeed, the other figure named as projecting the image of the country is the interior minister in the same government:

*But earlier this year, the powerful interior minister was forced to step down after revelations he had secretly met two alleged crime bosses and some of his officials were leaking confidential information to mafia suspects.*

It appears as if the terms of reference to the government repeat "power", however, the predications feature administrative weakness. This range of terms of reference shows an orientation to a power block in Bulgaria which projects might but is associated with negative activities. In effect, the terms of reference are found to be in close relation to the range of actors included in the discourse.

In effect, we see Bulgaria as a passive recipient of quite aggressive but inarticulately voiced measures from the EU. The words of EU officials are presented with the hedge of inverted commas, without explicit logical links to the overall structure of the articles. The qualifications more often than not are metaphoric, therefore creating associations rather than naming concrete objects. The attributes are never taxonomic and generally deprived of concrete meaning. The effect of the specific "eurospeak" is created by using verbs of mental activities rather than of material action. Thus the claims affect thinking, assessing, projecting, rather than concrete deeds. This conceals the actual picture; in effect, the quoted euro-documents refrain from naming concrete actions that evoke disapproval, but formulate evaluative mental activity. Secondly, the preference for positive statements is evident, even when a negative meaning is conveyed. Thus the language is non-conflictive and does not allow for challenges. Negative statements are used to circumvent making hard claims. Thirdly, taxonomic or binary adjectives are avoided and transformed into gradable ones, which take away the ultimate value of the statements. In the fourth place, statements tend to affect time rather than the nature of the verbal activity, thus making the statements easier to accept – not: *Bulgaria is not ready for admission*, but it is "premature" to admit Bulgaria. The BBC clearly identifies these features of "eurospeak", quotes them between inverted commas leaving the reader to guess whether they sympathise with the qualifications. However, the image of Bulgaria is created through such refined discriminatory statements lined with little substance but

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definitive dislike. The general impression is that Bulgaria is not wanted in the Schengen zone and vague explanations are voiced to motivate keeping it out while the Parliament votes it in.

The cogency of the logical links within the texts is often problematic. A report of misused agricultural funds is subtitled “mafia killings”; border controls are enmeshed with legal reforms; corruption occurs in tandem with organised crime. The connections between these issues beg the question in the BBC articles for this corpus, but presenting them as stable collocations reifies their status as joint entities, while instilling the perception that the logical links exist.

The profile Bulgaria cuts is one of inefficiency, passivity and several negative features of government.

The negative image is also predicated by the fact that a Romanian is authorized to write about Bulgaria and seek out contrasts with her native country. Most of the Bulgarians that are given the floor to speak prevaricate and promise, obviously cornered by accusations. Not a single Bulgarian is presented in a position to make a positive statement about Bulgaria, and this is the way the BBC structured their discourse about Bulgaria.