TEXTUAL NEGOTIATION OF ONLINE IDENTITIES

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SPECIAL ISSUE: TEXTUAL NEGOTIATION OF ONLINE IDENTITIES

Guest editors: Alexandra Cotoc and Diana Cotrău

MISCELLANEA

REVIEWS

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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THE SYNTAX OF CLIMATE CHANGE: SYNTACTIC MEANS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF GRETA THUNBERG'S COMMUNITY IDENTITY ON FACEBOOK

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ABSTRACT. *The Syntax of Climate Change: Syntactic Means in the Construction of Greta Thunberg's Community Identity on Facebook*. It is argued that the identity of an online community (e.g., a Facebook community) is manifested by linguistic devices, such as syntactic means (Androutsopoulos 2015; Blumenfeld-Jones 2022; Kapranov 2019). This contention is explored in the study that is further presented and discussed in the article. The study seeks to identify syntactic means, in particular dependent clauses, which are involved in the construction of Greta Thunberg's community identity on Facebook. Greta Thunberg, a famous climate change activist from Sweden, has a public account on Facebook that is followed by a substantial number of Facebook users, who, presumably, share her views on climate change, sustainability, and other environmental issues. It is assumed in the study that Greta Thunberg's status updates on her public Facebook account could be characterised by syntactic means that facilitate the construction of the climate activists' community identity. In order to verify the assumption, a corpus of Greta Thunberg's status updates on Facebook was collected and analysed by the software program L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer (Lu 2010). The computer-assisted analysis was supplemented by a manual procedure of identifying the types of dependent clauses in the corpus. The results of the corpus analysis revealed that Greta Thunberg's community construction on Facebook was facilitated by such syntactic means as dependent clauses, in particular non-finite, adverbial, and relative clauses. The findings were further discussed in the article through the lens of the construction of community identity.

Keywords: *climate change, dependent clauses, Facebook, Greta Thunberg, identity, online community, syntactic means*

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REZUMAT. *Sintaxa schimbărilor climatice: mijloace sintactice în construirea identității comunitare a Gretei Thunberg pe Facebook*. Se susține că identitatea unei comunități online, de exemplu, o comunitate Facebook, se manifestă prin mecanisme lingvistice, cum ar fi unele mijloace sintactice (Androutsopoulos 2015; Blumenfeld-Jones 2022; Kapranov 2019). Această dezbatere este explorată în studiul care este prezentat şi discutat în continuare în articol. Studiul urmăreşte să identifice mijloacele sintactice, în special propozitii subordonate, care contribuie la construcția identitară a comunității Gretei Thunberg pe Facebook. Greta Thunberg, o celebră activistă din Suedia în domeniul schimbărilor climatice, are o pagină web publică pe Facebook, care este urmărită de peste trei milioane de utilizatori Facebook, care au în comun cu aceasta activismul în domeniul schimbărilor climatice, respectiv schimbările climatice, durabilitate şi alte probleme de mediu. În studiu se presupune că actualizările de pe pagina publică de Facebook a Gretei Thunberg, scrise de ea însăşi, ar putea avea drept caracteristici unele mijloace sintactice care facilitează construirea identității comunității interesate de domeniul schimbărilor climatice. Pentru a verifica ipoteza, s-a realizat şi analizat un corpus de actualizări de pe pagina de Facebook a Gretei Thunberg prin intermediul programului software L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer (Lu 2010). Analiza asistată de computer a fost completată de o procedură manuală de identificare a tipurilor de subordonate din corpus. Rezultatele analizei de corpus au arătat că identitatea în cauză a fost construită prin mijloace sintactice precum subordonatele, în special nepredicativele, adverbialele, relativele, condiționalele şi exclamativele. Constatările sunt discutate în articol prin prisma construcției identității acestei comunități online.

Cuvinte-cheie: *schimbări climatice, propoziții subordonate, Facebook, Greta Thunberg, identitate, comunitate online, mijloace sintactice*

1. Introduction and specific research questions

Greta Thunberg is a symbol of youth engagement in the issue of climate change (Bergmann and Ossewaarde 2020), who "catapulted to world fame after mobilizing young people to urge the Swedish parliament to take action on climate change" (Park, Liu, and Kaye 2021, 1). Owing to her climate change-related activism, Greta Thunberg is typically referred to in the current literature as "a highly influential activist" (Telford 2022), "a global icon", "a hero" (Díaz-Pérez, Soler-i-Martí, and Ferrer-Fons 2021), "an eco-celebrity" (Murphy 2021), "a face of climate activism" (White 2021), and "one of the most prominent leaders of climate activism" (Martínez García 2020). It should be observed that whilst Greta Thunberg's rise from a lonely school striker to the global icon of

climate change activism (Olesen 2022, 1325) is remarkable, her activities seem to be described as a broad palette consisting of controversy, fame, paradox, and popularity (Bergmann and Ossewaarde 2020; Díaz-Pérez, Soler-i-Martí, and Ferrer-Fons 2021; Park, Liu, and Kaye 2021; Telford 2022).

As a popular climate change activist, Greta Thunberg is eagerly involved in creating a strong presence on social networking sites (SNSs), in particular Facebook (Sabherwal et al. 2021), where she currently (in October 2022) has three and a half million followers. Greta Thunberg's Facebook account is public. In this regard, it should be noted that in case the Facebook account is "constructed for the general public to look at, then the account will be made visible to everyone" (Zhao, Grasmuck, and Martin 2008, 1823). The public status of Greta Thunberg's Facebook account allows Facebook users to visit her Facebook page, familiarise themselves with its content, and, if desired, write their comments under her status updates. In this way, it could be argued that Greta Thunberg's public Facebook account is interactive, given that her Facebook followers are free to leave their written comments, as well as multimedia input, such as YouTube videos, hyperlinks, and emojis, i.e. pictograms embedded in the text message, or, alternatively, a stand-alone emoji.

In case we problematise Greta Thunberg's Facebook account as an open and interactive online forum that is focused on the issues of climate change and sustainability, it could be argued that it embodies not only her Facebook account per se, but epitomises an online community that, arguably, shares her climate change-related concerns. In particular, Greta Thunberg positions herself on Facebook as a climate and environmental activist (https://www.facebook.com/gretathunbergsweden). The aforementioned self-description emblematises the ethos of her Facebook account and, consequently, facilitates the construction of an online community of her followers, who are free to interact with her and with each other on her Facebook page. In other words, we may describe Thunberg's Facebook page as a digital community, or a digital culture (Androutsopoulous 2015) with the accompanying sense of identity, which "bespeaks a need of belonging that is readily afforded and met by the social platforms" (Cotrău, Cotoc, and Papuc 2021, 26). In unison with the literature (Cotrău, Cotoc, and Papuc 2021), it is argued in the present study that Greta Thunberg's Facebook page could be regarded as a "locus where identities are deliberately constructed and negotiated" (Garzone and Catenaccio 2009, 9).

Presumably, one of the aspects of Greta Thunberg's online community construction on Facebook could be manifested by syntactic means. Notably, syntactic patterns are thought to be associated with the construction of identity (Blommaert 2015; Kapranov 2014; Schiffrin 2009). For instance, Schiffrin (2009, 421) has established that such syntactic means as dependent clauses,

verb phrases, and existential *there* are employed in the construction of personal identity. In the wake of Schiffrin (2009), micro-syntactic means have been found to be involved in the construction of identity by early balanced bilinguals (Kapranov 2019). Additionally, prior research demonstrates that dependent clauses are reflective of the early balanced bilinguals' identity maintenance (Kapranov 2014). The nexus between syntactic means and identity construction is reported in the literature on second language (L2) acquisition, where syntax forms one of the facets of the learners' "sense of self and their ways of interacting with the world" (Belz 2002, 13). This observation is especially relevant in the context of the present study, given that Greta Thunberg's first language (L1) is Swedish, and English is her L2. It also should be noted that whilst Thunberg writes her Facebook status updates predominantly in English, she does so in order to reach a virtually unlimited audience (Garzone and Catenaccio 2009) of her global online community of followers, who, just like Thunberg, may communicate in English as an L2. It is quite possible that syntactic means that are used by Thunberg in her online communication with the Facebook followers would be reflective of her English competencies as an L2 speaker to address an online community of other English L2 speakers. It could be assumed that Greta Thunberg's use of English as an L2, taken in conjunction with the substantial part of her Facebook followers, who are English L2 speakers, is conducive to employing syntactic means in writing her Facebook status updates that are frequent and, perhaps, characterised by patterning. Presumably, the frequency of the occurrence of syntactic means found in Greta Thunberg's status updates on Facebook could be indicative of the construction of her Facebook community identity.

Currently, however, little is known about how syntactic means are employed in relation to the construction of an online community identity. Whilst there is a cornucopia of fairly recent studies that analyse Greta Thunberg's discourse (Agius, Rosamond, and Kinnvall 2020; Bergmann and Ossewaarde 2020; Díaz-Pérez, Soler-i-Martí, and Ferrer-Fons 2021; Keller 2021; Martínez García 2020; Nässén and Rambaree 2021; Nordensvard and Ketola 2021; Murphy 2021; Pałka-Lasek 2020; Sabherwal et al. 2021; Sjögren 2020; Stoecklin 2021; Vowles and Hultman 2021; White 2021), there seems to be no published research that specifically examines syntactic means in her Facebook status updates. Furthermore, there are insufficient studies that focus on the frequency and use of such syntactic means, as dependent clauses in the construction of an online community identity. Guided by the prior literature that emphasises the role of dependent clauses in textual identity construction (Belz 2002; Blommaert 2015; Kapranov 2014; Schiffrin 2009), the study further presented in the article seeks to discover novel insights into the interaction of online community

identity and syntactic means (specifically, dependent clauses), both of which are aligned with the issue of climate change as one of the principal starting points of community identity construction. The study aims to elucidate the following research questions (RQs):

> RQ1: What are the most frequent types of clauses that are used in Greta Thunberg's Facebook status updates?

> RQ2: How are dependent clauses used in Greta Thunberg's Facebook status updates in relation to the construction of the identity of her online community on Facebook?

In line with the RQs, the article proceeds as follows. First, the prior literature on Greta Thunberg's discourse is given in section 2. Then, theoretical considerations associated with the discourse of identity on Facebook are provided in section 3. Thereafter, in section 4, the present study is described in conjunction with the corpus, procedure, methods, and results that are discussed through the lens of community identity construction. Finally, in section 5, the major findings are summarised from the vantage point of their relevance to the field of discourse of identity studies.

2. The prior literature on Greta Thunberg's discourse

As mentioned in the introductory part of the article, there is a wealth of prior literature on Greta Thunberg's discourse. The literature appears to address the following research themes that are associated with Greta Thunberg's discourse: i) climate change activism (Bergmann and Ossewaarde 2020; Martínez García 2020; Nässén and Rambaree 2021; Pałka-Lasek 2020; Sabherwal et al. 2021; Sjögren 2020; Stoecklin 2021), ii) fame (Díaz-Pérez, Soler-i-Martí, and Ferrer-Fons 2021; Murphy 2021), iii) feminism and masculinity (Keller 2021; Vowles and Hultman 2021; White 2021), iv) populism (Agius, Rosamond, and Kinnvall 2020; Nordensvard and Ketola 2021), and v) trolling and bullying (Park, Liu, and Kaye 2021; Telford 2022).

The research theme of climate change-related activism in Greta Thunberg's discourse is explored in the recent publications by Martínez García (2020), Nässén and Rambaree (2021), Pałka-Lasek (2020), Sabherwal et al. (2021), Sjögren (2020), and Stoecklin (2021). From the standpoint of climate change-related activism, Greta Thunberg's discourse is reflective of her individual "I" as her personal self, testimonial "I" that stands for multiple individuals, and testimonial "we" that demonstrates her collective identification (Martínez García 2020, 356).

Presumably, the multiple personas identified in Thunberg's discourse, especially the testimonial "we", have positive rapport with the public at large (Sabherwal et al. 2021; Sjögren 2020; Stoecklin 2021). In particular, Sjögren (2020, 615) posits that Greta Thunberg's message "resonates with a worldview related to the promises of modernity" due to its structure and simplicity, which involve such narrative foci, as "science as the truth", "for the human child's sake", and "the apocalyptic future" (ibid.). The simplicity and accessibility of Thunberg's narratives render her the characteristics of leadership and moral authority in the public eye (Nässén and Rambaree 2021). Greta is argued to be depicted positively by the mainstream media (Bergmann and Ossewaarde 2020; Pałka-Lasek 2020). In terms of the mass media, Sabherwal et al. (2021) indicate that those individuals, who are familiar with Greta Thunberg's speeches and activities via mass media as well as personal and virtual contacts, exhibit a strong association between collective efficacy beliefs and collective action intentions that are facilitative of the individuals' support for climate activism (Sabherwal et al. 2021, 321). As far as climate activism is concerned, Greta's capacity to make a difference is thought to be based upon several discursive strategies that sustain her speeches, namely objectification, personification, sanctification, unification, and diversification (Stoecklin 2021, 1). The strategies, in turn, are associated with such symbolic landscapes as activities, relations, values, images of self, and motivations that are argued to streamline her social interactions with the public in climate change-related activism (ibid.).

The research theme of fame in relation to Greta Thunberg's discourse is represented by the studies conducted by Díaz-Pérez, Soler-i-Martí, and Ferrer-Fons (2021), and Murphy (2021). The studies demonstrate that Thunberg's key role as a famous climate change activist is "reinforced and legitimized with her own personal story told through the hero's journey" (Díaz-Pérez, Soler-i-Martí, and Ferrer-Fons 2021, 36). According to Murphy (2021), Thunberg's fame, referred to as "eco-celebrity", eventuates from her personal story, which is anchored in her role as a well-known and well-recognised leader of the global climate movement. Murphy (2021, 193) argues that "Thunberg's rise to global eco-celebrity has been media-centric", with the media's attention being focused on her confrontational style of climate change activism that is aimed at teenage and young adult audiences.

Thunberg's discourse is examined through the prism of feminism and masculinity by Keller (2021), Vowles and Hultman (2021), and White (2021). Keller (2021) suggests that Greta Thunberg could be seen as a figure of the so-called international girlhood whose climate change-related discourse provokes a range of sexist, racist, and ageist responses on the part of the masculine culture of the Canadian province of Alberta, which, coincidentally, is rich in oil.

In accordance with Keller (2021), Thunberg represents a symbol of international girlhood that is perceived as a challenge by the male representatives of the local patriarchal culture that is centred on resource extraction. In the same vein, Thunberg's climate change-related discourse is analysed by Vowles and Hultman (2021) via the lens of masculinity and the traditional male-dominated culture. Vowles and Hultman (2021) have found that Thunberg's speeches on environmental privileges, carbon emissions, and resource use have been met with hostility and mistrust on the part of the far-right Swedish media associated with the traditional "breadwinner" masculinity. Similarly, White (2021, 396) points out to the misrepresentations of Thunberg's climate and feminist discourse in online anti-feminist fora that express negativity towards "girls, women, feminism, the environment, and people with disabilities".

The research theme of populism in Greta Thunberg's discourse is discussed by Agius, Rosamond, and Kinnvall (2020), and Nordensvard and Ketola (2021). In particular, Nordensvard and Ketola (2021) argue that Greta Thunberg's approach to climate change narratives involves the 'truth-telling' hero character, who delivers the narrative by means of foregrounding the rhetorical strategies of emotions and conflicts as devices of populist discourse.

Interestingly, whereas Nordensvard and Ketola (2021) portray Thunberg as a populist narrator, Agius, Rosamond, and Kinnvall (2020) suggest that Thunberg is a victim of the populist far-right culture, which is characterised by the discourse of climate change denial.

Trolling and bullying in relation to Thunberg's discourse are scrutinised by Park, Liu, and Kaye (2021), and Telford (2022). Specifically, having analysed user comments from the most-viewed YouTube videos about Thunberg, Park, Liu, and Kaye (2021) demonstrate that approximately half of the comments are characterised by uncivil remarks that ignore her position on climate change, and focus on her age, gender, and Asperger's syndrome. In a similar fashion, Telford (2022) indicates that the discourse of bullying associated with Thunberg's climate change activism is conceptualised as the construals "bully", "the bullied", and "the anti-bully".

It is evident from the review of the recent literature that Thunberg's discourse on climate change has inspired a plethora of research publications that examine it from the vantage point of various foci. However, there seems to be no state-of-the art research that focuses on syntactic means in her climate change-related discourse. The study that is further presented in the article aims to bridge the gap in the current knowledge. Prior to proceeding to the study, however, it appears relevant to provide a brief overview of the discourse of identity on Facebook, which is described in section 3 below.

3. Discourse of identity on Facebook: Theoretical considerations

Generally, identity "deals with the question "Who am I?", which usually refers to further questions of belongings and locating oneself in social contexts" (Zhang, Jiang, and Carroll 2012, 102). The discourse of identity has attracted scholarly attention resulting in a wealth of research publications that analyse the construal of identity in its relation to the bilingual population, ethnic groups, the teaching and learning of foreign languages, professional identity, for instance, teacher identity, personal online identity, group identity, gender and sex, culture, to name just a few (Androutsopoulos 2015; Baym 2000; Bolander and Locher 2010; Cotoc 2017; Cotrău 2013; Drotner 2007; Georgalou 2018; Kapranov 2020; Mak and Chui 2013; Zhao, Grasmuck, and Martin 2008).

Concurring with Garzone and Catenaccio (2009), it seems feasible to suggest that identity is quite often fluid, and subject to construction and, arguably, de-construction (Kapranov 2018). As far as the construction of identity on SNSs is concerned, it is posited in the literature that online identity involves one's selective self-presentation and the interplay between the individual's online and offline identities (Cotrău, Cotoc, and Papuc 2021, 26). With the advances in online technology afforded by the Web 2.0 websites, the issue of online identity (for instance, individual, group and social identity) has come to the fore in discourse studies (Cotoc 2017; Georgalou 2018). In terms of online identity, or cyber-identity, Cotoc (2017, 206-207) notes that in cyber-space

> […] the focus is more on how we wish others to perceive us and on the process of setting forth an image we want others to perceive (online self-presentation), but also on how we contribute to the perception of other users and how other users contribute to our perception. Hence, online identity is the social identity encountered in cyberspace, what users display on SNSs, Websites, Weblogs, public chats, emails, etc.: "digital forms of identity performance" (Drotner, 2007: 171). It is the content posted by digi-participants in different Internet environments and one cannot create a recognizable identity in any digital space or group without posting (Baym, 2000: 144). Additionally, cyber-identity is the social identity expressed as individual identity (what is unique to the user) and group identity (what he shares with other users).

It is inferred from Cotoc (2017, 207) that an online identity is concomitant with a form of discursive, or more generally, semiotic presence of an individual and/or a group on the SNS. As far as the person's online identity on Facebook is concerned, Georgalou (2018, 12) argues that there is a mutual relationship between one's discursive practices and Facebook identity, since the identities

Facebook users employ in interactions influence their online communication. It is suggested that the users' discursive practices on Facebook determine the way they perceive themselves and others (Georgalou, 2018).

Whilst it is beyond the scope of the article to provide a comprehensive outline of the multitude of studies on discourse of identity on Facebook, it seems feasible to summarise the major theoretical postulates that are applicable to the present investigation. In particular, it stands to reason to agree with the following considerations that have been adapted from Georgalou (2018, 4). They are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Theoretical Considerations of Discourse of Identity on Facebook
(based upon Georgalou 2018)

N	Theoretical Considerations	Explanation
1	Facebook discourse is inherently constitutive of identity	Creating and updating a public profile on Facebook requires the users to reflect upon how they wish to represent themselves, enabling them to uniquely locate and combine their self-descriptions in the context of social connections.
2	Discourse of identity on Facebook is a product of social interaction	Identity on Facebook is intrinsically interactive, which is construed and maintained by means of exchanging comments between the user and the audience
3	Orchestrating meaning through multimodality is a critical element in Facebook identity construction	Communication in social media is integrated into visually anchored environments, with verbal/textual exchanges being fragmented and reliant on multimodal context.
4	Facebook users adopt certain textual practices to present their identities online	The users may adopt special textual practices for a variety of purposes (for instance, to secure their accounts) that affect the textually visible identity product.

Of particular relevance to the present study is the last consideration formulated in Table 1 under number 4. It refers to the adoption of certain textual practices by Facebook users. By means of expanding on this consideration, it appears possible to hypothesise that Greta Thunberg's Facebook discourse would be characterised by certain textual practices that involve, for instance, syntactic means. Further, the study is presented in section 4 of the article that addresses the issue of syntactic means in construing Greta Thunberg's community identity on Facebook.

4. The present study

It is not a novel idea that syntax, in particular syntactic patterns, the frequency of syntactic devices and their variation are associated with the speaker's/writer's style (Serrano and Oliva 2011) and identity (Grabovac and

Kapranov 2016; Kapranov 2019; Schiffrin 2009). However, as previously mentioned, few studies focus explicitly on the aforementioned contention, especially in the context of Greta Thunberg's online community identity. Given that there is no published research on how syntactic means are employed in Thunberg's Facebook discourse, the purpose of the present study is to identify and quantify the use of such syntactic means, as dependent clauses, in the construction of Thunberg's Facebook community identity. In conjunction with the purpose of the study, two specific RQs have been formulated (see Introduction).

The study is based upon the theoretical and methodological premises that have been expanded upon in the prior literature, which points to the crucial role of dependent clauses in identity construction (Belz 2002; Blommaert 2015; Kapranov 2014; Schiffrin 2009). Specifically, the study is informed by the findings (Kapranov 2014; Schiffrin 2009) indicating that a written narrative can evoke and shape nexuses of time, space, and identity by syntactic means, inclusive of dependent clauses (Schiffrin 2009, 421). Given that Facebook status updates could be regarded as written (mini)-narratives, it is assumed in the study that Facebook status updates written by Greta Thunberg on her public Facebook page would involve a number of dependent clauses that would be reflective of textual practices and/or preferences that are used in order to present her identity online (Georgalou 2018). Based upon the aforementioned assumption, the following specific aims of the study have been explicated:

i) to collect a corpus of Greta Thunberg's status updates on Facebook;
ii) to analyse the corpus by means of the software program L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer (Lu 2010);
iii) to analyse the corpus manually in order to establish the types of dependent clauses;
iv) to analyse the role of the most frequent dependent clauses in the construction of Greta Thunberg's online community identity on Facebook.

4.1. Procedure, methods, and corpus

In terms of the procedure, the following should be explained. In order to ensure that ethical standards are observed, it was decided to collect the corpus that consisted exclusively of textual material found on Thunberg's public Facebook profile, thus factoring out such multimodal elements as pictures and videos. As far as the cut-off for the corpus was concerned, it was established in accordance with the previous literature (Kapranov 2019), which indicated that a period of time between six months and two years would be sufficient for the corpus collection of status updates on Facebook. Hence, the corpus was comprised of Greta Thunberg's status updates on Facebook from

1 July 2020 to 1 July 2022, i.e., two years. The corpus was collected in July 2022 by means of accessing and downloading Thunberg's status updates available at https://www.facebook.com/gretathunbergsweden.

Based upon the methodology described by Grabovac and Kapranov (2016), Thunberg's Facebook status updates were merged into one file and processed in the software program L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer (Lu 2010) in order to calculate the descriptive statistics, such as the total number of words, sentences, and T-units. In concord with Hunt (1965), a T-unit, or a minimal terminable unit of language, was defined as the smallest word group that could be considered a grammatical sentence, regardless of punctuation. The descriptive statistics of the corpus were summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2. The Descriptive Statistics of the Corpus

N	Descriptive Statistics	Thunberg's FB Status Updates
1	Total number of FB status updates	191
2	Total number of words	11 718
3	Total number of sentences	1 013
4	Total number of T-Units	1 184

The computer-assisted analysis of the corpus was followed by a manual procedure of identifying the types of dependent clauses. The results of the analysis were given in subsection 4.2 below.

4.2. Results and discussion

As mentioned in the introductory part of the article, there are two specific RQs in the study. Let us discuss the results of the corpus analysis in conjunction with the RQs.

4.2.1. RQ 1: The frequency of clauses in Thunberg's Facebook status updates

The results of the quantitative investigation have revealed that there are 39 coordinate and 408 dependent clauses in the corpus. It follows from these findings that subordination is much more prominent in the corpus in contrast to coordination. Unfortunately, there is no possibility to compare the findings with the prior literature discussed in section 2 of the article, since the previous studies (Agius, Rosamond, and Kinnvall 2020; Bergmann and Ossewaarde 2020; Díaz-Pérez, Soler-i-Martí, and Ferrer-Fons 2021; Keller 2021; Martínez García 2020; Nässén and Rambaree 2021; Nordensvard and Ketola 2021; Murphy 2021; Pałka-Lasek 2020; Sabherwal et al. 2021; Sjögren 2020; Stoecklin 2021;

Vowles and Hultman 2021; White 2021) do not focus on the syntactic means in Thunberg's discourse.

The coordinate clauses in the corpus can be exemplified by Excerpts (1) and (2), which demonstrate that coordination is associated with the coordinating conjunctions *and* and *but* that are used rather frequently in English (Kapranov 2019), e.g.

> (1) Perhaps the most overlooked industry when it comes to the climate and ecological crisis is forestry. In the coming decades we will undoubtedly be needing every possible carbon sink to sequester and store CO2, and yet a forest area the size of a football field is being cut down every second, according to Global Forest Watch. (Thunberg, 18 October 2020)

> (2) Today on #YouthDay social media is filled with people praising youth for leading on climate action, along with countless of other issues. Youth commitment is truly great, but make no mistake we have no desire to "lead". (Thunberg, 12 August 2020)

Given that coordinate clauses are indicative of syntactic complexity (Kapranov 2014), their less frequent occurrence in the corpus could be explained by Thunberg's communicative style that aims to be accessible and easy to follow (Bergmann and Ossewaarde 2020; Pałka-Lasek 2020). Conversely, dependent clauses are used by Thunberg more frequently and consistently. The types of dependent clauses are given in Table 3 below.

Table 3. The Types of Dependent Clauses in the Corpus

N	Descriptive Statistics	Total N in Thunberg's FB Status Updates
1	Adjective clauses	5
2	Adverbial clauses	56
3	Causative clauses	35
4	Comment clauses	18
5	Comparative clauses	5
6	Conditional clauses	37
7	Elliptical clauses	3
8	Exclamative clauses	30
9	Imperative clauses	16
10	Interrogative clauses	22
11	Nominal clauses	18
12	Non-finite "-ing" clauses	39
13	Non-finite "to" clauses	67
14	Non-finite past participle clauses	4
15	Relative clauses	49
16	Subjunctive clauses	4

It is evident from Table 3 that the most frequent type of dependent clauses in the corpus is represented by non-finite clauses, comprised of "-ing", "to" and past participle clauses. This finding is further emblematised by Figure 1, where the frequency of non-finite clauses is given in the form of percentage to the total number (N) of dependent clauses (N = 408).
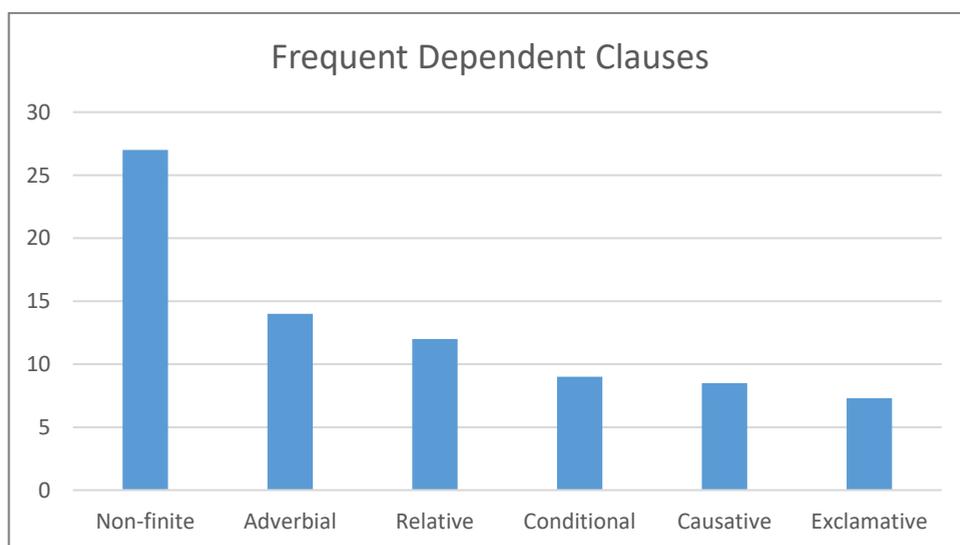
Figure 1. Percentage of the Most Frequently Used Dependent Clauses
Non-finite "-ing" clause

It is seen in Figure 1 that the non-finite clauses in the corpus are substantially more frequent compared to the rest of the clause types. This observation begs a logical question concerning the role of the frequent clauses in the construction of Thunberg's community identity. In other words, to what objectives are non-finite clauses used more frequently than the other types, what is the pragma-communicative purpose of employing them in the status updates, do they serve a certain purpose in the construction of Thunberg's community identity? We will address these questions in the following subsection of the article.

4.2.2. RQ 2: The use of the most frequent types of clauses in the construction of Greta Thunberg's community identity on Facebook

We have previously established that non-finite clauses are the most frequent clause type in Thunberg's status updates on Facebook. Could the frequency be explained from the vantage point of the construction of Thunberg's

community identity on Facebook? Alternatively, could we assume that the frequency of these clauses is fortuitous and devoid of any rhetorical or pragma-communicative purpose? Let us try to examine the pragma-communicative role of the non-finite clauses in constructing Thunberg's community identity by analysing Excerpt (3) that exemplifies the non-finite "-ing" clause and Excerpt (4) which illustrates the use of the non-finite "to" clause:

> (3) Interview in Vogue Scandinavia. The fashion industry is a huge contributor to the climate-and ecological emergency, not to mention its impact on the countless workers and communities who are being exploited around the world in order for some to enjoy fast fashion that many treat as disposables. Many are making it look as if the fashion industry are starting to take responsibility, by spending fantasy amounts on campaigns where they portray themselves as" sustainable", "ethical", "green", "climate neutral" and "fair". But let's be clear: This is almost never anything but pure green washing. You cannot mass produce fashion or consume "sustainably" as the world is shaped today. That is one of the many reasons why we will need a system change. Photo by Alexandrov Klum (Thunberg, 8 August 2021)
> (4) We can't call for climate justice while advocating for policies and phase-out-dates based on targets that exclude aspect of equity and historic emissions. The first step towards climate justice must be to include ALL (especially) high income nations emissions in the targets (like consumption, burning of biomass and waste, land use, international aviation and shipping etc). To surrender the aspect of equity based on historic emissions and climate justice for low- and middle- income countries in order to create goals and targets that high income nations consider to be "politically possible" is not just immoral - it violates the heart of the Paris agreement. (Thunberg, 5 May 2021)

Let us assume that the use of non-finite clauses in (3) and (4) is a conscious strategy that is employed by Thunberg in order to a) deliver an important message to her online community and, possibly, b) mobilise her community for action. Arguably, the non-finite "-ing" clause in (3) could be consciously used to convey a continuous, recurrent situation, which is "timeless" in the sense that it happened before, is happening now and is likely to happen again in the future. Such an interpretation of timelessness in (3) is suggestive of the construal of "chronotope" developed by Bakhtin (1981), who argues that there can be a textual blending of space and time in any event in the real world (Blommaert 2015, 106). Presumably, Thunberg employs the non-finite clause in (3) in order to emphasise that the fashion industry has been causing harm to the environment irrespective of where and when its production capacities are

located in the coordinates of the Bakhtinian chronotope (1981). By means of the frequently used non-finite clauses, Thunberg, perhaps, seeks to foreground a perennial nature of the problem that, arguably, is boundless in time and space, and, as such, should be tackled by the climate change activists.

