BOOKS

Andra Vasilescu, Mihaela-Viorica Constantinescu, Gabriela Stoica, Jonathan Russell White (eds.) *Exploring Discourse Practices in Romanian.* Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020, 460 p.

Published in 2020 at Cambridge Scholars Publishing, *Exploring Discourse Practices in Romanian*, edited by Andra Vasilescu, Mihaela-Viorica Constantinescu, Gabriela Stoica, and Johnathan Russell White, gathers in a collective volume contributions written in English by Romanian scholars who specialize in pragmatics and discourse analysis. This noteworthy initiative serves the important purpose, in our opinion, of giving an international visibility to Romanian linguistic research that may otherwise find itself confined to the frontiers of the Romanian language. The papers included in this volume are signed by well-established researchers, such as Andra Vasilescu, Ariadna Ștefănescu, Liana Pop or Margareta Manu Magda, but also by linguists belonging to what we might call "the younger generation" of Romanian pragmaticians and discourse analysis scholars.
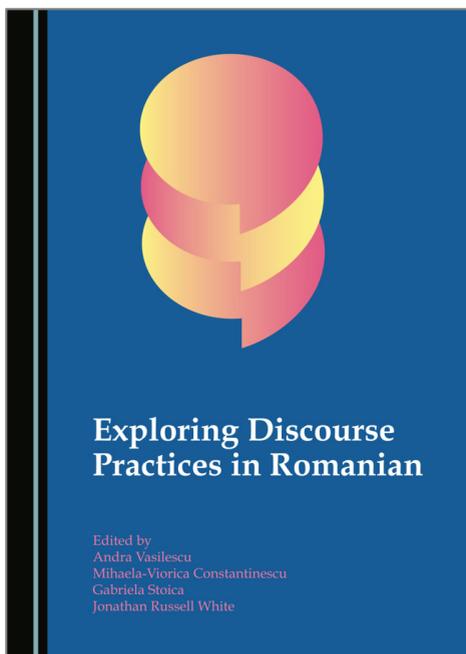
The introduction, signed by the renowned linguist Liliana Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu, makes a general overview of the paradigm changes in current linguistic research and addresses three key trends: the definition and the conceptual system of pragmatics, the growing interest for historical pragmatics, the redefinition of politeness. The introduction concludes with a few remarks on the Romanian contributions to the field, highlighting the switch from an initial interest in conversation analysis to recent interest in various theories developed by Anglophone scholars, such as (im)politeness studies. The following fifteen chapters of the volume are organized in five main parts, *Negotiating Identities*, *Staging*

Voices, *Textualization of Attitudes and Emotions*, *Conceptual Metaphors across Genres*, and *Grammaticalization of Context and Mismatches.*

The first part of the volume investigates identity construction in political and scientific discourse. Răzvan Săftoiu's paper focuses on festive political discourse and conducts a rigorous analysis of the address forms used by the four democratically elected Romanian presidents, in their attempt to create a bond with the voters, identifying a preferred discursive strategy in each case: identification with the people (Ion Iliescu), the creation of a sense of loyalty (Emil Constantinescu), the use of emotions (Traian Băsescu), and the president as an institutional symbol (Klaus Iohannis). Carmen-Ioana Radu is interested in the conflictive nature of the political discourse, focusing on the interaction in a corpus of fifteen transcripts of TV talk-shows (2006-2018), in terms of aggressiveness, assertiveness, and argumentation. She shows that interlocutors prefer aggressiveness over assertiveness or argumentation; this choice may also contribute to the shaping of the interlocutors' discursive identities. Andra Vasilescu analyses mitigation strategies in scientific discourse, namely in a corpus of transcripts of conferences at the Romanian Academy, national conferences of linguistics, PhD defences, etc., and identifies twelve types of hedges, ranging from prosodic to pragmatic. Building on Grice's theory of conversational maxims, Vasilescu proposes a supermaxim of Prudence that integrates cooperation and politeness and might explain the abundance of mitigation strategies in Romanian scientific discourse.

The second part of the volume includes papers that investigate online press and memoirs. In her paper, Margareta Manu Magda conducts a detailed analysis of the hyperbole in online press headlines and describes three main attributes of this figures or speech: figure of intensification with specific lexical and morpho-syntactic features, hyperbole as part of other tropes, such as comparisons, metaphors, stereotypes, and, at a macro level, hyperbolic discourse dependent on the nature of its contexts. Overall, the study shows that hyperbole is a dominant figure in the current Romanian journalistic language, as online media creators seek to capture the attention of the audience. Cezar Bălășoiu tackles free indirect speech in two well-known memoirs which remember life in Romanian communist prisons, *Journal of Happiness* by Nicolae Steinhardt and *The Silent Escape: Three Thousand Days in Romanian Prisons* by Lena Constante. In his study, Bălășoiu discovers that free indirect speech is used by Steinhardt and Constante, on the one hand, to engage in an interdiscursive dialogue with other texts, such as Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* or the case files of communist show trials and, on the other hand, to simulate an interlocutive dialogue with the readers.

