



<https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-33319>

EDN: ATIPRQ

Research article / Научная статья

The meaning of welcome. Positive migration discourse

Douglas Mark PONTON  

University of Catania, Catania, Italy
 dmponton@gmail.com

Abstract

Human e/migration across the Mediterranean increased significantly in the first part of the 21st century. At the mercy of people smugglers, migrants who succeed in crossing the seas face uncertain futures in Europe. Such immigration is at the heart of political debate in Europe, where right-wing populist parties have made significant gains because of their opposition to it. These parties tend to view human migration as a negative phenomenon, using familiar and by now even clichéd cultural and socio-political arguments against it. This study explores some of these discursive tropes. Rather than following studies that use a critical discourse paradigm, the paper's main aim is to identify positive discourse and practice that might represent models for future behaviour in this context. It focuses on a discussion on recent migration involving Italy and, by applying tools of pragmatic analysis, united to knowledge of the socio-political background, traces some underlying trends in migrant reception. The data analysed were gathered by interviewing an Italian mayor who has attracted hostility from right-wing media for his novel approach to migrants, whose needs are met by finding them a place in the local social context. Findings suggest that, in certain circumstances, the migratory phenomenon may benefit not just the subjects involved but also the places concerned. The study thus foregrounds the degree to which welcoming the cultural other counters social discourses that currently appear triumphant in mainstream media and electoral processes.

Keywords: *Migration, Mimmo Lucano, ideology, discourse pragmatics, social integration, Positive Discourse Analysis*

For citation:

Ponton, Douglas M. 2023. The meaning of welcome. Positive migration discourse. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 27 (1). 134–151. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-33319>

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Добро пожаловать. Позитивный миграционный дискурс

Дуглас М. ПОНТОН  

Катанийский университет, Катания, Италия

 dmponton@gmail.com

Аннотация

С первой половины 21 века наблюдается существенный рост миграции в Средиземноморье. Мигрантов, нелегально попадающих в Европу, ожидает неопределенное будущее. Тема иммиграции находится в центре политических дебатов в Европе, где выступающие против нее правые популистские партии существенно укрепили свои позиции. Эти партии, как правило, трактуют миграцию как негативное явление и, выступая против нее, используют хорошо известные, уже устоявшиеся и даже клишированные культурные и социополитические аргументы. В данном исследовании рассматриваются некоторые из этих дискурсивных тропов. В отличие от исследований, которые используют критический дискурс-анализ (CDA), данная статья нацелена на выявление позитивных дискурсивных практик, которые могли бы выступить как модели для будущих обсуждений этой проблемы. В центре внимания – дискуссия по вопросу о нынешней миграции в Италии. Цель статьи – проследить некоторые новые тенденции в восприятии мигрантов, применяя инструменты прагматического анализа и принимая во внимание социополитический контекст. Проанализированные данные были собраны в ходе интервью с одним из мэров Италии, который вызвал враждебность со стороны правых СМИ из-за своего нового подхода к мигрантам, нацеленного на их вовлечение в местный социальный контекст. Полученные результаты свидетельствуют о том, что при определенных обстоятельствах миграция может принести пользу не только вовлеченным в нее субъектам, но и принимающей их стороне. Таким образом, исследование определяет, в какой степени позитивное отношение к другим культурам противостоит социальным дискурсам, доминирующим в настоящее время как в основных средствах массовой информации, так и в избирательных кампаниях.

Ключевые слова: *миграция, Миммо Лукано, идеология, дискурсивная прагматика, социальная интеграция, позитивный дискурс-анализ*

Для цитирования:

Ponton D.M. The meaning of welcome. Positive migration discourse. *Russian Journal of Linguistics*. 2023. V. 27. № 1. P. 134–151. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-33319>

1. Introduction

Human migration involves processes that ‘simultaneously protect ‘us’ from, and care for, mobile populations’ (Chouliaraki & Musarò 2017). It sets a positive axiological discourse of human solidarity against one which tends to reject all migrants, stigmatising them into an out-group (Oktar 2001). It is often framed in terms of distinguishing migrants from a privileged category – ‘*political refugee, asylum seeker*’ – from others who have less respectability – ‘*illegal immigrant, clandestine, stowaway, economic migrant, etc*’ (Baker et al. 2008, O’Regan & Riordan 2018). In the often chaotic scenarios played out in reception centres such distinctions can be impossible to establish, as arrivals may not have passports or

other means of identification, and cultural mediation may not be adequate to the dramatic situations in which migrants arrive on land (Dines, Montagna & Ruggiero 2015). What happens in practice is that all arrivals, when apprehended, become part of variegated reception/detention programmes (Bello 2022), whose complex procedures frequently produce unreliable outcomes. From a bureaucratic perspective, moreover, migration is intrinsically viewed as a ‘problem’ (Benton-Cohen 2018), because it involves central and local authorities in providing food, shelter, clothing, medical care and a range of other needs, all of which stretch social services that, in the current economic climate, tend to be under-staffed and funded. These factors represent a short term drain on resources, though it has been suggested that the long-term economic effects of immigration could be generally positive (Kerr & Kerr 2011). As we will see in this paper, when migrants are successfully integrated they bring many economic and social benefits (Damelang & Haas 2012).