The non-finite "to" clauses in (4) seem to impart an idea that certain actions expressed by the to-infinitive verbs must be taken in order to ameliorate the deplorable situation associated with the issue of climate change. Whilst it might be an impressionistic reading of (4), such textual fragments as "the first step towards…", "must be", etc., facilitate an impression that (4) reads more like a manifesto and a call for action rather than a plain Facebook status update. Seemingly, the non-finite "to" clauses reinforce this impression. Furthermore, in (4) we observe several non-finite "to" clauses that form a chain, or, rather, a pattern that is suggestive of the step-by-step instruction of what needs to be done to tackle the long-standing issue of climate change. It could be the case that by using the concatenation of "to" clauses Thunberg seeks to mobilise her online community and provide the activists with a concrete and feasible plan of action.

5. Conclusions

The article has introduced and discussed the computer-assisted study on how syntactic means, to be more precise, dependent clauses are used in the construction of Greta Thunberg's community identity on Facebook. It has been established that non-finite clauses are the most frequent type of dependent clauses in the corpus of Thunberg's Facebook status updates in the period of time 1 July 2020 – 1 July 2022. The corpus analysis has revealed that non-finite clauses are frequent and recurrent, which might be suggestive of the conscious use of these syntactic means in order to create an effect of timelessness in case of the "-ing" clauses and a call for action, or, metaphorically speaking, a "laundry list" of actions to be taken in order to ameliorate the current situation associated with climate change in case of the non-finite "to" clauses. A possible interpretation of the frequent non-finite clauses has been provided in subsection 4.2.2 of the article. The interpretation is based upon Thunberg's conscious use of the non-finite clauses.

However, there seems to be more than one interpretation of the present findings. First of all, let us take into consideration that English is not Greta Thunberg's L1. Hence, we may argue that her preference for non-finite clauses stems from her English proficiency. This interpretation appears possible, especially in light of the prior research that indicates that syntax is a facet of an L2 speaker's way of interacting with the world (Belz 2002, 13). If this interpretation of the findings is correct, we may speak of the frequent non-finite clauses in the corpus as an indicator of Thunberg's mastery of the English language.

Another interpretation of the findings could involve a contention that, perhaps, there are neither conscious nor L2 proficiency-related reasons for Thunberg's frequent use of non-finite clauses. In other words, Thunberg is, supposedly, not aware of her frequent use of non-finite clauses and such use constitutes her personal style of writing, when she communicates with her community on Facebook.

Whilst there are multiple avenues for the interpretation of the findings, the study has revealed that there is a tendency on the part of Thunberg to prefer certain types of syntactic means, specifically non-finite clauses. It would be desirable for future studies to organise an interview with Thunberg to solicit answers to the questions why and how she writes her Facebook status updates, whether or not she considers the choice of syntactic means, for instance, dependent clauses.

Presumably, the relevance of the present findings to the research field of discourse studies, especially to the discourse of identity, may rest with the following considerations. First, it could be concluded that the findings provide indirect support to Kapranov (2014) and Schiffrin (2009), who suggest that dependent clauses are reflective of one's identity maintenance and construction. Second, the findings might be indicative of dependent clauses as a pragma-communicative means that facilitates the construction of a community identity. Third, it could be inferred from the findings that the research focus on syntactic devices, particularly, dependent clauses, might offer novel ways to approach the issue of community identity construction that is centred on discourse/discourses by the community's charismatic leader, such as Greta Thunberg.

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MEMEFYING CRISES IN ROMANIA AND JAPAN: A GLOBAL PHENOMENON BEARING LOCAL VALUE

Roxana-Maria NISTOR[1]

ABSTRACT. *Memefying Crises in Romania and Japan: A Global Phenomenon Bearing Local Value.* When faced with unexpected, traumatic events, such as crises, which can trigger fear and anxiety, people react differently. Depending on the type of crisis and on how affected they are by it, people can run in fear (*flight*), become numb, irresponsive (*freeze*), please other people (*fawn*), or stay put and deal with it one way or another (*fight*). In such cases, humour, irony and sarcasm appear to be a good strategy. As such, Internet memes are an example of a *fight* reaction that people have to crises, in which they resort to humorous, ironic, sarcastic texts / videos to deal with such unpredictable events that affect the world that they are familiar with, which become highly contagious (transmissible) on the Internet. By carrying out a qualitative analysis of a corpus of *Internet memes* from Japan and Romania retrieved from Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, which appeared in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, and by looking at Geert Hofstede's and Edward T. Hall's cultural dimensions, the purpose of this article is to prove that *Internet memes*—though they are seen as a global phenomenon—bear some local value and transmit ideas, feelings, and beliefs specific to a culture.

Keywords: *Internet memes, crisis communication, high context, low context, cultural dimensions*

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REZUMAT. *Memetizarea crizelor: un fenomen global ce poartă amprenta unor valori locale*. Atunci când se află în faţa unor evenimente neaşteptate, traumatizante, aşa cum sunt crizele, care pot declanşa frică şi anxietate, indivizii reacţionează diferit. În funcţie de tipul crizei şi de cât de afectaţi sunt de aceasta, oamenii pot fie să fugă de acest tip de evenimente (*fight*), fie să se blocheze şi să nu ştie cum să răspundă sau să reacţioneze (*freeze*), fie să găsească soluţii prin care să îi mulţumească pe ceilalţi (*fawn*), fie să rămână fermi pe poziţii şi să gestioneze situaţia într-un fel sau altul (*fight*). În astfel de situaţii, umorul, ironia şi sarcasmul par să fie şi ele strategii salvatoare. Astfel, *Internet memes* sunt un exemplu de reacţie prin care indivizii gestionează situaţii tensionate, stresante (tip de răspuns *fight*); prin aceste *memes*, oamenii recurg la texte şi videoclipuri amuzante, ironice şi/sau sarcastice pentru a gestiona astfel de evenimente neprevăzute care le afectează lumea în care trăiesc. Aceste imagini / videoclipuri devin extrem de 'contagioase' (transmisibile) pe Internet. Astfel, prin realizarea unei analize calitative a unui corpus de *Internet memes* din Japonia şi România, preluate de pe platforme precum Twitter, Instagram şi Facebook şi care au fost create şi au devenit virale în primul an al pandemiei de COVID-19, precum şi prin utilizarea dimensiunilor culturale introduse de Geert Hofstede şi Edward T. Hall, scopul acestui articol este de a demonstra faptul că *Internet memes* – deşi sunt văzute ca fiind un fenomen răspândit la nivel global – prezintă caracteristici şi valori locale şi transmit idei, sentimente, credinţe specifice unei culturi.

Cuvinte-cheie: Internet memes, comunicare de criză, context puternic, context slab, dimensiuni culturale

Introduction

First and foremost, it is important to understand that, when faced with crises—which are unexpected, traumatic events, times of "great danger, difficulty or doubt when problems must be solved, or important decisions must be made"[2]—people react differently, as they are triggered by fear and anxiety (Gray & McNaughton 2003, 94). From a psychological point of view, this depends on the effects of childhood trauma (LePera 2021, 12) or on the sum of experiences lived by an individual. As such, there can be four different responses to crises: *fight*, *flight*, *freeze*, and *fawn*. Walter B. Cannon—a prominent researcher and professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School—coined the first two responses (*fight* and *flight*) (Cannon 1927), Pete Walker coined the *fawn* response, while the *freeze* response was introduced by William James and Carl Lange (Cannon 1927).

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[2] Oxford Learners' Dictionary, definition available at
[https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/crisis_1], accessed on 01.04.2022.

Second, since crises can be extremely traumatic events for the people affected by them, they can trigger fear and anxiety (Gray & McNaughton 2003, 94), and so, these feelings, exacerbated by worry, become natural responses to unexpected, dangerous events (Szabó 2022). As previously mentioned, how people deal with fear and anxiety depends on their childhood trauma (LePera 2021, 12) and other past experiences. Some people *fight* (that is they react immediately to the trigger, sometimes aggressively), others respond through *flight* (meaning they want to run in the opposite direction, to run away from what they consider to be dangerous), others *freeze* (i.e. they become numb, irresponsive in the face of crises), while others *fawn* (that is they try to please others "when confronted by possible assault, terror, or atrocity") (Malchiodi 2021).

Third, in dealing with the fear, the anxiety, the worry, and the stress produced by crisis situations, humour appears to be a good strategy as "it is an excellent coping mechanism. (…) It helps people face difficult situations, pain, and adversities", is "a way of taking the reins in a context full of uncertainty" (Svet 2020), as well as "a frequent and highly valued element of online communication" (Laineste & Voolaid 2016, 27). Humour is "a powerful antidote to negative emotions" (Samson & Gross 2012, 375), an extrinsic regulator whose role is to reduce negative feelings and stress (Harm et al. 2014, 1896).

Fourth, another important aspect to consider here, in connection with our hypothesis, is that humour is localised. Studies quoted in Samson & Gross (2012, 376) underline the fact that humour is heterogenous. Distinctions arise from whether humour is positive or negative (Samson & Gross 2012, 376), as well as from the humour style of the sender and of the receiver, and from the humour types (Taecharungroj & Nueangjamnong 2015, 290-91). We would also add that humour differs from one culture to another (Cruthirds et al. 2012) and is, therefore, highly localised.

Last but not least, given the advancement of the technological age, when people use computers and smartphones for everyday communication, *Internet memes* have become such an example of reactions to crisis situations and amusing coping strategies, as they support "a humorous take on a negative experience and situation; the perception of peer-support through affiliation with others" (Akram, et al. 2020). Therefore, we want to show that *Internet memes*—as a research topic in various fields, ranging from cultural anthropology to social psychology— represent humorous reactions to crises and they transmit cultural realities.

Internet Memes. Origin and Evolution

Before discussing *Internet memes*, it is important to clarify the origin of the word *meme*. The term was coined by Richard Dawkins—an evolutionary biologist and an "enthusiast Darwinist" (Dawkins 2016, 229) as he describes

himself—in his 1976 book called "The Selfish Gene", where he introduced this term to refer to a "replicator", "a unit of cultural transmission" (Dawkins 2016, 230). He opted for this term because the *meme* that he described in his book was "a unit of imitation":

> Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so *memes* propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation. (Dawkins 2016, 230)

Consequently, he needed an appropriate term to convey this idea and to make it sound like the word *gene*. Starting from the Greek word *Mimeme* (i.e., something imitated), he shortened it to *meme* to mimic the word *gene* and to refer to "tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches" (Dawkins 2016, 230), therefore something that is popular and that is transmitted culturally.

However, in today's digital culture, where participation and transmission are key elements, another type of meme has become popular: the *Internet meme*. Although there is no universally accepted definition, in Internet parlance, the term *Internet meme(s)* is used to refer to "the propagation of items such as jokes, rumors, videos, and websites from person to person via the Internet" (Shifman 2014, 2). These *memes* are most often seen as jokes that go viral (Marwick 2013, 12), parodies, remixes, or mashups (Shifman 2014, 2). They can be very diverse: from combinations of images to text combined with one image, a gif, or a video. However, simply using a picture and adding a caption to it does not turn that picture into an *Internet meme*. It is its contagiousness, its fast transmission, and its potential to amplify that make it a *meme* (Iloh 2021, 3; Gleick 2011). As such, the text used must be smart, funny, even disputed for people to want to share and re-share that picture which, in the end, becomes an *Internet meme*. However, the most comprehensive definition is that given by Limor Shifman who, in her 2014 book, draws our attention to the important connection between *Internet memes* and digital culture and to the fact that they actually represent different voices and points of view. As such, she defines *Internet memes* as:

> (a) a *group of digital items sharing common characteristics* of content, form, and/or stance; (b) that were created *with awareness of each other*; and (c) were circulated, imitated, and/or transformed *via the Internet by many users*. (Shifman 2014, 7-8)

On the other hand, in a speech delivered at the Saatchi & Saatchi's New Directors' Showcase at the Cannes Advertising Festival, Richard Dawkins, the creator of the

term *meme*, referred to *Internet memes* as a "hijacked" form of the *meme* that he coined, the difference being that

> instead of mutating by random change and spreading by a form of Darwinian selection" (like *genes* do[3]), "they are altered deliberately by human creativity. Unlike with genes (...), there is no attempt at accuracy of copying; Internet memes are deliberately altered. (Solon, 2013)

Therefore, being "deliberately altered", *Internet memes*—a *Netlore* genre, i.e., a sort of humorous folklore that is used on the Internet to spread certain ideas or values—are bearers of meaning and of ideas that are culturally reproduced (Shifman 2014, 4). In her 2014 book, Shifman argues that, "like many Web 2.0 applications, memes diffuse from person to person, but shape and reflect general social mindsets" (Shifman 2014, 5). *Internet memes* are also a form of entertainment but also an identity building device (DeCook 2018).

Though some might see *Internet memes* as something ludicrous, something that has to do with informality rather than formality, with triviality rather than significance, many researchers in the fields of anthropology, linguistics, communication, journalism, cultural studies, education, and business (de Saint Laurent et al. 2021; Iloh 2021; Dynel 2020; Mihailidis 2020; Nissenbaum & Shifman 2018; Katz & Shifman 2017; Boxman-Shabtai & Shifman 2016; Williams 2000, to mention just a few) have started to understand the power of *Internet memes* and to use them to explain different phenomena in today's world and (digital) culture.

It is important, therefore, to retain the idea that *Internet memes* fulfil three main functions: social functions, political functions, as well as charitable functions (Shifman 2019, 43). Moreover, there are three main types of *Internet memes*: "memes as forms of persuasion or political advocacy", "memes as grassroots action", and "memes as modes of expression and public discussion" (Shifman 2014, 122-23).

Internet memes are widely used online, in the everyday online communication, mostly by the young generation, as a form of political communication or as a form of political protest. They are produced and transmitted horizontally (Kertcher & Turin 2020, 582). Furthermore, since they are meant to transmit a humorous, ironic, or even sarcastic message related to a political problem or crisis, their content is also adapted to the culture in which they are created since "meanings are produced not in the minds of individuals so much as through a process of negotiation among practices within a particular culture" (Sturken & Cartwright 2018, 7).

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[3] Author's note.

Cultural Dimensions and Internet Memes

Since, as previously mentioned, *Internet memes* are bearers of meaning and ideas that are culturally reproduced (Shifman 2014, 4), it is important to bring here into discussion the cultural dimensions that will be used in order to try and prove that, although they are a globally spread phenomenon, *Internet memes* also bear certain specificities that can help one understand cultural differences better. More specifically, our attempt to prove this will be based on the works of Geert Hofstede and Edward T. Hall, who have introduced the concepts of "dimensions of national cultures", and "high vs low context cultures" respectively. We will use these concepts in order to prove that *Internet memes* can help one delve into the cultural specificities of a country, and we will use examples of *Internet memes* from Romania and Japan in order to emphasize these aspects.

The work of Geert Hofstede is particularly important. Initially developed for the business world, the "dimensions of national cultures" that he introduced were a pioneering discovery and are widely used today to explain cultural differences in various domains. Through the latest edition of his book, *Cultures & Organizations. Software of the Mind* (2010), Hofstede introduced six models of national culture, namely Power Distance, Individualism vs Collectivism, Masculinity vs Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long-Term vs Short-Term Orientation, and Indulgence vs Restraint.

Since Hofstede's studies were carried out on companies around the world, his first dimension (*Power Distance*) refers to how people see and deal with authority. Individuals from large-power-distance countries see authority and power as something natural and they obey the rules and regulations set for them. Japan is such an example, as its citizens "accept and appreciate inequality", however, Hofstede emphasizes that there is also a sense of obligation that influences the use of power (Hofstede et al. 2010, 80). On the other hand, people from small-power-distance countries tend to challenge authority and the *status quo* (for instance, the citizens of the United States of America).

The second dimension introduced by Hofstede (*Individualism vs Collectivism*) focuses on relationships and differentiates between *collectivist* and *individualist* societies. Collectivist societies emphasize the power of the group, and they value relationships; that is why, for example, people in such societies keep in touch with their extended family (Colombia, Venezuela, Panama are perfect examples in this case), whereas people from individualist societies focus on their nuclear family and "think of themselves as *I*" (for example, the U.S.A., the U.K., Australia, Canada, etc.) (Hofstede et al. 2010, 89-97).

Masculinity vs Femininity is the third dimension that Hofstede introduced, which does not refer to the number of men and women in society, but to the values that society appreciates in people. As such, masculine societies value—among other things—"challenges, earnings, recognition, and advancement", as well as assertiveness, ambition, toughness, wealth, decisiveness. Japan, Slovakia, Austria, and Hungary are examples of countries that Hofstede describes as being masculine, whereas Costa Rica, Chile, Slovenia appear to be feminine. Feminine societies value relationships and the quality of life, modesty, tenderness, responsibility, gentility, friendliness, etc. (Hofstede et al. 2010, 155-65).

The fourth dimension (*Uncertainty Avoidance*) measures how people from different cultures deal with uncertainty. As Hofstede et al. point out in their book, "extreme ambiguity creates intolerable anxiety"; however, "every human society has developed ways to alleviate this anxiety", ways which "belong to the domains of technology, law, and religion" (Hofstede et al. 2010, 189). As such, countries that have identified state-of-the art technological or legal solutions or whose religious system has succeeded in keeping up with the development of the society (for instance, Sweden, Denmark, Singapore) can manage uncertainty better than other societies which have not managed to do the same thing and, therefore, "feel threatened by ambiguous or uncertain situations", for example Greece, Portugal, Guatemala (Hofstede et al. 2010, 191-93).

The fifth dimension introduced by Hofstede (*Long-Term vs Short-Term Orientation*) differentiates between cultures that work and plan everything for the long term by "fostering values oriented toward future rewards" and cultures that focus on the past and the present moment by "fostering virtues (…) such as respect for tradition, preservation of 'face', and fulfilling social obligations" (Hofstede et al. 2010, 239). Some of the countries that score high on this Long-Term Orientation Index are South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, whereas at the opposite end there are countries, such as Puerto Rico, Egypt, Ghana, that prefer to think about things and do them for the short term (Hofstede et al. 2010, 255-58).

Finally, *Indulgence vs Restraint* (or *Light vs Dark*) is the sixth societal dimension which distinguishes between cultures that tend to "allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun" and cultures that believe that "such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict societal norms" (Hofstede et al. 2010, 281). On the Indulgence Versus Restraint (IVR) Index, among the countries that seem to score high and, therefore, to be more indulgent are Venezuela, Nigeria, and Sweden, whereas countries such as Ukraine, Egypt, Pakistan are at the opposite pole and exhibit the characteristics of more restrictive societies (Hofstede et al. 2010, 282-85).

Although, as previously mentioned, the initial study carried out by Geert Hofstede was done on companies, today his cultural dimensions are widely used to analyse not only different corporate cultures, but also societies as a whole, education systems, family specificities, and behaviours. To these dimensions, and in order to further analyse cultural specificities in *Internet memes*, it is important to refer also to Edward T. Hall's contribution. Through his 1976 book, called *Beyond Culture*, Hall left his mark on the field of intercultural communication by introducing the concepts of *high context* and *low context* cultures.

Building on the idea that "what gives man his identity no matter where he is born is his culture" (Hall 1976, 42) and that language is "too linear, too constrained, too unnatural, (…) and too artificial" to describe culture (Hall 1976, 57), Hall introduced other dimensions that can be used to decipher new cultures, a *silent language*[4], which include elements of time, space, and context. Though time is a valuable dimension that can be used to analyse other situations, we shall not refer to it here, as in *Internet memes* it is difficult to see elements related to monochronic or polychronic time. We shall, however, use Hall's elements of *space* and *context*.

Space (proxemics) is seen by Hall as "a physical boundary that separates [a living thing] from its external environment" (Hall 1959, 187). He differentiated between *territoriality* (one's marked space that communicates power), *personal space* (the area around an individual that can increase or decrease according to their relationship with the people that surround them or depending on the activity they are carrying out), as well as *multisensory spatial experience* (as Hall believes that space is felt by all the senses) (Hall 1987, 12-14).

Context is probably even more important in the process of communication generally, and in intercultural communication more specifically, because "cultures are extraordinarily complex" (Hall 1976, 106). The messages uttered by a sender are highly dependent on the context, or, as Hall put it,

> it is important for conversationalists in any situation—regardless of the area of discourse (love, business, science)—to get to know each other well enough so that they realize what each person is and is not taking into account. This is crucial. (Hall 1976, 90)

Hall differentiated between *high- and low-context* cultures. Messages sent in *high-context (HC) cultures* do not contain explicit details, the information must be deduced from the context or from the behaviour of the individual, whereas

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[4] This is a reference to Edward T. Hall's book, called *The Silent Language*, published in 1959, in which he tackled for the first time some new methods of understanding cultures, especially those dimensions that are hidden to the eyes of tourists (e.g.: attitudes towards time, space, which are not part of what he refers to as the *overt culture*, but part of the *covert culture*).

messages sent in *low-context (LC) cultures* are clear, explicit, contain all the necessary details (Hall 1976, 91). When individuals from *high- and low-context* cultures interact, communication problems may appear because:

> HC people can be creative within their own system but have to move to the bottom of the context scale when dealing with anything new, whereas LC people can be quite creative and innovative when dealing with the new but have trouble being anything but pedestrian when working within the bounds of old systems. (Hall 1976, 127)

This means that, when communicating interculturally, in order to avoid misunderstandings or disputes that might arise from cultural differences, people from *low-context cultures* have to remember that, when dealing with peers from *high-context cultures*, they have to pay attention not only to the language they use, but also to elements of proximity, time, and context, which all contribute to the message sent and how it is received by their interlocutors.

All these elements are highly important and can be successfully used in analysing *Internet memes*, as *Internet memes* are a form of (intercultural) communication in today's new digital culture and a form of *expressive repertoire* (Nissenbaum & Shifman 2018, 3). However, when analysing *Internet memes*, both time and space are overcome, because "computers connect to one another through far-reaching networks", and "the digitally represented information is available as long as the server hosting it remains online" (Davison 2012, 123).

Internet memes exist in a variety of forms—sometimes referred to as *genres* (Shifman 2014, 99) or *submemes* (Davison 2012, 127)—, the most common ones being *Image Macros*. These images are pictures that contain a text, usually written in white, which are often used instead of emoticons (Denisova 2019, 47). There are also *Photoshopped Image memes* (or *Reaction Photoshops*), which, as the name indicates, are pictures modified using an app (e.g., Photoshop), which are meant to "provoke extensive creative reactions" (Shifman 2014, 102). For the endeavour we have undertaken, we will analyse a set of *image macros* and *reaction Photoshops* that were created and published online in Romania and Japan during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Global Crises, Crisis Communication, and Cultural Specificities in Internet Memes

Most crises—whether they are financial, economic, or sanitary—tend to be unpredictable and traumatic to a certain extent. They are also becoming quite common, since we have seen many such crises in the past twenty years (financial crisis, refugee crisis, medical crisis). In this complex context, *Internet*

memes—as a research topic—can be placed at the intersection of cultural anthropology, social psychology, and intercultural and crisis communication.

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the most recent crises that humanity has been faced with, a crisis that has profoundly changed the world as we know it. From social (sanitary) distancing to wearing masks, it has affected the way in which we communicate, but have also strengthened the power of technology and digital communication all over the world. *Internet memes* have gained momentum, have been transmitted on social networks "as virally as the coronavirus itself" and have become the forefront of a "siege mentality" (Denisova 2019, 581).

In order to analyse whether *Internet memes* bear any local cultural specificities, we have selected a corpus of nine memes from Romania and Japan (n = 9), created and shared on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have chosen these two cultures because they are different from each other, but similar at the same time, and we shall explain in the following paragraphs why we describe them this way.

We have carried out a visual qualitative analysis and have used photo elicitation to select *image macros* and *reaction Photoshops* to create and analyse date. The three social medial platforms we have accessed to look for *Internet memes* abound in such images in Romania, but not so much in Japan, a situation which drew our attention to a first difference between the two cultures: contrasting cultural reactions to crisis situations (in this case, the COVID-19 pandemic).

The first element we had a look at when selecting the *Internet memes* for this study was the language used. Much of the content shared via social networks nowadays is in English (which has become "an obvious anchor for content consumption" (Nissenbaum & Shifman 2018, 5)), and this contributes to the expansion of the "global digital culture". We looked for *image macros* and *reaction Photoshops* with captions in Romanian for those selected from the Romanian social media platforms, and with captions in Japan for those from the Japanese social media platforms. We set this first rule, as we strongly believe that language is the most important medium of transmission of a culture's traditions, beliefs, as well as a powerful tool used by its speakers to interpret and share the reality around them. This endeavour, however, proved to be a difficult one, as we discovered that many Romanian social media users prefer to use English instead of their mother tongue and led to a reduced number of *Internet memes* used in our corpus. The case of Japan was different, Japan being seen as a "linguistically homogenous and therefore monolingual society" (Turnbull 2020, 634)[5] since "very few Japanese people consider themselves to be bi- or multilingual despite undergoing years of compulsory English education" (Turnbull

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[5] In this article, we use terms such as 'monolingual', 'bilingual', and 'plurilingual' to refer to individuals or societies that have the ability of using an international language of communication.

2020, 635). We managed to find *image macros* and *reaction Photoshops* with captions in Japanese; however, since *Internet memes* are not as popular in Japan as in the rest of the world, this too has reduced the number of *image macros* and *reaction Photoshops* that we were able to use in this analysis.

The second rule we set was to focus on social realities, realms of a culture's attitudes and beliefs. As such, the *Internet memes* that we selected all depicted social situations or realities related to the wearing of masks during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic in Romania and Japan.

As previously mentioned, Romania and Japan exhibit both similarities and differences. They are similar in that they tend to share the same cultural dimensions according to Hofstede's classification (e.g., attitude towards hierarchy, individualism vs collectivism, how they deal with uncertain situations, etc.), as well as the same type of context according to Hall's (both cultures are examples of high-context ones). At the same time, they are different because, for instance, they have different orientations, they put emphasis on different individual or group traits, they value personal space differently and they also share emotions differently.
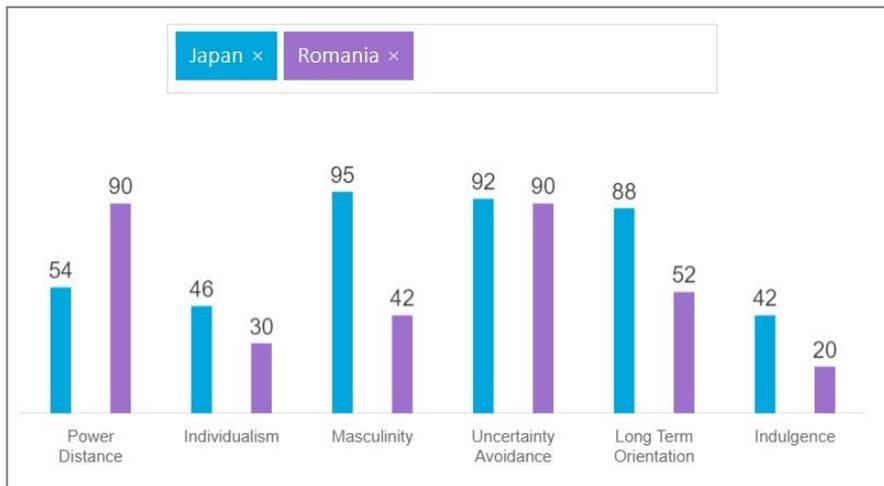
Figure 1. Country Comparison (Japan-Romania)
(Source: Hofstede Insights)

As such, they both score high on the Power Distance Index (PDI)—Romania scored 90 and Japan 54 according to Hofstede Insights[6]; however, we believe that the score is no longer representative for Romania as the results are

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[6] https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/japan,romania/, accessed on 28/07/2022.

based on a study carried out in the 1990s and updated only from time to time; while Japan still remains a quite closed society where status and power are still very important, Romania is eager to emulate the American model, which scores low on the PDI, meaning that Romanians would at least like to have fewer status-related differences and everyone should have a say irrespective of their educational background or financial power.

Yet, during the COVID-19 crisis, both countries contested the authority of politicians and reacted to the measures adopted by their governments and to the instructions given by the national/local authorities in a humorous way (an example of *fight* reaction to the unforeseen and unpleasant situation created by the pandemic). Let us look at the following two *Internet memes* (both of them *image macros*) published online in 2020 as a response to the measures imposed by the Romanian and the Japanese authorities.

Romania **Japan**

Figure 2. Reactions to the Romanian and the Japanese authorities' decision to impose masks at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic (Source: Twitter)

The *Internet meme* on the left, which appeared online in Romania, contains the image of the Romanian traditional bacon (*slănină*) and a caption that is written in vernacular Romanian specific to the Transylvanian area ("Right!... Now I also have one!... Transylvanian Mask"[7]). This meme appeared in 2020 when the authorities decided that masks had to be worn in all areas (outdoors and indoors); however, at that time, masks were both scarce and expensive. As such, Romanians—who see themselves as very innovative—quickly found this solution of using the traditional bacon to craft a mask since it is customary for most of them to have such food at home.

[7] Author's translation.

In the case of the second meme, which appeared in Japan in 2020, the context is again important: it was the beginning of the pandemic in Japan (April 1st) when, the then-prime minister, Shinzo Abe, presented his plan to fight the coronavirus in his country by introducing new measures among which to give two masks to each household to help the members of each family protect themselves from this novel virus. Although the Japanese are traditionally very respectful towards authorities, even they reacted to this measure, which was obviously a bit absurd since many households had more than just two members. The caption of the meme reads "I made this because my friend wanted two 10,000-yen banknotes rather than two masks."[8] In Japan, this absurd measure also led to the creation of a crisis hashtag, #マスク二枚 (#twomasks), which was included in many other memes in Japan, since crisis hashtags "allow citizens to share vital information and make sense of acute crisis events" (Reilly & Vicari 2021, 1).

One can, therefore, see that it would not be easy for a foreigner to really understand the two *Internet memes* above unless they were aware of the cultures in Romania and Japan. That is why, both of them are examples of *high-context memes*, since it would not be easy for someone who is not familiar with the at-that-time context to actually grasp the meaning conveyed by them.

Figure 3 below allows us to see better the local specificities of the Japanese culture.

An interesting cultural aspect is that *Internet memes* are not as popular in Japan as *emojis* and *kaomoji* (Japanese emoticons). That is why, if one looks at the memes above, one can see that Japanese memes are like no other. Unlike many of the memes circulating over the Internet in the rest of the world, the Japanese ones are sweeter and warmer. By using manga/anime characters—the first meme in the top left corner from the well-known "Spirited Away", the second one in the bottom left corner from "Whisper of the Heart", the third in the right half of the figure from "The Wonderful World of Sazae-San"—the creators of these *image macros* and *reaction Photoshops* use local realities to respond to the political plan of distributing two masks per household. The at-that-time popular crisis hashtag (#マスク二枚 / #twomasks) can also be identified in memes 1 and 3.

