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**MORNING RADIO PROGRAMME  
– IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION STRATEGIES BY MEANS OF DISCURSIVE  
POSITIONING –**

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**Abstract:** *NEEDING TO SAVE TIME, PEOPLE FIRST HEAR ABOUT TODAY'S NEWS FROM THE RADIO, EITHER IN THEIR CAR, IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT OR EVEN DIRECTLY AT WORK. THE RADIO PASSES AN INFORMATION WHICH THE LISTENER CHOOSES TO VERIFY BY THE IMAGES BROADCASTED BY TELEVISIONS AND ANALYZE IT USING THE ARTICLES FROM THE WRITTEN PRESS.*

*THE MORNING RADIO SHOW INVOLVES AN ENCOUNTER WITH AN INFORMATION USING DIALOGUE WITH THE HOSTS/PRESENTERS OF THE SHOW AND THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE PRESENTERS AND THE LISTENERS. RADIO PRESENTERS ARE THE ONES WHO TRANSMIT THE INFORMATION AND ASSUME A SOCIAL ROLE IN RELATION WITH THE LISTENERS. STARTING FROM THE PREMISE THAT EACH RADIO STATION USES A CERTAIN STRATEGY TO HAVE THE BIGGEST AUDIENCE POSSIBLE, WE COULD SAY THAT THE HOSTS ADOPT A CERTAIN STANCE, TO KEEP THE PUBLIC CLOSE.*

*ANY SPEECH IMPLIES A STANCE TOWARDS THE CONTENT OF THE COMMUNICATION, BUT ALSO TOWARDS THE OTHER PARTICIPANTS TO THE SPEECH IN QUESTION. RADIO PRESENTERS DO NOT ONLY PASS AN INFORMATION, BUT ALSO THE WAY THEY SEE THAT INFORMATION.*

*INDIVIDUAL NARRATIONS OF THE PRESENTERS GIVE THE LISTENERS CLUES TO GIVE THEM A SOCIALLY KNOWN ROLE: **THE EXPERT IN THE ECONOMIC/CULTURAL/POLITIC DOMAIN, THE RELAXED PERSON, WHO KNOWS HOW TO APPRECIATE THE NICER SIDE OF LIFE, COMEDIAN, ANALYST.***

*POSITIONING IMPLIES ANALYZING THE DISCUSSED THEMES, EVALUATING THEM AND CAPTIVATING THE PUBLIC WHICH NEEDS TO AFFILIATE TO THE DOMINANT MESSAGE*

*POSITIONING IS SUSTAINED BY EVERY INTERVENTION MADE BY THE HOSTS AN DIS IN DIRECT RELATION WITH THE POSITION OF THE RADIO STATION AS A SOCIAL ORGANIZATION.*

**Keywords:** *RADIO PROGRAMME, RADIO PRESENTERS, DISCURSIVE POSITIONING*

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## 1. INTRODUCTIVE ASPECTS

We live in a world in which we approach life based on the information broadcasted by mass-media on a daily basis. There is a fierce ongoing between radio, television and the written press for supremacy and, especially, for audience. Needing to save time, people first hear about today's news from the radio, either in their car, in public transport or even directly at work. The radio passes an information which the listener chooses to verify by the images broadcasted by televisions and analyze it using the articles from the written press.

Thus, the early radio programme, a morning show dedicated to those wanting information and, why not, entertainment, becomes the first source to which an individual comes to know what is important in the day that is just starting, what is worthy to be taken into account.

The radio host presents an information and, depending on the show's format and character, analyzes it or jokes about it. Without visual support, he must transmit the simplified information using only his voice, in such a way that the listener transforms listening to the radio station into a habit, bringing popularity to the station.

Likewise, individuals depend on mass-media to understand not only the information – current events, from the past or the future-, but also to understand the others and, sometimes, themselves. The radio is most often used for information about the weather, traffic, local news or to interact with others, in shows on various themes.

The hosts of the morning radio show, which does not have a predetermined topic, have the role of informing, interpreting, educating and relaxing the listeners, using only their voices, music, slogans and jingles.

The purpose of this research is to identify the identity construction mechanisms of the presenters and of the radio station, by analyzing the discursive positioning in the morning show.

The structure of said paper seeks to contextually define the concept of social identity and the concept of discursive positionin, presenting the strategies used by the radio presenter to build an identity through language, referring to different morning shows.