Critical studies of immigration discourse discuss discrimination, racism and the negative discursive construction of the cultural other. It is quite usual for such studies to view migrants and their activities from a humanist position, to critique processes that dehumanise, even demonise migrants as potential sources of social tension, terrorism and criminality (Alaazi et al. 2021, O’Regan & Riordan 2018, Sohoni & Sohoni 2014, Vollmer & Karakayali 2018); however, it is less common to encounter studies of positive, constructive discourse towards the phenomenon. In the spirit of Positive Discourse Analysis (Martin & Rose 2003, Stibbe 2017). This paper reports interviews with an Italian politician from Calabria, engaged in projects whose aim is the reception of migrants, and the consequent revitalisation of the declining local economy. Pragmatic linguistic analysis is used to identify ideologies and political programmes implicit in discourse, that may indicate alternative approaches to the phenomenon; for example, discourses of human solidarity rather than repudiation.

2. Immigration discourse and sociopolitical context

Migration has occupied a prominent place in mainstream media for many years, beginning in Anglo media after WWII with the Windrush generation from the Caribbean (Peplow 2019). The Windrush experience has remained a potent symbol in Anglo migration debate because, as Peplow (ibid: 4) says, it concerns “Britain’s need to explain to itself the growing presence of people previously considered unassimilable within its perceived monoracial white national identity”. The ethnic implications of this statement have a wider applicability to other contexts such as those of the USA, France and Austria, for example or, as we shall soon see, Italy.

Though arrivals from Commonwealth countries undoubtedly made a vital contribution to rebuilding Britain’s economy after the war, it was not long before the impact of such culturally diverse people produced a reaction that mingled outright racism with more grounded concerns over social issues, employment

possibilities, etc. (Kaufmann 2014). A milestone in discursive terms was Enoch Powell's infamous "Rivers of Blood" speech in 1967, the same year that anti-immigration party the National Front was founded. A discourse of welcome and solidarity flourished briefly in 1972, when Ugandan dictator Idi Amin expelled 80,000 Asians, many of whom found homes in Britain. In the Syrian refugee crisis of 2015, many British families welcomed fugitives to their homes (Goździak, Main & Suter 2020). However, following the attacks by Islamic terrorists in Barcelona and Paris in the same year, a counter-discourse of security rapidly emerged (Ponton & Mantello 2018, Goodman & Kirkwood 2019). Fear of migrants became a prominent note in British media discourse, a trope exploited by UKIP during the Brexit debate (Cap 2017), when it was notoriously claimed in a poster that "Europe has failed us" (by not repelling migrants effectively enough). The proposition that it was necessary to "take back control of Britain's borders" was arguably key in producing the Yes vote over Brexit (Mintchev 2021).

In Italy the picture is similar to some extent, though migration has become a site of serious social contestation only comparatively recently. While Italy's position in the central Mediterranean has long made it a magnet for clandestine migration from Africa and the Maghreb countries, numbers have only become uncontrollable in recent times, since the Arab Spring in 2010 and the Syrian crisis of 2015 (Panebianco 2022). Until the 1980's, indeed, the country was characterised by *emigration*, but rising economic trends saw it confirmed as one of the main destinations for migrants by the 2000's (Van Hooren 2010). Opposition to migration rapidly became a familiar trope in far right discourse and that of the mainstream right (Masseti 2015, Bobba & McDonnell 2016, Fernandes-Jesus, Rochira & Mannarini 2022).

Recent trends in Italian politics have seen the assertion of right-wing policies on immigration, and the restrictive policies enacted by Salvini in 2018 when the Ministry of the Interior, which criminalised certain categories of migrant, made successful integration more difficult (Bello 2022). Many first wave migrants carried out low-paid but essential work, mainly in agriculture (farm labour) and small industries, but also in social services as baby-sitters, domestic assistants and carers for the elderly (Van Hooren 2010, Fullin 2016: 392). Many came from European countries such as Albania, Poland, Romania and, in general, such migrants tended to arouse less hostility than those from Africa. As Kaufmann (*ibid*: 267) underlines: "ethnic change is historically associated with calls for immigration restriction and a general mood of defensive ethnic nationalism".