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8 Author's translation.
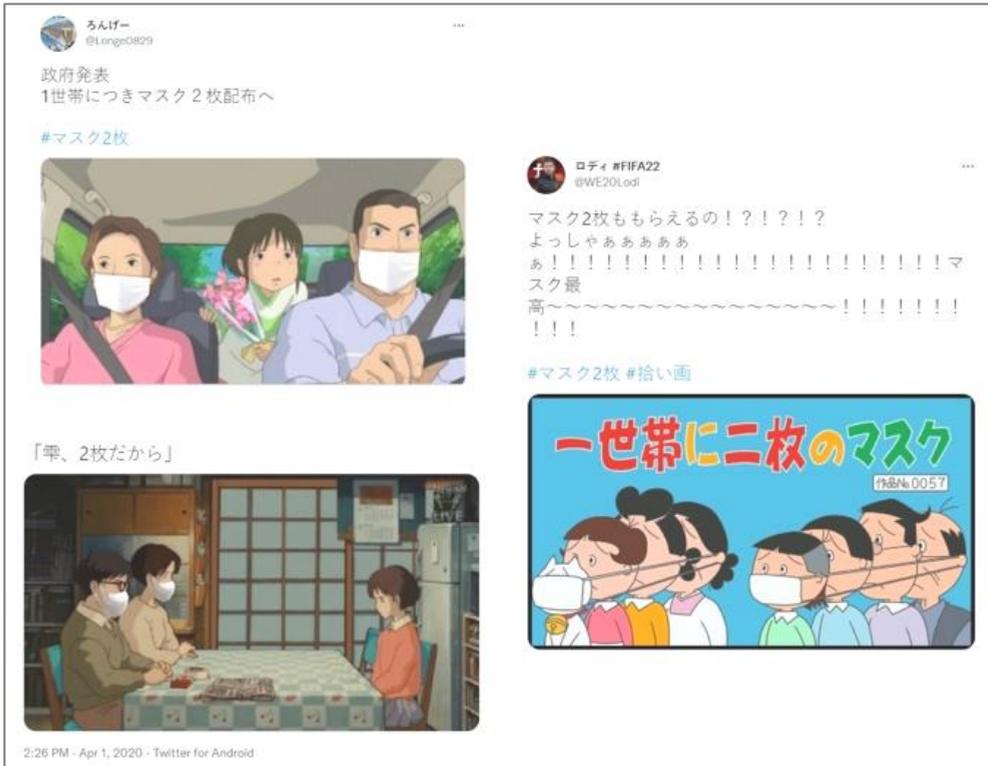
Figure 3. Japanese memes in reaction to the two-mask policy
(Source: Twitter)

Furthermore, by looking at these memes, one can identify elements of Hofstede's cultural dimensions. All three memes depict families, and since Japan is a large power distance culture, "less powerful people" (in this case, the children) "should be dependent" and obedient (Hofstede et al. 2010, p. 72). It is visible that parents and/or grandparents exert their authority over the children, they are the only ones using the two masks given by the Japanese authorities (except for meme no. 3), and children have to accept the reality. The expressions we see on the children's faces show that they are sad but resigned.

This also shows how important family is in the Japanese society, where "the maintenance of harmony with one's social environment becomes a key virtue" (Hofstede et al. 2010, 106). Since Japan is a collectivist society, children in the three memes above are resigned because they know that family relationships are highly important, that their opinions are set by the group they are part of (in this case, by their parents) and that it is their obligation to play their part in maintaining that harmony.

Furthermore, when discussing *masculinity vs femininity* in the family, the relationships between parents and children, as well as husbands and wives, are taken into account. The moment children are born and taken home to their families, they become "culture-bound listeners"[9], i.e. they are accustomed to the culture they will be raised in. Even though Hofstede's website portrays Japan as a highly masculine society, we believe (and the *Internet memes* above partially confirm) that Japan is somewhere in-between. We argue this because in feminine cultures "relationships and quality of life are important; both men and women should be modest" (Hofstede et al. 2010, 155), which are ideas that can be extracted from the memes in Figure 3.

In what regards *uncertainty avoidance*, we believe it is a bit difficult to draw any conclusions from the memes presented, as none of the explanations provided by Hofstede for this dimension can be safely extracted from the memes above. However, we can understand that in Japanese families there is "willingness to subordinate for a purpose" (the children in the memes presented seem resigned, they accept their parents' decision because they understand it is a sustained effort) (Hofstede et al. 2010, 243), and all these are characteristics of cultures that have *long-term orientation*.

Furthermore, the Japanese humour also bears a local value because it is different from the humour we are, perhaps, used to. Newspapers in Japan, for instance, do not use humour as they are "trapped in the idea that they should be serious and tense, and that laughter is taboo". If we have another look at the memes in Figure 3, we can see that they are slightly ironic, however, sweet and warm, and definitely not offensive or too humorous.

In what regards Romanian culture, it has been difficult to extract clear ideas for each of Hofstede's or Hall's dimensions. What has stood out, however, has been the highly sarcastic captions for the memes analysed, which show that Romanians like to have fun and make fun even of strenuous or stressful events. It seems that it is easier for them to overcome crisis situations if they use humour. Romanian humour, compared to the Japanese one, is more sarcastic and sometimes even hurtful.

In Romanian, there is an old saying which literally translates to "Let the neighbour's goat die, too" ("Să moară și capra vecinului"), which expresses a sense of envy and selfishness. These two characteristics are depicted in meme no. 3 in Figure 4 above, whose caption reads "When you are COVID-19 positive and you hate your neighbours", and these characteristics are specific to masculine countries. Even though, Figure 1 above presents Romania as a rather feminine culture (it only scores 42 on this index), as we have already mentioned, we

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9 See Patricia Kuhl, *The linguistic genius of babies*,
https://www.ted.com/talks/patricia_kuhl_the_linguistic_genius_of_babies?language=en, accessed on 28/07/2022.

believe that things are changing as Romanians want to emulate the Western/ American cultures, which are more masculine than feminine.

Figure 4. Romanian memes in reaction to the COVID-19 crisis
(Source: Instagram & Facebook)

Furthermore, in countries that score high on the Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI), the rules existing in those cultures "are often implicit and rooted in tradition (high-context communication)" (Hofstede et al. 2010, 219), and Romania scores very high on this index (90) just like Japan. If we have another look at the memes included in Figure 4, we have again messages that are quite difficult for foreigners to understand because the specificities depicted in those memes are included in the aspects of a culture that are less visible[10]. For

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[10] The image of the iceberg is famous in explaining the cultural aspects that are easy to spot and those that are not, which are deeply embedded in the mentality and attitudes of the members of a culture. In this case, we refer to what comes below the surface of the water, i.e. those elements that are not easily noticed and usually require an in-depth understanding of the attitudes, beliefs, and traditions of a culture.

instance, meme no. 2 shows a general disappointment in the results obtained by the national football team since 1996 (the year when they last qualified for the European or the World Football Championship). The caption ("I respect Romania's national football team; the chaps have been staying home since 1996. Prevention, what else? ... the European or the World Football Championship – we are staying home!") expresses both cynicism and pessimism, and these are two traits of *restrained* societies. Our interpretation of meme no. 2 is also supported by the very low score (20) obtained by Romania on the *indulgence vs restraint index* (IVR), which can be seen in Figure 1 above. The same cynicism and pessimism can also be drawn from meme no. 4, which compares the mandate of a former Romanian politician to the novel coronavirus.

In the *Internet memes* showing families together (in the case of Japanese *memes*) or in the one showing the Romanian national football team, we can also see elements of space (according to Hall). We can see that the personal space depicted in these *Internet memes* is reduced, showing that the relationship existing between the individuals is a close one. In addition, Figure 1 above also shows that both cultures are collectivistic ones because they only obtained 46 points on the Individualism index (Japan) and 30 respectively (Romania). Collectivistic societies value relationships and the group more than the individual and their personal achievements. The Japanese *Internet memes* used in our corpus focus on the extended family, which is an important aspect of the Japanese society, whereas the Romanian *Internet meme* puts emphasis on the closeness of people in a group.

In addition, there is also a glimpse of *indulgence* coming out of meme no. 1, which shows us the "perfect mask" that "also comes in white": the wine. Wine, just like Transylvanian bacon, is part of the Romanian tradition of growing and harvesting grapes and then turning them into unfermented wine and then in wine.

Conclusions

This article has undertaken the (sometimes difficult) task of carrying out a qualitative descriptive analysis of a corpus of *Internet memes* from Romania and Japan in an attempt to prove that, in the face of crises, *memes* are a way of fighting the anxiety associated with such stressful events and that, even though they are agents of digital globalization, *memes* still bear some local value and local humour.

First, we have come to the conclusion that using *Internet memes* and humour is a helpful coping strategy, which can also help one see how different cultures react to crises in various ways. Second, by using Hofstede's and Hall's cultural dimensions, we have seen that there are cultural specificities that can be extracted from the *Internet memes* posted and (re)shared online by different

users. We have, therefore, seen that cultural particularities related to attitudes towards hierarchy and power, relationships, values, long-term or short-term orientation, elements of indulgence or restraint, as well as elements of space and context can be extracted from the *image macros* and *reaction Photoshops* shared over the Internet in an attempt to counteract the anxiety produced by crisis situations.

There are also limitations to our analysis. The number of *Internet memes* in our corpus was drastically reduced by the rules we set at the beginning of their selection (for example, related to the language used in the captions).

We have seen cultural similarities and differences between Romania and Japan. However, it has been easier to pinpoint cultural elements in the case of Japanese memes, and we assume it is because Japan is still making efforts to protect its cultural identity, whereas Romania is trying to emulate the American/Western model.

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THE DIGITAL DISCOURSE OF ROMANIAN SOCIAL MEDIA PROSUMERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Alexandra COTOC[1], Anamaria RADU[2]

ABSTRACT. *The Digital Discourse of Romanian Social Media Prosumers during the COVID-19 Pandemic.* Social media platforms provide the digital playground for users to manifest a strong form of clicktivism and, at the same time, a deep sense of belonging. In this digital space, users produce discourses with in-built ideologies which have a strong impact on society. Through digitized practices (following, sharing, commenting, posting), users become social actors who design and redesign their behaviour and life choices in relation to the individuals and groups which they follow online on a regular basis. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, through the use of social media, various users have become movers and shakers in Romania. This study aims to analyse the new media discourse showing the Romanian people's attitude towards the Covid-19 pandemic in the time span of September-October 2021. As such, the linguistic manifestation of users (including micro-celebrities and public figures) was reflected in the polarization of Romanian society, resulting in people mistrusting authorities, and medical experts and giving voice to users who would not normally have a voice in the matter of a global pandemic.

Keywords: clicktivism, digital discourse, digitized practices, prosumers, debunking

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REZUMAT. *Discursul digital al prosumatorilor români de rețele de socializare în timpul pandemiei COVID-19*. Platformele de socializare oferă utilizatorilor terenul de joacă digital pentru a manifesta o formă puternică de clicktivism și, în același timp, un sentiment profund de apartenență. În acest spațiu digital, utilizatorii produc discursuri cu ideologii încorporate care au un impact puternic asupra societății. Prin intermediul practicilor digitalizate (urmărire, partajare, comentarii, postări), utilizatorii devin actanți sociali care își proiectează și își reproiectează comportamentul și opțiunile de viață în raport cu persoanele și grupurile pe care le urmăresc online în mod regulat. În contextul pandemiei Covid-19, prin utilizarea rețelelor sociale, diverși utilizatori au devenit promotori și actanți în România. Acest studiu își propune să analizeze discursul noilor media care arată atitudinea românilor față de pandemia Covid-19 în intervalul de timp septembrie-octombrie 2021. Ca atare, manifestarea lingvistică a utilizatorilor (incluzând micro-celebritățile și figurile publice) s-a reflectat în polarizarea societății românești, ceea ce a dus la neîncrederea oamenilor în autorități, precum și în experții medicali și a dat glas unor utilizatori care, în mod normal, nu ar fi avut o voce în contextul unei pandemii globale.

Cuvinte-cheie: clicktivism, discurs multimodal, practici digitale, prosumator, demascare

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic in Romania reached its fourth wave in September-October 2021 and was marked by the first reopening of schools, local elections, a surge of cases, and a low vaccination rate. In this context, Romanian Facebook users, in their quality of prosumers (producers and consumers of social media) were very active online as news about the pandemic was regularly posted and discussed. There was also an abundance of misinformation posted and circulated in the filter bubbles created by Facebook algorithms. This gave way to the phenomenon of polarization within Romanian society, both online and offline: people who were pro-vaccine and people who were anti-vaccine. Thus, an 'us' versus 'them' tendency became prevalent on Facebook as well, simultaneously showing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral polarization regarding medical and scientific subject matters (see Bârgăoanu 2021)[3]. As a consequence, there were users who tried debunking the misinformation using various strategies (sarcasm, humour, irony, etc.).

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[3] For further information on the matter see the article Tendința anului 2021: „NOI" împotriva „LOR" – indiferent care ar fi subiectele aflate în discuție (https://www.qmagazine.ro/tendinta-anului-2021-noi-impotriva-lor-indiferent-care-ar-fi-subiectele-aflate-in-discutie/?fbclid=IwAR3shtXeBhB1nXbgID8NuKM0wzvktpJwZSizQHwAi5-nlIkYrY22fscOJPI)

The digital discourse produced during the specified time period reflects the local manifestation of the pandemic and the complexity of the situation by documenting how authorities and ordinary citizens dealt with the sanitary crisis. There were discourses of panic and fear with a strong echo at the societal level; however, there were also discourses that balanced the first category by promoting science over pseudo-science, and rationality over emotional havoc. All these discourses were constructed in a snowball-like fashion, growing rapidly, but then dissipating like a soap bubble.

This paper explores aspects pertaining to the digital discourse of the COVID-19 pandemic produced by Romanian Facebook users in the time span of September-October 2021. To this, we add a post from December 2020 and a post from January 2021 with the purpose of highlighting the online productions by which some Facebook users showed anticipation of a situation that would eventually escalate.

This study begins by providing a context for the analysis of the analytical material selected. We present relevant theoretical concepts; we engage in qualitative analysis and discuss a few selected examples. The examples are in Romanian, and, for authenticity reasons, we provide screenshots from Facebook, accompanying the screenshots with the translation of keywords or relevant excerpts. In the Annex, we provide the translation for the text that appears in the screenshots, but which is not translated in the body of the article.

Digital Discourse and Prosumers in the Post-factual Era

Social media platforms enable a profound sense of belonging and they play "a crucial role in spreading information and mobilising society for common action" (Sutkutė 2016, 427). Users generate discourses that are embedded in ideologies (beliefs, points of view and ideas that they share within particular groups) and become social actors who sometimes design and redesign their behaviour and life decisions in relation to the individuals and groups they interact with online. Moreover, as we live in a post-factual era "marked by fake news and uncritical consumption of the media" (Lacković, 2020, 442) and in which there is an "increasing influence of public figures with a flexible code of ethics" (Modreanu 2017, 8), users appeal to their emotions and convictions rather than to facts when assimilating and accepting arguments. Users are also prone to embrace the values of diversity and democracy, make decisions, and express themselves through a vast array of distinct forms and digitised practices – *like button*, *follow*, *share*, *comment,* and *post* (see Jenkins 2016).

In order to be informed and keep up to date with the latest memes and trends, fast-breaking news, entertainment options, and various events, users crowdsource "their friends' sharable databases" (see Alvermann 2017, 335).

They also interact with the content, gaining the quality of prosumer, a term introduced by Alvin Toffler (1980) and first used in the field of economics and marketing to denote the proactive consumer and describe the fact that "people consumed what they themselves produced. They were neither producers nor consumers in the usual sense. They were instead what might be called 'prosumers'" (283). In the new reality of social media, the user represents the social consumer, embodying the prosumer[4] and using "social networking sites as vital information resources for the sharing and consumption of product and brand information" (Silver 2009, apud. Buzzetto 2013, 68).

Prosumers are engaged in the digital discourses (see Thurlow and Mroczek 2011) of social media platforms whose power resides in the use of images and text. These images and texts keep the prosumers in the same discourse space and shape their understanding of the world, having a snowball effect as posts trigger reactions and counter-reactions. Especially in times of crisis or crucial events like the pandemic, oftentimes, the prosumers' engagement with these discourses manifests in the form of clicktivism, understood as "'liking', upvoting, or 'following' an activist social media post or blog. Clicktivism signals endorsement of an existing post" (George et al. 2019, 10) and creates communities of like-minded users, where they support and validate each other in their ideologies and beliefs. This explains Makoš' five types of cognitive distortions mentioned by Kvetanová et al. (2020, 6) and which we also identified on social media platforms: 1) anchoring: the recipient, in our case the user, considers the first information he sees to be the relevant one, even though it may be false; 2) peak-end bias: the perception of the veracity of past events depends on the most recent or most significant positive or negative experience; 3) survivorship bias: individuals' tendency to trust the version of successful, well-known people; 4) confirmation bias: recipients subconsciously seek confirmation of their opinions (often false); 5) contrast bias: people often compare and use contrast in perceiving and evaluating events, seeking reassurance for their opinion.

Users' continuous engagement with social media platforms is framed by the post-factual era in which we live. The ceaseless prosumption and clicktivism enhance the tendency of individuals to believe false information, this tendency being "also related to the historical and political significance of a country" (Kvetanová et al. 2020, 7). Regarding the degree of belief in disinformation and conspiracy theories in a survey conducted by GLOBSEC, Romania ranked among the top three EU countries who believe published lies, occupying the third position with a percentage of 39% (see Figure 1 below).

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4 For further insight on the concept of prosumer in time of crisis, see Lang et al. 2020.
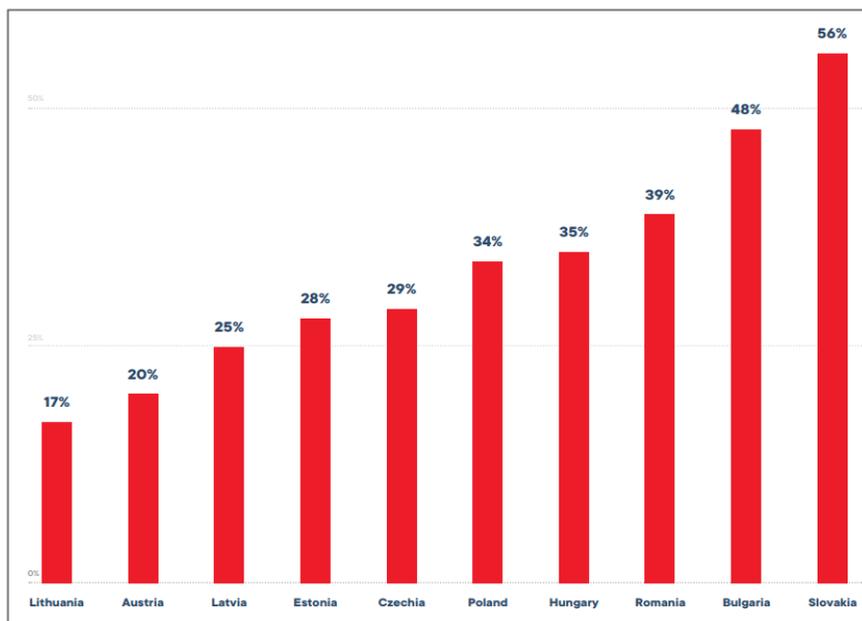
Figure 1. Degree of belief in conspiracy theories and misinformation narratives
(Source at the end of the article)

In the digital space, the increased degree of belief in conspiracy theories and misinformation narratives is fuelled by rhetorical strategies and, even more so, by a multimodal discourse in which the image and text are intertwined, with the image having a high impact, functioning like a trigger to one's attention and having "emotional consequences" (Powell, Boomgaarden, De Swert, De Vreese 2015, 997). The online images authenticate the reality users wish to portray in an immediate and fast-changing manner, being better at accessing *a reality* than words. Users anchor themselves into the reality created by the content creators, who reenact Roland Barthes´ belief that photography "does not invent; it is authentication itself; the (rare) artifices it permits are not probative; they are, on the contrary, trick pictures: the photograph is laborious only when it fakes" (1981, 87). This is valid for the digital discourse as most of the time users play with reality, embellishing it and altering it in order to convey the intended message. Hence, "photography never lies: or rather, it can lie as to the meaning of the thing, being by nature tendentious, never as to its existence. Impotent with regard to general ideas (to fiction), its force is nonetheless superior to everything the human mind can or can have conceived to assure us of reality - but also this reality is never anything but a contingency ("so much, no more"). Every photograph is a certificate of presence" (ibidem).

Facebook as a Site of Engagement

We collected several examples of Facebook discourses in the time span of September-October 2021. We chose Facebook and not other social media platforms due to its popularity in Romanian society and its affordances which distinguish it from other platforms, Facebook having "the largest array of functions, including text-based posts, photo sharing, and sophisticated privacy settings" (Shane-Simpson, Manago, Gaggi, and Gillespie-Lynch 2018, 277). Thus, according to a study performed by the Romanian National Press Agency[5], Facebook is the most popular social media platform because it is used by all age groups. Especially in the pandemic, compared to the previous years, Romanians have used platforms to a greater extent. Among the online activities performed, the authors of the above-mentioned study state that users prefer Facebook as a platform for leisure activity and as a source of information. To this, we add that almost everyone in Romania has a Facebook account (see Marica 2021), adults aged over 30 have a Facebook account and check it several times a day, while younger users prefer Instagram or TikTok.

When comparing Facebook affordances with the affordances of other platforms, there are significant differences that determined us to analyze profiles on this platform and not on others. Hence, we consider that the Facebook affordances make this platform more appealing to adults rather than to the younger generation as it blends a classical source of information (e.g. magazine, newspaper, TV) with the user-generated/created content. Whereas Instagram and TikTok "emphasize visual image sharing" and videos (Shane-Simpson, Manago, Gaggi, and Gillespie-Lynch 2018, 277), which offer fluid and rapid stories and representations, Facebook focuses on multimodal content, offering more space for text. On Facebook, users are encouraged to use their real names, and interact with people by sharing their opinions, which creates a higher impression of familiarity among users, engagement and "higher levels of bonding social capital" (ibidem). On Instagram and TikTok, more users have nicknames and their online activity is focused more on self-promoting images with narcissistic overtones (ibidem).

For our study, we select posts and comments produced by Romanian users on Facebook, providing an overview of the digital pandemic discourse. We focus on the discourses produced by a variety of users in terms of age, education, and approach to the pandemic, offering a vast amount of content. We analyze a selection of the most representative examples of this content, performing qualitative analysis.

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[5] https://www.agerpres.ro/economic-intern/2021/10/19/platforma-de-socializare-facebook-ramane-in-preferintele-utilizatorilor-romani-de-internet-televiziunea-principala-sursa-de-informare-studiu--799136

There are three aspects that we take into consideration and that we consider particularly relevant in our analysis of Facebook discourse: 1. the combination of images, videos, and text (the digital discourse); 2. the polarization (US versus THEM) and 3. the snowball effect (a post and a reaction that triggered counter-reactions).

Online Pro-vaccine Discourses versus Anti-vaccine Discourses

The beginning of the vaccination campaign triggered polarization, making evident the existence of two groups of users: a group of users who were against COVID-19 vaccination and a group of users who encouraged vaccination. This polarization was amplified by fake news and misinformation.

Starting from the basic idea that in the post-factual society emotions and beliefs undermine credible facts, it is our view that in Romania the emphasis falls on content that relies on imaginable situations and experiences. Moreover, as "technology has enabled every person to craft their own narrative, while seeking and engaging with personalized and relevant information", this content is delivered in a digital loop created by the algorithms "or 'filter bubbles' where users are not exposed to opposing viewpoints" (Altieri 2021, viii). Hence, prosumers find themselves in this loop of content that is being delivered to them, with which they interact, and which sometimes encompasses "fake news", "hoaxes and conspiracy theories, hyper-partisan content, and state-sponsored disinformation, all of which are circulated or amplified by networked individuals that may be spreading false information both intentionally and unintentionally" (Caplan et al. 2018, 9). This would explain the success of fake news in Romanian society: it belongs to the field of contexts and experiences that the human mind can comprize and envisage. In this respect, the Facebook corpus in this paper is divided into two sections: the anti-vaccination discourse and the discourse of pro-vaccination. We made a selection of representative figures for each type of discourse.

The anti-vaccination discourse was represented by the right-wing political party, specialists against the vaccine and the anti-vaccine group identities, while the discourse pro-vaccination was produced by public figures from various fields.

The Anti-vaccine Discourse

The Romanian right-wing political party (AUR - Alliance for the Union of Romanians) is the first representative figure for our study. Their posts generally illustrate panic, fear, and critical situations, and instigate hatred. They claim that the president is at war with the Romanians and that the green certificate restricts the citizens' freedom and rights. They also urge the citizens to fight a tyrannical state. We can often see examples of keywords like *medical*

dictatorship, *conspiracy*, *government psychopaths*, and *war*. Images very often complement the text. For example, figure 2 below contains a sample of posts produced by AUR. Example 1 shows people protesting and the text: [The Johannis regime is not at war with the virus, but with its own people. The green certificate does not stop the virus, but it will limit the right to work and to move freely. Moreover, it will create two classes of citizens, with different rights. When the state becomes tyrannical, the resistance of the people is a civic duty.]

Example 2 is an image depicting the Romanian president holding the citizens captive. The image is also accompanied by the text: [The medical dictatorship is no longer just a conspiracy. The interim minister of labor, Raluca Turcan, wants the green certificate to be a passport to work in public institutions. We have to stop them!].

We also noticed high-impact messages written in a very simple and clear language: [The Government psychopaths want only vaccinated people to be granted access to shops. [we demand] Early elections!] (see Example 3).

There were also posts with text [Who are the extremists? We, who support civil rights and freedom, or they, who have started a war against their own people?] and high-impact messages written in special fonts and colours in order to draw users' attention: *Stop extremism* (see Example 4 below).
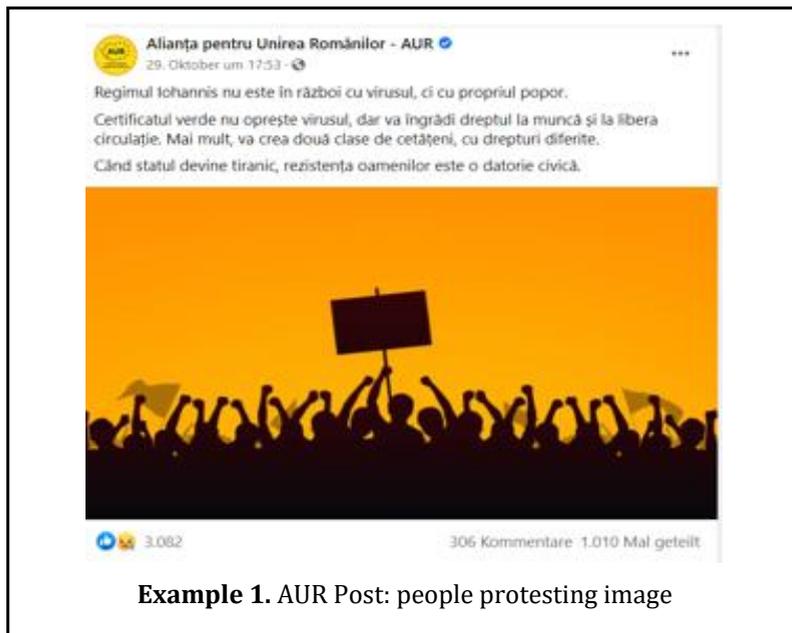
Example 1. AUR Post: people protesting image

Example 2. AUR post: president holding citizens captive image

Example 3. AUR post: Government psychopaths

Example 4. AUR post: stop extremism

Figure 2. AUR Posts - Samples 1
(Source at the end of the article)

Other AUR posts contain images and texts that encourage citizens to act and refuse the vaccine (see Figure 3 below). The texts accompanying the images are very relevant and we provide the translation: Example 5 [Romania needs trust and hope, not the terror promoted by the current regime. Cîțu and Johannis must go]; Example 6 [Now, in Victoriei square]; Example 7 [We will not allow them to turn us into obedient citizens! We will not allow them to shut down our schools, to force us to get the vaccine, to infringe our rights and our freedom guaranteed by the constitution! On Saturday we will go out on the streets to stop the dictatorship!]; Example 8 [Outrageous! Vaccination with the third dose of covid vaccine begins in Romania today, regardless of the fact that the European Medicines Agency (EMA) has not issued a positive assessment. This fact is unprecedented and implicitly of great magnitude. We know that the government wants to get rid as soon as possible of the tens of millions of vaccines it bought with the Romanians' money, but we are people, not laboratory mice!].

Overall, their discourse is paradoxical: they encourage citizens not to panic, but their discourse contains exactly the words and the images that are connected to crisis and critical situations. This blend of simple images and words with which Romanians instantly resonate (for e.g. the Romanian flag, people on the street, syringes, the Romanian president) constitutes their most

used rhetorical strategy to appeal to users' feelings and beliefs. These keywords and images refer to the Romanians' negative experience with the communist era and dictatorship and they activate one of Makoš's five types of cognitive distortions: the peak-end bias which could trigger past traumas in the Romanian collective imaginary.

Example 5. Romania needs trust and hope

Example 6. Now, in Victoriei square
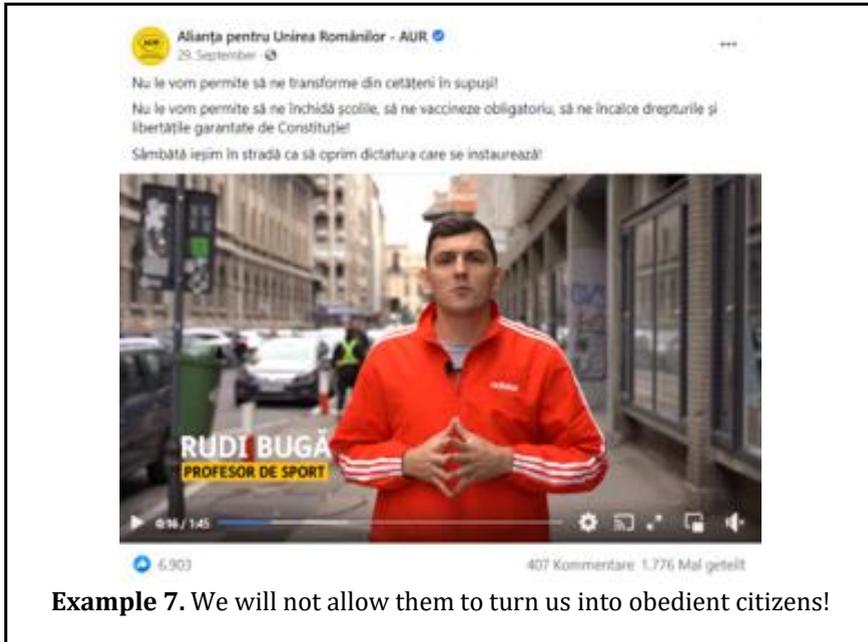
Example 7. We will not allow them to turn us into obedient citizens!

Example 8. Outrageous!