Attitudes and emotions are the focus of the third part of the volume. In "A pragmatic analysis of political cartoons", Stanca Măda investigates the complex relationship between text and image in conveying meaning and humour. The pragmatic lens allows Măda to single out several mechanisms used by cartoonists: the suspension of conversational maxims, the use of vague language, humour as a mitigation strategy, etc. In the following study, Mihaela-Viorica Constantinescu focuses on paratext in the humoristic press of the mid- and late nineteenth century

and the early twentieth century: titles, administrative sequences, rubrics, author-ship. The corpus reveals that both affilia-tive and aggressive humour are used in humoristic publications. Moreover, self-deprecating humour seems to be preferred over time, while aggressive humour tends to be less common in the publications from the early twentieth century. In-group and out-group stereotypes are also used especially when publications want to create an image of themselves or of other types of press. Gabriela Stoica analyses *pathos* in authentic love letters from the first half or the twentieth cen-tury and in epistolary templates pub-lished in two etiquette manuals written at the end of the nineteenth century. As ex-pected, both corpora showed the prev-alence of the pathetic dimension, as feelings and emotions are abundantly described, analysed and reiterated throughout the texts. Nonetheless, differ-ences may appear as far as the metaphor-ical conceptualization is concerned LOVE IS FIRE VS LOVE IS INSANITY, LOVE IS DRUNKEN-NESS. Common conceptualization strate-gies used in both corpora are the ideal-isation (or even the deification) of the loved one, love as the only source of happiness or the only reason to live. Oana Chelaru-Murăruş investigates self-depre-cation and self-directed insults in Roma-nian a corpus of personally recorded short interactions. Self-deprecation and self-directed insults are used as the 1st or the 2nd conversational turn and are clas-sified according three main patterns: ex-clamatory, interrogative, and assertive. This detailed study show that these acts have various illocutionary values, being correlated with the expression of (im)po-liteness, the emotions expressed by the speaker, strategies of counterattack, etc.

The fourth part of the volume is dedicated to conceptual metaphors. Ari-adna Ştefănescu focuses on philosophical discourse (Andrei Pleşu's *Minima moralia*) in an attempt to identify its intricate met-aphorical structure: conceptual meta-phors as developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), but also the metaphor clusters, metaphorical patterns and metaphor sce-narios, more comprehensive tools of analysis that can be identified at discur-sive level. The paper highlights the role of bridge-terms throughout the conceptual patterns identified in this type of discourse and suggests further comparisons with theological and pedagogical discourse, as they might reveal similarities in the pro-cess of conceptualization of ethics. Liliana Hoinărescu investigates the Romanian me-dia political discourse, through the lens of cognitive semantics and critical discourse analysis and identifies several metaphors used in the corpus (the body metaphor, the family metaphor, the building meta-phor, the war/conflict metaphor, the sports metaphor, etc.) in the configuration of *us vs them* the dichotomy. She also points out that a few source domains (such as family and nautical terms) can no longer be used in Romanian political discourse, given their cultural interpretation. The next paper, signed by Teodora Popescu, tackles Romanian and British business communication and analyses a corpus of financial media, identifying several meta-phors used for the conceptualization of companies: systems of change, living or-ganisms, machines, instruments of domi-nation, political systems, etc. Although there are not significant differences between the Romanian and the British corpus, the fre-quency of some metaphors may vary (for instance, the machine metaphor is more frequent in the Romanian corpus).

The fifth part of the volume includes papers that investigate deictics, interjections, and the pragmatic competence in Romanian as L2. Liana Pop analyses "fuzzy deictics" in a corpus of oral texts, concluding that the derived meanings of deictics are more frequent in spoken language and that deictics are frequently used as discourse markers: approximation markers, narrative markers, comment markers, etc. Gabriela Biriş conducts an analysis of interjections as discourse markers in face-to-face interactions and discovers that they acquire discursive values and lose their prototypical meaning in the process. For instance, *ei!* has twelve different meanings in this corpus, depending on the context of its use. Last but not least, Gabriela Biriş, Carmen Mîrzea Vasile and Irina Nicula Paraschiv examines errors in learning Romanian as L2, with a focus on the pragmatic competence. The twelve findings of this study show that linguistic phenomena such as performative verbs, address terms, politeness pronouns are not obvious for L2 learners, even at more advanced levels, such as B2.s

To sum up, the collective volume *Exploring Discourse Practices in Romanian* is a remarkable contribution that shows the maturity of the Romanian linguistic research. We had the pleasure of reading in this eclectic volume studies that focus on political, journalistic, literary, philosophical, professional, colloquial, and epistolary discourse and on the acquisition of Romanian as second language. It is noteworthy that the research in the acquisition Romanian as L2 is gaining more terrain, as the field has been traditionally neglected. Moreover, the variety of the contributions demonstrate that Romanian linguists are connected to the mains trends in current research in pragmatics and discourse analysis: politeness theories, diachronic pragmatics, critical discourse analysis, cognitive semantics. As Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu stated in her introduction, Romanian linguists tend to be "followers", in the sense that they use modern theoretical frameworks to analyse linguistic phenomena of their mother tongue. It is true for most of this collective volume. However, we dare to state that the quality of these contributions shows that Romanian linguists have clear potential to assume a bolder role, that is, of developing original models of analysis.

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