It appears easier for Moroccan and Egyptian migrants to achieve long-term integration in modern Italy than for those from Sub-Saharan Africa. Fokkema and de Haas (2015: 21) comment: "An obvious factor seems that sub-Saharan migrants are more often confronted with racism and discrimination than North African migrants". Ragone and Avallone (2022) document the diffuse stigmatisation of Senegalese and Moroccan street vendors, during the 80s and 90s, who were known throughout Italy as 'vu cumprà' (lit. 'do you want to buy'), and the application of

discriminatory policies that confirmed their status as barely tolerated outsiders. In their words:

the racist expression ‘vu cumprà’ crystallises the stereotypical image of some immigrants in a set of defining characters, which associates them with the sequence ‘African-black-poor-irregular street vendor’. Historically, in Italy, the presence of foreign street vendors has been a reason not only for social and political conflict, but also for the institutional construction of a troublesome, dangerous, or even enemy figure (Ragone & Avallone *ibid*: 5)

Such immigrants were marginalised (Angel-Ajani 2000) and featured, from the 90s onwards, in heavily mediated narratives focusing on their status as potential or actual criminals. One flashpoint in Villa Literno saw an immigrant camp burnt down, and a memorable slogan used in a demonstration by residents: “We’re not racist, but we don’t want blacks here” (Angel-Ajani *ibid*: 348). This evidence of Italian colour prejudice is repeated by Sniderman et al (2002, in Fullin 2016: 396–397) in a study of stereotypes: “Africans are more likely to be judged by Italians as ‘inferior by nature’ compared with Eastern European immigrants”. The point is further underlined by another citation: “Given that in Italy the native population is almost entirely white, it can be assumed that in Italy the divide that matters is between white and non-white” (Sniderman 2002).

The foregoing discourse-historical socio-political picture (Wodak & Meyer 2001) is necessary background not only to understanding Lucano’s story (Lucano & Rizzo 2020, Rinaldis 2016, Lucano & Rizzo 2020, Ranci 2020) but also to explicating meanings in the discourse studied below.

Mimmo Lucano was a left-of-centre mayor in the early 2000s in Riace, a coastal town in Calabria, Italy’s poorest region and in the front line of cross-Mediterranean immigration. His interest in migration began in 1998 as an ordinary citizen, when he assisted in the reception of a wave of Kurdish migrants; successively as mayor, beginning in 2004, he involved diverse groups of African arrivals in government-funded projects, resolving both the migrants’ problems and those of Riace itself. The town, like many of its kind in Calabria, was losing its young people to the more prosperous and industrial North, its economic activity in severe decline, social services depleted by lack of manpower and resources, essential structures like schools and hospitals threatened with closure (Felice 2018). By the gradual integration of migrant families these issues were partially resolved, and a spirit of hope brought back to the town (Sasso 2012). Media attention was attracted to the story, and Lucano became famous, coming second in the 2010 global award for “Mayor of the Year” and receiving other marks of national and global recognition.

Plainly, however, these progressive, left-of-centre policies ran counter to the anti-immigration spirit animating Italy’s dominant political classes, and funding for the migrant projects was withdrawn. He was accused, in 2017 of a series of offences, including *favoreggiamento dell’immigrazione clandestina* (favouring unlawful immigration), and in 2018 was removed from office. His activities were

also criticised in Riace and, though re-elected in 2009 and 2015, he suffered harassment from local criminal bands that included an attempted assassination.

The rights and wrongs of Lucano's legal story are beyond the scope of the paper. However, they are relevant to the paper in two senses; firstly, it is necessary for the explication of his discourse to have some understanding of this complex picture. Secondly, in terms of the overall 'positive' social orientation of this paper, we need to understand that what is at stake in the Riace experiment involves not just a discourse of human solidarity and welcome, but also one of individual courage and resistance to political pressure and social opposition.

3. Methodology

Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA) may be seen in relation to its better known cousin, Critical Discourse Analysis which, in Van Dijk's words studies how "social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the political context" (van Dijk 2005: 352). As one of PDA's main proponents, James Martin says:

The approach exemplifies a positive style of discourse analysis that focuses on hope and change, by way of complementing the destructive exposé associated with Critical Discourse Analysis (Martin 1999: abstract)