Figure 3. AUR Posts - Samples 2
(Source at the end of the article)

Some doctors who are not virologists outspeak a highly vocal critic against the vaccine on TV and insistently express their reluctance regarding the vaccine. These doctors posted a lot of content on their FB profiles in order to gain more popularity and reach a larger and more diverse audience. Doctor Răzvan Constantinescu, whose posts consist of self-contradictory and injudicious statements, provides a good example. We observe that his discourse might be perceived as persuasive by some users, but the paradox is that most of his posts are full of trivial and vulgar words. Wanting to gain popularity, he is condescending and sarcastic, without bringing any scientific arguments, as can be seen in the two posts below.

In example 9 "I TRUST SCIENCE", even though the title he gives to his own post announces a relevant, scientific topic, he uses offensive language, insulting, and mocking American immunologist Anthony Fauci, who serves as director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. In the post, Constantinescu accuses Fauci of promoting fake science.

In example 10 "THIS GUY MUST BE HOSPITALISED", he tags and directly addresses Raed Arafat, one of the doctors who played a key role during the Pandemics. He uses labels such as *dropout*, *power-sick psychopath*, and *demented man* to describe Arafat. (see Figure 4 and see ANNEX for a full translation of these posts).

His posts are then shared by other users in the Facebook community as they take them for granted and they consider the first information they see to be the relevant one, showing an uncritical consumption of the media and constituting a clear case of anchoring.
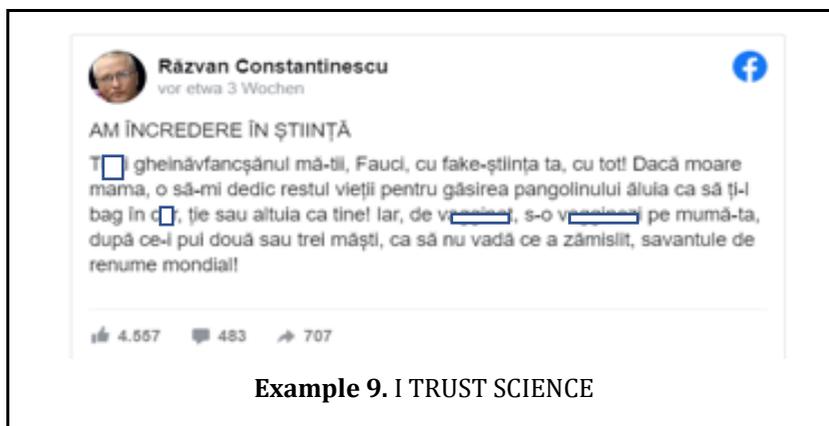
Example 9. I TRUST SCIENCE

Example 10. THIS GUY MUST BE HOSPITALISED

Figure 4. Specialists' posts against the Vaccine
(Source at the end of the article)

These stances above produced by this doctor are illustrative for other anti-vaccine stances of specialists who are not virologists, their anti-vaccine discourse predominantly appealing to emotion, using simple and sometimes aggressive language. These stances shown by specialists fuelled strong positionings towards vaccine rejection. Hence, the *us* versus *them* dynamics enabled pro-vaccine groups (labelled by the people in derogative terms like *laboratory mice* or *government slaves*) and anti-vaccine group identities (labelled by the people as *anti-vaxxers*).

Regular users against the vaccine often promoted and shared the posts of the doctors like the one mentioned above, acting as prosumers, endorsing these posts, and creating communities of like-minded users, thus performing clear cases of clicktivism and deepening the anchoring cognitive distortion, but at the same time subconsciously seeking confirmation of their opinions, thus manifesting the confirmation bias. Their discourse contains the same keywords: *dictatorship*, *communism*, *freedom of choice*, and *rights gained with the price of our blood*.

Most of these types of posts have sarcastic, belittling, and attacking overtones: *the flu of the hysterical stupid*; *imbeciles wearing their underpants on their noses*; *the stupidity of the world we live in do not understand anything and they follow the herd, that's why it is easy to manipulate them*; *"i-phone" generation*; *how naive should you be to believe that someone wants to do you good by forcing you, for your own sake taking away your air, freedom of movement, your job and the right to buy food.* (See Figure 5, Example 11 "The flu").

Oftentimes, these posts are accompanied by quotations from Romanian classical authors in order to make their discourse more credible. For example, one of the posts below contains the quote "Man has only one duty: not to be

stupid", which belongs to an iconic figure of the Romanian literature and journalism of the late XIXth century and beginning of the XXth century. This quote reveals an attempt to legitimize their discourse, by enforcing the message they want to convey and appealing to an authoritative figure. However, including it in the discourse of the pandemic leads to the juxtaposition of two different narratives. It presents readers with a collage of unrelated, incoherent, and incohesive information as these quotes are not taken from the specialised literature and they do not present case studies about the topic under focus (see Figure 5, Example 12 "Quoting the classics").

Example 11. The flu

Example 12. Quoting the classics

Figure 5. The Anti-Vaccine discourse
(Source at the end of the article)

The Pro-vaccine Discourse

Many opinion-makers, micro-celebrities, and celebrities from various fields (the medical field, academic communities, literature, etc.) posted examples of good practice and shared a lot of content on their Facebook pages in order to raise awareness and convince people to get vaccinated and accept the rules (lockdowns, wearing masks, etc.) implemented by the government and the World Health Organization. As such, social media platforms provided the digital playground on which regular users, in their capacity of prosumers, had access to the voice of public figures.

One of the rhetorical strategies in the discourse of opinion-makers, micro-celebrities, and celebrities reflects the so-called phenomenon of debunking, "the intention of which is to clarify the primarily false information presented and thus force the recipient to think more deeply about the published facts" (Kvetanová 2020, 2). For instance, Romanian writer Mircea Cărtărescu (novelist, poet, short-story writer, literary critic, and essayist) wrote a post after getting vaccinated, simply stating what he did and motivating his choice: *I got vaccinated against Covid and I advise everyone to do so. It is a great chance to be among the first ones in the world who get vaccines from the most trustworthy companies and*

for free. It seems absurd to me to refuse, while in peril at sea, this lifebuoy. The post also contains a picture of Mircea Cărtărescu wearing a mask and holding the COVID-19 vaccination certificate (see Example 13 "Mircea Cărtărescu", Figure 6 below). In a related move, the Romanian philosopher and writer Mihai Șora speaks back to and thus challenges the anti-vaxer discourse by drawing on it and reframing it. Thus, he posts on his Facebook wall the following text: "The vaccine rewrites human DNA. Wonderful! I have wanted to be a giraffe all my life". To this, he adds the picture of DNA sequencing that transforms into a giraffe (see Example 14 "Mihai Șora", Figure 6 below). It is important to note that Mihai Șora uses the giraffe as a symbol of strength; in one of his previous posts, he explains that giraffes are the only terrestrial mammals that do not yawn and stay awake and lucid almost the entire time (they never sleep more than 2 hours out of 24).

Example 13. Mircea Cărtărescu
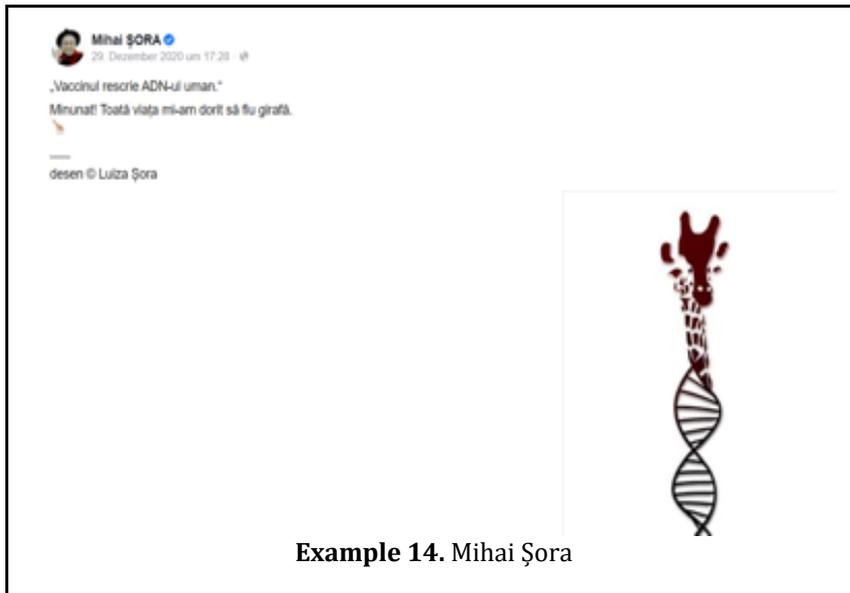
Example 14. Mihai Șora

Figure 6. Contemporary Romanian Writers
(Source at the end of the article)

In some cases, users, including micro-celebrities and public figures, chose to express their opinions in a solemn and grave manner. In example 15 "Banner", in figure 7 below, the user writes a post in which he urges the Romanian people to get vaccinated (*Get the vaccine)* and shares a picture of a banner on the streets of Bucharest in which the dire consequences of not getting vaccinated are depicted: *"They suffocate. They beg us. They regret it." - Banner on Magheru street*. In example 16 "Death certificate", Figure 7, the user highlights the role played by the political parties in deciding people's faith. When the political parties had to give their votes pro or against the Green Certificate, two of the Romanian parties (AUR and PSD) voted against it. The user expresses irony and despondency, implying that voting against the Green Certificate will cause the death of the Romanians: *AUR and PSD have voted yesterday for replacing the Green Certificate with the Death Certificate.*
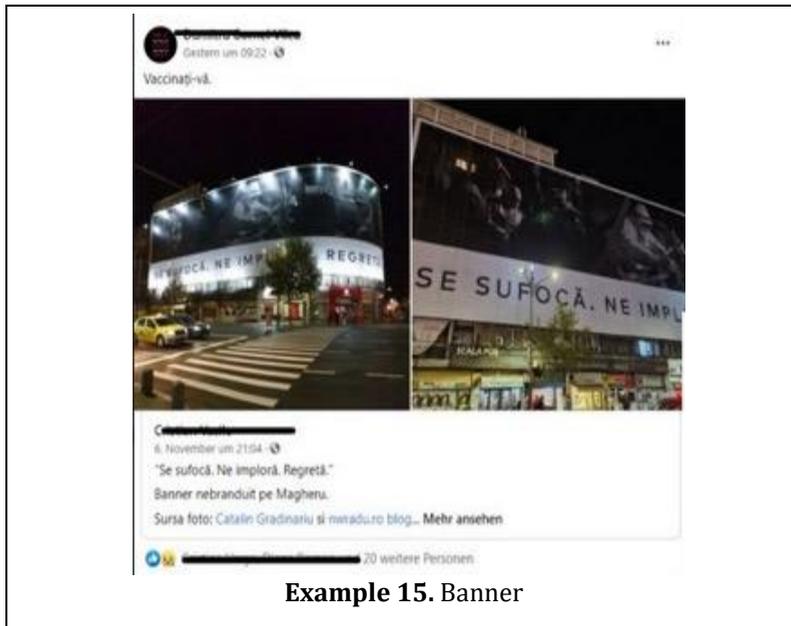
Example 15. Banner

Example 16. Death Certificate

Figure 7. Posts expressing discouragement
(Source at the end of the article)

Other users manifest irony or sarcasm towards the national situation, but also try to deconstruct and debunk certain anti-vaccine beliefs. We selected Romanian users who produced public posts (jokes, profile pictures with the vaccine logo, etc.) and who had more visibility, a high degree of engagement with other discourses, and frequent interaction with other users.

One user makes fun of the lack of reasonable thinking in the messages shown on the banners of people protesting against the vaccine in Bucharest. As such, the user writes the Latin acronym *qed* and reposts the banner's content, specifying: *It is worse than during the communist regime. It is true, the grocery shops were empty, but you were allowed to enter them. - person protesting - Universității Square* (see Example 17 "Banner text", Figure 8). Another user announces in a post a record of vaccination, expressing his bewilderment towards the fact that Romanians can take action as well. He then uses a litotes in order to highlight the gravity of the situation: *There was a record of vaccinations today. Well, blow me down, man! It only had to happen: hundreds of deaths on a daily basis, people had to wait one year and a half, the government had to fall and there was a need for a state of general chaos during which no one understood anything. Get it? General…Mkey* (see Example 18 "Litotes", Figure 8).

Example 17. Banner text

Example 18. Litotes

Figure 8. Posts expressing sarcasm
(Source at the end of the article)

Other users reacted against the Church and its teachings, as evidenced by their posts: [What The Romanian Orthodox Church is doing is to make as many bodies as possible available for chapels] - in this post, the user hints at the fact that the church earns a lot of money from burial ceremonies (see Figure 9, Example 19 "Money for the chapels"); [Churches are exempted from any restrictions, my body is a temple] (see Figure 9, Example 20 "My body is a temple").

Example 19. Money for the chapels

Example 20. My body is a temple

Figure 9. Reactions to the Orthodox Church
(Source at the end of the article)

When the fourth largest wave of the pandemic occurred in Romania, and at the same time the Church organised a massive pilgrimage to the tomb of the saint Paraschieva, this ceremony constituted the source of the greatest controversy because thousands of Romanians were present at the event and kissed the saint's coffin. This exception to pandemic rules was perceived by some as a dismissive and even contemptuous gesture on the part of the Church that allowed and encouraged this behaviour. Therefore, users who promoted the use of vaccines and following protocols posted numerous jokes on the matter: [The coffin is disinfected every 10 minutes, but it is in vain, the woman is still dead] (see Figure 10, Example 21 "The coffin"). Another user calls the saint *Super Spreaderscheva* (see Figure 10, Example 22 "*St. Spreaderscheva*: The relics of Saint Super Spreaderscheva"), making a mockery of the circumstance through this play of words.

	Moaștele Sfintei Super Spreaderscheva
Racla Sfintei Parascheva e dezinfectată la fiecare 10 minute. Dar degeaba, că femeia tot moartă e.	
Example 21. The coffin	**Example 22.** St. Spreadersheva

Figure 10. St. Paraschieva
(Source at the end of the article)

When it comes to the voice of public figures, micro-celebrities, opinion-makers, we consider that prosumers tend to trust the version of successful, well-known people and people that they admire. In the multimodal discourse of these prosumers, we were able to identify the survivorship bias. Moreover, the form of clicktivism manifested in this case is represented by the further distribution of content which consolidates communities of users who support and validate each other in their ideologies and beliefs.

Conclusions

During the Covid-19 pandemic there was content such as videos, spots, posts, comments, images, pictures, text, and memes that circulated on social network sites like Facebook, reaching large audiences. In this climate, pro-vaccine groups and anti-vaccine groups attempted to convince the population to adopt their particular ideology (pro-vaccine or against vaccine). In Romania, the ever-increasing polarisation of the population was a main effect of these

arguments. New media allowed for an unprecedented reach as users were quickly updated about the particular stance of the people they admire, including relatives, professors, scientists, etc. The popular new technologies facilitated a faster sharing and distribution of content, engaging users in continuous interaction, triggering the creation of discussion groups and instigating users to action, organizing people in the digital space and outside the digital space as well in a quick and efficient manner. Through social media platforms, users discovered each other's opinions, clusters of ideas were created, and consequently, people joined one side or the other.

Without the new technologies, it would have been more difficult to comprehend the reality and complexity of the crisis. At the same time, the new technologies revealed a tendency to trust the version of successful, well-known people, leading to the cognitive distortion of *survivorship bias* mentioned by Makoš' (2019). In this scenario, clicktivism seems to have gained an unprecedented effect and a completely new trajectory in Romanian society, bringing in more prosumers and employing new rhetorical strategies.

The COVID-19 pandemic made visible the social impact of the online multimodal discourse and the power of images and texts created and distributed online. There were drawbacks for all the actants involved in this sanitary crisis, regardless of their position and attitude towards the vaccination campaign: scientists and medical experts have been discredited; people, especially those living in small towns and villages, decided to act on their own when in dire need of medical assistance (they did not accept treatment, vaccines or going to hospital); conflicts arose, which led to personal relationships being broken; and the dynamics of some relations have changed as well.

The trend seems to be that new forms of clicktivism, rhetorical strategies, and online patterns of behaviour will influence society in various and complex ways. In this respect, digital activism could constitute a further research path to explore social impact and the manner in which desired outcomes are obtained. Furthermore, it would be relevant to analyze the segment of the population more prone to be influenced by online discourses and thus more susceptible to succumb to the power of image and text. Such potential findings would foster understanding of digital discourse and the idea that critical thinking should be employed when consuming new media content.

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Figure 1. Degree of belief in conspiracy theories and misinformation narratives, at *Voices of Central and Eastern Europe Perceptions of democracy & governance in 10 EU countries*: 46. https://www.globsec.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Voices-of-Central-and-Eastern-Europe_print-version.pdf

Figure 2. AUR Posts - Samples 1
Example 1. AUR Post: people protesting image, at https://web.facebook.com/partidulAUR/posts/pfbid0MySbGxXS3rYasxdZwp c8ePDmsg3HNocTB1zmmRzuXfavQDq5PzBqLoQXLUHzNP27l?_rdc=1&_rdr
Published: October 29, 2021
Comments: 248; Shares: 967

Example 2. AUR post: president holding citizens captive image, at https://web.facebook.com/partidulAUR/posts/pfbid0J8KrCubsPYMpdWEtE D5LzNibZTqbkn2tUzwKt5fyQHxBiE2unNZgMUkgGKCumB1rl?_rdc=1&_rdr
Published: October 20, 2021
Comments: 163; Shares: 309

Example 3. AUR post: Government psychopaths, at https://web.facebook.com/partidulAUR/posts/pfbid0gDaXGc9o2KoCBD2iXd r1avEbHec5tXi4ZEjBbmT7ZtbLkuG7zbKjEVdF5CdrwcnBl?_rdc=1&_rdr
Published: October 14, 2021
Comments: 380; Shares: 265

Example 4. AUR post: stop extremism, at https://web.facebook.com/partidulAUR/posts/pfbid02BrSHEPvedRcn2ippy2 FsM9X8zS4JZ7HdQukCkL8wkiQef5NYEzSoHw6BXeZkfuNHl?_rdc=1&_rdr
Published: October 27, 2021
Comments: 132; Shares: 313

Figure 3. AUR Posts - Samples 2
Example 5. Romania needs trust and hope, at https://web.facebook.com/partidulAUR/posts/pfbid032KBEUTYE5XJFaXZW bwspy6wCv72Vy3ZLYtk4iqmPepFkE12qtSZjRvbv5QKEvDejl?_rdc=1&_rdr
Published: October 4, 2021
Comments: 105; Shares: 202

Example 6. Now, in Victoriei square, at
    https://web.facebook.com/partidulAUR/posts/pfbid0YfeSDufYG8SmysNb5L
    xpKmJC23JjCdrFtYGx9W4t9jH5qYbXRUFSZignBuUJwyhTl?_rdc=1&_rdr
Published: September 18, 2021
Comments: 69; Shares: 192

Example 7. We will not allow them to turn us into obedient citizens!, at
    https://web.facebook.com/watch/?v=388089719452967
Published: September 29, 2021
Comments: 410; Views: 60

Example 8. Outrageous!, at
    https://web.facebook.com/partidulAUR/posts/pfbid0hKMgpxvBC1UQvDccC
    CgDjZP8H7TQYLRkewgTby3tYVGx5eFiNNZwnxw2ueMiL3Mxl
Published: September 28, 2021
Comments: 79; Shares: 100

Figure 4. Specialists' posts against the Vaccine
Example 9. I TRUST SCIENCE, at
    https://web.facebook.com/razvan.constantinescu1/posts/pfbid0C6XUWzpqfRF6fJ
    Gv1zd6gSWneh2FqwXtkTG43bV8KMZXWUBzzY1XFfJ2U7D9nYsYl?_rdc=1&_rdr
Published: October 15, 2021
Comments: 552; Shares: 656

Example 10 THIS GUY MUST BE HOSPITALISED, at
    https://web.facebook.com/razvan.constantinescu1/posts/pfbid0neXmYia9QJ
    xeZ1RT8r59BkXSkKXNvjcMhRUhjHpoWhHDMVTf6ddhumMGhSBbvsK6l?_rd
    c=1&_rdr
Published: October 27, 2021
Comments: 726; Shares: 4.2K

Figure 5. The Anti-Vaccine discourse
Example 11. The flu, at
    https://web.facebook.com/dana.raescu/posts/pfbid0Qbu7ft8p3yBjbB9AX77
    rB6tE5rMeR7rKtsMYfw6PdwCkaR1zVXam4h4D5osCipdMl?_rdc=1&_rdr
Published: October 26, 2021
Embedded as Facebook PrintScreen

Example 12. Quoting the classics, at
    https://mobile.facebook.com/citate.shop.ro/photos/a.110248290873237/26
    0639575834107/?type=3&source=54&_rdc=1&_rdr
Published: October 25, 2021
Embedded as Facebook PrintScreen

Figure 6. Contemporary Romanian Writers
Example 13. Mircea Cărtărescu, at
    https://web.facebook.com/cartarescu.mircea/posts/pfbid0cyjir21SDyQQzSR
    Wb7P5WjBxnNYGvgaJAbCZVDSTz7sMAoko3npKvyyqHu1Y8Q3il?_rdc=1&_rdr
Published: January 20, 2021
Comments: 235; Shares: 687

Example 14. Mihai Şora, at
https://web.facebook.com/mihaisora/posts/3639320039457319/?paipv=0&eav=
AfZSaKS0qrI75aX6U9DQs75jMx5Y3_ZF185kcu44jlc_Fa4nbJLs-xnj-i0EbHG33qU
Published: December 29, 2020
Comments: 173; Shares: 959

Figure 7. Posts expressing discouragement
Example 15. Banner, at
https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/se-sufoca-ne-implora-regreta-cine-este-in-spatele-
bannerului-urias-cu-un-mesaj-pro-vaccinare-de-pe-fatada-blocului-scala-3823481
Published: October 25, 2021
Embedded as Facebook PrintScreen

Example 16. Death Certificate,
https://web.facebook.com/dumitrucornel.vilcu/posts/pfbid0y4gWf7QUz1gw
BZjF7cCKDjwF6unTgGiv7bUESeXNcnAsPanXMX27K9C2wRFviboTl?_rdc=1&_rdr
Published: October 28, 2021
Comments: 0; Shares 0

Figure 8. Posts expressing sarcasm
Example 17. Banner Text, at
https://web.facebook.com/ana.glavce/posts/pfbid02VAjTW8U7vD8XX9wiijF
toBi1X2RDQyBiwtfDEc8ZFAAvV2G2ZRVZNGiEyk4LTRTTl?_rdc=1&_rdr
Published: October 30, 2021
Comments: 28; Shares: 9

Example 18. Litotes, at
https://web.facebook.com/tiberiucodorean/posts/pfbid02Yr8TW9Djx8hPi4
hWviJAW3VEA2AXmJ3oEAjkYe9NPy65tGXxdQcgAP36jkc6kCyzl?_rdc=1&_rdr
Published: October 22, 2021
Comments: 31; Shares: 17

Figure 9. Reactions to the Orthodox Church
Example 19. Money for the chapels, at
https://web.facebook.com/cornel.ionescu.182/posts/pfbid0JGjagWiWsdx6DeNS
Expxqk6AQp95BdX8Q9jhTyuNRZGWoCykpmE5pvNBbayozg1Ul?_rdc=1&_rdr
Published: October 24, 2021
Comments: 8; Shares: 10

Example 20. My Body is a Temple, at
https://web.facebook.com/tiberiucodorean/posts/pfbid02HoDLBTGFLDfRD
SGGaQsaLgDxsSsH4Vn8QbqDbK8iaVDvN5ZtugkoXkApUgz3Mii6l
Published: October 22, 2021
Comments: 21; Shares: 19

Figure 10. St. Paraschieva
Example 21. The coffin, at
https://web.facebook.com/tiberiucodorean/posts/pfbid0255iYfbu6DLMs6Zv
KfPyzefVitbQATiRZz4m9D2Ljr9z33TNHgFgSTCK7UMnyBRGUl
Published: October 9, 2021
Comments: 21; Shares: 46

ANNEX

Example 9 I TRUST SCIENCE

AM ÎNCREDERE ÎN ŞTIINŢĂ
T***i gheinăvfancşănul mă-tii, Fauci, cu fake-ştiinţa ta, cu tot! Dacă moare mama, o să-mi dedic restul vieţii pentru găsirea pangolinului ăluia ca să şi-l bag în c*r, ţie sau altuia ca tine! Iar, de v******t, s-o v*******i pe mumă-ta, după ce-i pui două sau trei măşti, ca să nu vadă ce a zămislit, savantule de renume mondial !

[I TRUST SCIENCE.
F**k you, s*****g Fauci, with your fake-science and everything! If my mother dies, I'm going to dedicate the rest of my life to finding that pangolin to put it up your a*s, yours, or someone else's like you! And you should f**k your mother after putting two or three masks on her, so that she does not see the world-renowned scientist she has conceived!]

Example 10 THIS GUY MUST BE HOSPITALISED

ĂSTA TREBUIE INTERNAT DE URGENŢĂ
Dar cine restricţia mă-tii de crezi tu, Raed Arafat, să mă ameninţi şi să propui să fiu aspru sancţionat? Un repetent susţinut de servicii şi ajuns un psihopat bolnav de putere? Să povestesc cum mi te smiorcăiai la telefon, prin 2010, că vor Movilă şi Tabără să-ţi privatizeze SMURD-ul şi apoi îmi mulţumeai fierbinte pentru ajutor, după care mi-ai blocat adresa de e-mail şi toate contactele? Dementule!]

[THIS GUY MUST BE HOSPITALISED
But who do you think you are to restrict me, Raed Arafat, to threaten me and propose that I be severely punished? A [secret] service-supported dropout turned power-sick psychopath? Let me tell you how, in 2010, you were whining to me on on the phone that Movilă and Tabără wanted to privatize your SMURD [emergency rescue service based in Romania], and then you thanked me for my help, after which you blocked my email address and all contacts? Lunatic!]

Example 11 The flu

Ca să-I lămuresc pe imbecilii care umblă cu chiloţeii pe nas prin aeroporturi, mă ofer voluntary să mă infectez cu virusul vieţii. Să vadă şi ei un medic nevaccinat "antigripal" (o tâmpenie, având în vedere polimorfismul virusurilor gripale) care nu moare, frate, deşi "a susţinut ciuma roşie" (!) Prostovănimea lumii în care trăim nu pricepe nimic, se comportă ca o turmă, de aceea este uşor de manipulat. Ea nu poate înţelege că astfel de virusuri nu prezintă pericol vital decât pentru categoriile de risc maxim: cirotici, neoplazici, vârste extreme, pacienţi cu insuficienţă cardiacă severă, BPOC. Imunodeprimaţi (aş adăuga eu, şi cei care v-aţi vaccinat aiurea pentru orice prostie). Generaţia "i-phone" poartă

barbă și glezne goale, mască de pânză pe facies, urlă că vrea nu știu ce țară ca afară, iese la proteste în mod ovin, se vaccinează în draci ca să-și facă rost de vreo leucemie și apoi se plânge că statul nu face nimic pentru ei, nu îi pune biberonul. Mortalitatea gripei "Covid-19" este de 2.4%, comparative cu 2.1% cât a fost cea a epidemei de gripă din 2018. Și atunci de ce vă isterizați, glezno-barbișoanelor?

[To enlighten the imbeciles who walk around airports with their panties on their noses, I volunteer to infect myself with the damn virus. Let them see an unvaccinated doctor (a stupidity, given the polymorphism of flu viruses) who doesn't die, bro, even though he "supported the red plague" (!) The stupid people of the world we live in don't get it, they behave like a herd, that's why they are easy to manipulate. They cannot understand that such viruses are only life-threatening for the highest risk categories: cirrhotics, neoplastics, extreme elderly, severe heart failure patients, COPD. Immunodepressed people (I might add, and those of you who've vaccinated yourselves for whatever nonsense). The "i-phone" generation, having beards and bare ankles, cloth masks on their faces, screams that they want a civilized country like the one you can find in Western society. They participate in protests, vaccinate the hell out of themselves to get leukemia, and then complain that the State does nothing for them, doesn't give them their baby bottles. The "Covid-19" flu mortality is 2.4%, compared to 2.1% as high as the flu outbreak in 2018 was. So why are you hysterical, you 'bare-ankled' bearded people?]

Example 12 Quoting the classics

- Cât de naiv să fii ca să crezi că cineva vrea să îți facă BINE cu forța, luându-ți "pentru binele tău" aerul, libertatea de mișcare, slujba, dreptul de a cumpăra mâncare?
- "O singură datorie are omul, să nu fie prost"
- În curând o să ieșim din casă doar pe bază de certificat, se instaurează dictatura. Băimăreni, haideți în stradă, că ne iau ăștia drepturile câștigate cu sânge.
- [How naive could you be to believe that someone wants to do you GOOD by force, taking away "for your own good" your air, your freedom of movement, your job, your right to buy food?
- "Man has only one duty, not to be stupid"
- Soon we will be allowed to go only if we have a certificate, dictatorship is being established. Come on, people, let's take to the streets, they're taking away our rights gained with the price of our blood!]

Example 13 Mircea Cărtărescu

M-am vaccinat anti-Covid și sfătuiesc pe toată lumea s-o facă. E o mare șansă să fim printre primii în lume, vaccinul să fie de la cele mai credibile firme și gratuit. Să refuzi, căzut în mare, acest colac de salvare mi se pare absurd.

[I have the vaccine against Covid and I advise everyone to do so. To be among the first to get the vaccine is a great opportunity. Not to mention that the vaccine was produced by the most reputable companies and it's free. To refuse this lifeline seems absurd to me.]

Example 14 Mihai Şora

„Vaccinul re-scrie ADN-ul uman." Minunat! Toată viaţa mi-am dorit să fiu girafă

["The vaccine re-writes the human DNA." Great! I wanted to be a giraffe all of my life]

Example 19 Money for the chapels

- Eu, prieteni, interpretez invers ştirea: Ceea ce a făcut (şi mai face) BOR, în pandemie, e să pună la dispoziţie morţi pentru capele.
  Morgile spitalor din Bucureşti sunt pline. Arhiepiscopia Bucureştilor vine în ajutor şi pune la dispoziţie capelele de exterior din cadrul spitalelor, capelele mortuare de la parohiile din imediata apropiere şi capelele cimitirelor parohiale din imediata proximitate. Tot este ceva, nu?
- Prin urmare, o afacere BOR

[I, my friends, interpret the news backwards: what the Romanian Orthodox Church did (and still does), in the pandemic, is to provide dead people for the chapels.
The hospital morgues in Bucharest are full. The Archdiocese of Bucharest comes to the rescue and makes available the outdoor chapels of hospitals, the mortuary chapels of nearby parishes and the chapels of nearby parish cemeteries. It's still something, isn't it?
Therefore, a profitable deal]

IDEOLOGIZED IDENTITIES IN THE ROMANIAN E-NEWS. A CULTURAL SOCIOLINGUISTIC QUERY OF CONVERGED MEDIA TEXTS ON THE 2022 RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Diana COTRĂU[1]

ABSTRACT. *Ideologized Identities in the Romanian e-News. A Cultural Sociolinguistic Query of Converged Media Texts on the 2022 Russia-Ukraine Conflict.* The design for this paper is to provide a qualitative analysis of how positioning towards the two parties directly involved in the 2022 Russia-Ukraine conflict has been the catalyst of the textual morphing of two ideologized identities in some of the Romanian e-Press. The focus was on the locus of convergence of two types of mediated texts: the production of professional press editors and journalists, and of Social Networked Sites users and prosumers. With this intent, the Romanian HotNews.ro website was scrutinized, and a number of e-news items were singled out thematically and structurally. The presumption is that the mediation process has been conducive to foregrounding two ballpark antithetic identities as underpinned by correspondent ideologies. An interdisciplinary perspective was opted for, one that joins Cultural Sociolinguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (Agha 2007; Androutsopoulous 2006; Blommaert 2017; Herring 2013; Silverstein 2004; Thurlow 2017; Wodak 2022) with the Ethnography of Netspeak (Kozinets 2010; Markham 2016, 2020; Zappavigna 2011) and focuses on collective identities in order to diagnose how the mediated text, as part of the semiotic architecture of the said e-Press inputs, pairs up antithetic ideology-determined identities in times of crisis.

