INTRODUCTION

Communicating via computers has lately come to represent a routine, ritual, and consequential activity on personal and professional levels alike. Under the umbrella term *computer-mediated communication*, a plethora of socio-cultural acts are performed that are agentive for identity construction. From among them, linguistic scholars have been particularly interested in how individual or group identities are negotiated through text across the fixed-fluid continuum. The main vehicle for communication in a medium that is multimodal, language is pervasively instrumental in negotiating identities in ways that are subtle, finely calibrated, and often, liminal.

It could be said that focus on digital identity construction particularly befits Internet Linguistics in its sociolinguistic approach as a recent and generous discipline. The traditional sociolinguistic approach to how language systematically correlates with social variations is now conflated with shifts in social identity definition accommodating the increasingly seminal cultural functions of language in both individual and collective identity construction. Indeed, their own online engagement, coupled with the reach afforded by the Internet of a superdiversified array of individuals in the globalized cyberspace, has occasioned Netizens to communicate even with the most exotic of *others*, a benefit as well as a challenge both for Netizens themselves and for analysts. During the process of communication, the digital users, consumers and prosumers doing the intuitive guess-work on the identities of their interlocutors may also become members of communities of interests grounded in ideological affiliations and reciprocity. What we witness in Web 2.0 is an intertwining of presentational and participatory cultures, with individual and collective identities at once displayed and played on. It must be noted, however, that self-presentations and other-representations in discourse or through texts are not the exclusive object of research of cultural sociolinguists, but are scrutinized by linguists in general, all of whose results have informed the new theories and subsequent shifts in methodology in this line of research.

Arguably, any study of identity construction through computer-mediated communication should make recourse to a multidisciplinary type of approach and include such aspects as pertaining to semantics, pragmatics, semiotics, and social psychology, thus supplanting the grounding cultural sociolinguistic angle. This issue of *STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS PHILOLOGIA* hosts 15 articles that have taken that step either individually or collectively. Its thematic scope covers (re)emerging identities in critical times, nebulous tribal reconfigurations, gendered-position-triggering situations, ethnic-determined contexts, and teacher-learner settings, respectively, as hosted by the cyber space. A complex tableau of crisscrossing

identities is, thus, contributed to, and made analytical sense of, by authors from the European and American academiascapes.

Empirical and theoretical studies are trying to keep pace with the radical and accelerated developments triggered by the daily ritual of engagement in Social Network Sites. The latter are seen as the generators of echo-chambers, which afford the expression of such affiliations as are temporarily formed and reinforced through particular patterns of discourse and underlying topics and attitudes. Local or global issues that are particularly sensitive or incited by crisis, are readily embraced, disseminated and debated online. In *The Syntax of Climate Change: Syntactic Means in the Construction of Greta Thunberg's Community Identity on Facebook*, Oleksandr Kapranov surveys the construction of famed Greta Thunberg's community identity on Facebook through such syntactic means as dependent clauses, while Roxana Nistor's *Memefying Crises in Romania and Japan: A Global Phenomenon Bearing Local Value* argues that while Internet memes can become viral in times of crisis and travel the global virtual space, they will retain some local value and transmit ideas, feelings, beliefs specific to a particular culture. Thematically underpinned by the same worldwide crisis—the 2019 Covid health threat—*The Digital Discourse of Romanian Social Media Prosumers during the COVID-19 Pandemic* by Alexandra Cotoc and Anamaria Radu explores the powerfully trust-inducing and polarising impact made by the online discourses of would-be celebrities, who should not be credited with expertise in the matter. A locally processed conflict with geopolitical reach is scrutinized in Diana Cotrău's *Ideologized Identities in the Romanian e-News. A Cultural Sociolinguistic Query of Converged Media Texts on the 2022 Russia-Ukraine Conflict.* The focus, here, is on language as an important piece in the semiotic puzzle of converged mediated texts, functioning as a tool and a resource for allowing an antithetic categorization of the supporters of the combat-parties in Ukraine on the basis of resurrected Cold War ideologies.

Gender-oriented identity construction is explored against the backdrop of issues that are of consistent interest and under systematic debate in Social Network Sites. In *Narratives of a Struggle: The Experience of Assisted Reproductive Medicine in Online Infertility Communities,* Gabriela Glăvan undertakes to explore how online forums and social media provide patients with opportunities to connect through particular jargons and textual strategies with regard to their medical journey, even while creating a medium of emotional support. Next, in *#THISMAMA: Serena Williams Amplifying the Perils of Black Motherhood*, Alison Lukowski deconstructs the feminist overtones in Serena Williams' use of maternal rhetoric on Twitter to build a community of women who resist dominant discourses about medicine and motherhood. Last but not least, Alina Preda lays emphasis on the negotiation of self- and group identity and on techniques of self-definition and self-representation, by conducting an analysis of the

reactions to a Facebook post regarding abortion rights, in her *Dynamics of Identity Negotiation: A Case Study on a Facebook Post Pertaining to Abortion Rights.*

The scientific interest scope could not elude an insight into how subcultural group identities have become, of late, at once hybrid, nebulous, fluid, tribal, under the impact of integrated digital actions. Thus, Oana Papuc, in her *Exploring Liminal Aesthetics: The "Glitchy and Decayed" Worlds of Vaporwave, Semiotic Assemblages and Internet Linguistics* adopts a postmodern perspective on the matter and highlights the oximoronic imploded distinctiveness of online subcultural expression.

Language contact and its effects on identity negotiation across the Internet are also explored contextually by two contributors to this issue. Daniela Hăisan provides the link to the theme above by addressing how code-switching functions to signal specific identities even while shaping the representation of contemporary womanhood in a Romanian premium e-zine (see *The Catchiness of Code-Switching: Plurilingualism in* Catchy *(A Romanian Women's E-Zine)).* A conflated linguistic variety is analyzed in Alina Oltean-Cîmpean's *Attitudes towards Romglish in online discourse,* with the intent of identifying local glossia ideologies underpinning language-directed stances.

The final set of articles furnish informed and experience-based accounts as well as recommendations for language-related education henceforth. The suggestive titles of the contributions: Bianca Doris Bretan's *Is the Future Hybrid? An Analysis of Opportunities for Digital Education*; Anda-Elena Crețiu's *The Artist's Website. Discourse Features of Online Identity and Brand*; Ethna Dempsey Lay's *Undergraduate Self-study: Discourse Analysis of Imagesets on Student Blogs*; Ioana Mudure-Iacob's *Mapping Language Learning with Emojis: From Phatic Communication to Idioms and Flash Fiction*; and Cristina Varga's *Talking about Exams. Discursive Identities of Romanian Youtubers* are incursions into online spaces where the needs and profiles of modern-day students and teachers alike are reflected upon, with hybrid language education and creative writing strategies in mind.

We want to express our utmost gratitude to the authors of the papers included in this issue for their choice to share with our readers their valuable contribution to knowledge on where language, communication, and technology intersect. We extend our gratitude to our peer-reviewers, who have been so generous in devoting their time and efforts to validating the scientific rationale of the present compilation of articles.

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