BOOKS

Diana Cotrău, Alexandra Cotoc and Oana Papuc (eds.) *An Introduction to Internet Linguistics: The Cultural Sociolinguistic Take with Case Studies*. **Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2021, 191 p.**

The prevalence of digital communication has made it imperative to study the linguistic practices and patterns unique to these digital spaces. As becomes apparent in *An Introduction to Internet Linguistics*, the impact of the internet on language use is far-reaching. Digital arenas have not only influenced the way individuals communicate but also engendered new ways of constructing identities and interacting with others. As such, Internet Linguistics has become an increasingly popular area of study for linguists of various academic backgrounds and fields.

As posited in the Foreword of *An Introduction to Internet Linguistics*, the volume attempts to shed light on the interdisciplinary ways language and communication are changing in response to the digital age, by drawing upon frameworks from established theoretical fields such as sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and semiotics. In order to achieve this, the volume has been organized into three main sections: an introductory theoretical study designed as an overall guideline and introduction to the field of Internet linguistics, a compilation of invited papers from established academics and a case-study section comprised of contributions from both graduate as well as doctoral students.
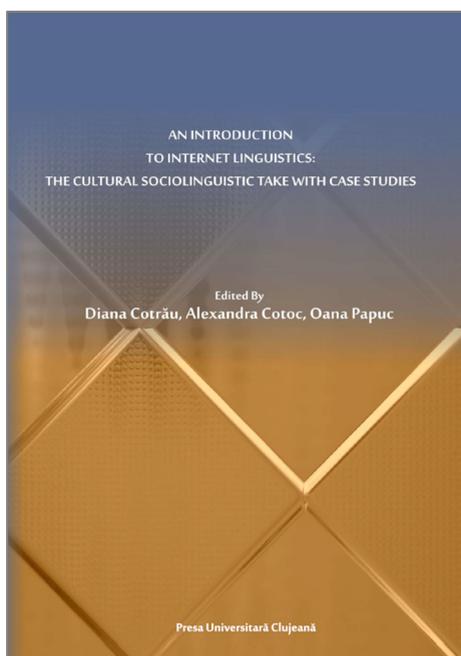
The introductory study "A Pledge for the Cultural Sociolinguistic Approach to the Domain of Internet Linguistics" discusses topics such as computer-mediated discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, and the role of identity in the digital medium. It is in this section that the editors build a comprehensive argument in favour of understanding the complex and dynamic nature of language use in digital environments. To achieve this,

the authors reference notable contributions that have helped shape the academic discourse regarding internet linguistic practices – among these Jenkins' theorization of sociocultural identities, Blommaert, Bakhtin, and the nexus analytical approach proposed by Scollon. The nexus analysis methodology focuses on how digital identities are constructed and enacted online in a multimodal, multisemiotic, and multilingual pattern. Ultimately, the text makes a compelling case for the adoption of a Cultural Sociolinguistic approach to the study of internet language use, arguing that it offers a rich and nuanced perspective on the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of language use in digital contexts.

The first contribution is a study of the metalinguistic activities of internet users, particularly the comments posted on various aspects of language. Liana Pop's "Leçons de «p'tits profs» sur la Toile" identifies and examines emerging folk-genres in the virtual space, which have been produced by non-linguist writers. The study investigates the emergence of new metalinguistic and metadiscursive genres in the digital space, with particular focus on word choice, register, grammatical rules, and coherence of user-posted content. The research shows that these new genres are a reflection of the mental representations of language that users hold and highlights the rich material they offer for cognitive linguistics to study language imaginaries.

"Forumurile de discuții profesionale. Construirea identităților discursive" is a contribution that examines the typical discursive features of professional online forums in Romanian. In an attempt to provide insight into forms of communication in digital spaces *other* than those engendered by social media platforms, Cristina Varga argues that the discourse of individuals on Romanian online forums subverts the expected behavioural patterns: despite their lack of professional knowledge, the user soliciting assistance takes a position of authority and places the competent person in a secondary position as an assistant. Varga claims, thus, that the intention of communicative exchanges on such professional forums has shifted from seeking knowledge and understanding the issue and its causes, to seeking simple, pragmatic solutions that require no intellectual effort.

Raluca Pop's contribution is a study on the potential of virtual exchange and simulation projects to further develop multimodal and disciplinary skills with regard to pre-service teachers. The study was carried out using an online survey to collect data from pre-service teachers. The teachers' responses were analysed to determine the impact of the project on the participants' development of pedagogical content knowledge, intercultural communicative competence, and digital skills. The main findings suggest that such projects can be a valuable addition to pre-service teacher training programs and can help to prepare teachers for diverse and globalized classrooms.

The contribution that concludes the section of invited papers is provided by Anamaria Radu and Alexandra Cotoc in the form of "Irony as Venting Negative Feelings in Online Discourse. Romanian Users and Glocal Identity." The purpose of this study is to analyse the use of irony in the online discourse of Romanian netizens during the COVID-19 pandemic. The theoretical framework of this contri-

bution was underpinned by Kreuz's conceptualization of verbal irony, which defines irony as a reversal of meaning or expectation. As such, the authors analysed a corpus of Facebook and YouTube posts produced by Romanian users between February and April 2021, and identified several types of irony, such as sarcasm, hyperbole, and historical irony. The authors concluded that the content produced by the Romanian online community through irony reflects a specific Romanian glocal identity, characterized by ridiculing severe situations, and adopting a distanced stance and manner of rendering major problems and concerns in Romania. Furthermore, the use of irony in Romanian online discourse also serves as a way to challenge dominant narratives and power structures, as it allows for critical reflections on societal norms and expectations.