From this perspective, PDA may be viewed as a complement to CDA, as another form of CDA, another way for the analyst to focus on the relation between society and language, and on the familiar themes of social ills and abuses of power. According to Martin, the starting point is the same for both, since 'hope and change' strongly imply that the discourse involved in PDA will relate to the resolution of some perceived social ill – in the specific case, he is analysing Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*. While the study inevitably concerns racism and oppression, it mainly focuses on the protagonist's positive qualities of resilience, determination, moral courage, etc. Inescapably, the analyst's own preferences and ideological positions seem involved in such studies, raising the question of the loss of scientific objectivity: "if critical discourse analysis is an exercise in interpretation, it is invalid as analysis" (Widdowson 1995). There seems no good way around such criticisms, but PDA does suggest a crucial difference in emphasis. As Martin says,

The lack of positive discourse analysis [...] cripples our understanding of how change happens, for the better, across a range of sites – how feminists re-make gender relations in our world, how indigenous people overcome their colonial heritage, how migrants renovate their new environs and so on. And this hampers design and perhaps even discourages it since analysts would rather tell us how the struggle was undone than how freedom was won (Martin 2004: 182)

By focusing on what from the analyst's perspective are positive social trends, highlighting the role of language in shaping positive social discourses, the analyst may become part of the processes of change they wish to bring about and this, like

activism itself, may be empowering. Moreover, a focus on positive attitudes rather than negative may be psychologically more beneficial for the analyst, who may also benefit in a holistic sense from focusing on harmonious, ethically sound or inspiring texts from sources that may not deal with toxic social contexts but may, for example, concern nature or indigenous poetry, traditional values, holistic narratives and the like (Martin 1999: 51–52, Stibbe 2017, Leontovich 2015).

The discourse analysed below comes from an interview conducted with Mimmo Lucano in Riace in August 2022; his words have been transcribed and translated for the paper from Italian into English. Interviews are an ideal situation for gaining insight into the “experiences, concerns, interests, beliefs, values, knowledge and ways of seeing, thinking and acting of the other” (Schostak 2006: 10). In an unstructured, open-ended interview such as this, it is possible to follow up “interesting developments and to let the interviewee elaborate on various issues” (Dörnyei 2007: 136). In such an interview the interviewer “encourages the informant to lead the conversation” (Berg 2006: 68). The interview with Lucano was a rare opportunity to hear the views of a figure whose ideas and ideologies are frequently the subject of obfuscation, parody and mis-interpretation in Italian media. One limitation of this format is that the occasion for second or third interviews, highly desirable for this type of research (Dörnyei, *ibid*) to follow up areas raised in the first, to clear up confusions and so on, may not arise.

Analysis draws on the methodologies of interactive pragmatics (Levinson 1983, Kecskes 2016, Wilson & Sperber 2015), focusing on the identification of implicit or context-bound meanings, and underlying or implicit ideologies / systems of value (Blommaert & Verschueren 2022). Lucano’s communicative style, it will be seen, leaves much to the interlocutor’s ability to fill in the gaps; or better, assumes that they will be able to draw on shared knowledge of the context to interpret meanings correctly. For example, consider the points that are potentially unclear in the following fragment (numbered and underlined):

one of the main objectives (i) was to increase (ii), which was my goal as mayor, the most serious (iii) in the town is the lack of jobs. The reason why they (iv) all leave. Or why everyone left

(uno dei primi obiettivi è stato quello di incrementare, che poi era una aspettativa per me come sindaco, la più forte in città è la mancanza del lavoro. La ragione per la quale tutti vanno via. O erano andate via.)

The preceding co-text (see appendix) in this case does not clarify key meanings. In (i) the main objectives of *what* is unclear (the speaker’s mayoral programme/a certain project?, etc.). At (ii) instead of telling us precisely *what* he aimed to increase, he goes off at a tangent. In (iii) he leaves the intended substantive implicit (the most serious problem/issue/task?, etc.). In (iv) the intended referent in the pronoun ‘they’ is implicit, and in (v) there is no clue to who is meant by ‘everyone’. By applying context knowledge of the situation of Riace, a meaning emerges which could be paraphrased as follows:

As mayor it was my objective to resolve the most pressing problem in the town, i.e. the lack of jobs. That's the reason why all the young people leave today, and why they left in the past.

Fragmentary discourse with elision of subjects, changes of tack, apparent digressions or obscurity, repetitions and the taking for granted of shared knowledge, is found in spoken discourse rather than written (Sidnell & Stivers 2013), and it will be seen that Lucano's oral style is rather demanding in this respect. Pragmatic analysis can also attempt to explicate the ideological foundations that underly such speech, yielding results that might appear more or less convincing.¹ The methodology adopted coincides with the approach of Blommaert and Verschueren (2022: 357), who explain that it assumes:

(i) that the authors, just like any other language user in any other communicative context, are unable to express what they want to communicate in a fully explicit way, (ii) that therefore their texts leave implicit most of the assumptions they expect their readers to share with them, and (iii) that a careful analysis of those implicit assumptions will reveal a common frame of reference or 'ideology'