Keywords: *Cultural Sociolinguistics, Ethnography of Netspeak, ideologized identity, digital cultural practices, textual interpretation, e-Press, Social Networked Sites*

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REZUMAT. *Identități ideologizante în presa electronică din România. O investigație de factură sociolingvistică și culturală a unor texte mediatice convergente pe tema conflictului ruso-ucrainean din 2022*. Intenția lucrării de față este de a furniza o analiză calitativă a modului în care poziționarea față de cele două părți direct implicate în conflictul ruso-ucranean a catalizat alcătuirea în textele unei părți a presei electronice românești a două identități ideologizante. Accentul cade asupra locului de convergență a două tipuri de texte mediatice, și anume produsele editorilor și jurnaliștilor de presă și cele ale utilizatorilor și prozumatorilor de pe siturile de socializare în rețea. S-au identificat din punct de vedere tematic și structural un număr de articole de știri electronice de pe platforma românească de știri HotNews.ro. S-a presupus că procesul de mediatizare facilitează evidențierea, în mare, a două identități antitetice, întemeiate pe ideologiile aferente. S-a optat pentru utilizarea unei perspective intersdisciplinare, ce reunește Sociolingvistica culturală și Analiza critică a discursului (Agha 2007; Androutsopoulous 2006; Blommaert 2017; Herring 2013; Thurlow 2017; Silverstein 2004; Wodak 2022) și Etnografia dialogului pe Internet (Kozinets 2010; Markham 2016, 2020; Zappavigna 2011) cu accent pe identitățile colective, cu scopul de a diagnostica modul în care textul mediatic, parte a arhitecturii semiotice a tipului de presă menționat, alătură identități antitetice în baza curentului ideologic căruia îi subscriu în momente de criză.

Cuvinte-cheie: *Sociolingvistică culturală, Etnografia dialogului pe Internet, identitate ideologizantă, practici culturale digitale, interpretare de text, presă electronică, situri ale rețelelor de socializare*

Introduction

Some radical socio-political changes have occurred after the fall of the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe during the past few decades. Efforts were made by the former communist states to align their burgeoning democracies to the ones in the West boasting tradition. The road has been turbulent and peppered with several failed expectations of a swift change, which provides a partial explanation as to why some individuals, despite having lived behind the Iron Curtain, harbour nostalgia for the socialist traits of life under the past regime. However, one cannot but note the aspirational ideological shifts paralleling the lingering ambivalence across the local socio-political spectrum, the capitalism v. communist ideological pair revisited occasionally. Further note should also be taken of the fact that the political ideology canvas has diversified in somewhat of a syncretic fashion, the conservative and avant-garde features co-habiting in the postmodern recycling of imploded political leanings. It is

against this political ideology backdrop that one can perceive a latent, problematic East-West dichotomy that apparently has not of yet reached a resolution. This sense of an irresolute issue traverses individual and collective discourses be they in the Press or in Social Networked Sites (Papacharissi 2011). The former purports to be the voice of the public, the other a social arena for the grassroots negotiation of the varied publics' identities across alliances, affiliations, or interests (Zappavigna 2012). In the current setting, the armed invasion of Ukraine by Russia, which had escalated to an almost full-scale war at the time of our writing, is a metonym of a belated West versus East belligerent conflict. The actual invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Army was deemed unimaginable, the European Union states in the geo-proximity of the physical conflict stunned at an act they could not reconcile with, albeit anticipated. Bewilderment aside, the respective nations joined the people across the world engaging in the matter in ways that were somewhat more subjective given their spatial closeness to battleground. These included, amongst others, closely following the Press briefings while taking out their correlated dilemmas and anxieties to the Social Network Sites. Indeed, in accordance with the new socio-cultural practices of our times (Van Dijk 2006), the conflict became a heatedly debated topic marking the digital discourse of engaged readers of the e-Press and of Social Media users.

This paper is a qualitative exploration of how both the ostentatious and oblique positionings towards the two parties directly involved in the 2022 Russia-Ukraine conflict have become the main factors in forging two polarised identities as determined by two historically opposite ideologies. And if the situation triggered likewise global reactions, we dare say that the phenomenon registered a higher intensity in the countries neighbouring Ukraine for implicit historical and geographical reasons. Romania is one such country that has proven its partisanship(s). Its actual engagement became visible both in the 'real' as well as in the 'virtual' worlds of the Social Media and e-Press, the one affording, the other relaying authentic textual manifestations. Thus, a feedback loop was enabled by the meeting between the e-Press and the Social Media texts, with the Press turning the Social Network Sites expression of individual (political) leanings into representations that gratified their readership.

Since the author herself became involved on a personal level in the humanitarian crisis generated by the conflict, choosing to research the Romanian Press was a heart *and* mind rather than mind *over* heart decision. In such a situation, there is the risk of confusing the emic and etic perspectives, yet that was regarded as an advantage that could only add weight and complexity to an analysis that was being carried out on an unfolding phenomenon. To begin with, we selected the highly accessed Romanian HotNews.ro news platform, which

had been covering round the clock the development of the situation in Ukraine since its inception. Our foremost criterion for selection was thematic, to which we added, shortly after, a structural one, on noticing amongst the large volume of briefing news on the war a consistent category of e-press items that incorporated international Tweets and Instagram posts. By and large, we observed a pattern whereby the professional editors meaningfully built pieces of news around the Twitter and Instagram User Generated Content, whose messages and rhetoric they encapsulated in a catchy headline. To round up our contention, we felt it necessary to put into the mix the posts by the Romanian readers in the *Comment* section of the e-news in point, an e-locus that falls within the definition of Social Networked Sites. Thus, our cursory observation that a critical mass of people across the world had been taking divergent sides relative to the conflict paved the way to an epistemic wish to determine how this translated into interpersonal antagonism on a local level. This led to our further inference that under the *Zeitgeist* circumstances, the joint daily e-Press consumption and ritual Social Media engagement induced in readers and users the feeling of re-experiencing the Cold War atmosphere, and thus enhanced the pairing up of antithetic identities building on a rekindled ideological conflict.

Our nexus perspective is one provided by Cultural Sociolinguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis (Agha, 2007; Androutsopoulous 2006; Blommaert 2017; Herring 2013; Silverstein 2004; Thurlow 2017; Wodak 2022) and the Ethnography of Netspeak (Kozinets 2010; Markham 2016, 2020; Zappavigna 2011) focusing on the *being* and *becoming* of socio-cultural identities. Our research is qualitative in that we have undertaken to explore the role of the cultural aspects and functions of language in forging identities on the Net as the host of the e-Press we have targeted. Indeed, with the advent of the Social Media, the Internet has become the locus *par excellence* where Netizens not only retrieve information or communicate but also become, in the process, members of participatory cultures (Androutsopolous & Tereick 2013; Androutsopolous 2016). Given everything it encumbers, they seek and find in the Net the opportunities to display allegiances based on communal mindsets, worldviews, and interests, even while they are occasioned to play out their identity repertoires (Tannen & Trester 2013). Moreover, and in as far we are concerned, it is *the* medium that fosters ideological realignments of identities when conjectured upon geopolitical crises (Wodak 2022).

Some Conducive Focal Concepts and Theory Turns

In our conception of identity, we lean onto the belief that the exploration of the language displays and textual inputs in the media of our choice can lead us to valid observations, for "we fill the gap between the meagre linguistic and

other evidence available to us, and the whole person we construct using knowledge some of which may perhaps be 'hard-wired' into us genetically [...], but the bulk of which has been accumulated over a lifetime of experience of meeting people, making 'hypotheses' about what they are like, and 'testing' out these hypotheses in our dealings with them." (Joseph 2004, 3) Today, the digital alternative to interacting in person is more 'engaging' than the one inoculated in our genes by millennia of behaviour. It is, however, also more compelling, for as interlocutors we need to swiftly break down and analyse novel and ever more dynamic types of actions that are not yet deep-seated reflexes. Online interaction requires that we supplant our genetic hard-wiring with the newly-acquired talents, the latter themselves in need of periodical updating.

On another note, the term *socio-cultural* is deemed by several scholars as a timely and necessary replacement of the term *social* in identity theories. This change of terminology, where accepted, has marked a substantial shift in academic work as it proceeded to contemplate how conflated (social *and* cultural) identities are made meaningful in self-expression and the categorisation of the others. A refined observer of the dynamic social and cultural changes of the last decades, Jenkins (2014) himself revised consequentially his original definition of 'social identity' more than once. The new syntagm and its conceptualisation have both been embraced by Cultural Sociolinguistics, and many of the scholars (Agha 2007; Androutsopoulous 2006; Blommaert 2017; Herring 2013; Silverstein 2004; Thurlow 2017) in this line of applied linguistics welcomed the fused unit, its cultural variable gaining precedence over the social one. Indeed, the social system of classes ebbing today, upending saliency-wise the social-cultural sequence relative to both collective and individual identities cannot be eluded.

Yet another aspect to be considered is the existence of two prominent approaches to language and identity, the one now deemed essentialist, the other constructionist. Categories such as nationality, class, race, gender, etc., were once regarded as fixed. In the constructionist view, researchers were/are interested in identity as a process "in which individuals construct categorical belonging, both for themselves and for others with whom they come in contact" (Joseph 2004, 84). Between the two, we felt that the constructionist approach is the more appropriate where we are concerned, for as Joseph (1997, 93) pointedly noted: "[...] the repeated reconfigurations of the USSR and Eastern-bloc countries in 1989-91, and the recognition of sub-national entities in Western Europe in the 1990's have all contributed to a strong awareness of the fluidity and arbitrariness of nationality." Foreshadowing the conceptualisation of identity that is currently trending in the Social Sciences, Joseph's *fluidity* has branched out in a constellation of new meanings, especially with the advent of the Social Media. Jenkins, too, has backed the philosophical perspective for looking at

identity as *becoming* rather than *being*, and it can be safely said that the inherent dynamism of digital communication has also tipped the scales toward the idea of process. Indeed, the affordances of the Social Networked Sites have provided their users with the opportunity, the means, and even the motives for putting into motion their identity repertoires instead of sticking to fixed self-presentations. And although it has been said that fixedness is associated with 'real-life' identity, and fluidity with online self-presentation, the two need combining for successful communication to occur.

In what follows, it is apparent that we need to make partial recourse to the essentialist view, as we acquiesce with the axiomatic view of language as central to the formation of national identity and with the fact that "the existence of a national language is the primary foundation upon which nationalist ideology is constructed" (Joseph 1997, 94). Our leverage, however, is that since ours is a prevailingly Cultural Sociolinguistic perspective, we assume that language is both the means and the resource by which nationalist and world-order ideologies are made either transparent or oblique in discourses even while they are being renegotiated, which points to the constructionist view. Needless to say, several other elements are to be taken into account relative to collective identity construction as underpinned by ideologies in the Internet era. For instance, as regards e-news columns (part of our analytical material), the degree to which such ideologies are (made) visible may be the result of straightforward editorial leaning-related decisions, of deliberate manipulation, or of the column author's personal creeds. Then again, it has long been established (McLuhan, 1964) that the Internet has turned us into Netizens, the dwellers of a wired global village, an image that downplays the saliency of national appurtenance, just as later it also became apparent that the term cultural was an adequate and inclusive alternative for 'national and social'. While seen as the direct effect of the accruing engagement (Zappavigna 2012) in the globalised Social Media, all of the above have conjectured the setting into motion of the cultural functions of language. And if the argumentation above shows us as wavering between the two conflicting approaches (essentialist vs. constructionist) to language and identity, let us conclude with Markham's enunciation (2016, 2) that "in studies of special interest groups who emerge, grow, and function as stable communities online [...], the boundaries are built discursively, or through connection, interest, and flow, rather than geography, nationality, or proximity." We, therefore, presumed the anticipated pair of emerging identities to be foregrounded by their ideological dimension even as people locally and worldwide were processing the sudden news of the attack on Ukraine by Russia on February 24 of the year 2022.

The Analytical Journey

i. The Corpus

We chose to explore the Romanian e-news platform called HotNews.ro, the first 24/7 newspaper in Romania (as the claim reads on its Home Page), as we had found their overt editorial choices to be centripetal to engaging two types of readership relative to the situation in Ukraine. The manner in which it ranked the news items in terms of newsworthiness, by giving precedence to the situation in Ukraine, the choice of reorganising its news categories by inserting a distinct showcasing icon for the conflict entitled *War in Ukraine* (Rom.: [Război în Ucraina]), the placing of the icon as the first in the line of its until then regular categories of news, and the programmatic lexical choice of naming the conflict 'war' and dismissing all the other alternatives employed insistently and persistently by the two geopolitical poles involved, were just as many clues in this sense.

We harvested a longitudinal series of its e-news over a period of 5 months, roughly starting at the outbreak of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict in late February through late July 2022, and identified a category of clustered textual input, comprising, as follows:

a. the edited text of the e-news items as professional publishing;

b. the *authentic* (in Internet Sociolinguistic lingo) embedded Twitter and Instagram texts (with *text* in the wider sense of language as part of the communication semiotics on the Social Media);

c. the posts in the *Comment* section of the said item (see a.).

If type a. texts are mass-media edited inputs, type b. are the product of the Social Media average user, members of military organisations, officials 'speaking' in their personal capacities, or else they may be re-tweets or re-posts of news outlets (the authenticity lies in the action itself: re-tweeting is a/the message), with type c. texts also classifiable as authentic production on Social Networked Sites (given the convergence of the New Media).

The corpus was not collected *per se* but was delineated *in situ* with the help of a HotNews.ro platform affordance which allows readers to filter content. The same has also enabled us to narrow down the analytical material (see ANNEX for the link to the longitudinal, filtered archive). We have surveyed the HotNews.ro items featured under the *War in Ukraine* section during the time span mentioned in two operational stages. The first, covering February to June 2022, led us to the observation that a critical mass of Romanians had adopted two opposing sides in the conflict. We then proceeded to refine even more our selection, as we had noted by then the recurrent e-news structural pattern

aforementioned. Our criterion of selection became thus twofold, thematic *and* structural, and we narrow-targeted the items that embedded Tweets and Instagram posts and hosted posts by engaged readers in the *Comment* sections. Next, we sourced our second stage exemplifications from the archived items covering the month of July 2022.

Considering the functioning characteristics of e-news sites and our use of one as a corpus-archive, we need to underscore some of its peculiarities. It is not just new material that is being uploaded round the clock, but the archived items themselves may undergo erratum processes, headlines may be altered or whole items may be removed (this, however, very rarely). Moreover, the production of new posts in the *Comment* section is pan-chronic, new ones may be added as belated reactions to early comments and may initiate new threads at any point in time. Consequently, every example cluster comprises the e-news item with the embedded (multimedia) Twitter or Instagram Post and the posts in the *Comment* section at the moment of retrieval.

ii. Methodology

We summarised the results of our first operational stage as a set of preliminary general observations. We drew up a synopsis of the thematic items indexing culturalist talk, which we regarded as a potent generator of, or closely mirroring polarised identities. Additionally, we found that perceptible attitudinal and emotional overtones were concurrent with and underpinned the following generic-nationalistic themes:

- humour and sarcasm at the expense of the Russian army;
- defiance of the invading Russian military by the Ukrainian civilians;
- otherization of the Russians as a nation;
- Russian military's (high-ranking officers and regular soldiers alike) ignoble manner of doing combat.

Our concrete exemplifications (see ANNEX) of detailed findings, as part of our second operational stage, are extracted from the July section of the archived e-news, the month which marked the 150th day of a war that was originally designed by its on-setters as a *blitzkrieg*. By then, the identities we had foreshadowed would have gained a strong contour, but it is not our intention to perform a diachronic pursuit thereof. Instead, we assumed our analysis of the targeted e-news items would confirm as well as nuance our preliminary observations, which is the line along which we are deconstructing the examples below. These are sourced from the clustered categories of texts mentioned above, alternately cloaked in Romanian as the language of the headlines of the HotNews.ro edited items and of the posts in the *Comment* sections, and in

English as the *lingua franca* of the embedded Tweets and Instagram posts. This add-on to our preliminary observations expanded the scope of our objectives, as we noticed an additional dimension to the antithetic identities specifically sought. We deemed that salient, as it supplanted whatever ideological 'bonding' had already occurred locally, through the communication occurring across the multilingual and globalising Internet (Danet & Herring 2007). Indeed, the varied ethnic backgrounds of the text producers, consumers, and prosumers, the ethos of the parties physically engaged in the war, and the cultural propensities of the authors of the mediated texts rendered it quite poignant. All in all, we explored the texts of the selected e-Press items, with language seen as part of the overall semiotics of communication across the converged textual inputs rather than as piecemeal of multimodal communication. The coordinates of our analysis were the thematic content and the critical nuances of the discourses of the e-Press and of the embedded Social Media items, both of which, in this case, were instrumental in forging identities as a languaculture act.

iii. Focal discussion of the findings

In the early stages of the conflict, mocking the alleged superiority of the Russian army (personnel and weapons) quickly became a favourite discursive strategy in the Social Media and was just as swiftly tapped into by HotNews.ro. Memes of abandoned Russian tanks tugged by Ukrainian farm tractors with entertaining captions were trending. As an aside, they had become so popular and suggestive of the hearty involvement of the whole of the Ukrainian population, in contrast to the perceived mercenary composition of the invading army, that they were featured in a stamp series issued by the Ukrainian government. Sarcasm and humour targeting the invading army were identified in the July corpus-archive as coincidental with the glorification of the home army defending its territory. For instance, if within the example 3 cluster, the original embedded Tweet is worded neutrally: *Destroying an enemy armored personnel carrier with a Javelin* – the corresponding HotNews.ro headline is longer, uses click-bait wording and is the carrier of multiple messages: in addition to the factual information, it anticipates the success of the hit concomitant with suggesting that the famed Russian army vehicles are vulnerable to the inferior weaponry used in the Ukrainian counterattacks (the square bracketing indicates our English glossing of the original Romanian headlines, see ANNEX):

> [New and clear images of a Javelin attack: How the rocket soars before hitting full-on a Russian armoured vehicle].

Example 4 reinforces the multi-semantics and enhances the irony. It reads like the satisfactory realisation that the invading army is running short of fully

functioning weapons and needs to resort to its obsolete armament. The full weight of the inherent sarcasm is conveyed by the second part of the headline:

[The Russian army brought out their stock of 2S7Pion self-propelled guns. Perhaps they are being taken to the scrapyard]

The commendation of the Ukrainian soldiers is non-negotiable in several of the HotNews.ro headlines, which, at face value, are merely summarizing raw facts, as in example 1:

[Ukrainian soldiers have published the first images of the new M270 launchers in action / How they differ from the HIMARS systems]

Underneath its denotative layer, the headline carries the strong connotation that the Ukrainian soldiers defending their country are highly motivated, the evidence of which lies in their deft manipulation of high-technology Western weaponry with which they are less than familiar. The embedded Tweet video reinforces the connotation by showing the weapons in full, real action, that is, a direct hit of the enemy. The accompanying musical score (most of the embedded material is multimedia) is cross-referential. It starts with a Ukrainian patriotic song and moves on to a mundane popular foreign jingle resonating with fun-making and play.

A defiant attitude set in after the initial astonishment and disconcertedness felt by the Ukrainian city and village dwellers on being attacked by the representatives of a kindred nation, despite the number of prior episodes (e.g., the Annexation of Crimea preceded by, according to translocal folklore, the moving in of some 'little green men' wearing no insignia indicative of any national army) in anticipation of what was to follow. Instances of invading soldiers being addressed or confronted in the Russian language by Ukrainian citizens (be they Russian minority or Ukrainian majority) were a common sight captured by journalists doing fieldwork in the early days of the conflict. If with some it could have been a sign of bipartisanship, soon enough, when enemy bombing became a daily occurrence in the Ukrainian localities, including those beyond the front line as officially delineated by the Russian military, the reality of the situation struck hard. Many Ukrainian locals fell prey to the terror-inducing conduct of the invaders, but several resisted the pressure by resorting to physical or symbolical subversion. In example 2, a young woman wearing a blue T-shirt with a logo reading *Ukraine* is captured displaying a rebelling (Rocker) gesture towards the Russian flag placed on a bombed-out edifice in the city of Mariupol. This functions as a singling out of a distinct socio-cultural category: young Ukrainian *aficionados* courageously expressing their stance

against the war on their country and the refusal to accept defeat despite the obvious outcome. Thus, focal leisure-related activities of youth subcultures are upcycled into one brave and selfless act even while the city had by then undergone utter destruction and become the 21ˢᵗ century equivalent of the iconic Spanish town of Guernica in World War II.

Instances of considering the Russians the *Other* are plentiful. In example 7, Ukrainians are shown as 'humane' humans in stark opposition with the Russians generically likened to the pseudo-human *Orcs*, the infamous fictional characters of the highly popular fantasy saga by J.R.R. Tolkien. The name was quickly adopted by many engaged readers as part of the broader convention that equated the Russian Federation with the equally infamous world of *Modor* (the creation of the same author). They became in-house names for many commentators, who used it to index indiscriminately all Russians. Through over-lexicalisation, as is sometimes the case with anti-languages, they were also used as a ploy for avoiding censorship by HotNews.org administrators alongside other instances of play with lexical variants: *rusnaci*, a derogatory Romanian name for Russians, becomes *ruznaci*, *ruzznaci*, etc. (see below). The Ukrainian soldiers are documented, here, as finding the time, in the grasp of a dangerous situation, to rescue a kitten left behind by the Russians after a brief occupancy of Snake Island. The images of the actual rescue are showcased alongside the replacement of the Russian banner by the Ukrainians' own, an indication that the two actions are deemed equally iconic of a nation that is noble and multifaceted, whereas the invaders are uniquely ignoble. In fact, many TV recounts of Ukrainians fleeing the country to the neighbouring friendly states were accompanied by clips showing the refugees taking along their pets as the norm rather than an exception, picturing them as the responsible representatives of an animal-loving nation.

Distinguishing between the two types of battling, the one, the defence of the sovereignty of one's country, the other, an unprovoked invasion of an independent state, is also a matter of complexity. Russians are held culpable for conducting a war befitting the past century. Overriding all political agreements and ignoring all modern rules of physical combat, the Russian war doctrine is culture clashing. In this vein, the repetitive Russian nuclear threats (post WW II taboos) carried against the whole of Europe and the USA (or 'the collective West', as worded by the Russian pro-war propaganda) rather than just Ukraine as the self-appointed enemy, weaponizing food, petrol and gas with dire consequences for states that have no geopolitical contingency with the conflict, the indiscriminate bombing of civilian buildings, the deportation of a high number of the local population, the deflection of blame, the claim of false objectives, are projected as modern day military and political *faux-pas*. All of the above were reflected critically by the HotNews.ro press platform, which wholeheartedly

embraced Ukraine's own propaganda, and thus transgressed journalism deontology. The editorial stance purported that grief be voiced singularly over the Ukrainian casualties and fatalities, insisting on the civilian ones, while the loss of lives among the Russian military was reported obliquely, as the result of successful Ukrainian strikes. The former were augmented through graphic visuals (photos or videos) anchoring the edited text, whereas the latter were trivialised, through issuing routine daily statistics.

As regards the embedded Russian images documenting their own strikes with advanced weapons, they are presented laconically (see Example 5), inviting readers, for a change, to form their own opinions on what was intended as a daunting threat by the invading state claiming military superiority. In example 6**,** on the other hand, a point is made of highlighting the creative and ludic strategy of the Ukrainians. Christian iconography was craftily superposed over photos of popular weapons and became viral memes. A possible reading of the 'male' Saint HIMARS[2] (featured in the example) and of the 'female' Saint Javelin[3] (the first to be circulated) takes Christian referencing even further, inferring that the women and men of Ukraine may be destined to martyrdom, but they *will* faithfully engage in a battle against a doctrinal Evil. Any one of them might as well be Saint George slaying the dragon, or David defeating Goliath, and not just in effigy. If weaponizing food and rattling of the nuclear sabre are unacceptable tactics by modern warring standards, in contrast, Ukrainian-manipulated Western weapons must be canonised for their destruction of Russians in an iniquitous battle.

Several of the themes above have been picked up and snowballed in the *Comment* sections of the e-news investigated. Galvanized by the editorial rhetoric, heated debates are afforded by such websites. Readers today are no longer passive media consumers who are narcotised into accepting wholesale the preferred messages of the dominant ideology. Today's keen information-seeking Netizens have achieved the media literacy (Martin 2008) to decode the now super-diversified messages. In this sense, the discursive actions and reactions in the comments we have analysed are cloaked in a hate-speech type of language, ranging from mild sarcasm to extreme licentiousness. Such hostile attitudes as have become apparent could only be underpinned by some clashing ideologies running deep. We thus concluded that that must be a significant factor in determining the abovementioned discursive choices. The language style of most comments is licentious, overflowing with expletives, overtly offensive and strongly *other*-directed 'speech-acts.' The *other* is an interlocutor identified as someone holding the opposite position or else belonging to an

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2 American high mobility artillery rocket system.
3 American advanced anti-tank portable missile system.

'unfriendly' nation and is labelled accordingly. A highly incidental and offhand label employed is: 'Russian-paid troll' (Rom. [*postac plătit de ruşi*]). Ingenuity in circumnavigating rules and creativity in finding solutions to elude conversation etiquette are part of the stock talent of digital natives, as extolled by David Crystal (2011). One such strategy can also be traced in the play with names – *Putler* for *Putin* – not only for avoiding censorship, but also for indexing a perceived similarity between the infamous German dictator of WW II and the current Russian president. The name *Orci* (Engl.: Orcs) is the favourite substitute for the Russian soldiers (see above) and its high incidence indicates that it is preferred to other (less frequent) lexical alternatives – for example, *mujici,* whose equivalent in English is *Russian peasant*, or those combining playing with spelling and underpinned by derogative connotations: *ruzznacii* instead of the neutral *ruşii* (Romanian for *Russians*). In fact, *Orci* has become conventionalized to the degree that even some of the Romanian Press has adopted it. The authors' nicknames or avatars are also creative, the result of Net-afforded multi-modal play and display for expressing an unequivocal stance: for language-only examples we found *Soljenitin* (deliberate simplified spelling of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's surname, the Nobel Prize Russian author and dissident who wrote about the Russian Gulag), or *Alecsei* (a play on the spelling of a popular Russian name: *Aleksey*, the variant suggesting an assumed Russian ethnicity, manifestly dismissive, however, of any loyalty to the home country as a notionally invading nation).

Conclusions

We built our presumptions on a set of general observations of the e-Press briefings on the war in Ukraine and the related topics trending on the Social Network Sites. The emerging antithetic identities we set out to investigate were seen as being negotiated along a set of parallel ideological lines vis-a-vis the evolution of the armed conflict. We integrated the certified idea that Social Networked Sites, such as the *Comment* section of News platforms, and Twitter and Instagram are providing the locus for the socio-cultural negotiation of the said identities. The HotNews items themselves were found to be less than neutral and thus functioning as the catalyst for the morphing, rather than just the expression, of ideology-determined identities. The local situation delineated, and the socio-political context explained, we focused on how the engaged readership of a specifically-leaning e-press are instrumental in the process, with language as part of the semiotic architecture of digital communication functioning as the main agency.

The pair of antithetic profiles identified was registered as displayed and enacted in the converged texts of the media surveyed. They were found to gain even more contour through the set of traits displayed by the three categories of texts, tying together the following: conventionalized lexis and discourse, snowballing recurrent themes, hyperbolized comparisons. However, if initially seen as the symmetrical components of an antithetic pair, the findings pointed to a different conclusion regarding the two. It became apparent that the one that was systematically corroborated with Western values and cultural capital was all the while enhanced by means of the other, representing the East in recycled Cold War terms.

The example clusters confirmed our preliminary observations and provided some concrete instantiations. The editorial positioning of the e-news items was made transparent by the headline wording as well as by the structural choice of embedding such Social Media material as aligned to the general editorial ideological orientation. In addition, it invited engaged readers to associate with the preferred message endorsing the agreed upon World Order and universal principles on war and peace, even while it legitimated all Ukrainian actions.

The Romanian-English language mix, the first component indicating Romanian Mass- and Social-Media consumership, the second, global engagement, may also be regarded as a lingua–culture resource for the negotiation of the said identities. A mutual intelligibility of sorts is achieved through the visuals (images, video clips, memes) anchoring the texts as well as through popular culture inter-referencing: Tolkien's fiction, pop(ular) jingles and Bible referencing.

Overall, we have managed through our study to confirm that language as an important piece in the semiotic puzzle of converged mediated texts has proved to be both a tool and a resource for allowing an antithetic categorization of the supporters of the combat-parties in Ukraine on the basis of resurrected ideologies.

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Webography:

https://www.hotnews.ro/razboi_ucraina

ANNEX

The annexed material has been retrieved on July 30, 2022, from https://www.hotnews.ro/razboi_ucraina. The analysis above was carried on the then running text. Accessing the (sub)links to the examples below will display the version corresponding to the actual moment of subsequent retrieval. The author's translations into English of the HotNews headlines follow the original Romanian title between square brackets.

