

## BOOKS

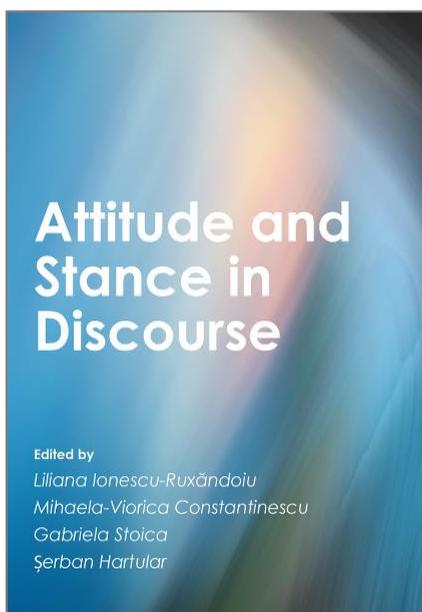
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**Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu, Liliana, Mihaela-Viorica Constantinescu, Gabriela Stoica, Șerban Hartular (eds.), *Attitude and Stance in Discourse*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022, 504 p.**

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The collaborative volume *Attitude and Stance in Discourse* is a product of academic research, compiling papers which analyze the role stancetaking plays in oral and written discourses. The volume explores changes in meaning negotiation processes and intercultural communication and diachronic contexts.

The issues are tackled from an interactional and pragma-rhetorical standpoint, but key components of the studies also comprise interdisciplinarity, cultural anthropology, and social psychology. This volume's papers are organized into six sections. The first section examines stancetaking in political and judicial discourse. A few online communicative forms represent the object of the second section. In the third section, the focus is stancetaking in conversation, as well as in fiction. In the fourth section, stancetaking is examined diachronically, taking into account its various oral and written discourses. In the fifth section, stancetaking is



discussed in the framework of intercultural communication, while in the last section, the studies examine it from an applied linguistics perspective.

The first part *Stancetaking in Political and Judicial Discourse* focuses, as the title states, on stancetaking in political and judicial discourse and it is comprised of five chapters: "Stancetaking, Identity, and Intersubjectivity" by Daniela Rovența-Frumușani, "Epistemic

Certainty and Metalinguistics of Truth in Political Discourse" by Liliana Hoinărescu, "Attitudinal Stance in Romanian Parliamentary Discourse. The Case of the Colectiv Tragedy" by Adrian Toader, "Stancetaking in Argumentative Discourse: Strategic Maneuvring with Quotation" by Anca Găță, "The Last Christmas. Stancetaking in the Transcript of Ceaușescu's Political Trial" by Andrea Cristina Ghiță.

Daniela Rovența Frumușani in the study "Stancetaking, Identity, and Intersubjectivity" conducts a qualitative and

quantitative analysis of the public statements made by the President of Romania in the time span March 16-May 4, 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research successfully highlights the use of stance in constructing subject positions and propositions. The concept of *conversational history* is also used by the author to highlight the relationship between successive presidential addresses. The chapter adds to current research on stance and identity by “emphasising the importance of semantic and pragmatic choices as a resource for speakers and an analytic category for researchers” (48).

Liliana Hoinărescu in the paper “Epistemic Certainty and Metalinguistics of Truth in Political Discourse” analyzes British and Romanian parliament discussions from 2010 to the present, highlighting functional similarities and differences in the use of epistemic makers of certainty. Furthermore, the author investigates various types of epistemic stance markers that are explicitly related to the truth of the utterances. This particular stance or discursive attitude is intriguing because “truth and sincerity are regarded as essential” (57), fundamental conditions of dialogue in genuine communication. The study indicates the cognitive, rhetorical, and argumentative patterns of markers such as: *in fact, in reality, in truth* and the sequences: *the fact is, the reality is, the truth is, this is the reality, this is the truth*, and their Romanian corresponding forms. What is more, the analysis shows how the argumentative structure based on “truth-lie pair” is often encountered in the British Parliament, while the Romanian Parliament only renders examples where “this opposition is conveyed through mixed dichotomous pairs, as appearance-truth and facts-lie/hoax” (90). The author’s conclusion is that the expressions that contain the word *truth* are

the most “rhetorically powerful” (90) tools because they involve axiological and moral aspects.

In “Attitudinal Stance in Romanian Parliamentary Discourse. The Case of the Colectiv Tragedy”, Adrian Toader highlights several image-building techniques Romanian lawmakers employed when addressing a devastating subject: the 2016 Colectiv nightclub fire. MPs assume accountability through group identities, pointing the finger at others and denying any involvement. The article illustrates in detail how the presence of attitude markers in parliamentary debate on the Colectiv nightclub fire is indicative of different image-building strategies.