For example, to consider the same fragment from the angle of problem / solution (Winter 1977), which is a relevant discourse pattern for a politician, and one that certain textual cues in the discourse of Lucano himself suggest:

Table 1. Lucano: Problem-Solution

Problem	Solution
There are too few jobs in Riace	Increase the number of jobs
People left Riace in the past, and are still leaving	If jobs are found people will stay

From the axiological perspective, this is arguably suggestive of the speaker's latent sense of *care* and *social responsibility*: it is implied that a mayor, as the 'first citizen' of a town, has a duty of care towards it. If people do not want to live there because of lack of jobs, it becomes his 'responsibility' to attempt to create new jobs. Critically, as we shall see, this trope is a recurrent one, and it features strongly in Lucano's story as a whole, since the crux of the accusations levelled at him relate to his over-enthusiastic policies of social integration, thus to emphasise Riace's human depletion is a defence against this attack.

¹ It should be stressed that it is not possible to invest any findings in this area with anything like scientific certainty. As with other enquiries in discursive pragmatics, what emerges are results that depend on rhetorical rather than absolute processes, since alternatives that account for what one analyst takes to be the speaker's likely meanings are always possible to find, and in this case we are making hypotheses about what attitudes (ideologies) could underlie these so-called likely meanings (Bach 2005).

4. Interview data

This section presents transcripts of three extracts from the interview, with conjectures of the possible conversational implicatures indicated below the text, as in extract one:

Table 2. Extract One

T E X T	1	Lucano: There was <i>this coincidence</i> , a political vision. You start like that and then the fact
	2	that we are border territories, in the sense that there aren't...the post-project,
	3	there <i>isn't a post-project</i> there aren't <i>opportunities</i> , in any case we're a land of migration.
	4	And that means that <i>there's a reason if we leave</i> because there are no jobs, you
	5	understand?...
I M P L I C I T E S	1	'this coincidence' (between migratory phenomenon and human depletion) 'a political vision' (to solve the problem of depletion by integrating migrants)
	3	'there isn't a post-project' (it is not clear long-term what happens to the migrants)
	3	'opportunities' (for long-term work) 'in any case' (justifies the lack of long-term settlement in Riace of migrants, i.e. they leave the area when project funding runs out)
	4	'there's a reason if we leave' (there are no jobs; an implicature immediately disambiguated)

In the immediately preceding co-text, before (1), Lucano had said: “I did three successive mandates and during my time in office immigration in Italy rose significantly.”² This supports the interpretation that one term in ‘this co-incidence’ (1) refers to migration. The other term could be suggested by ‘the project’ (referred to in 2,3). The connection between them could be what Lucano means by the phrase ‘a political vision’ (1). Given what we know about Lucano’s activities, these surmises seem reasonable. In other words, the ‘vision’ consists in a policy of welcoming migrants to Riace where they will make a contribution to the economy, as well as justify spending on schools, hospitals, social services, etc. His mayorship comes at a time when, in Italy generally, migration is increasing, and Calabria is well-known to be in the front line of this phenomenon. Again, since we also know that Calabria is among the poorest regions of Italy, a region affected by labour shortages and consequent emigration, we have no difficulty in following these inferences. It is less clear why he talks about the ‘post-project’. From his use of ‘in any case’, which functions in conversation to provide justification of why an expected outcome did not materialise, we can infer that long-term integration of the migrants in Riace has not taken place. When ‘the project’, i.e. centrally funded systems of support for the migrants, finishes, we can infer that the migrants move on since, as Lucano says ‘in any case we’re a land of migration’. The fact is, there are no permanent jobs to be had in Riace, and this is ‘the reason we leave’ (4). Thus,

² Poi ho fatto 3 legislature consecutive e il percorso durante le mie legislature, l'immigrazione è diventato in Italia molto più consistente

though migrants can be temporarily integrated thanks to the financial support of the project they, like native Italian residents of the town, will have to leave when this ends.