Example 1, at https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-razboi_ucraina-25705286-primele-imagini-lansatoarele-m270-primite-ucraineni-actiune.htm

> HotNews headline: Soldații ucraineni au publicat primele imagini cu noile lansatoare M270 în acțiune / Cu ce diferă față de sistemele HIMARS [The Ukrainian soldiers have published the first images of the new M270 launchers in action / How are they different from the HIMARS systems]

Published: Friday, July 29, 2022: 12.47
Embedded Twitter PrintScreen
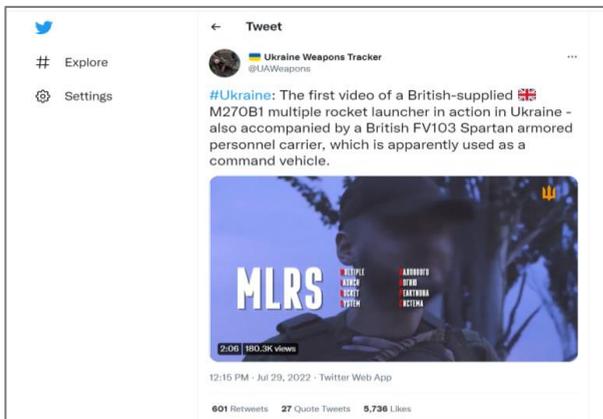
Comments: 10

Example 2, at https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-razboi_ucraina-25704794-imaginea-zilei-cum-sfideaza-tanara-ucraineanca-rusi-mariupolul-devastat-bombardamente.htm

      HotNews Headline: Cum îi sfidează o tânără ucraineancă pe ruși, în Mariupolul devastat de bombardamente [How a young Ukrainian woman defies the Russians in bomb-devastated Mariupol]

Published: Friday, July 29, 2022, 08:53

Embedded Tweeter PrintScreen
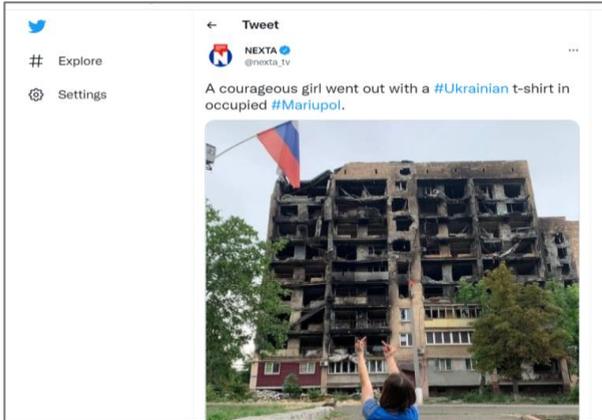
Comments: 12

Example 3, at https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-razboi_ucraina-25695368-video-noi-imagini-clare-atac-javelin-cum-urca-racheta-inainte-lovi-plin-blindat-rusesc.htm

      HotNews headline: Noi imagini clare cu un atac Javelin: Cum urcă racheta înainte de a lovi în plin un blindat rusesc [New and clear images of a Javelin attack: How the rocket soars before hitting full-on a Russian armoured vehicle]

Published: Sunday, July 24, 2022, 13:16

Embedded Twitter PrintScreen

Comments: 7

Example 4, at https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-razboi_ucraina-25698770-rusii-scos-naftalina-vechile-tunuri-autopropulsate-2s7-pion.htm

> HotNews Headline: Armata rusă a scos din depozite alte tunuri autopropulsate 2S7 „Pion": „Poate le duc la fier vechi" [The Russian army brought out their stock of 2S7Pion self-propelled guns. Maybe they are taking them to the scrapyard]

Published: July 26, 2022, 13:59
Embedded Twitter PrintScreen
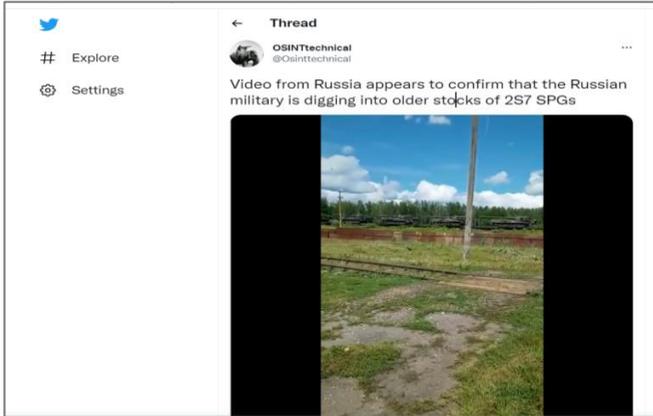
Comments: 20

Example 5, at https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-razboi_ucraina-25696968-rusia-publicat-imagini-momentul-lansarii-rachetelor-kalibr-asupra-orasului-port-odesa.htm

> HotNews Headline: Rusia a publicat imagini cu momentul lansării rachetelor Kalibr asupra Odesei din Marea Neagră [Russia published images of the moment of launching Kalibr rockets onto Odessa from the Black Sea]

Published: Monday, July 25, 2022, 13:59
Embedded Twitter PrintScreen
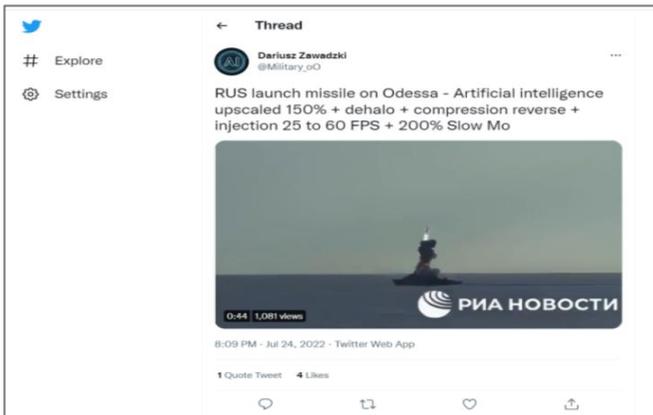
Comments: 27

Example 6, at https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-razboi_ucraina-25688108-video-operatiune-spionajului-militar-ucrainean-insula-serpilor-fost-recuperate-arme-documente-militare-rusesti-plus-pisica-trait-cateva-luni-sub-ocupatie.htm

> HotNews Headline: Operațiune a spionajului militar ucrainean pe Insula Șerpilor: Au fost recuperate arme și documente militare rusești, plus „o pisică ce a trăit câteva luni sub ocupație" [Operation by Ukraine military intelligence on Snake Island: Russian weapons and documents were recuperated, plus a cat that had lived several months under occupation.]

Published: Wednesday, July 20, 2022, 13:25
Embedded Twitter PrintScreen
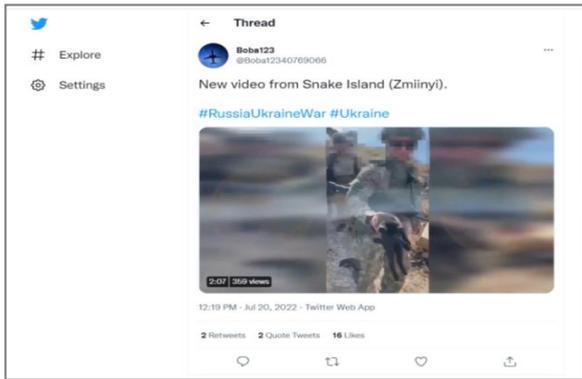
Comments: 19

Example 7, at https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-razboi_ucraina-25677935-sfantul-himars-noua-mema-din-calendarul-armatei-ucrainene.htm

> HotNews Headline: „Sfântul HIMARS", noua memă din calendarul armatei ucrainene [Saint HIMARS, the new meme on the Ukrainian army's calendar]

Published: Thursday, July 14, 2022, 13:35
Embedded Twitter PrintScreen

Comments: 7

NARRATIVES OF A STRUGGLE:
THE EXPERIENCE OF ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE MEDICINE IN ONLINE INFERTILITY COMMUNITIES

Gabriela GLĂVAN[1]

ABSTRACT. *Narratives of a Struggle: The Experience of Assisted Reproductive Medicine in Online Infertility Communities.* Although ART (assisted reproductive technology) has become a well-established field in modern medicine, the subject is still taboo in many modern societies. This prompted infertility patients (roughly 15-20% of the general adult population) to find online platforms to discuss options, treatments, experiences and create virtual communities – mainly forums and Facebook groups. I shall focus on aspects concerning the narratives of trauma, loss and empowerment in two online communities - *Infertilitate. Fertilizare in vitro. Sustinem Asociatia SOS Infertilitatea* (*Infertility. In vitro fertilization. We support the SOS Infertility Association*) and *Fertility Friends*, from two different geographical areas – the UK and Romania, in order to reveal the dynamics of advice giving, information sharing, experience narratives and patient support. Communication is paramount to infertility treatment, yet specialized clinics often underestimate the importance of this aspect. Online forums and social media have provided patients with opportunities to connect, shaping particular jargons and textual strategies with regard to the medical journey of ART. I intend to outline the structure and relevance of these verbal constructs, in order to explore the specific manner in which online platforms offer a valid environment for a positive exchange of information among ART patients while also creating a medium of emotional support. My interdisciplinary focus will involve methods specific to medical humanities, text and discourse analysis and linguistic commentary.

Keywords: *assisted reproduction, infertility, loss, online communities, support groups, trauma*

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REZUMAT. *Narațiunile unei lupte: experiența reproducerii asistate medical în comunitățile online despre infertilitate.* Cu toate că tehnicile RUAM (reproducere umană asistată medical) au evoluat spre coagularea unui domeniu bine stabilit în medicina modernă, subiectul este încă tabu în multe societăți contemporane. Acest fapt determină pacienții infertili (aproximativ 15-20% din populația generală adultă) să caute platforme online unde să își discute opțiunile, tratamentele, experiențele și să creeze comunități virtuale – în principal forumuri și grupuri Facebook. În studiul de față mă voi concentra asupra unor aspecte ce vizează narațiunile traumei, pierderii și ale susținerii, în două comunități online - *Infertilitate. Fertilizare in vitro. Sustinem Asociatia SOS Infertilitatea* și *Fertility Friends*, din două spații geografice diferite - Marea Britanie și România, pentru a revela dinamica schimbului de sfaturi și informații, a narațiunilor despre experiențe și a susținerii între pacienți. Comunicarea e esențială în tratamentul infertilității, deși clinicile de specialitate adesea subestimează acest aspect. Forumurile online și rețelele sociale le-au oferit pacienților oportunități de a se conecta, generând o serie de jargoane și strategii textuale legate de experiența medicală a RUAM. Intenția mea, în acest studiu, este de a delimita structura și relevanța acestor constructe verbale, pentru a putea explora maniera specifică în care platformele online oferă un mediu viabil pentru un schimb pozitiv de informații între pacienții RUAM, creând în același timp un mediu de susținere emoțională. Interesul meu interdisciplinar va viza metode specifice științelor umaniste medicale, a analizei de text și discurs, precum și comentariului lingvistic.

Cuvinte-cheie: *comunități online, grupuri de suport, infertilitate, reproducere asistată, pierdere, traumă*

Introduction

Since 1978, when Louise Brown, the first baby conceived through in vitro fertilization was born due to the efforts of British medical pioneers Robert Edwards and Patrick Steptoe, almost ten million children were conceived through the same method (ESHRE 2022). With fertility rates decreasing across all EU countries, the number of patients seeking fertility treatment increased, and, implicitly, the need for complex psychological care and support, too. Infertility is a multi-faceted condition that has significant social, cultural and geographical roots. Despite its numerous variations in meaning, it is primarily a medical condition defined by a couple's inability to conceive after a year of unprotected sexual relations. The World Health Organization recently estimated that there is a large number of people suffering from this condition worldwide – between 48 and 148 million people (ESHRE 2022). Its etiology is particularly complicated, since the male and female factors involve aspects that can only be

diagnosed and treated in a multi-disciplinary manner. Fertility care is expensive, few countries prioritize the domain among other public health services and the great financial and emotional cost of assisted reproductive medicine deeply affects couples, leading to tensions and even the dissolution of marriage or partnership. Despite the attested shared involvement of the male and female factors in infertility, it is not uncommon that many societies tend to see the woman as more responsible for the reproductive challenges of the couple, and implicitly, it is expected that women are more active in the seeking of treatment for the couple and bear the medical and psychological burden of treatment (Aiyenigba, Weeks, and Rahman 2019, 77). Online instruments of support, such as forums and Facebook groups have been designed to help individuals cope with the challenges of infertility. However, despite their predominantly positive impact, such instruments may present important drawbacks – an informational overload that patients cannot process properly due to a lack of medical training, a potential state of addiction to the empathetic virtual bubble of the forum/group and a misplaced trust in medical opinions coming from other patients rather than doctors. Despite their apparently positive intentions, these virtual communities reunite vulnerable patients who need specialized advice. However well-intended it may be, exchange of experiences, illness stories or adverse outcomes - such as missed miscarriages, pregnancy termination due to severe prognoses, fetal intrauterine death or stillbirth require professional intervention. Unauthorized advice and negative information may have a harmful impact on the emotional wellbeing of the user and on the outcome of the fertility treatment. Since the condition is difficult to treat, given its many possible etiologies (physiological, morphological, endocrine, immunological, genetic, environmental, to name just a few), empirical treatment is often proposed to patients, and, in their turn, some patients often offer advice to other patients, based on their own experience. Since anecdotal success of such treatment – the so-called "add-ons" - has little or no scientific basis, the side effects may interfere with medication, leading to unpredictable treatment outcomes. Moreover, the diversity of serious (if rare) situations concerning pregnancy, birth and maternity may prove triggering for some patients, thus increasing the emotional burden they must carry throughout their treatment.

It is important to note that, despite the dominant perception that infertility is a women's issue, the male factor contributes to half of the cases (Vander Borght and Wyns 2018, 2). This aspect is culturally determined, as fertility often appears indistinguishable from motherhood in many culturally-driven contexts; however, it is remarkable that the social platforms investigated here had very few (if any) male members, with female partners inquiring about male pathologies such as low sperm count, azoospermia or urological disorders. Poorly researched, the emotional dimension of male infertility fuels the cliché

that men repress their emotions and resort to different coping mechanisms than women. Recent studies revealed the common-sense reality that men perceive infertility as a difficult diagnosis in each of the three circumstances they could find themselves in: infertile patient, the healthy partner of a subfertile spouse, or part of a couple with unexplained infertility (Joja, Dinu and Păun 2015, 360; Hanna and Gough 2016).

Ann V. Bell noted, in a comprehensive study regarding marginalization in infertility that the process is highly feminized and it involves various degrees of hardship and exclusion in the case of specific categories, based on race, gender, socio-economic status and sexual orientation (Bell 2016, 39). Moreover, it is relevant to note that, compared to the *Fertility Friends* UK forum, Romanian social platforms have remained opaque and silent in what concerns same-sex couples' struggle to conceive. A stringent contemporary issue, marginalization has gained increasing scientific attention especially in women's studies (Richburg, Jackson and Moravek 2022, 44).

My investigation of online infertility communities shall focus on two examples from two different geographical areas - *Infertilitate. Fertilizare in vitro. Sustinem Asociatia SOS Infertilitatea* (*Infertility. In vitro fertilization. We support the SOS Infertility Association*), a Facebook support group from Romania and *Fertility Friends*, an infertility forum from the United Kingdom. My aim is to reveal significant cultural, linguistic and discursive aspects emerging from the diverse ways in which patients narrate their experience of illness and trauma stemming from infertility in these two online communities. The obvious drawback of such an initiative is the virtually impossible task to read tens of thousands of Facebook and forum posts in order to draw scientifically valid quantitative results. However, humanities researchers can bypass the rule of exhaustivity in favor of analytical depth, despite the potential reproach that such an endeavor may draw conclusions based on a limited number of examples. Moreover, there is a certain fluidity pertaining to online narratives and interventions such as the ones on Facebook infertility groups and online forums. Users can edit their texts or delete them, administrators can ask for revisions or elimination of certain expressions or arguments that others may find offensive or triggering. An overview of these online ecosystems can, therefore, be based on a reasonable number of relevant examples without prejudicing the scientific quality of the entire project. The fundamental condition, which I intend to firmly adhere to in the present study, is that of using clear methodological instruments that help articulate a consistent set of arguments leading to valid, significant conclusions. Medical humanities is a research area that fills the major gap between medical sciences and the humanities, therefore my investigation is an effort to analyze representative examples of discourse in online infertility communities with the

instruments and concepts of this interdisciplinary field - text and discourse analysis, observations concerning cultural differences, linguistic commentary, narrative structures and strategies.

The online underground of infertility patients

Fertility forums and Facebook groups are currently the main stage reuniting infertility and assisted reproduction patients who navigate the complex process of receiving treatment for an equally complex pathology. Although numerous and well organized, assisted reproduction clinics rarely have enough employees (nurses, coordinators, assistants) to cater to the vastly diverse needs of their patients. Online support groups are a recent social media phenomenon, although real life infertility support groups had existed long before the advent of the internet. The experience of infertility generates specific traumatic responses. Given the highly individualized perception of this medical condition, infertility is rarely made visible and discussed openly on a wider scale. Compared to the trauma caused by a historical period or event, infertility trauma is less socially acknowledged. The experience of patients seeking online support has been the object of study in a variety of domains, from clinical psychology to medical sciences, and, given the growing relevance and popularity of social media and online communication tools, it should be analyzed from a thematic, narrative and linguistic perspective as well. Fulfilling the fundamental emotional need of confession and storytelling based on one's singular experience of a dramatic event, online narratives and interventions concerning infertility can be explored as subjective accounts of a transformative event.

Vulnerability is the fundamental notion that may be used to define the position of infertility patients in relation to social norms, health systems and the normal fertile population. Treatment is, in most European states, highly regulated and restrictive, even in generous states, such as France, where a couple can benefit from six attempts at artificial insemination and four courses of IVF treatment paid by the health insurance system before the age of 43 in women (Gomez and De la Rochebrochard 2013, 3103). Moreover, since 2021, an important landmark has been established in the process of making fertility treatment available to all women – single women and women in same-sex relationships gained the right to benefit from state-funded fertility treatment in France. EU countries such as Belgium, Spain, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden have already activated similar legal provisions in recent years. Outside the EU, Iceland and Norway offer identical rights to this category of patients. One of the important challenges infertile patients face in a social context is the painful yet inevitable confrontation with the situation in which people in their social circles, with

unimpaired fertility, manage to obtain pregnancies and live births. Users on infertility boards and Facebook groups face a complicated variant of this situation inside the apparently protective universe of the group, as they empathize, offer (and receive) support for a while, then they are faced with the inevitable - other members become pregnant, have the children they desired and, at one point or another, they "graduate from the group" (Chocano 2020). There are numerous such situations in online fertility groups and, despite it being a joyous moment and the ultimate proof that infertility can be overcome, it can also be a challenging moment for some users. In a nuanced, yet targeted intervention in *The New York Times*, Carina Chocano outlined the uncomfortable position of all parties involved in this type of unusual graduation. She spoke with infertility patients who ran blogs on trying to conceive and gathered information about the group dynamic at significant moments, such as those when members announce they managed to get pregnant. In the pragmatic dimension of group dialogue and information exchange, it is important to maintain an emotionally balanced environment, therefore pregnancy announcements are considered sensitive content, with great potential to trigger a negative response. The administrators of the *Pregnantish* blog, for example, decided to apply a particular tag to all posts containing pregnancy announcements so that users can choose to avoid the sensitive content – "Good 'Ments" (that is "good announcements") (Chocano 2020). Andrea Syrtash, a writer specialized in dating and relationships, learned that she might have fertility issues at a young age, when she was diagnosed with endometriosis. Years later, after many failed attempts to get pregnant, she started *Pregnantish*, a blog focused on fertility-connected issues. Her story reached a sensitive point when she announced she was expecting, with contradictory feelings of guilt, joy and compassion for those still struggling. Commiseration, a certain type of group solidarity and a generally empathetic mode of relation to the challenges other members face are characteristics of online communities observed by numerous studies (Malik and Coulson, 2008; Dănilă and Băban 2018; Zappavigna 2012). Less frequently, but medically more consistent, online expert forums provide patients with similar support although patients tended to give more informational than emotional cues (Aarts et al. 2015).

Social support and a sense of belonging to a community have been revealed as paramount in the process of managing an infertility diagnosis, even before the internet era (Jirka, Schuett and Foxhall 1996, 55). Hirsch and Hirsch concluded that social support played a significant role in improving marital relations, the couple's sex life, their identity perception and self-esteem. It directly influenced what the authors called "the measures of contentment" (Hirsch and Hirsch 1995, 517) in the lives of those affected by difficulties to conceive. Moreover, J. Boivin's 2003 review of psychosocial interventions in infertility revealed that group interventions were more effective (and generally perceived

as more useful) than counselling interventions. In the author's opinion, a group format is more effective in facilitating the exchange of opinions and experiences than individual communication. As many users confirmed, asynchronous communication and permanent availability, regardless of the time of day, play an important role in making online group support a consistent psychological tool that many infertility patients embrace (Malik and Coulson 2008, 106). The survey conducted by Malik and Coulson in 2008 gathered participants by posting invitations on websites such as www.fertilityfriends.co.uk, www.infertilitynetworkuk.com, www.fertilityzone.co.uk, www.acebabes.co.uk, www.repromed.co.uk and www.fertilethoughts.com. 95 participants (93.7% women) completed the online questionnaire and the results unequivocally revealed that users found mainly positive aspects in joining online infertility groups (Malik and Coulson 2008, 112). The authors propose an "essentialist/ realist framework, which aims to report on the experience, meanings and reality of participants" (ibid, 108) which is, I believe, an efficient approach that can be replicated in any other exploration of the communication dynamics in online infertility communities. However, I consider linguistic observation and discourse analysis equally relevant, as they offer a comprehensive framework of the multi-level exchange of support, ideas, suggestions, and emotion that occurs between users. The exploration of "digital practices underlying peer-to-peer interactions about stigmatized conditions" (Jaworska 2018, 25) is an occasion to discover an entire ecosystem, usually reflecting a particular effort to raise awareness about a certain condition, illness or trauma.

Infertility narratives – an overview and analysis

The most important features of online interaction among the participants in infertility groups, as outlined by the participants in Malik and Coulson's investigation were convenience, uninterrupted availability, emotional support, the asynchronous and anonymous nature of online communication, encouragement of honesty to discuss sensitive issues, individual control over participation and involvement, positive impact on partner relationship. Chief among the drawbacks mentioned are a form of addiction to the group, a stringent need to be permanently connected to group activity; and, what I consider most significant among the negative aspects mentioned, a raised awareness of what might go wrong during treatment and pregnancy, given that users often post dramatic stories of loss, stillbirth, postnatal depression or partner and family conflicts over parenting styles and child-rearing philosophies.

Infertility is often an isolating experience, a traumatizing diagnosis that comes unexpectedly. On the contrary, the illusion of ever-lasting fertility is frequently entertained by today's culture of endless youth, donor conception boards being eloquent proof of this trend. It is a common occurrence to find

press articles about famous women in the entertainment industry who become mothers well beyond the reasonable age limit of natural fertility. Their public flaunting of such unusual fertility makes this private aspect part of their extraordinary personality and enviable success, any mention of the concrete means that led to their becoming mothers remaining shrouded in mystery. It has been scientifically proven that assisted reproduction has a very poor prognosis past the age of 45. However unethical it may be to sensationalize one's fertility, given the already minimal background of fertility education in both Western and more traditional societies, such misleading voices should also be a cause of concern for the medical community, as they create false hope for the women who postpone motherhood. For example, in the *Infertilitatea…* Facebook group many posts are written by patients aged 42 and above who lament their doctor's recommendation to follow egg or embryo donation treatment instead of classical IVF with their own genetic material. Such posts are usually triggers of heated disputes, as many fellow members of the group recommend persistence and patience, as they know a friend, relative, TV personality who succeeded even at older ages. Other members, some having had their own experience with adverse IVF outcomes due to advanced age, strongly advise against "wasting money", "believing charlatan doctors" or feeding an illusion, since the IVF success rate above the maternal age of 43 is more or less theoretical. Of special relevance are donor conception posts, especially those focusing on egg donation, as this constantly proves the conservative attitude towards the issue in Eastern Europe (Todorova et al. 2017).

The *Infertilitate. Fertilizare in vitro. Sustinem Asociatia SOS Infertilitatea* support group had 31200 members, as of August 7, 2022. Numerous IVF clinics have opened in Romania in the past decade, offering specialized services of various medical quality, and the number of patients is constantly growing (Nahman 2016). Founded in 2009, as a Facebook extension of the *SOS Infertilitatea* forum, the group gained visibility and traction as more users preferred the Facebook platform over the now obsolete forum format. Although many users connect with their "official" Facebook account, choosing to reveal their identity while posting, many others either opt for a clone account, posting under pseudonym, or for a newer tool, allowing them to post anonymously as a "group member", with no name displayed. As Nancy Baym noted, "on a societal level, anonymity opens the possibility of liberation from the divisions that come about from seeing one another's race, age, gender, disabilities, and so on" (Baym 2015, 34). The orderly fashion in which topics were arranged in the forum frame is no longer in place on Facebook, despite constant efforts made by administrators and moderators to create hashtags and topics. The group works on the principle of a permanent influx of questions, stories and answers, and few users actually rely on the "search" function of the page in order to get answers to already answered questions. However, a few elements have been banned from the

group – the "Is it positive?" question followed by pictures of ovulation or pregnancy tests, or the use of colored backgrounds for posts in order to make them more visible and potentially attract more comments. Ultrasound confirmation of ovulation, b-hCG blood tests and visits to the hospital emergency room are firmly encouraged by moderators and posters when patients need medical advice or intervention.

The group offers excellent opportunities of linguistic, anthropological, social and cultural analysis and observation. As Dănilă and Băban (2018) pointed out in their study of infertility representations in Romanian discussion forums, there is a set of universal themes recurring in this particular online environment: "Infertility as a personal battle; infertility as an unfair destiny; infertility as a threat to the feminine identity; divinity as a last resort to infertility" (Dănilă and Băban 2018, 25). Although my observations do not contradict these conceptual parameters, I shall try to refine them further.

Thematically, the interventions of users on the *Infertilitate…* Facebook group fall into some major categories, such as: medical narratives aiming to elicit narratives of similar experiences from other patients (short pathographies, heavily focused on the emotional dimension); brief, punctual interventions seeking concrete answers preceding doctor's answers (laboratory results, beta-hCG levels, drug dosage, etc.); crisis interventions (depression, anxiety, inability to cope with an infertility-related diagnosis, couple and family crises, financial difficulties, work problems, etc.); encouragement posts meant to give hope to patients still undergoing treatment (from patients who had recently become parents, either biologically or through adoption). It is noteworthy that, until 2020, when the group was reported to Facebook for infringement of community standards, it was not unusual for patients to try to sell or donate leftover drugs, as fertility drugs are known to be expensive and sometimes difficult to find. Infertility is mostly viewed as an often religiously charged challenge, a trying period that can be overcome, a test of personal resilience and couple strength.

The *Infertilitate…* Facebook group is interesting to investigate from another perspective, that of the online phenomenon of trolling[2]. I shall exemplify with the case of a group user who unusually chose to post under her real name, despite her illicit intentions. The case of M.B., which unfolded over a period of three months on the group is a relevant example illustrating the pitfalls of online patient support. Although rare, cases such as this prove that anonymity may encourage readers to create false narratives, assume fake identities beyond the scope of privacy and ultimately betray the trust of other members who shared sensitive personal details. Interestingly enough, M.B. used her real

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[2] "troll - someone who leaves an intentionally annoying or offensive message on the internet, in order to upset someone or to get attention or cause trouble"; Cambridge Dictionary, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/troll.

name, joining the group under the pretense that she was pregnant with twin girls in her second trimester. She even met other members in real life, participating in some events organized by the SOS Infertility NGO, displaying a small but obvious pregnant abdomen. As it was later revealed by angry users, she contacted members privately, engaged them in conversation about their infertility issues, asking them to send her laboratory test results and other medical documents. Her incessant online activity in the group quickly earned her the sympathy of the founding members of the association, who gave her moderator rights. M.B. detailed her far-fetched life story in long, sophisticated and often delirious posts, resulting in a divided attitude of the audience: many members were captivated by her phantasmagoric narrative, while others ignored her and a few monitored the situation with a skeptic eye. M.B.'s dramatic tale took a turn for the worst when she announced that her pregnancy was in danger and her 22-week-old twin girls were about to be born prematurely without a real chance for survival. Although she didn't ask for money (even bluntly refusing the financial help she was offered), M.B. copy/pasted enough details from the narratives she gathered from other members to raise suspicion that she was creating a tall tale that uncannily resembled the tragic story of the founding administrator of the organization, who lost her 25-week-old prematurely born daughters in 2008. However, despite her good knowledge of high-risk pregnancy and prematurity, N.C.B., the founder of the association and the group, was a staunch supporter of M.B., even believing the absurd story that M.B. was in labor and, in order to save her and the twins, her family rented a private American medical airplane to transport her to the United States via Paris, that M.B. had given birth to one twin and had undergone dialysis with the other one still in the womb, that she had suffered and episode of cardiac arrest yet was perfectly able to chat privately with other members while intubated, etc. When she realized the scam and the emotional farce she had been made part of, N.C.B. wrote a few posts expressing her bewildered disappointment that a group member would resort to such ruthless strategies for no apparent gain, other than an obviously pathological narcissistic fixation. A group member, who is a licensed psychiatrist writing under her real name warned the community about the dangers of providing strangers with medical personal data and of confessing delicate aspects of treatment and pregnancy in private online conversations. Such information could be appropriated by mentally ill fellow members suffering from infertility-related delusions (it remained unclear if M.B. had ever been pregnant and whether the bulging abdomen she had been displaying was real or a prop). Across seven posts dedicated to the subject, all placed under the "dezaxata" (i.e. "unhinged") hashtag, the story generated unprecedented interest in a member's story – over 3500 replies were written between April 11-14, 2017, mainly to express shock, disproval, disgust and blame, as M.B. was finally exposed as a fraud and excluded from the group. It is noteworthy that, after she

had been banned, all her posts and comments were deleted, therefore the narrative she had created is no longer accessible for analysis. However, for the purposes of this investigation (among others, a focus on the creation of online stories and narratives about infertility and the readers' response to such stories), there is still plenty of material available. N.C.B. decided to keep all her posts and comments and not delete those favorable to M.B., although the narrative was exposed as sheer fabrication.

Facebook replies are structured as cascading messages, not necessarily deriving one from the other. Users may write short replies or even strictly resort to emoticons in order to convey their opinion or feelings. The M.B. story elicited a massive response from users because it violated an essential community value – a sense of trust and solidarity. The mounting evidence that M.B. faked her pregnancy undermined any possible excuse (other than mental illness) that she might have had in order to proceed as she had. One user wrote:

> I'm reading in sheer amazement...I cannot believe my eyes...I too believed this story and was profoundly impressed because at the time I was pregnant, too, there were a few women that had ruptured membranes, for various reasons, and I was terribly impressed...I couldn't stop thinking of them and was hoping they could manage to save them. Thank God [...] I haven't slipped down such a slippery slope after the loss of my 4th pregnancy. I hope she seeks appropriate treatment, because this story is shocking[3] (Facebook user, Wednesday, April 12, 2017).

A few hours later, one of the users who closely followed the story concluded:

> There is nothing to be done, one of M.'s teachers commented at one of the posts, M. is real and she is a medical student. At least that is true. The rest was probably an experiment of hers/an invention and we were the victims. My brain still cannot process what happened. It refuses to believe that there are such people [....] I would have never thought that there are people who do what she had just done. No, there is nothing to be done, we are victims, we feel betrayed, but there is nothing to be done. What do you want to do? A police complaint? Go ahead :))) they will laugh in your face[4] (Facebook user, Wednesday, April 12, 2017).

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[3] "Citesc și mă minunez... nu-mi vine să cred ochilor... și eu am crezut povestea asta și m-a impresionat profund pt că în perioada în care eu am fost însărcinată, au fost câteva femei însărcinate care ajunseseră cu membranele fisurate, din diverse cauze, și m-au impresionat cumplit... mă tot gândeam și speram să reusească să le salveze... Îi multumesc lui Dumnezeu că în momentul acesta îmi țin copilul sănătos în brate și nu am alunecat pe o pantă atât de periculoasă, după pierderea celei de-a 4-a sarcini. Sper să caute tratament adecvat, pentru că e șocantă toată povestea." (Facebook user, Wednesday, April 12, 2017; my translation)

[4] "Nu e nimic de făcut, una dintre profesoarele lui M. a comentat la una dintre postări, M. există și e studentă la medicină. Cel puțin asta e adevărat. Restul a fost probabil un experiment de-al

M.B. confessed her fraudulent behavior a few hours after she was exposed. Her confession was rather short, compared to her other rich, more elaborated posts:

> I know that this post should have been written earlier, but I was incapable, I didn't feel up to it. I could only invoke the pain I feel inside, which for the last week paralyzed me completely. [...] I had 2 children. They were gone much sooner than I told you. Yes, the pain paralyzes me, and somehow it was easier to tell myself, too, that they were still there. That way, there was still a chance. [...] I'm sorry I didn't know how to share this information that brings me down every single time. I'm only asking this: whoever can forgive, fine, whoever doesn't I'm sorry I wasn't worthy of the trust I was given.[5] (M.B., Facebook group user, April 12, 2017).