## 2. THEORETICAL COORDINATES

The construction of one's personal image implies reporting to the world we live in, to the interactions with others, but also to oneself.

Identity is defined in „Gadrey dictionary of sociology”(1998) as an ensemble of circumstances which determine a person to be that specific person, while the „Oxford dictionary of sociology”(Marshall, 2003) defines identity as „self knowledge or as the ideas and feelings one has about himself.”

The social identity of an individual is a complex process, changing continuously, ambiguous and contested, because in today's society, the technological inovations speed up the transformation process and even the personality of individuals. Thus, tge way in which a person speaks and the texts it interacts with show it's identity in the most accurate way. (Graddol, 1994).

The identity does not appear before the act of speech, rather it results from it „d'un jeu de va-et-vient entre pratiques et représentations langagières”. (Charaudeau, 2004) This game of back and forth between practices and representations of language is a form of understanding the other. In a dialog we must accept both the similarities and the differences between partners, because each of them has a personal identity and a social one. Depending on the context in which an individual finds himself at a given time, one of the two identities manifests in a more imposing way, it shines and effaces the other

According to Worchel and Coutant (2002) the model of social identity includes: the personal identity(physical characteristics and personality traits of an), social identity(member of the group),

intragroup identity (the role one has inside the group and the relations from within said group) and group identity (given by the group boundaries, the values and beliefs of the group and the reputation among other groups).

The radio presenter has a well defined social identity, as it is essential for him to share values and thoughts common with other members of the group he is addressing. Reporting to the listeners becomes a form of self knowledge, of redesccovering oneself. Language constructions become indicators of social, „ social acts” (*social act* – Ochs, 1994) betraying a well known social behaviour, aimed at a certain.

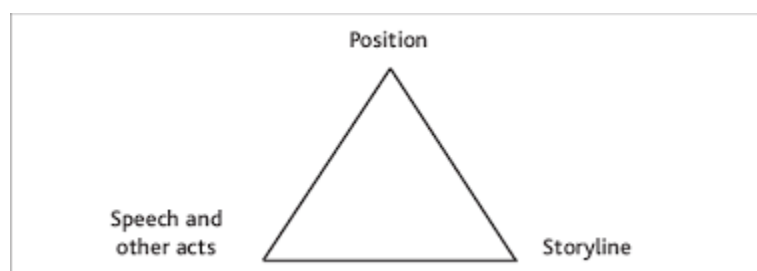
Meanwhile, *stance* is defined as a show of a certain point of view or of a socially known attitude (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1989).

Positioning involves an episteme attitude, considering the confidence or lack of confidence of the speaker towards certain phrases, and an affective component which involves the intensity of some emotions or referring to certain emotions. We build our social identity using acts of speech which suggest a positioning regarding knowledge, as well as an affective positioning. The link between language and the construction of identity depends on speakers, their values, the meaning they give to phrases. In the acts of communication, people not only pass an information, but also a way in which they regard said information and, in the case of mass-media, determines the others to regard the information in the same way. Positioning becomes a discursive practice in which the radio presenter defines his identity and, at the same time, builds the identity of the radio station he represents, with the end goal of gaining a similar position from the listeners.

Erving Goffman refers to the metaphor of social interaction as a dramatic performance and considers that in speech interactions each performs a role. Besides, the univers itself proposed by mass-media is constructed as a show whose public should be convinced to approach the same values as the ones who pass the information along. In 1981, Goffman proposes the concept of *footing*, which he associates with positioning. Using language, speakers play a certain role, changing this role brings a change in our frame of events:

„ Participant’s alignmet, or set, or stance, or posture, or projected self is somehow at issue. (...) A change in our footing is another way of talking about a change in our frame for events.” (Goffman, 1981:128)

This role is assumed in a system of pre-arranged places for the speakers. This way, the theory of positioning is described by researchers using a triangular model. The concept of positioning is considered “a dynamic alternative, as opposed to the static concept of a role” (Harré, and van Langenhove, 1999:14). The stance of the speakers are not determined, are not related to an institutional frame, but they can be recognized due to the communication practices of society. We build our identity by storylines, which we transform in verbal interactions in order to present ourselves to others.