Table 3. Extract Two

T E X T	1	Lucano: this not with forethought, with a strategy, but I was noticing that, I was noticing
	2	that in my commitment as mayor, because you know I was dealing with the territory, our
	3	territory and with a bit... and with immigrants coming in. So it was like...like the building
	4	of a little of... <i>a little global community</i> , you know?
	5	Interviewer: Yes
	6	Lucano: With all its <i>related problems</i> . But I was realizing that.... and that I immediately
	7	had the conviction that from the perspective not of a cooperative or an association
	8	where I'm interested that they square the accounts as they are... as it's also correct that
	9	fiscal subjects do. But I had a <i>rather collective understanding</i> of our territory... I had
	10	understood that reception cannot be one-sided, it has to be an <i>opportunity</i> for the
	11	people who arrive, but <i>also for the local people</i> , because otherwise there is a <i>disconnect</i>
	12	<i>in the social fabric</i>
I M P L I C A T U R E	4	a little global community (Italians and Africans living and working together)
	6	With all its related problems (these are unspecified)
	8-	Compares the project communities to co-ops or associations in which it is fundamental
	10	that the books balance. The fiscal perspective is not relevant here, rather L. proposes a
		'collective understanding' of the territory.
	11	An opportunity (from the migrants' perspective, the possible meanings here are
	numerous – a new life, escape from persecution, political freedom, prosperity, etc.)	
	11	Also for the local people (they also need 'opportunities', but how they benefit from
		migration is not specified)
	12	A disconnect in the social fabric (a united community means one where all groups
		benefit. The African arrivals are a part of the social fabric).

In the second extract Lucano gives more details of the projects, emphasising that his activities are dictated by his 'commitment as a mayor' (2) and the 'needs of the territory' (3). By a 'global community', we infer that he means one in which Italians and Africans mingle, but it is impossible to do more than speculate on what 'all its related problems' might mean, and this example serves to highlight some difficulties in a pragmatic approach to discourse. For example, the problems could be that the Italian citizens are racist and resent the arrivals. Or, it could be that because the arrivals do not speak Italian there are multiple everyday problems of communication. This example is truly ambiguous; it relies on the hearer to supply the likely meaning, but there seems no way of arriving at a certain interpretation without a further question. The analogy advanced in the second part of the extract is also problematic. He makes a comparison between a cooperative or association

where books must be balanced (7–8) and the ‘collective understanding’ of the territory (9). That this is intended to be a contrast is evident from the contrastive conjunction ‘but’ (9). We might infer, here, that the contrast is between, for example, a fiscal logic and a looser way of doing things – perhaps a local barter economy, or a more primitive kind of social organisation. Again, given the relative inequality, in material terms, between the Italian citizens and the African migrants, we might take Lucano’s meaning as a recognition that, in such situations, the question of book balancing is an irrelevancy. However, he makes it clear that there must be a balance, of ‘opportunity’, which must be for both arrivals and citizens (11–12). Again, the reference to ‘the social fabric’ (12) makes it clear that the African arrivals are viewed as part of this – in other words, their social integration is given implicit discursive recognition.

Table 3. Extract 3

T E X T	1	Lucano: It loses, politics, when it becomes selective, <i>it loses its mission</i> . I can't say this
	2	one deserves to stay that one to go and so instinctively, I was saying “okay”, and why?
	3	We were filling <i>empty containers</i> . My municipality didn't... I as mayor didn't issue any
	4	building permits on the beaches, because we brought the axis of reference back to
	5	Marina. We said, we have to fill empty containers, <i>not favour people with</i>
	6	<i>cementification</i> . You have to look at dominance because in the cycle of cement, in the
	7	chain, at the top at the top of the chain is the Mafia, so by bringing back welcoming,
	8	ethics, solidarity...these are interests this is nothing to do with the Mafia. We have a
	9	window of opportunity, a purpose, it becomes collective reasoning that concerns the
	10	community, so we suffer, we suffer the conditioning of the <i>Mafias</i> . This
	11	was...welcoming too was a signal, to say that it's <i>the cultural value of opposing the</i>
	12	<i>Mafias</i> , the political value, choices in favour of the periphery, bringing the axis back to
	13	the old town centre. For me it was this.
I M P L I C A T U R E	1	it loses its mission (Politics has a mission)
	1-2	I can't say...etc. (Impossible to discriminate between the cases of individual migrants)
	3	Empty containers (Houses?)
	6	favour people with cementification (Builders often enjoy political favouritism)
	7-9	Migration is a way of combating the Mafia
	11	Mafias (there are more than one Mafia)
	12	the cultural value of opposing the Mafias (Suggests a strategic reason for favouring migration)

In this fragment, the discourse centres more directly on reception and the question of housing. Here more context information is required, to appreciate the treatment of ‘cementification’ and ‘favouring people’. Lucano traces a clear picture of criminality at work in the building sector, placing ‘the Mafia’ at the top (7). The allusion to ‘favouring people’ (6) is probably to the social practise, sadly still current across much of Italy, of corruption where politicians, in return for bribes or

other favours, award public construction contracts, concede planning permission, and so on. This social reality is so well-known that it figures as shared information between the speaker and his interlocutor, and in this single reference (6), Lucano treats it as such. He does, however, go into some detail concerning the link between the Mafia/s and the construction industry (5–12). It would appear that, from this extract, the migration projects, by situating migrants in empty town centre houses (12–13), rather than issuing building permits to allow criminals to build new houses, for example on the beaches (4), follow a specific political design (12).