M.B.'s strategy that captivated a significant number of users, reunites a few characteristics of online patient support, providing a virtual answer to the emotional needs of participants. The narrative aspect appears paramount, as most users need to tell their story and elicit sympathetic reactions from other users in similar situations. It is noteworthy that longer posts are, paradoxically, neither encouraged nor read from beginning to end by group members – an interesting ending formulation being – "please, excuse me for the novel". It is an expression that most often accompanied longer posts, fueling the impression that shorter and denser posts were better received. This is a feature specific to Romanian-language infertility/parenting groups, *Fertility Friends* having a rather different forum structure that involves other communication strategies.

One of the major drawbacks of online community support is the double-edged aspect of anonymity. With users often protecting their identity and not using their real-name Facebook account for privacy reasons, fake accounts could compromise the trust factor and increase susceptibility that delicate issues are shared with strangers who may take advantage of others' vulnerabilities.

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ei/o invenție iar noi am fost victimele. Creierul meu încă nu poate să proceseze ce s-a întâmplat. Refuză să creadă că există astfel de oameni. Nu aș fi crezut niciodată că există oameni care să facă ceea ce ea tocmai a făcut. Nu, nu e nimic de făcut, suntem niște victime, ne simțim trădate, dar nu e nimic de făcut. Ce vreți să faceți? Reclamație la poliție? Mult succes! :))) vă vor râde în față" (Facebook user, Wednesday, April 12, 2017; my translation).

[5] "Știu că postarea asta trebuia făcută mai demult, dar nu m-am simțit în stare. Nu aș putea să invoc decât durerea ce există în mine și care în ultima săptămână m-a paralizat complet. [...] Am avut doi copii. Ce s-au dus mai devreme decât v-am spus. Da, durerea paralizează și cumva a fost mai simplu să îmi spun inclusiv mie că încă mai sunt acolo. Așa mai exista o șansă. [...] Îmi pare rău că nu am știut cum să împart informația asta ce mă pune la pământ de fiecare dată. Nu cer decât atât: cine poate să ierte, bine, cine nu, îmi pare rău pentru că nu am fost demnă de încrederea ce mi-a fost oferită." (M.B., Facebook group user, April 12, 2017; my translation).

Despite such rare occurrences (besides minor conflicts, this case remains unique in the history of the group) the advantages of such online support groups, outlined in other studies, remain valid and important. As Malik and Coulson concluded in 2008 (and further research confirmed, see Billett and Sawyer 2019), there are significant advantages to participating in online communities and receiving support there while battling infertility.

The great majority of posts on the *Infertilitate…* Facebook group is of medical nature and answers from fellow members are meant to share similar experiences. For example, on August 2, 2022, one user posted anonymously, under the "Group member" generic pseudonym a question regarding the possible fertilization limitation of the number of oocytes retrieved during an IVF cycle:

> Hi! I'd like to know if, for various reasons, anyone requested that less eggs are fertilized in order to obtain a limited number of embryos? If the situation allowed for it, of course. If yes, who is the doctor/clinic that was open in this direction? I do not want to generate controversies, I know that such a request significantly reduces the chances of success and I apologize if my question hurts anyone, but I consider it an aspect that is part of one's personal choices[6] (Facebook user, August 2, 2022).

The user's concerns have been thoroughly documented in IVF literature (Laruelle and Englert 1995; Provoost et al. 2010), although it is well established in current practice that high quality supernumerary embryos give patients a better chance at a successful treatment (Salha et al. 2000; Romanski et al. 2018). Firstly, we could only assume that, since the conversation concerns oocytes, the user is female and her question regards her own yield of gametes. However, she does not motivate her concerns, deciding not to disclose if her reasons were ethical, religious or otherwise. She seems aware that such a choice could be discussed "if the situation allowed for it", again failing to mention what she meant by "the situation". One could only speculate if she was referring to a successful egg retrieval procedure (as, rarely, patients ovulate before retrieval and oocytes are lost, or, in other cases, gametes are not fully developed - in metaphase II - and remain attached to the follicular wall) or a situation in which enough oocytes are retrieved so that a discussion about fertilizing a smaller batch becomes relevant. However, the user doesn't seem fully aware that there is no direct correlation between the number of oocytes retrieved and the number of high-

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[6] "Bună! Aş vrea să ştiu dacă, din diverse motive, a cerut cineva să fie fertilizate mai puţin ovocite pentru a obţine un număr limitat de embrioni? Dacă situaţia permite, desigur. Dacă da, ce doctor / clinică a fost deschisă în această direcţie? Nu vreau să creez controverse, ştiu că o astfel de cerere reduce semnificativ şansele de success şi îmi cer scuze dacă întrebarea mea rănește pe cineva, dar cred că este un aspect ce ţine de alegerea fiecăruia" (Facebook user, August 2, 2022, my translation).

quality embryos resulted. It is not uncommon, in IVF practice, to have a zero rate of successful fertilization (2 pronuclei after 24 hours), although an adequate number of oocytes are fertilized. It is also important to note that the medical education of patients is, more often than not, understandably limited, therefore it is difficult to estimate if the patient has all the necessary information before making a radical decision or needs to be further informed by the medical professional guiding the treatment.

The user's warning that she does not want to cause controversies signals not only the sensitive nature of the issue, but also the fact that it may challenge or offend others. It also implies that her motivation could be religious and, in the history of the group, religious arguments sparked intense debate and controversies. A simple search for the word "God" returns an endless list of results, the majority of which are pregnancy/birth announcements. "When you place your faith in God and firstly in yourself and you don't give up, miracles happen!"[7] (Facebook group user, July 18, 2022); "Only after 4 months I'm starting to believe that it is true and she is mine. All the while I dreamt that someone tried to take her away from me, I couldn't believe that God made a miracle for me, too"[8] (Facebook group user, August 1, 2022). On September 24, 2020, less than two weeks after the death of her 3-month son, a 27-year-old user (who had conceived naturally and had a loss at 12 weeks of gestation in her medical history) announced that she had tested her ovarian reserve and the result showed she was pre-menopausal: "I hope that 2021 will be a productive year for everyone […] be it as God wishes"[9] (Facebook user, September 24, 2020). Memorial posts or perinatal death posts also carry a religious meaning: "May God give you strength to overcome this difficult moment"[10] (Facebook user, June 19, 2019) a female user wrote as a reply (out of 784 replies) to a post announcing the loss of a 22-week twin pregnancy.

A significant element that strikes Romanian-language readers is the abundance of spelling and syntax errors present in the posts of numerous users. Not only medical terms (a "blastocyst" has been named a "balocist", a "balocid", etc. – the correct Romanian form is 'blastocist'), but everyday language has been used incorrectly "oki" for "ochi" ("eye"), "am loat" instead of "am luat" ("I took"), "umpic" instead of "un pic" ("a little"), etc. Indeed, Facebook language is

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[7] "Când îți pui credința în Dumnezeu și în primul rând în tine și nu renunți, se întâmplă minuni" (Facebook user, July 18, 2022; my translation).

[8] "Doar după 4 luni încep să cred că e adevărat și că e a mea. Tot timpul visam că cineva încearcă să mi-o ia, nu-mi venea să cred că Dumnezeu a făcut o minune și pentru mine" (Facebook user, August 1, 2022; my translation).

[9] "Sper că anul 2021 va fi un an productiv pentru toată lumea […] facă-se voia Domnului" (Facebook user, September 24, 2020; my translation).

[10] "Să-ți dea Dumnezeu putere să treci peste acest moment dificil" (Facebook user, June 19, 2019; my translation).

far from following literary norms, but such formulations are often sanctioned by other users or moderators. Moreover, as Naomi S. Baron argued, the sheer amount of text that literate Americans [or, more generally, online users, we may add] produce is diminishing our sense of written craftsmanship" (Baron 2008, 7). My argument is that users have a different sense of language in a Facebook group environment – a more "utilitarian", relaxed, approach that assumes users understand the meaning of words even if misspelled, abbreviated, or anglicized.

Another significant aspect that I intend to address is the diversity and contradictory nature of interventions: users seeking empiric advice from experience, others asking about the availability of certain fertility drugs, birth announcements and posts detailing depressive episodes are all part of the same flowing discourse, with no warning for users who may find them triggering or disturbing. The *Infertilitate…* group continuously creates a massive discourse that rarely separates categories and issues, resulting in a continuous influx of information that gravitates around the many faces and consequences of infertility.

The forum format of *Fertility Friends* and its far greater outreach, doubled by its 20-year longevity online (it was founded in 2002) offers significant opportunities for comparison with smaller-scale, differently structured platforms such as the *Infertilitate…* Romanian group. It is also important to note that the number of members (104.300) and the number of posts (6.2 million) makes the forum an environment that can be explored in samples, rather than mapped exhaustively. Indeed, *Fertility Friends* is not only vast in structure, it is also very complex thematically. Each division (ovulation, fertility lifestyle, IVF, donor conception, surrogacy, etc.) has many sub-divisions, as members are allowed to start new threads with themes and issues they consider relevant. The IVF section is structured geographically, as fertility tourism is a phenomenon on the rise. Since the present investigation cannot cover even a fraction of the impressive virtual territory of the forum, I shall focus on a thread that bears some characteristics that makes it comparable to the *Infertilitate*…Romanian forum. The "Poor Response/Treatment With Low AMH/High FSH" (referring to a difficult to treat category of patients who present with low ovarian reserve – hence "Low AMH[11]" and a significant hormonal imbalance – hence the "high FSH"[12]) is a thread reuniting patients with a poor prospect of fertility treatment success. In this section, patients created a smaller chat group, the "Low AMH/High FSH Cycle Buddies", where 30 participants gave 366 replies in the last active part of the thread (the last post was on January 24, 2022).

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[11] AMH is the Anti-Müllerian Hormone; According to the National Library of Medicine, "an AMH test is often used to check a woman's ability to produce eggs that can be fertilized for pregnancy" – for further reading https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/anti-mullerian-hormone-test.

[12] The FSH is the follicle stimulating hormone, a hormone produced by the pituitary gland, that plays a key role in fertility.

Each user can insert a small medical history in their signature, so that readers and fellow forum members can instantly place their messages into a comprehensive context. Some choose shorter descriptions, consisting of age, ovarian status and number of IVF treatments, while other opt for longer ones. This section offers users an excellent opportunity to familiarize with the specific jargon of infertility treatment, but also to find encouragement and consolation that others have gone or are going through similar experiences. For example, one user gave a long and detailed account of her fertility treatment status in her signature:

> "Me 46 Endo, DH 38. Nov15 Lap 1 cystectomy ablation. Dec15 Natural BFP MMC 10wks. Requested Karyotype testing but hospital stored incorrectly 💔. Apr17 Gennet PICSI. 2 eggs 2 blasts. 1trf 1 Frosties. Bleeding 7dp5dt Oct17 ARGC - ICSI. 8 eggs 7 fertilised, 3 blasts ET, 2 d6 frostie, Immune support IVIG. BFN. 2018 Dr G immune testing. 2018 - 2019 Create 3 cyc natural modified. 1 frostie d3 8 cell grade1,1 no fert, 1 d3 grade ET BFN; Apr19 Lap 2 excision, natural BFP, MC 6.5wks. Nov 21 Lap 3. Jan/Feb 22 FET BFN"[13] (forum user, January 18, 2020).

This concise and abbreviated medical history is an eloquent example of the alternative ways in which a patient can narrate the experience of their illness. In this case, the apparently abstract discourse, lacking the usual personal and emotional markers of proper pathography offers a "map" of the patient's journey written in the specific jargon of online patient forums. The user 'speaks" to a specific audience, one that is familiar with the acronyms and the forum jargon, therefore they establish a symbolic connection that is at the same time abstract, textual and visual. Telling one's story in an abbreviated manner saves time, it is essentially informative, and it may fulfill the need of other users to find similar stories that offer hope, consolation, and information about treatment outcomes, etc.

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[13] Endo – endometriosis; DH- dear husband; lap- laparoscopic surgery; BFP- Big Fat Positive (positive pregnancy test); MMC- missed miscarriage; PICSI - Physiological intracytoplasmic sperm injection (a specific technique of in vitro fertilization in which a single spermatozoon is injected into a single oocyte for the purpose of fertilization); blast – blastocyst (5-day old human embryo); trf - transferred (referring to embryotransfer – transferring an embryo into the woman's uterus); frostie – frozen embryo; 7dp5dt – 7 days post 5 day (embryo) trasfer; ARGC – British clinic in London; ICSI (intracytoplasmic sperm injection); ET – embryotransfer; d6 frostie – 6 days old frozen embryo; BFN (Big Fat Negative) – negative pregnancy test; Create (Clinic in London) 3 cyc natural modified – 3 cycles of natural modified treatment; d3 8 cell – day 3 embryo of 8 cells; grade 1 – grade 1 embryo with little or no fragmentation; no fert - no fertilization; MC – miscarriage; FET - frozen embryotransfer.

Interestingly, users tend to structure their posts as a collage of separate answers to all the other users they interacted with, thus replicating the manner in which Facebook comments are fashioned. The fragmentary nature of each answer gives the impression of a personal narrative adapted to a specific conversation with a particular user – for example, the same user whose signature was discussed above gave medical details to a user she was sharing treatment protocols with, and just below that conversation, as if an invisible line divided the two separate worlds, she wrote to another user that she was going to Nepal on vacation with her family. Similar to the Romanian Facebook group *Infertilitate…*, this thread is emotionally charged. Users give details about their IVF protocols, sharing patient opinions on treatment, but they also discuss manners of coping with loss, depression, jealousy, and a pervasive sense of meaninglessness. One user who had been active for 8 years on this board shared the fact that, after succeeding to have a child via IVF in 2015 (despite a firm diagnosis of ovarian failure), her subsequent rounds of treatment proved increasingly discouraging. In 2021, a medical professional advised her to seek psychiatric treatment, as she had attempted IVF more than 15 times in the past 7 years. Her thoughts about her loss of fertility echo the imaginary awareness women should have about the decline of their fertility with age:

> The kind of grief you get with loss of fertility is just impossible to ignore or easily get over and no time or distance seems to help. I buried myself with work but the deep sadness is still there. I also feel so angry at the whole covid situation that effectively robbed me of my last months/years of fertility as we were unable to travel. I am only 45 but it looks like I am out of the game. […] I remember thinking that I'd draw the line at 45 but now when I am actually here I feel like I have it in me to fight if only I had any eggs left (Facebook user, August 23, 2021).

This user inserted a link in her signature to the story of her only IVF success in 2015, proving her predisposition to complex narratives disclosing a rich personal philosophy regarding fertility. A professional woman (she often mentioned her highly qualified, well-paid job), this user had a firm representation of familial harmony that she was unwilling to renounce. Despite her very low chances to get pregnant, she persevered and learned, in minute detail, the complicated physiology of human reproduction, taking charge of her treatments and negotiating with medical professionals what she felt was the best course of treatment. However, a visible and consistent sense of loss, a sadness taking the shape of mourning, a grief permeated the massive discourse she created as a user on these forum boards. "I buried myself with work but the deep sadness is still there", with its poetic (yet plain) undertones could be read as a contemporary elegy of female agency.

A brief comparison between the two media (The *Fertility Friends* forum and the *Infertilitate*… Facebook group) highlights significant cultural differences regarding the perception of infertility by users. Linguistically, it is striking to acknowledge the divergent attitude towards acronyms and infertility treatment jargon. Romanian users are almost frugal in their use of this vocabulary, resorting to few such terms – "blasto", FET (frozen embryotransfer), ET (embryotransfer), BFP/BFN, FIV ("fertilizare in vitro"/in vitro fertilization). English and international users use a vast idiom that works like a closeted language of a particular group, a microcosmos with its own laws and rules: terms such as PUPO (pregnant until proven otherwise), BD (babydance, meaning sexual relations), AF (Aunt Flo, that is menstruation), swimmers (spermatozoa) are as frequently used on forum threads as any other word from the vocabulary of infertility. Another distinctive trait is the separation between personal religious faith and public discourse. *Fertility Friends* has a special sub-forum dedicated to spirituality and few users invoke their religious views in current conversations with other users of the forum. Romanian users, as discussed above, tend to frequently include a religious dimension in their interactions. Sometimes users become verbally aggressive, without resorting to insults or inappropriate language. A certain discursive boldness often surfaces as a potential cultural trait, although the fundamental intentions of the users are polite and positive. Politeness (direct or negative) is fundamental on *Fertility Friends*, users intervening with great consideration to others' feelings, given the extreme stress they undergo. Certain trigger warnings are not uncommon, as users are highly aware of the importance of emotional management during fertility treatment. No less significant is the trend on *Fertility Friends* to give more complex, nuanced and personal advice, creating small narratives that function both as therapeutic tools and information vectors. Yet probably the most significant difference is that, although it has an impressive number of users, the forum is on its way to becoming obsolete, as patients prefer social media platforms such as Facebook.

Conclusions

The public conversation about infertility is still far from having the desired form and outreach, given the growing number of young individuals and couples affected. The subculture of forums and Facebook groups, imperfect as it is, allowed for the creation of an environment where patients could find sympathy, comfort and advice from others experiencing the same challenges. The two online communities investigated display generic similarities – they are both founded on the generous intention to offer emotional support to infertility patients, filling an important gap neglected by medical institutions; users tend

to be mindful of other users' feelings and emotional needs, and thankful when they receive useful information and encouragement. In many cases, Romanian users tend to invoke religious elements, while forum posters from the UK tend to offer generic yet targeted advice, omitting culturally sensitive elements. The presence of online trolls is a relevant example of the reasons users should use online resources with a grain of skepticism and attention to warning signs when other users may try to mislead or deceive their readers. Medical advice is universally considered the primary source of healthcare, as administrators and "older" users tend to reinforce posting rules and advice sharing strategies that cannot replace medical opinion. On a strategic level, Facebook groups encourage more users to join the conversation around infertility, while forums tend to have a less flexible dynamic, giving the impression of a closed community that requires specific steps to join. However, the *Fertility Friends* forum is better organized thematically, while the *Infertilitatea…* Romanian group is more open and accessible. The information flow is inevitably more rapid on Facebook groups, while on forums it is more consistently verbalized, with useful details articulated in ampler narratives.

A closer examination of these media may prove revelatory for today's culture of eternal youth – biologically limited and highly vulnerable to genetic and environmental factors, fertility offers a lucid measure of our current illusion of control.

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#THISMAMA: SERENA WILLIAMS AMPLIFYING
THE PERILS OF BLACK MOTHERHOOD

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ABSTRACT. *#THISMAMA: Serena Williams Amplifying the Perils of Black Motherhood.* In 2020, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) found that Black women are over 200 percent more likely to die from childbirth-related causes than white women (Hoyert 2020). Routinely, Black women describe attending obstetricians and delivery room staff who ignore the mother's knowledge about her own body. In 2017, tennis champion Serena Williams experienced similar discriminatory practices when she nearly perished giving birth to her daughter, Olympia. Motivated to end racial prejudice in the medical treatment of pregnancy, Williams publicized her delivery-story and used Twitter to share her struggle as a new mother. This article examines how Williams uses maternal rhetoric on Twitter to build a community of women who resist dominant discourses about medicine and motherhood. Centered on Williams's tweologism (new hashtag) #ThisMama, Alison Lukowski builds on research on digital maternal rhetoric scholarship (Joutseno 2018; Lukowski & Sparby 2016; Owens 2015, 2010; Friedman 2013; Harp & Tremayne 2006). While Williams's advocacy for Black mothers is a form of feminist mothering, her application of #ThisMama on Twitter demonstrates the tensions between authority, advertising, and advocacy.

Keywords: *maternal rhetoric, digital rhetoric, Twitter, motherhood, race, Serena Williams, social media*

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REZUMAT. *#THISMAMA: Serena Williams și documentarea pericolelor de a fi mamă de culoare*. În 2020, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) (Centrul de control al bolilor) a descoperit că probabilitatea ca femeile de culoare să moară la naștere este cu 20% mai ridicată decât în cazul femeilor albe (Hoyert 2020). Femeile de culoare americane relatează, de regulă, că obstetricienii și personalul de asistență ignoră faptul că mamele în cauză își cunosc propriul corp. În 2017, campioana de tenis Serena Williams a cunoscut aceste practici discriminatorii când a fost pe punctul de a muri dând naștere fiicei sale Olimpia. Astfel, motivată să pună capăt prejudecăților rasiale din tratamentul medical al sarcinii, Williams și-a făcut public episodul nașterii și a apelat la Twitter pentru a-și împărtăși lupta de mamă pentru prima oară. Articolul de față examinează modul în care Williams utilizează retorica maternală pe Twitter pentru a construi o comunitate de femei care opune rezistență discursurilor dominante despre medicină și maternitate. Cu accent pe tweologism-ul (hashtag nou) #ThisMama al lui Williams, cercetările lui Alison Lukowski pornesc și, totodată, contribuie la studiile academice de retorică maternală în mediul digital (Joutseno 2018; Lukowski & Sparby 2016; Owens 2015, 2010; Friedman 2013; Harp & Tremayne 2006). În timp ce pledoaria lui Williams în favoarea mamelor de culoare este o formă de grijă maternală cu accente feministe, folosirea hashtagului #ThisMama pe Twitter evidențiază tensiunile generate de triunghiul autoritate, publicitate și sprijinirea cauzei.

Cuvinte-cheie: retorică maternală, retorică digitală, Twitter, maternitate, rasă, Serena Williams, media de socializare

> **Motto:** "I almost died after giving
> birth to my daughter, Olympia"
> Serena Williams

In 2017, Serena Williams gave birth to a healthy baby girl, Alexis Olympia Ohanian Jr., or Olympia. While Williams is a paragon of physical fitness, she nearly died in the days after bringing Olympia into the world. Serena tried to tell nurses and doctors about her long history of dangerous blood clots and a pulmonary embolism. However, they did not listen to her: "She walked out of the hospital room so her mother wouldn't worry and told the nearest nurse, between gasps, that she needed a CT scan with contrast and IV heparin (a blood thinner) right away. The nurse thought her pain medicine might be making her confused" (Haskell 2018). Williams insisted that she needed specific care. Instead, they delayed further and performed a doppler ultrasound that revealed nothing. When she continued to cough for no apparent reason, the medical staff

finally sent her for a CT scan, where they discovered numerous blood clots in her lungs. Over the next six days, Williams coughed so hard she reopened her C-section incision and had a filter surgically installed in one of her major arteries to break up clots forming throughout her body. She spent the first six weeks of motherhood in bed. She nearly died because her physicians and nurses would not listen to her about her own body. She knew that somebody needed to say something.

Unfortunately, Williams is not alone in her experience. In 2020, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) found that Black women are over 200 percent more likely to die from childbirth-related causes than white women. Delivery nurses and physicians ignored Black women's pleas for help, descriptions of pain, and claims of something not feeling right, which resulted in women's death after lifesaving interventions were attempted too late. Similarly, in their 2017 spotlight on maternal mortality among women of color, Nina Martin and Renee Montagne report on the death of Shalon Irving, an epidemiologist at the CDC and Lieutenant Commander in the US Public Health Service (Martin and Montagne 2017). Despite her education and years of research about inequalities in health care for the poor, Irving died three weeks after giving birth due to complications. Her death showcases that race, regardless of class or education, is the most significant predictor of maternal mortality in the US. Irving's story and the myriad other stories collected in ProPublica's Lost Mothers series demonstrate that Williams's experience is a shared experience amongst women of color. Staggering statistics and stories prompted Serena Williams to publicize her ordeal. She leveraged her global celebrity and social media presence to raise awareness about the struggles of Black motherhood.

What Is Feminist Mothering?

In many ways, Williams epitomizes what Andrea O'Reilly calls feminist mothering: "Feminist mothering refers to a particular style of empowered mothering in which resistance is developed from and expressed through a feminist identification or consciousness" (O'Reilly 2007, 802). Williams may not routinely use the f-word, but she describes herself in feminist terms. When interviewed after her controversial loss to Naomi Osaka, Williams stated, "'I'm here fighting for women's rights and for women's equality and for all kinds of stuff'" (Williams 2018j). Or, as O'Reilly succinctly states, "feminist mothering *begins with recognition that mothers must live her life and practice mothering from a position of agency, authority, authenticity, and autonomy*" (802). Feminist mothers use their power, in the home, at work, and in public to draw our

attention to social problems. Likewise, Williams employs her celebrity and social media platforms to draw attention to a public health issue that affects her and other women of color, and she tweets about the challenges of motherhood to lend veracity to her claims. This essay will demonstrate that Williams's advocacy for Black mothers is a form of feminist mothering, but her application of #ThisMama on Twitter is fraught with contradictions.

On its surface, O'Reilly's definition of feminist mothering appears empowering for all women. However, O'Reilly fails to recognize the intersectional identities in motherhood and the concomitant challenges to surviving motherhood. In her critique of O'Reilly, Amy Middleton (2006) calls this "mothering under duress." For women from historically marginalized groups, social and material mothering circumstances may make it impossible to exercise agency, authority, and autonomy over their bodies and those of their children. For instance, women of color are more likely to be referred to child protective services; in fact, over 90% of children in foster care in New York City are Black or Latinx (Meyerson 2018). Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and women of mixed race are much more likely to be incarcerated; Black women are twice as likely as their white counterparts to be placed in prison (Carson and Golinelli 2014). Most recent census data shows that 25% of disabled women, 18% of Black women, and 15% of Latinx women live in poverty, compared to 8% of white women (Fern 2020). For Indigenous women in the United States, murder is the leading cause of death, ten times higher than national averages (Lucchesi and Echo-Hawk 2018). Feminist mothering is nearly impossible under these conditions, for one cannot be "autonomous" and "authentic" when the threat of hunger, incarceration, and personal safety are front of mind.

In many ways, Serena Williams's publication and tweets about her challenges in giving birth echo Middleton's critique of O'Reilly. One of her first official responses to childbirth was an op-ed for CNN in which she recognized her positionality as a Black mother and called on us all to donate to UNICEF because "Every mother, everywhere, regardless of race or background deserves to have a healthy pregnancy" (Williams 2018i). That same day, she tweeted "Help save lives by calling on [world] leaders to prioritize quality, affordable health care for mothers and newborns. Sign @UNICEF's petition TODAY!" (Williams 2018a).[2] In other words, Williams recognized the privilege her wealth and fame have handed her, and she used her vast public platform, Twitter especially, to bring attention to the struggles of poor women worldwide.

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[2] Tweets, by their nature, are an informal form of discourse; thus, they often contain capitalization and spelling errors. Rather than noting or editing every error, the tweets are reproduced accurately.

Writing Feminist Mothering Online

Despite the blind spots in O'Reilly's argument, Williams engages in feminist mothering, especially when considering the social expectations for silence during childbirth. Despite their significant role in the moment, women lose all agency in childbirth. In *Writing Childbirth*, Kim Hensley Owens (2015) suggests that women expect to be "rhetorically disabled" during birth. Meaning, many women believe they cannot reasonably communicate due to an imbalance of power between themselves and their physician, or the trauma to their bodies will render them speechless. A woman may write a birth plan because of "her temporary inability to speak for herself. Her writing is expected to stand for her voice" (Owens 2015, 68). In many cases, the mother loses complete control over how her body is treated during labor and delivery. Like many women who die from childbirth, Williams's real medical challenges occurred *after* the birth. For instance, Donna L. Hoyert and the CDC (2020) found that over a third of women's deaths within a year after giving birth were directly related to the pregnancy and delivery, and over two-thirds of those were preventable. Even when Williams could communicate clearly, her physicians still discounted her knowledge about her own body. When her physicians were not listening to her, Williams tried to take on greater authority: " 'I was like, listen to Dr. Williams!' " (Haskell 2018). As with many women of color, Williams was ignored until she nearly died. She had multiple surgeries and weeks of bed rest after giving birth.

Like many celebrity mothers, Williams speaks about her ordeal with reporters. However, she distinguishes herself as a feminist mother when she writes about her experience and uses it as a platform to inform the public about the plight of Black motherhood. She uses her voice, story, and likeness on Twitter to showcase that Black motherhood is different and perilous. Like other celebrity mothers, Williams could have depended on a glossy profile in Vogue to share her news. However, she takes agency over her story. For decades, scholars of gender and race have noted that women regain discursive power through a variety of genres, such as storytelling, memoir, letters, diaries, and testimony. Today, many women, particularly new mothers, find comfort and support in online communities and social media.[3] For instance, Twitter user and journalist Aja Williams (@ajawilliams09) tweeted, "Everytime I see stories of Serena's birth tale, it was eerily similar to mine, except I battled severe baby

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[3] Women of color can participate easily in social media discourse because access and speed of composition are not barriers to participation. In the past, women of color were often barred from participation because of the costly hardware and time required to write. Recently, the Pew Research Center found that more than a quarter of adults earning less than $30,000 annually are completely dependent on smartphones for internet access (Anderson and Kumar).

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blues and depression *vs.* Her Embolism. Every woman has her own journey. #ThisMama #ThanksSerena" (A. Williams 2018). Like her predecessors, Williams's social media writing seems to build community and voice what is unsaid. Williams uses social media (Facebook, Instagram) to document, share, and explore this identity.

Social media's ability to spread knowledge harkens to rhetorical strategies like those employed by women in the Obama White House. Women in the White House found that their perspectives were often ignored or unshared, so whenever one woman made a point, other women would repeat, reiterate, or build on the first woman's point. They called this strategy "amplification" (Eilperin). In fact, social media is made for amplification with 'retweeting' and 'sharing.' Digital rhetorical scholars Jim Ridolfo and Dànielle Nicole DeVoss call this phenomenon rhetorical velocity, or "a conscious rhetorical concern for distance, travel, speed, and time, pertaining specifically to theorizing instances of strategic appropriation by a third party." That is, Williams composes posts for Twitter expressly to share and amplify her messages about Black motherhood. Williams provides a platform for other mothers of color to share their knowledge and expertise with her and her followers. Scholar and PR specialist Genevieve Bosah (2018) points out on Twitter the connections Serena Williams is making by publicizing her story: "While she is not the first high profile athlete to give birth (and won't be the last) #ThisMama #SerenaWilliams is using her platform to reach out to other moms and working moms. By sharing her experiences and her struggles, she is uniting women on and off the court." Black women see Williams's struggles and amplify her experiences to raise awareness, the epitome of feminist mothering.

Williams facilitates rhetorical velocity or amplification by using the hashtag #ThisMama. While not a new hashtag, Williams revitalized #ThisMama to build community.[4] In one of her first tweets using the hashtag, Williams tells the story of Olympia vomiting on an airplane with a photo of the two of them in a narrow alley Williams's leg up, framing a tired looking Olympia in a stroller. She then expressly calls for other women to share: "#ThisMama would love to hear your stories of motherhood.. even ones like this! Share and tag them with #ThisMama" (Williams 2018b). Perhaps due to William's request for amplification, the tweet received 5,577 retweets and 49,859 likes. Similarly, Williams reached out to her followers to see if they had similar struggles with infant medical care:

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[4] Kim Wong-Shing, writing for web magazine *Little Things*, credits Serena Williams with starting #ThisMama. The hashtag was used as early as January 2016 by @LesieliKatoa.