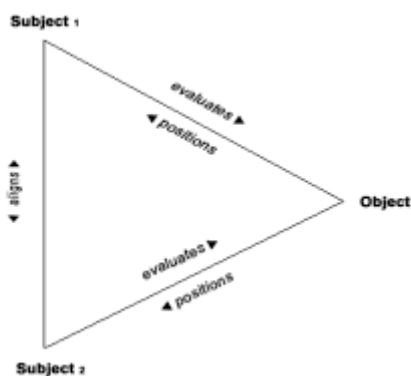
The triangle of stance (Harré, and van Langenhove, 1999:17)

Language acts can generate a social meaning. John W. Du Bois considers that the most important thing we can achieve through words is positioning – take a stance (Du Bois, 2007:139):

„positioning has the power to give value to objects of interest, to position social actors in relation to the perspective objects, in order to calibrate the alignment between those who have a certain position –stancetaker- and to invoke supposed systems of sociocultural values.”

Positioning becomes thus a form of social action, whose meaning is build inside the language, in the frame of interaction, to have a social meaning.

The speaker/the one who takes a certain position evaluates an object, positions himself regarding that object, aligns with other subjects, in a certain socio-cultural context.



Positioning triangle (Du Bois, 2007:163)

Thus, the stance implies three actions simultaneously: object evaluation, positioning the subjects(the social actor himself and others) and aligning with the other subjects.

The radio presenter fulfills these actions simultaneously to create a social self in the minds of the listeners, which offers an identity to the radio station he works for

Kiesling considers that the first form of understanding interaction by speech is by taking stance: *I define stance as a person's expression of their relationship to their talk (their epistemic stance—e.g., how certain they are about their assertions), and a person's expression of their relationship to their interlocutors (their interpersonal stance—e.g., friendly or dominating).* (Kiesling, 2009:3)

Thus, positioning implies a relation between a person and it's speech – the confidence of what has been said-, but also the relation with the other speakers which is defined by an attitude, either friendly, or dominant.

There is no such thing as an „automated stance recognition” which could be done(otherwise we could encrypt other linguistic characteristics, other than stance), because the same characteristics can be used to occupy different positions depending on other elements of the (defined on a large scale). (Kiesling, 2009:4)

In the case of the morning radio show, the dominant attitude is rarely highlighted, because often times the goal is to relax the publi, not to create a conflict. The radio host sells himself and the image of the radio station in a personal style which implies adopting a position depending on context. Starting from Charaudeau's affirmation „maybe we are only a succession of masks”, we can say that our social identity implies several times of speech attitudes: neuter, when the journalist sends the information, without making assessments or emitting valour judgements, distancing, when he adopts the style of a specialst/expert or involvement when he adopts a certain position, trying to convince the public to be on his side.

Most of the times, in the case of the morning radio show, the presenter has an attitude of engagement/assumption which he realises by dialogue, not only with the other presenters, but also

with the public whose attitude becomes implicit, by deliberately reporting the speech in order to impose beliefs, or explicit, in the case of direct dialogue, using telephone calls or messages from the listeners.

In the study „Identité sociale et identité discursive. Un jeu de miroir fondateur de l’activité langagière” (Charaudeau, 2009), the researcher describes the types of abilities from different communication situations and the strategies used: *Communication competence* in which the speaker can determine the social identity of the partners of his dialogue discovering the structure and limitations of the situation of communication, *the semantic competence* which corresponds to the organization of knowledge of certain themes and *the discursive competence* which involves reporting the speech by declarative components, narrative or argumentative, based on the frame of communication.

The morning radio show can be perceived as a daily ritual: „expressing repetitive and formalized consumer behaviours, some behaviours of routine production or, finally, some types of messages which, even if they seem to refer to different actions, places or characters, are always the same –,same narrative structure, same type of theme.” (Coman, 2003: 58)

Any interaction is based on a *communication contract* (Charaudeau, 2004), the social actors must obey some rules: certain ways of addressing, a type of nonverbal behaviour, a certain language, etc.

However, the contract of communication can suffer changes based on the intentionality, on using several discursive strategies: legitimation, credibility or captation. (Charaudeau 2006, b). These strategies give the speaker a discursive identity.

If the social identity of the radio presenter corresponds to the role assumed by positioning in regards to the transmitted message, by framing in certain social patterns, the discursive identity reflects authority and represents the stated opinions.

