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Stancetaking on migration in Lithuanian argumentative journalistic discourse

Stance and various stancetaking techniques have been widely considered in newspaper and political discourse, where various global topics, i.e. terrorism, war, were addressed and discussed by journalists, politicians, and linguists (see Marín-Arrese 2021a, 2021b; Hidalgo-Downing & Hanawi 2017; Martín de la Rosa & Domínguez Romero 2021, among others). The present study aims to identify stancetaking strategies, namely realizations of epistemic, effective and attitudinal stance, attested in Lithuanian argumentative journalistic discourse dealing with the topic of migration. The study is based on the analysis of stance in opinion columns that date back to the year 2021 and deal with the arrival of Syrian and Iraqi migrants into Lithuania and Poland through Belarus. The influx of migrants created a number of social, economic and political challenges to these countries of Central Europe and was widely covered by the Lithuanian and Polish media.

Drawing on the framework of stance developed by Marín-Arrese (2011), the study focuses on expressions of epistemic stance, which includes the subcategories of epistemic modality, evidentiality, factivity, and cognitive attitude, and on realizations of effective stance, which comprises the subcategories of deonticity, potentiality, intentionality, directivity, and normativity. Attitudinal stance is analysed within the framework of evaluation developed by Bednarek (2006), which contains the parameters of emotivity, (in)comprehensibility, (un)importance, and (un)expectedness. The study provides the frequencies of epistemic, effective and attitudinal stance markers and their (inter)subjective functions in opinion columns devoted to migrants, migration policies, attitudes towards migrants, etc. The data have been drawn from the self-compiled corpus of opinion columns collected from the public broadcaster LRT (Lithuanian National Radio and Television) in the year 2021.

The preliminary results show the salience of attitudinal and effective stance in the opinion columns analysed. The present study adds to the body of research into epistemic, effective and attitudinal stance in newspaper and political discourse across languages and cultures (Marín-Arrese 2021a, 2021b; Martín de la Rosa, Domínguez Romero 2021).

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