The next section of the volume includes the productions of five graduate students with a keen interest on Computer Mediated Communication and a doctoral student. In this respect, the first contribution is provided by Laura Oana-Herțanu, who discusses the phenomenon of live-streaming on Twitch.tv, with a focus on the type of online identity assumed by streamers in this context. The author highlights the unique features of Twitch.tv, such as its slogan "Don't just watch, join in" and the concept of prosumerism, where users can both consume and produce content. The main argument presented in the article is that streamers assume an open-source identity in the context of live-streaming. The open-source identity refers to the identity that is constructed and performed by the streamer but is also co-created by the audience through their interactions and engagement with the streamer. This identity is open to interpretation and can evolve over time, as the streamer's performance and the audience's responses shift and change. The concept of open-source identity highlights the dynamic and collaborative nature of live-streaming, where both the streamer and the audience play active roles in shaping the experience and constructing the narrative.

This section continues with a contribution on the use of hashtags, where Mihaela Buzec explores how hashtags have evolved from a tool for sorting and filtering information on social media to a device for metacommunication (particularly on Twitter). The article focuses on the use of hashtags to convey irony, sarcasm, and calls to action, and discusses the challenges of studying social media data, such as creating a corpus for analysis, privacy concerns, and the rapid evolution of language and meme culture. The author concludes that while hashtags are still a useful device for conveying metacommunicative cues, they may be losing popularity to visual-based expressions such as emojis and GIFs. The author suggests that future research could explore the power of hashtags to convey irony and sarcasm using specific algorithms and sentiment analysis software.

Just as insightful is Cioacă Marina's analysis of YouTube comments, where the author applies Goffman's theory of face-work and face-threatening acts as well as Brown and Levinson's distinction between positive and negative face to understand how power and solidarity are shaped in online communication. Cioacă argues that YouTube comments mirror real social interactions and are used to display social superior-

ity or community membership. The article notes that social media is split between these two components (positive and negative face), with platforms like Instagram focusing on the power component through the creation of a virtual social hierarchy based on the number of followers. In contrast, solidarity is based on social equality and similarity and is often expressed through name-giving such as 'dude.' Cioacă also highlights the importance of context in online communication, particularly in terms of self-disclosure. While self-disclosure is a face-threatening act, social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook encourage users to share intimate details about themselves with others.

The next contribution is provided by Martina Lončeková and tackles the subject matter of the discursive practices engendered by the intersection of social media platforms and cancel culture. The author aims to analyse the language used by social media users who engage in cancel culture and identify patterns in their linguistic choices. This study focuses on analysing the language used in tweets related to the cancellation of two public figures, Shane Dawson and Ellen DeGeneres, who both experienced significant backlash in 2020. The language used in these tweets is characterized by profanity, expressive punctuation, hashtags, mocking, and the use of emojis. Hashtags, in particular, are a crucial element of online communication, allowing users to express their interests and beliefs and assert membership to a particular online community. The language used in tweets related to cancel culture also reveals a preoccupation with self, community, belonging, and beliefs, reflecting a desire to build ties within these online communities.

"Face-threatening Acts and Facebook Comments" continues this section by providing an analysis of the use of face-threatening acts in the comment sections of Facebook. The paper is based on the theory of Face and Politeness developed by Brown and Levinson (1987), which suggests that people universally follow certain guidelines when communicating with others. Positive face-threatening acts, such as compliments and agreements, were more prevalent in the comments section, while negative face-threatening acts, such as criticisms and disagreements, were less frequent. The analysis also suggests that people tend to prefer polite and respectful conversations on social media, just as they do in real-life situations.

The contribution concluding both this section and the volume is provided by Mădălina Andreea Pop, whose article investigates the nature and strategies of trolling as an online discursive phenomenon. Trolling is a phenomenon that occurs on the internet and involves negative and disruptive behaviour exhibited by individuals who seek to deceive or manipulate others with malicious intentions. The anonymity provided by the internet enables 'trolls' to act in ways that they would not in real life, with trolling being seen as a form of recreation, boredom, or an exercise of power that would be inaccessible in offline contexts. The findings of the study suggest that trolls use good grammar and spelling to make their comments more persuasive, use questions to incite sensitive topics, and avoid using modality words to make their trolling less obvious. Trolls also tend to bring up sensitive topics such as racism, political views, health, and religion. The study found that there are differences in how trolling manifests on different social media platforms, with

YouTube users creating controversy but rarely replying, TikTok users engaging in prolonged back-and-forth exchanges, and Reddit users creating longer comments that can appear more credible.

Although the editors have designed the contents of this volume as partly an exercise of academic publishing, and partly as a bibliographical reference for a Computer Media Communication course within a master's programme, the volume far exceeds such qualifications as it successfully explores a wide array of linguistic practices and patterns unique to digital communication. Moreover, while the volume may primarily be designed to appeal to graduate readers with an interest in applied linguistics and to provide a comprehensive overview of current research in the field of Internet Linguistics, one might find that it is accessible to readers pertaining to all kinds of theoretical or non-theoretical backgrounds, as these practices are not only a reflection of individual identities but also of the broader cultural and social contexts in which they exist.

Marian-Răducu TODERIȚĂ
MA Student, Babeș-Bolyai University
Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Email: marian.toderita@studd.ubbcluj.ro