### **CASE STUDY – DISCURSIVE POSITIONING IN THE MORNING RADIO SHOW**

The morning radio show involves an encounter with an information using dialogue with the hosts/presenters of the show and the dialogue between the presenters and the listeners.

Radio presenters are the ones who transmit the information and assume a social role in relation with the listeners. Starting from the premise that each radio station uses a certain strategy to have the biggest audience possible, we could say that the hosts adopt a certain stance, to keep the public close.

Patrick Charaudeau (1994) considers that the act of language as the meet place of the communication contract and the strategy. If we think about it’s production, the act of language can be considered as an expedition and an adventure, because it has an intentional aspect(the speaker uses contracts and strategies), but at the same time, it is unpredictable(the speaker can not control the effect he has on the others).

The strategy is built during the dialogue, it is not the result of the intentions prior to the interaction. The role assumed by the presenter is seen as the continuous aspect of discursive performance, while the stance is the discreet aspect of the discursive exchange. (Harré, Moghaddam, Lee, 2008).

We can identify, based on the specific of the show, several types of stance, based mainly, on the name chosen for said show. The title becomes a way of anticipating the themes discussed in the show, the position of the presenter, a clue for the listener, to affiliate or not to the message.

#### **Radio România Actualități – Morning call. Good morning, Romania!**

The title of the show uses the noun call to highlight several meanings: the direct addressing to the listeners belonging to a group, having common interests and beliefs, but, at the same time, can also





be interpreted as its base meaning-request. The greeting formula solidifies the first meaning, so the role of this show is to make a call, offering information and beliefs, from the perspective of an expert.

The stance of the presenter is that of an expert in the economic/politic/cultural domain, because each morning, the producers of this show choose current events from the economic and politic actuality to discuss. The dialogue between the presenters, as well as the dialogue between the presenters and the personalities interviewed live reflect such themes, which are also carefully presented on the webpage of the radio station. The veracity of the information is sustained by statistics and a careful reference to experts, the guest being viewed as an authority in his field.

**Realizator:** *In Romania, once every three seconds, a person needs blood, but only 2% of people decide to get involved and donate. We need to consider the fact that even a single donation can save three lives, though. During this pandemic, the situation got even worse at every donation center in the country, even though there is always a need for blood. The conditions for donors have in mind eliminating every risk of contamination, and the government even offers rewards to those who donate. Today's guest of „Morning call” is the director of the Blood Transfer Center of Bucharest, dr Doina Gosa. Good morning, doctor.*

**Realizator:** *We are talking about a new law being proposed which could lead to avoiding the reoccurrence of cases such as the one from Caracal or, behold, the one from Dambovita. It's a project which implies a new system called „child alert”, its purpose being to facilitate finding missing children by sending SMS to the general public but also passing information quickly using mass-media. The guest of today's show is PNL deputy Ovidiu Raetchi, vicepresident of Public Order and National Safety Committee, the one who proposed this law. Good morning!*

The host presents the theme, as well as the role of the guest, also giving him a short presentation, to define his social role and to demonstrate to the listeners that he is a specialist in the matter at hand. The role of the listener is passive, he is not asked for a reaction, but he is imposed to affiliate to the message passed on as a legit, verified information. In this case, the host knows or he does his research in order to pass as a connoisseur of the problems being discussed. The frequent use of the first person, plural –we talk, we discuss-, brings the journalistic speech closer to the scientific style.

Likewise, the dialogue between the host and the guest does not follow a reactive reaction: *no further comment* being a line often used in the dialogue between the host and the guest

The theme of the discussion is the object of positioning, which is evaluated, but the guest does not affiliate to the position adopted by the specialist, but he maintains a neuter position, trying to be impartial. The careful listener can deduce his position regarding the position of the guest by the tone in the host's voice or by the small pause after the line *no further comment*.

In this case, knowledge does not imply affection, the speech of the presenters lacks phrases with emotional value, the position of the radio station is kept at the level of the show: **Radio România Actualități**, meaning an informative role. Addressing Romania (*Good morning, Romania!*), highlights the intention for the information to reach every citizen.