Thus, from these extracts, Lucano's project appears more complex than at first sight appeared. It is not simply a question of helping migrants and in so doing bringing about a measure of social re-generation. Rather, analysis highlights the multi-faceted nature of this political and humanitarian gesture, which engages many levels of local social realities, as well as wider socio-political currents within Italy.

5. Discussion

The level of ideology is proposed in pragmatics as a sub-stratum to discourse, suggestive of a cognitive dimension that underlies verbal communication and consists of habitual ways of thinking and feeling, more or less conscious attitudes to phenomena that may represent deeply-held convictions, and may emerge as transient stances to topics suggested by the ongoing dialogue (Verschueren 2012, Van Dijk 2015). As Harring, Jagers, and Matti (2017) point out, there is considerable overlap between ideology in its political sense and the more general understandings associated with the notion of 'personal values', and it is in this latter sense that the term is used in this paper. For example, in extract 3 line 1 (3.1), Lucano says: "It loses, politics, when it becomes selective, it loses its mission". From this we may infer that, for him, *it is natural and correct for politics to have a mission*.³ This is not necessarily a given, as in western representative democracies it may be argued that a politician has a role rather than a mission, the latter term referring to the kind of activism found in the case of politicians like Mandela or Thatcher, for example. Moreover, from Lucano's objection to selectivity, we can infer that, for him, the mission of politics relates to the advancement of a *socially inclusive* strategy that does not distinguish between individual cases but treats all alike.

From the third extract, it is plain that an important element of Lucano's system of values relates to the *need to combat criminality*. In the Italian context this means to recognise that the Mafia, which once operated in an underworld of drugs, prostitution, gambling, etc., are currently entwined within Italian political life, investing heavily in key sectors such as the construction industry (Scognamiglio 2018). For a politician to refuse to collaborate with these processes is an act of courage, and in this instance we would tend to view Lucano's ideology in the light of a conviction, a belief in the value of honesty, an idea of *service to the state* as a

³ The presence of possible ideologies is indicated by italics.

greater entity than its individual members, which forms part of a traditional political ideology that crosses party lines.

Lucano's approach to race shows a humanistic orientation. The migrants are referred to with non-racial language as 'immigrants' (2.3), 'people who arrive' (2.11); significantly, they are represented as part of a 'little community' (2.4) and the 'social fabric' (2.12), which suggests an *inclusive, non-discriminatory attitude* towards them.

Interestingly, Lucano's main priorities in these extracts which, however, the rest of the interview tends to confirm, appear to centre on the socio-economic needs of Riace rather than any wider, global goal such as resolving the refugee crisis, relieving suffering, rescuing African families in need, and so on. Indeed, it would almost seem that his interest in migrants is secondary to his determination to resolve the traditional issues of local joblessness, criminality, corruption and so on that have led to humans leaking away to Northern Italy and destinations abroad. This is shown in extract 1, with its discussion of the reason people leave Riace and have left in the past; in 2. 10–12 where he says that migrant reception needs to be as beneficial for the host community as it is for the arrivals. This is a novel perspective, as it is more usual to consider the benefits from the point of view of the migrants alone – they receive safety from dangerous situations, new economic possibilities, protection from persecution, shelter, health care, and so on, all provided by the host community. Thus, Lucano's emphasis on the benefits to Riace of immigration show him as applying a strategic concept, making use of the phenomenon of migration to stimulate the funding of social services that will serve the Italian community as well. This would align with Lucano's ideology of *service to the community*, his mayoral responsibilities to resolve the problems of Riace that he inherited at the beginning of his mandate, which have been amply discussed, above.

6. Conclusion

From this necessarily brief discussion of a single interview with Mimmo Lucano, it is plain that no overarching ideology or scheme of values can be traced that underlies or unifies these random fragments. As mentioned above, this was not the aim of the paper. What arguably emerges is the sense of a politician who has carried forward a specific policy towards migrants, that of meeting their immediate needs, welcoming them, making them feel part of a community, enabling them to make important contributions to the local context. This last factor is key since it upsets traditional views of migration in which the host country is doing all the giving, to needy Africans who turn up on their doorsteps, draining resources and, in short, constituting a 'problem'. By challenging this dominant narrative, Lucano proposes a new view of migration. This does not make him the figurehead of an idealistic revolution, though neither does it justify the extraordinary opposition to his policies, his demonisation by right-wing politicians and media. What he has done is suggested that, in numerous ways, the arrival of migrants may be of

enormous benefit to communities damaged by the processes of capitalism, and this gives his local story a wider, potentially global relevance.