In “Stancetaking in Argumentative Discourse: Strategic Maneuvring with Quotation”, Anca Gâță investigates quotation as a stancetaking device in argumentation. Official funeral speeches are given special consideration, and pseudo-quotations are seen as strategies for valuing the deceased person. The study proposes possible categories of reported discourse to be taken into account for a taxonomy or inventory of quotation strategies with impact on the argumentative style makeup by examining several manifestations of quotation. Furthermore, the analysis pinpoints the formal and structural traits of quotations and links them to their rhetorical purpose or function at both the subordinate level of utterances and the superordinate level of discourse fragments.

Andrea Cristina Ghiță in “The Last Christmas. Stancetaking in the Transcript of Ceaușescu’s Political Trial” examines the performance of participants in the video showing the Ceaușescu trial. The author shows how these participants consistently exhibit a hybrid, hazy identity, hence the gaps between them and their non-alignment continuously intensify. Du Bois’ (2007) stance model (the stance triangle

– the speaking subjects, the stance objects, and the process of alignment) was used as a theoretical framework for revisiting this very controversial trial.

The second section of the volume focuses on stancetaking in online communicative forms and has two papers: “Political Posts on Social Networks from a Dialogic Perspective”, written by Stanca Măda and Răzvan Săftoiu, and the chapter “From Verbal Violence to Argumentation: Stancetaking in a Corpus of Newsreader Online Comments”, written by Sorina Ciobanu.

In their study “Political Posts on Social Networks from a Dialogic Perspective”, Stanca Măda and Răzvan Săftoiu conduct an analysis of a Facebook post written by a former mayor of Bucharest, as well as all the comments it triggered. For their investigation, the authors employ the stancetaking framework. Their attention is drawn to the initial post, which serves as the action of the dialogic game, as well as the various types of comments that follow the original message. They point out and offer commentary on various realizations of the stance-related verbal cues.

The chapter written by Sorina Ciobanu focuses on an incident that had a great influence on Romanian society, namely the *Colectiv* nightclub fire in Bucharest (2016). The author analyses attitude and stance in a corpus collected from the website of the Romanian daily *Gândul*. Using the theoretical framework put forward by Du Bois (2007) and Kiesling et al. (2008) and explaining the main features of online comments (especially those referring to news), Sorina Ciobanu performs her analysis by manually annotating the nicknames of the users involved in this interaction, the types of stance acts performed (Du Bois, 2007), and the main linguistic resources and patterns used. She

proves that these comments express the epistemic opinions of users who are presenting themselves as “patronising knowledgeable experts, “teachers” and “preachers” who express their opinions in the form of impersonal general truths and often give unsolicited advice through the use of imperatives” (236). Their discourse features “stancetaking for the sake of stancetaking” (260) and is “heteroglossic without being dialogic per se” (261), containing mainly negative evaluations.

The third part of the book focuses on *Stancetaking Devices in Oral Conversation and in Literature* and contains two chapters. In the first chapter of this part, Andra Vasilescu addresses the issue of parentheticals and outlines the “state of the art” (266): structural variety and approaches to parentheticals (syntactic, pragmase-mantic, cognitive approaches). The author proposes a definition for parentheticals, she observes how they cause the discourse's syntactic linearization to break down and she makes a functional classification. Comparing the forms and functions of oral and written conversations, she notes that in oral communication parenthetical constructions are caused by “thinking–planning–textualising thought processes, or artifices intentionally used for rhetorical effects”, whereas in writing disrupted structures “echo the oral genuine usage and acquire stylistic functions” (286).

In the second chapter of the third part of the book, Adriana Costăchescu analyzes the reformulation marker *adică* “I mean, namely” in relation to expressing stance. She presents a classification of stances and introduces a new subcategory of intrapersonal stances, in order to provide an adequate framework for the study of reformulation markers (RMs). Adriana Costăchescu points out the limits of pragmatic models, namely the conver-

sational theory of Grice (1975) or the cognitive pragmatics of Sperber and Wilson (1986), to account for stance. She uses excerpts from Romanian literature from the nineteenth to early twenty-first centuries (narrative and dramatic) in order to describe the main two functions of the main Romanian RM marker *adică*: intrapersonal and interpersonal stances.