#### 📻 **Magic Fm – Magic Start, The show with the best music!**

*Magic Fm's* morning radio show proposes an opposite position to the one from *Radio România Actualități*. The title sends to an imaginary universe, an alternate reality, an escape from today's news, a redesccovery of happiness. The adjective *magic* evaluates (Du Bois, 2007), but also implies affective implications, the informative role being replaced by the function of *loisir* of media communication:



„Every morning we will have even more beautiful music here at Magic”, claims **Liana Stanciu**, one of the hosts, and her colleague answers: „Together-us, the presenters and you, the listeners- we will make magic on the radio”.

The affective implication is marked by the association, which the presenters deliberately establish: *we and you*. The position of the presenters is of affiliation towards the feelings of the listeners: *we know what you feel, we are just like you, seems to be the message*. The use of the first person plural is a sign of affective implication, and the adjectives used comparatively or superlatively are used to evaluate.

*L. S: People, we remind you, Calin Goia from Voltaj woke up this morning with more energy than usual, because he was in the Magic FM studio...*

*L. S: A completely beautiful morning...<sup>1</sup>*

In the speech of Liana Stanciu we can see the constant desire to solidify her position, to maintain the assumed role. From the speech of her colleague, adjectives are missing, we can even talk about the differences at the level of stance, male-female.

Liana Stanciu is, like most women, sensible and an extrovert, she easily shares her feelings, while Raul Brebu's tone is neuter, even if he positions himself on the same line as the radio station's specific.

The show's intro is also a small preview, in this sense: *they are happy, energetic and they'll fill you with joy and happiness!*<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the position of the presenter is portrayed as a relaxed person, who knows how to appreciate the beautiful side of life.

The position of the radio station is maintained at a speech level, the listeners are being given the sensation that only by listening to the show they can start the day right, happy and full of joy, so that life itself becomes magic.

#### **Kiss Fm – Laugh with Rusu and Andrei!**

The title of the show is 100% dedicated to the idea of entertainment. The presenters Andrei Ciobanu and Ionut Rusu are stand-up comedy performers and they play this social role in the context of the show they present. The verb **Laugh** is not only an urge, but also a warning. The stance is clear: it does not imply veridicity, because the purpose of the presenters is to obtain laughter, to create a link with the listeners. By distancing from the serious themes can be seen as an alternative to the show from *Radio România Actualități*. The role of the presenters is that of comedians, a person who sees reality as a pretext for a good joke, but, at the same time, the dialogue takes the form of a confession.

The first person plural is replaced by singular, references to personal lives are being made, the evaluated object is no longer the theme of the show, but one's life. Knowledge is replaced by affection, with the need to self-confess.

**Olix:** yes i've recently found out, too, the people around you matter a lot.

**Andrei:** They matter a lot, **brother**, a lot

**Olix:** I mean, more than the place you are at, you can be in a villa with a bunch of people with bad vibes and not..

**Andrei:** <R Well i did tell you about the parties we threw in Suceava at that old abandoned house, i mean, believe me, it was abandoned, like there were rats there

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0b19pqYKhU>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGZWA\\_dz5qs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGZWA_dz5qs)



**Rusu:** yes, but they were rats with good vibes

**Andrei:** we were really..

**Olix:** a bunch of happy rats

**Andrei:** we got along great and the vibe was really positive, so it did not matter that the heater was falling.

**Rusu:** yeah:↑ yeah yeah

**Olix:** exactly

**Andrei:** you could be in a poolside villa with golden shrimps but if you are surrounded by people you don't like and you're getting a bad vibe from them it's for nothingm you're not gonna enjoy it.

**Rusu:** do you remember that picture from the internet with the villa and what not and it said that money can't buy happiness but i'd be unhappy in a house like this.

**Olix:** yeah:↑ i don't think it applies here

**Rusu:** no bro i don't think it applies there are plenty of filthy rich people who are really sad.

In this situation, the listener no longer has a passive role, because the story generates emotions in the listener's mind, which determine affiliation with his own life. The phrase *money can't buy happiness and rich people are sad, too* can discreetly suggest an evaluation of everyone's life.

**Andrei:** good morning, people, good morning I: O: nuț!

**Rusu:** good morning, Andrei! morning Oliver

**Olix:** Good morning, everybody, Tuesday, 5th of November

**Andrei:** MA:::yo, people are sending me messages saying i got fat

**Rusu:** ttt

**Andrei:** look i just got a message now: „, you've gotten quite a round face now, haven't you?"

**Rusu:** fatty:::

The word *frate*, frequently used by the hosts, sends the idea of friendship. This way, the affiliation with the message transmitted by the others is made using this word, in the same way in which the affiliation of the public towards the position adopted by the hosts is wanted, because it always appears, addressing the listeners with *people* or *everybody*

**Andrei:** yes good morning↓

**Olix:** yes↓ good morning everybody

**Andrei:** +A: it's Friday and it's over, my boys, with the nice weather and going out in jeans and a sweatshirt in november.