From the perspective of Positive Discourse Analysis, Lucano's story fits the description of Martin (1999: 51–52): 'discourse that inspires, encourages, heartens, discourse we like, that cheers us along'. The usual targets present in CDA studies of migration discourse such as racism, discrimination, marginalisation, etc., do not occur to anything like the same extent in Lucano's discourse, and this presents us, in the end, with different questions. We are left pondering, for example, the internal political factors that lead western governments to oppose such initiatives from local administrations, on the front line of the migratory phenomenon. We might also raise questions about the destruction of peripheral communities by the processes of capitalism, and wonder how credible or sustainable solutions like those of Lucano might be. The question of how far the solutions of Riace to the migration crisis represent possible models of successful integration is also an open one.

Acknowledgement

This publication has been supported by the RUDN University Scientific Projects Grant System, project № 050734-2-000.

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Appendix

Italian transcripts

Extract 1

Lucano: C'è stata questa coincidenza, una visione politica. Si inizia così e poi il fatto che siamo territori limitati, nel senso che non ci sono...il dopo progetto non c'è il dopo progetto non ci sono opportunità tra l'altro siamo terre di migrazione. E vuol dire che c'è un motivo se noi si vanno via per mancanza di lavoro, capito?...

Extract 2

Lucano: E questo io non non con una premeditazione, una strategia, ma mi accorgevo che, mi accorgevo che nel mio impegno da sindaco, perché poi avevo da fare con il territorio, il nostro territorio e con un poco e con gli immigrati che arrivano. Quindi è stato come... Come la costruzione di una piccola di...una piccola comunità globale, capito?

Interviewer: Sì

Lucano: Con tutti i problemi annessi e connessi. Ma però mi accorgevo che... e al cui io ho avuto subito la convinzione che con lo sguardo non di una cooperativa o di un'associazione dove mi interessano, che quadrano i conti come sono, come è giusto anche che fanno i soggetti fiscali. Ma avevo uno sguardo un po' collettivo, sul territorio avevo capito che l'accoglienza non può essere unilaterale, deve essere una occasione per le persone che arrivano, ma anche per le persone del luogo, perché sennò c'è una disconnessione tra il tessuto sociale...

Extract 3

Perde, la politica, quando diviene selettiva, perde la sua mission. Non posso dire questo merita di restare, quello merita di andare e quindi istintivamente, dicevo, va bene, perché? Riempivamo i contenitori vuoti il mio comune non ha, io come sindaco non ho rilasciato nessuna concessione edilizia sulle spiagge perché abbiamo ribaltato a Marina l'asse di riferimento, abbiamo detto, dobbiamo riempire i contenitori vuoti, non favorire con le colate di cemento. Ci affianchiamo anche al dominio, perché nel ciclo delle cementificazione, la catena, la parte più alta al vertice della catena c'è la mafia, quindi recuperare l'accoglienza, l'etica, la solidarietà sono degli interessi che non riguardano la mafia. Abbiamo un margine, un ambito, diventa un ragionamento collettivo che riguarda la Comunità, così noi subiamo, noi subiamo come le il condizionamento delle Mafie. Questo è stato anche l'accoglienza è stato un'indicazione per dire che è il valore culturale di opporsi alle mafie, il valore politico, le scelte a favore del del delle periferie, di riportare l'asse nel centro storico. Per me è stato questo.

Article history:

Received: 12 November 2023

Accepted: 18 January 2023

Bionote:

Douglas Mark PONTON is Associate Professor of English Language and Translation at the Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Catania. His research interests include political discourse analysis, ecolinguistics, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, pragmatics and critical discourse studies. He has held teaching and research positions at the universities of Catania, Messina and Pisa. His most recent research projects concern the Montalbano effect on tourism in Sicily, ecological questions in Sicily, and Sicilian dialect theatre. He is linguistic consultant for Vernon Press and is peer reviewer for numerous international journals.

e-mail: dmponton@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9968-1162>

Сведения об авторе:

Дуглас Марк ПОНТОН – профессор, преподаватель английского языка и перевода на кафедре политических и социальных наук в Катанийском университете (Италия). Сфера его научных интересов включает анализ политического дискурса, эколингвистику, социолингвистику, прикладную лингвистику, прагматику и критический дискурс-анализ. Преподавал в университетах Катании, Мессины и Пизы. Его недавние исследовательские проекты связаны с влиянием «эффекта Монтельбано» на туризм в Сицилии, с экологическими проблемами в Сицилии и сицилийским диалектным театром. Является консультантом по лингвистике в *Vernon Press* и рецензентом в ряде международных журналов.

e-mail: dmponton@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9968-1162>