The fourth part of the book, *Stancetaking in a Diachronic Perspective*, focuses on stance analysis in the discourse produced in the Romanian press (2 articles) and personal correspondence (1 article). In the paper "Stancetaking in the Romanian Interwar Parliamentary Discourse", Melania Roibu and Oana Uță Bărbulescu tackle the relation Power and Opposition during the 1933 Bucharest strike. The authors collected data from two issues of the Romanian official journal *Monitorul Oficial (The Official Gazette)*, which contain transcripts of the debates held in the Romanian Parliament, and two issues of *Adevărul (The Truth)*, a Romanian newspaper that provides impartial insights into the events. They provide a thorough analysis of the linguistic and communicative means used to signal the MPs' positioning.

In the paper "Stance in the Romanian Humoristic Press", Mihaela-Viorica Constantinescu looks at stancetaking in relation to humour in the Romanian humoristic press of the late 19th century and early 20th century. This chapter analyzes several articles from the weekly magazine *Nichipercea*, founded and directed by N.T. Orășanu in 1859. The magazine had several contributors, but the greater part of the content was produced by Orășanu, who used several pseudonyms. Mihaela-Viorica Constantinescu notices that, generally, the authors manage multiple identities. She also shows that, by constructing humorous works as entertaining performances, the authors

in *Nichipercea* induce an implicit intersubjective alignment in their audience. She also notes that authors use rhetorical strategies in order to control and manipulate the audience.

In the chapter "Affective Stancetaking in Correspondence. The Case of Filial-Parental Love", Gabriela Stoica investigates affective stancetaking in a set of letters sent by a retired Romanian military man, between 1850 and 1854, to his adolescent son who was studying in Paris. The author combines stancetaking theory and rhetorical-argumentative approach on emotions and uses interdisciplinary concepts (subjectivity, emotion, stancetaking, or evaluation) in order to account for the filial-parental love in a particular cultural-historical context. She also analyzes the construction of the self as "on the one hand, the projection of a personal-individual and relational identity (parent/father at the scale of one's own family), and, on the other hand, the projection of a sociocultural, collective identity (parent/father, in general, at the scale of an ideal cultural-social model)" (394-395).

Part V focuses on *Stancetaking and Intercultural Communication*. Lidiya Shamova and Bella Bulgarova, in the chapter "Attitude and Stance in Discourse in a Bilingual Community: the Case of Present-day Sociolinguistic Situation in Catalonia", make a short description of bilingualism in Catalonia, the laws concerning language use in the region, and their impact on the educational system. They analyse the interference between Spanish and Catalan and the attitude and stance of Catalan society towards the two linguistic codes. In this way, they provide a detailed analysis of the sociolinguistic situation in Catalonia, where there is "absolute bilingualism" (420).

The last contribution of the volume, "What Japanese Can Say about Politeness in Romanian", is written by Masanori Deguchi. The chapter analyzes the

Romanian second-person politeness pronouns *dumneavoastră* “you (polite)” as an addressee honorific, *dumneata* “you (polite)” as a referent honorific, and third-person politeness pronouns, as ways of showing respect for the referent rather than formality. Through the analysis of these pronouns, the author presents politeness in Romanian from Japanese perspectives, highlighting similarities in terms of politeness and arguing that politeness expressions are manifestations of stancetaking.

Last, but not least, Part VI *Stancetaking and Applied Linguistics* contains two chapters: “Stance and Literacy Development: Japanese Learners in Lingua Franca English Discourse” and “Stance and Stancetaking in Romanian and American School Debates”.

The data from an intercultural experiment with Japanese students who communicate with their Romanian peers using English as a lingua franca formed the basis for Hiromasa Tanaka's study, “Stance and Literacy Development: Japanese Learners in Lingua Franca English Discourse”. From a socio-cognitive viewpoint, the author examines how the participants co-constructed their position as well as how stancetaking behaviors evolved, from distancing to alignment and commitment. The author takes a social constructivist approach to stance (Du Bois 2007), viewing it as a dynamic practice within a discourse.

Carmen-Ioana Radu's study “Stance and Stancetaking in Romanian and American School Debates” compares two Karl Popper-style school debates on topics of interest to teenagers, held in Romania (discussing whether zoos should be banned), and the United States (discussing whether television is a bad influence on children). The focus of the study is on stancetaking and on the strategies used in debates: observation, interaction, contextualization, and logical consistency of sequences. However, the author observes some discrepancies in the two stancetaking behaviours. According to her results, this fact could be explained by the cultural contrasts between two different societies, namely between a society that places emphasis on collectivity in contrast with an individualistic society.

The volume consists of sixteen chapters which conceptualize and present attitude and stance in a variety of discourses, shedding light on the social, pragmatic, and cultural nature of communication. This volume is a significant contribution to the general topic of stancetaking through its presentation both in synchrony and diachrony, through the rich corpora explored in each chapter and the practical applications of the theory of stance regarding communication, in general, and intercultural communication, in particular.

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