**Rusu:** \_in shorts

**Olix:** warm clothes starting from today, people, if you're listening and haven't gone out yet

**Andrei:** we'll have some rain with maybe a little snow

**Olix:** cold

**Rusu:** no: we hope not yet.

**Andrei:** yo, i gotta get a beanie, yo

Besides the role of comedians, the presenters also assume the role of comrades, brothers. The position of the radio is to give the people moments of relaxation, escape, by avoiding or mocking any conflictual situation.





### ✚ Europa Fm – Wake up. Romanian Fantastic Republic

The title of the show, closer in meaning to that of the show from *Radio România Actualități*, can be analyzed both denotative and connotative. *Wake up* means, on one side, getting up and ready for a new day, while on the other hand highlights the position of the presenters and the radio station: waking up implies, especially, a form of knowledge in our world, especially in the political world

The show proposes a dialogue between the hosts and the listeners, starting from political subjects, from the news. In this situation, the dialogue is anchored in the political world, imposes subjects of general interest, information known not only on the local scale, refreshes the context by the intro of the host. (*if you have forgotten, i would like to remind you*).

<MARC > <Z> **i would like to remind you** that the actual leader of the government is in fact Liviu Dragnea

The phrase *Romanian Fantastic Republic* is a form of evaluation of the Romanian Republic, because the adjective *Fantastic* betrays the inconsistency of the action in the economic, politic and social life of the country we live in. *Fantastic* can not be associated with *Magic*, because the show does not position on the side of positive aspects of society, on the contrary, it focuses on the onest hat can generate a reaction from the listeners. Affiliation to the message is wanted, either agreeing with the presenters, or one oppoedm which would imply the evolution of the discussion.

**Vlad:** only in **Romania** <@ > randomly in Iasi, a security guard who was fighting some thieves he caught red handed and was screaming for help because he was not Vandame Bruce Li, was fined by the police for disturbing the peace.

((laughter in the studio))

**George:** you can't, you can't, you can't

**Vlad:** <Z > so it's about a guard from Braunstein Pallace in Iași, mister Zafiu

**George:** yeah::: yeah::: yeah:

**Vlad:** he caught some guys stealing

**George:** what else?

**Vlad:** what came out?

**George:** he started screaming for help

Every time, the hosts find themselves in disagreement with certain actions from the political life. They often make refference to our country, Romania, to mark what can be considered fantastic.

Local news are not chosen to inform, but rather to be analyzed, to provoke reactions, because the presenter is not an expert, he is an analyst. Hence, from the position of an analyst, we remark the affectionate implication by using the first and second person and assuming the role of a citizen interested in the problems of his country, indirectly involved in the political scene.

**Vlad:** The best paid man working for the state <F> hold on! Earned once 1265 lei every minute # # this would mean 75 900 lei an hour

**George:** thanks::: you know:

**Vlad:** 607 thousand lei every day but this employee didn't have stamine, he only worked for 56 minutes in a year, couldn't do more

The position of the radio station is deduced from the position of the presenters: Europa FM analyzes the political, economic and social scenes, seeking to obtain a reaction from the listeners.



### 3. CONCLUSIONS

Any speech implies a stance towards the content of the communication, but also towards the other participants to the speech in question. Radio presenters do not only pass an information, but also the way they see that information.

Individual narations of the presenters give the listeners clues to give them a socially known role: **The expert in the economic/cultural/politic domain, the relaxed person, who knows how to appreciate the nicer side of life, comedian, analyst.**

Positioning implies analyzing the discussed themes, evaluating them and captivating the public which needs to affiliate to the dominant message

Positioning is sustained by every intervention made by the hosts an dis in direct relation with the position of the radio station as a social organization.

In conclusion, positioning in the radio speech will always follow the need of informing and manipulating: „Radio communication will always be subject to the attraction of the extremes: informing and influencing, persuading, manipulating.” (Rusu Păsărin, 2012:61)

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