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> Olympia had her one year check up and she has been super clingy ever since #thismama wants to know if this is normal? I mean I kinda liked it she wanted to be by my side ALLLL day but she cried whenever I left her even just to go to the bathroom (Williams 2018f).

On its surface, #ThisMama seems like an empowered and authentic way to call out dominant discourses on motherhood. This tweet received 611 retweets, over 13,000 likes, 1,600 responses, and treatment from the *Today Show* (Tate 2018). Some responses by her followers simply offered well-wishes, but others offered more substantial support such as one commenter, @bridgetmcgann, who commented, "This is not only normal, but an important measure of healthy development. I used to actually work in a lab where we tested this ... Google 'attachment theory'" (Williams 2018f). Other Williams followers retweeted, liked, and responded to @bridgetmcgann's response and shared their knowledge with other people on Twitter who may not follow Serena Williams.

Williams cross-posts and shares across platform adding to her rhetorical velocity and ability to share feminist mothering. The strategy is typical of many celebrities, but Williams's approach is unique because she uses multiple platforms to counter dominant narratives that motherhood is always a joyous affair. In this cross-post from Instagram, Williams exceeds Twitter's character limit to tell the full story of postpartum depression. At the end of her post, Williams encourages her followers, "I am here to say: if you are having a rough day or week—it's ok—I am, too!!! There's always tomm!" (Williams 2018c). In other words, by sharing her authentic, imperfect motherhood, Williams provides discursive space for other women, particularly those of color, to share their maternal challenges.

Feminist Mothering Complicated

Sharing her maternal challenges may be part of a larger social movement, new momism, characterized by a rejection of old tropes surrounding motherhood in which mothers are perfect angels of the house. In *The Mommy Myth*, Susan J. Douglas and Meredith W. Michaels (2004) explain the inherent paradox in new momism: "Central to new momism, in fact, is the feminist insistence that women have choices, that they are active agents in control of their own destiny, that they have autonomy ... The only truly enlightened choice to make as a woman, the one that proves, first that you are a 'real' woman, and second that you are a decent worthy one, is to become a 'mom'" (5). In Haskell's 2018 *Vogue* piece, Williams states: "'Sometimes I get really down and feel like, Man, I can't do this," she says. "It's that same negative attitude I have on the court sometimes. I guess

that's just who I am. No one talks about the low moments—the pressure you feel, the incredible letdown every time you hear the baby cry.'" She acknowledges what every mother has felt, helplessness and fear. However, while rejecting perfectionism, new momism carries its own poison pill, that nothing can be as fulfilling as motherhood. Women have choices, but for new momism, the choice should always be motherhood. Williams voices this tension: "'To be honest, there's something really attractive about the idea of moving to San Francisco and just being a mom" (Haskell 2018). She Tweets this tenant of new momism too: "This Mama Was going out for me time. Some much needed Serena time… but she threw up in my shoe… I stayed home to make sure she's ok. #momlife #thismama" (Williams 2018h). In other words, for a good mom, "me time" takes a back seat to the baby's needs.

Despite or perhaps because of the pressures of new momism, Williams prioritizes her career.

She wants to prove that she's the greatest tennis player by winning more Grand Slams than Australian women's champion Margaret Court, whom she trails by one: "Maybe this goes without saying, but it needs to be said in a powerful way: I absolutely want more Grand Slams" (Haskell 2018). But again, her success is tied to her new identity as a mother, a typical move in new momism:

> I think having a baby might help. When I'm too anxious I lose matches, and I feel like a lot of that anxiety disappeared when Olympia was born. Knowing I've got this beautiful baby to go home to makes me feel like I don't have to play another match. I don't need the money or the titles or the prestige. I want them, but I don't need them. That's a different feeling for me' (Haskell 2018).

For Williams, Olympia becomes an asset to her career rather than a liability. Nevertheless, Williams's profile piece in *Vogue* typifies the celebrity mom profile because they "resurrect so many of the stereotypes about women we hoped to deep six thirty years ago: women are, by genetic composition, nurturing and maternal, love all children, and prefer motherhood to anything" (Douglas and Michaels 2004, 138). Under new momism, the feminist mother can have it all – autonomy, agency, and authenticity. For celebrity mothers with cooks, cleaners, and dieticians, mommyism is achievable.

However, Williams' use of maternal rhetoric is not completely altruistic. Her hashtag and cross-platform posts most frequently promote her brand and other brands with unsavory reputations. Motherhood, it seems, is another identity in which Williams can turn the machine of capitalism to her advantage.

Williams announces her return to tennis after having her daughter using #ThisMama, but does so with her sponsor, JPMorgan Chase. #ThisMama was designed in conjunction with Chase as a marketing ploy: "The JPMorgan campaign is an attempt to reflect both the diversity and complexity of the motherhood experience ... #ThisMama is a great example of reframing the cultural narrative of motherhood as a source of strength for working mothers'" (Timsit 2018). On one hand, this campaign is an incredible testament to Williams's empowered mothering because she "can affect social change, both in the home through feminist childrearing and outside the home through maternal activism" (O'Reilly 2008, 799). On the other hand, when we understand feminism as "committed to challenging and transforming this gender inequity in all its manifestations" (O'Reilly 800), including economic inequality, the leveraging maternal rhetoric to benefit Chase, and Williams falls short of true activism.[5]

Moreover, Williams uses maternal rhetoric on social media to market her clothing brand. She uses a non-branded hashtag, #momlife, to share her brand with her followers: "Went to bed around 10:30. Woke up at midnight. Worked on @ShopSerena brand until 4am. Thought I would sleep in and @OlympiaOhanian woke me up at7am. #momlife #designerlife I'm tired. But gotta get back to work" (Williams 2019). Again, Williams showcases the real struggle of working mothers who often go without sleep for the benefit of their children. Arguably, her tweet draws attention to the plight of many Black women across this country who never had the luxury of idealized motherhood in which bourgeois white women could stay home with their children (hooks 1984, Hills-Collins 1991).

Perhaps the most significant problem in Williams's feminist mothering is her extensive ties to Nike. Besides Nike's historic exploitation of labor across the globe (which they have admittedly improved over the years), Nike has had ongoing difficulty with many of its women athletes. For instance, Alysia Montaño, who gained national attention as the "pregnant runner" for competing in women's 800 meters at the 2014 US Track and Field Championships while nearly eight months pregnant, recently broke her silence on Nike's bullying tactics in contracting with women athletes. In her op-ed for the *New York Times*, Montaño argued, "On Mother's Day this year, Nike released a video promoting gender equality. But that's just advertising" (Montaño 2019). She describes the experience of several track and field women athletes who cannot take a break for pregnancy and have been pressured to avoid pregnancy. Similarly, other

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[5] Motherwork is unpaid and unappreciated traditionally. Seemingly, Williams found a way to monetize motherwork through this partnership with JPMorgan Chase.

women athletes have reported pressure from Nike to lose weight – in some cases to the detriment of their athletic prowess (Chappell 2019). In response to this publicity, Nike changed its policy regarding pregnant athletes, but the company's ties to child labor and sweatshops overseas make this partnership problematic.

Something's Got to Give

Since the celebrity profile and activism surrounding birth mortality, Williams has continued her advocacy for women and mothers. She remains a UNICEF ambassador. She invested in Angel City Football Club, a National Women's Soccer League, and named Olympia as part owner (Betancourt 2020). Mostly, Williams uses her Twitter platform to showcase how much Olympia shapes her experiences as a mother, athlete, and professional: "I agree wholeheartedly. Olympia has been my greatest teacher" (Williams 2022). Journalists, writers, and other mother activists amplify Williams: "'After we play a match we have to go home and still change diapers' -Serena Williams speaking about the 9 moms in the US Open draw this year #USOpen #momlife" (O'Connell 2020). The groundbreaking three mothers in the 2020 US Open epitomizes feminist mothering. These world-class athletes can use their celebrity status to bring awareness to women's social problems and demonstrate that motherhood does not mean the end of one's career. Moreover, platforms like Twitter allow them to control messaging, advertising, and stories about their bodies.

Nevertheless, in Summer 2022, Williams announced her retirement from tennis – short of her Grand Slam goals. Her decision to retire is explicitly linked to the physical limitations of birthing more children:

> I never wanted to have to choose between tennis and a family. I don't think it's fair. If I were a guy, I wouldn't be writing this because I'd be out there playing and winning while my wife was doing the physical labor of expanding our family ... I almost did do the impossible: A lot of people don't realize that I was two months pregnant when I won the Australian Open in 2017. But I'm turning 41 this month, and something's got to give. (Haskell 2022).

Perhaps in a new way, Williams is rejecting new momism. At some point, pregnancy, age, and peak athletic performance may not reside in the same body. Williams's vulnerability and authenticity at this moment may provide other women the courage to accept that everything has limits. She can put her energy into developing her brand instead of her tennis serve.

Despite her retirement from tennis, Williams will continue working. Her business, Serena Ventures, has raised over $100 million in outside financing with a portfolio of over 75% of those ventures owned by women and people of color (Haskell 2022). Williams is not content to suffer in silence; she uses her substantial celebrity to bring awareness to a terrible racial bias that places Black women in peril whenever and wherever they give birth. As she states in her op-ed about Black maternal mortality: "Every mother, everywhere, regardless of race or background deserves to have a healthy pregnancy ... Together, we can make this change. Together, we can be the change" (Williams 2018i). She leverages the power of Twitter and her nearly eleven million followers to showcase her personal health complications, struggle with postpartum depression, and the challenges of motherhood. And, in the end, Williams is a feminist mother.

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DYNAMICS OF IDENTITY NEGOTIATION: A CASE STUDY ON A FACEBOOK POST PERTAINING TO ABORTION RIGHTS

Alina PREDA[1]

ABSTRACT. *Dynamics of Identity Negotiation: A Case Study on a Facebook Post Pertaining to Abortion Rights.* With the advent of computer mediated communication, Internet users have formed routines and rituals that mirror the articulation, the negotiation and the formation of online identities. This extremely subtle yet complex process has stimulated researchers' interest in the particularities of the socio-cultural acts performed in the on-line environment. The present study focuses on the negotiation of self- and group identity and on techniques of self-definition and self-representation, through an analysis of the reactions to a Facebook post regarding abortion rights.

Keywords: Facebook, abortion, self-presentation, interpersonal goals, identity negotiation

REZUMAT. *Dinamica negocierii identităţii: studiu de caz asupra unei postări Facebook privind dreptul la avort.* Comunicarea asistată de computer a permis internauţilor să dezvolte ritualuri care reflectă tehnicile de exprimare, negociere şi formare a identităţii online. Acest proces subtil dar complex a stimulat interesul cercetătorilor pentru studiul manifestării actelor socio-culturale în spaţiul virtual. Acest articol examinează comentariile utilizatorilor Facebook la o postare referitoare la avort pentru a evidenţia tehnicile de auto-definire şi auto-prezentare aferente negocierii identităţilor individuale şi de grup în mediul online.

Cuvinte-cheie: Facebook, avort, auto-prezentare, scopuri interpersonale, negocierea identităţii

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> **Motto:** "Identity is produced and reproduced both in discourse – narrative, rhetoric and representation – and in the practical, often very material, consequences of identification" (Jenkins 2008, 201)

Introduction

Depending on the interactional context, people shape their discourse in light of the specific layers of identity brought to the forefront by the particular factors underlying the respective act of communication. According to the ethnomethodological view pioneered by Harold Garfinkel, any person's identity can be regarded as their "display of, or ascription to, membership of some feature-rich category" (Antaki and Widdicombe 2008, 2). Identity, therefore, is profoundly social in nature, so it is neither simply passive nor merely latent, being a work-in-progress and, thus, never perfectly crystallised or permanently fixed: "Membership of a category is ascribed (and rejected), avowed (and disavowed), displayed (and ignored) in local places and at certain times, and it does these things as part of the interactional work that constitutes people's lives" (Antaki and Widdicombe 2008, 2). This qualitative research study relies on a conversation analytic process of scrutinising the dynamics of identity construction and negotiation as revealed by a three-day-long heated dispute occasioned by a Facebook post of 7 May 2022 pertaining to abortion rights.

The Dynamics of Online Identity Negotiation

With the advent of the Internet, the traditional distinction between mass communication and interpersonal communication has become increasingly blurred. On the one hand, mass communication was regarded as a one-way channel used to impart information to a rather large – either outright-anonymous or highly-undifferentiated – audience, yet some newspapers and magazines have also provided readers with the opportunity to respond via specially designed themed discussion forums. Interpersonal communication, on the other hand, was viewed as an exchange of ideas between (usually) two individuals whose discourse strategies are determined by their instrumental and relational goals and by their knowledge regarding "one another's idiosyncratic preferences" (Walther et al. 2011, 19). Nevertheless, the e-mail, albeit a form of interpersonal media, has also been used to simultaneously reach large groups of recipients.

The emergence of new interactive media has accelerated these convergent practices, especially with the rise of social networking sites, of which the most popular in 2022 are Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, Pinterest and Snapchat (Robinson 2022). Both mass communication and interpersonal communication contribute to the process of forming opinions on socio-political issues and their recent convergence, brought forth by computer-mediated communication, which favours the public sharing of personal information, has modified not only the information-processing patterns, but also the "social influence dynamics" (Walther et al. 2011, 17) and the subsequent "effects of information consumption", all these being shaped by "the interplay of motives that drive particular interactions" (18).

For instance, one can react to an item of political news with a Facebook post that, in turn, will fuel a debate by attracting the interest of one's Facebook friends, who may contribute with their individual reactions both to the original post and to other comments it might have generated. Thus, Facebook posts are perfect candidates for an analysis meant to illustrate what Patrick O'Sullivan, in 2005, termed "masspersonal communication", and later, in 2018, together with Caleb Carr, expanded into a communication-centred research model. Whereas the move away from the previously employed medium-centred approaches was promptly applauded by researchers such as Megan French and Natalya Bazarova, they felt the need to refine the mass-personal communication model "by incorporating anticipated interaction into its framework", given that, "to be truly communication-centered, the model has to link the sender and receiver, instead of considering their experiences separately or focusing on static message characteristics" (French and Bazarova 2017, 303). Thus, since social media is highly participatory in nature, this refined mass-personal communication model adroitly includes not only the sender's relatively subjective initial assessment of audience size and the receivers' perceived personalisation of the message, but also the sender's "expectations for audience involvement in a communication exchange" (304).

Through profile settings, Facebook users can either keep the level of self-identification to a minimum, or disclose from just a few to a great many details about themselves (by displaying a profile picture, e-mail addresses, websites and social links, their telephone number, date of birth, their own gender and the one of those they might be interested in having relationships with). They may choose to add a short bio, in no more than 101 characters, and offer information regarding their educational background, workplace, current city, hometown, relationship status, life events, hobbies, favourite quotes, languages spoken, religious and political views. Similarly, for any one of their posts, users may select the desired audience: "Only me", "Specific friends", "Friends except …", "Friends" or "Public". As different from other social networking sites,

such as the video-sharing system called YouTube, for example, populated by "relatively anonymous peers", Facebook allows users to build their own social network of "friends" (Walther et al. 2011, 26). It is, nevertheless, true that on Facebook the term "friend" is used with an extremely wide scope, to refer to any individual who enjoys the privilege of not only viewing but also contributing to a person's Facebook posts. Still, one can actually choose to "befriend", even here, only close affiliates, like real-life friends and acquaintances, but such exclusivity does seem to be uncommon. Hence the relative – yet not absolute – subjectivity of an original poster with regard to the size of any post's audience and to its degree of personalisation in the viewers' minds, once the "Friends" or the "Public" confidentiality option is selected.

Social identification empowers users of social networking sites to exert an increasingly strong influence on peers, especially on those that display what Rogers and Shoemaker (1971) called "optimal heterophily", namely on peers who are similar to us with respect to their interests and outlook on life. Thus, whilst political and religious posts are likely to spark fierce debates, the OP may expect full or partial support from such peers, but others' reactions will likely flesh out a number of issues and set in motion conflictual exchanges. Matters are further complicated by the fact that one rarely succeeds in classifying fellow human beings in a neutral, disinterested and internally consistent way, as there are layers of identity that cannot be accommodated by a one-dimensional classificatory model. Classification relies on much more than mere evaluation and tends to be hierarchical, not only cognitively, but also interactionally and socially. Thus, "A and B may be different from each other at one level, but both are members of the meta-category C" yet a certain individual might have to be identified as a C in one particular context and as an A in another context (Jenkins 2008, 6). Moreover, since identification is a process that simply "makes no sense outside relationships", it is closely connected to "motives for behaviour" and, thus, accounts for our treatment of others: there are hierarchies "of preference, of ambivalence, of hostility, of competition, of partnership and co-operation, and so on" (Jenkins 2008, 6). Additionally, categorical imperatives cannot be relied on: "Hierarchies of collective identification may conflict with hierarchies of individual identification", and there often are "emotional charges" attached to identification (Jenkins 2008, 6).

The "Emotions as Social Information theory (EASI)", developed by Gerben van Kleef, is an interpersonal approach to emotion.[2] The result of

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[2] The theory rests on the fundamental assumption that, because of the ambiguity of social life, people often "turn to others' emotions to inform their understanding of the situation and the people involved in it" with the purpose of clearly determining "a fitting course of action"; disambiguation can, however, occur if and only if people have the ability to "express the emotions that they experience (encoding) and accurately perceive the emotional expressions of others (decoding)" (Kleef 2016, 198).

evolutionary adaptation, emotional expressions are seen as communicative tools, as cues to social predispositions, which elicit inferential processes in observers, trigger their affective reactions and produce social effects, both in close relationships and in larger groups, playing an essential role in conflict and negotiation: "EASI theory posits that emotional expressions are more likely to trigger inferential processes to the degree that they are perceived as appropriate. Conversely, emotional expressions are more likely to elicit (negative) affective reactions to the degree that they are perceived as inappropriate" (Kleef 2016, 199).

Thus, interpersonal-communication competence is essential whether the interaction is face-to-face or online. Interpersonal goals shape people's behaviour during interaction: self-presentation goals refer to people's tendency to adjust their contributions during the communication process so as to ensure that they are perceived in the desired way; relational goals motivate people to accept compromises even when these require a certain degree of self-sacrifice, if that means keeping in with the other(s); instrumental goals include obtaining information, eliciting support or gaining compliance. Naturally, at different moments during the interaction, one goal or another may gain priority over the rest. In order to keep the exchange civil, just like there are explicit rules and norms in face-to-face interactions and relationships, so there are clearly communicated guidelines and regulations on social networking sites, meant to ensure that users do not fail to conform to normative positions in group discussions. All Facebook users, for instance, must follow the Community Standards and any user may report a post that does not, for it to be removed. The OPs or commentators in question cannot find out who reported them, but they are allowed to require a review of Facebook's decision and have the posts returned to their walls if it is proven that, in fact, no rules were broken. Repeat non-compliance results in restrictions (from temporary suspensions to lengthier bans) and might even lead to the respective account being deleted.

In light of the information outlined above, and given that Facebook is mainly used for status seeking, forming and maintaining as well as for relational initiation, development and maintenance, a case study such as the one presented in this article may provide insights into the evolution of communication strategies, into the dynamics of online identity formation and negotiation or into the new-fangled ways of conceptualising communication in the online environment.

The Socio-Political and Cultural Background of the Present Case Study

In the wake of the Supreme Court's vote of 5 May 2022 to strike down the landmark *Roe v. Wade* ruling, following Justice Samuel Alito's initial draft majority opinion, which repudiated the 1973 decision guaranteeing federal constitutional protections of abortion rights, a seismic socio-political wave of

conflicting reactions was generated. This affected the world at large, not merely the United States, due to the serious nature of human rights infringement that such a ruling engenders wherever it may be made.

In Europe, for instance, Poland's abortion ban is very strict, as it now only allows the procedure if the pregnancy constitutes a health-risk for the mother or if it resulted from either rape or incest. A third exception – which had accounted for 98% of abortions in Poland, also used to apply but, in October 2020, the country's Constitutional Court declared the termination of pregnancies on account of foetal abnormalities unconstitutional, equating them with "eugenic practices" (Vandoorne and Bell 2022). Conservative anti-abortion pressure groups, not content with the harshness of the legislation, are lobbying to tighten it even further, so as to completely eliminate the right to safe and legal abortion in this heavily Catholic country, following in the footsteps of predominately Catholic Malta. Maltese law is the strictest, enforcing a complete ban on abortion but, on 30 June this year, the government announced their intention to review the legislation in order to ensure that the law does not "prevent doctors from saving lives" (Moneta 2022). This occurred in the aftermath of a terrifying experience that Andrea Prudente, a 38-year-old US citizen from Seattle, was forced to undergo. She and her partner, Jay Weeldreyer, 45, were on their babymoon in the Mediterranean archipelago, when her water tragically broke and she suffered an incomplete miscarriage. Although in the absence of amniotic fluid the foetus had no chance of survival, the 16-week pregnant woman was denied the life-saving procedure, as the doctors were required by law to wait until the foetal heartbeat stopped or until the mother developed sepsis, before intervening to save her life. After spending one tormenting week in extreme fear for her life, despite the "significant danger that she'd bleed out during the two-hour flight", Andrea decided to require an emergency medical evacuation to Spain, where she was given proper medical care, coincidentally on the very day when *Roe v. Wade* was overturned in the United States (Campoamor 2022).

Obviously, since bodily autonomy should be one of the human rights enjoyed by all citizens of a country and of the world, irrespective of their biological sex, the persistent attempts throughout history to limit this right to males only has always given rise to protests all over the world. *Roe v. Wade* stipulated that states were not allowed to outlaw abortion during the first 24 weeks of pregnancy, or even afterwards, if pregnancy turned out to threaten the mother's life or health. When, on 24 June 2022, the Supreme Court officially overturned *Roe v. Wade*, many people took to the streets. However, the pro-choice peaceful protesters were violently attacked in various places by self-entitled "pro-life" vigilantes. In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, for example, a man in a black truck careered into the group of women who were just leaving the site where the meeting had taken place, crushing one's ankle and causing another to fall and hit her head. Local journalist Lyz Lenz tweeted about the attack:

Figure 1. Lyz Lenz, Embedded Twitter PrintScreen.
Source: *Substack*. https://lyz.substack.com/p/this-is-how-we-fight?utm_source.
Published: 25 June 2022, 13:16.

According to Molly Monk, one of the witnesses, "the pro-life movement is a complete lie if, in order to be against people who are protesting for abortion rights, you try to murder them in my street" (Campbell and Vagianos 2022).

The dire consequences of the decision to roll back access to abortion did not take long to surface. On 2 July 2022, Doctor Caitlin Bernard, an Indianapolis obstetrician-gynaecologist, reported to the Indiana Department of Health and to the Department of Child Services that on 30 June she had provided abortion services to a 10-year-old rape victim from Ohio. The little girl had been forced to travel to Indiana, where for the first 22 weeks of pregnancy it is legal to have an abortion, because in Ohio the procedure can only be performed up to 6 weeks of pregnancy, with no exceptions for cases involving rape or incest, and she was 6 weeks and 3 days pregnant. Nevertheless, Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita, a member of the Republican Party, decided to investigate the physician's actions, alleging that she is an abortion activist whose medical license should be suspended. On a similar note, Indiana lawyer Jim Bopp, author of the model legislation drafted in advance of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, claimed that the girl, who had been raped by a 27-year-old man, should not have sought abortion but, instead, should have understood "the reason and ultimately the benefit of having the child" (Messerly and Wren 2022). Naturally, due to Republicans' refusal to acknowledge the cruel reality of their inflexible abortion stance, any such case is bound to spark not only national but often international polemics.

Given the widespread use of social media platforms, the anti-choice versus pro-choice wrangle immediately found its way to various social networking sites, even before the Supreme Court handed down the final decision in that case, namely immediately after their initial vote on 5 May 2022. Among these, there was the Facebook post of 7 May which constitutes the focus of this study.

Methodology

The study focuses on the analysis of the picture below (Fig.2), which the author of this article, hereinafter referred to as the OP (i.e. original poster) shared on her Facebook wall in early May 2022. The OP has a total of 1,392 Facebook friends – mostly former or current colleagues and students, family members or actual real-life friends and uses no other social networking platform. Her preference for Facebook is mainly motivated by its accessibility on the PC and by the generous character number limit of 63,206. In terms of anticipated audience size and interaction, her average of three memes per day may receive about thirty reactions and a couple of comments, if any. Only extremely rarely does a post generate a greater number of comments and/or reactions. Her online contributions, however, are often a topic of conversation in real life, whenever she socialises with friends, colleagues or students, many of whom do not leave any reactions to the respective posts, as they prefer to keep a low profile on social media. The posts themselves are mostly humorous or parodical, yet the ones more serious in nature normally concern current national or international events, especially those related to human rights issues.

Figure 2. Original Post, Embedded Facebook PrintScreen.
Source: Alina Preda, Published: 7 May 2022.

Since the author of this article is also the OP, only the commentators' names and profile pictures have been blurred. The male contributors will be referred to as M1, M2 and M3, whilst the female ones will be identified as F1, F2, F3, etc. because, in light of the hierarchies of collective and individual identification, gender is, in this case, a layer of identity as relevant to the analysis as is the contributors' degree of religiosity, unlike the educational level, which does not constitute a differentiating factor. M2 is not a believer in supernatural powers, whilst M1 belongs to one of the largest Protestant denominations of Christianity and M3 is an Eastern Orthodox. The commentators' demographics are known to the author, as they are her friends and acquaintances in real life, not only on social media.

Highly regarded by James Powell, President of the International Bible Society (Barnard 1989, 18), *The New International Version of the Bible*, arguably "the most popular modern Bible translation in the world" (Lewendon 2020), has been chosen by the author, for the quotes featuring in this article, on the grounds that it has succeeded in preserving the original meaning of the text while making it easily-understandable especially at "gatherings where a wide-demographic of people are in attendance" (Lewendon 2020).

The Facebook post itself and the OP's contributions are in English, the others' as well, at first, since they have all been studying English. However, M1's use of Romanian, a language he seems to prefer when engaging in apologetic work, determines some of his interlocutors to also shift to Romanian, especially if it is their mother tongue, or to structure their discourse combining both languages, sometimes even within one and the same post. M3 joins in English, a language he feels very comfortable using but, if addressed in Romanian, he does his interlocutors the courtesy of mirroring their choice of language in his comebacks. This practice is known as translanguaging, one of the "many anticanonical variations of multilingualism" generated by superdiversity, "a linguacultural phenomenon stemming from the crossing of identity and speech repertoires of individuals in communities" (Cotrău, Cotoc, and Papuc 2021, 32). Since the English comments feature in the article, they will be discussed rather than quoted, whereas the Romanian ones will either be translated or paraphrased throughout the analysis.

Data Analysis

The picture under consideration here, created and distributed by the 4-million-member foundation NARAL Pro-Choice America, briefly yet cleverly outlines, in the form of a mockingly patronising tree-chart, the principle of bodily autonomy: the decision whether to have a baby or not belongs to the

respective pregnant woman and no other entity, male or female, priest or state, should have a final say in the matter. Between 7 May and 10 May, 120 supportive reactions were offered, by males (16) and females (104) alike, in the form of emoticons, either "thumbs up" or "hearts", keenly anticipated by the OP. She had actually used a one-word assertion meant to draw attention to the importance of the message while unequivocally expressing her stance on the issue: the word "This!" appears in the status update field – the box at the top of the Facebook homepage which prompts users, via the 'What's on your mind?' question, to share personal reflections on their own wall. Since the OP's Facebook friends are almost all college graduates, some holding one or more BA degrees, others even MA degrees or PhDs, her expectations, based on the notion of optimal heterophily, were that there would be little or no controversy on the issue, given that, to rational educated people, their right to make decisions regarding what happens to their own body is sacrosanct and they acknowledge the need to also accept the bodily autonomy of others.

Interestingly enough, there were no direct comments to the post itself, except for the first quip, namely "What about God's opinion?" – which promptly unleashed a flood of comebacks in the feed, as did one other male-authored intervention, thus subsequently fuelling the debate. Since Romania is one of the most religious countries in Europe and a predominantly Christian state,[3] some female participants to the debate are Christian as well, yet gender identity and endorsement of rationality coupled with a belief in the importance of upholding universal human rights take precedence over religious identity in this particular instance. The opposite is true in the case of the two female members of M1's congregation, one of them being his wife, who supported, via likes, some of M1's statements Fig. 4, 5, 6, 8, 15). Since collective identification "places the emphasis on similarity" (Jenkins 2008, 118), their belonging to the same congregation brings to the forefront the religious identity which outranks gender identity, especially as the Christian belief system exclusively sanctions male authority, as stated in 1 Timothy 2:11-12: "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent" (*The Bible*). Within such an inegalitarian framework, males dictating to females what they should do, including with their own bodies, is the norm, as women are expected to be submissive, especially a wife to her husband (Ephesians 5:22-24, Colossians 3:18, 1 Peter 3:1-6; Titus 2:5, 1 Corinthians 11:3,

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[3] Statista Research Department published on 21 June 2022 an article entitled "Religious commitment in Europe 2018, by country", which shows that Romania ranks first among 34 European countries in having the most religious citizens. This confirms data found on Wikipedia, showing that Romania has 1% non-believers and Malta 2%, these two countries thus being the most religious in the European Union (Wikipedia 2019).

etc.), whilst pregnancy and birth are to be accepted by women as manifestations of God's will and punishment: "To the woman he said, 'I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you'" (Genesis 3:16). This situation illustrates Jenkins's claim that "the 'irrational' dimensions of everyday life", such as "religious or other ideologies", are extremely significant, "within organisations no less than in other walks of everyday life" (Jenkins 2008, 203).

Figure 3.

M1
What about God's opinion?
Like   Reply   4d   😆 13

Alina Preda
   M1   Luckily, we do not live in a theocracy. Whichever god is real, if any, of the thousands of gods various people believe in, can deal with the wrong-doers in the afterlife.
Like   Reply   4d   😲❤️ 24

F1
I didn't know god had a uterus, fascinating!
Haha   Reply   1d   😆❤️😲 15

F2
   M1   I don't see why God's opinion is supposed to be upheld by law. Aren't people supposed to obey him out of choice and free will? How can you say you love God if it's illegal to do otherwise?
Like   Reply   1d   ❤️😲 7

M2
   M1   next time any of us meet God in person, we'll ask Him what he thinks
Like   Reply   1d   👍 5

Figure 4.

M1
Alina Preda Este adevărat că e democrație și ea nu e un lucru rău; dar nu înseamnă că orice lucru făcut în cadrul unui sistem social care te lasă să faci ceva e neapărat și bun. Legal nu înseamnă neapărat moral (de exemplu, în majoritatea cazurilor, nu e ilegal să minți. Cât despre varianta miilor de dumnezei, afirm cu 100% convingere că este doar Unul. La categoria wrong-doers ne încadrăm toți (în sensul că suntem păcătoși); diferența o face modul în care căutăm soluția pentru plata acelor păcate (eu aleg să cred în Singurul care este soluția).
Like   Reply   11w   ❤️ 2

M1
   M2   Isus a fost Dumnezeu întrupat, dar și atunci, ca și acum, mulți râdeau și nu dădeau doi bani pe ce spunea. Data viitoare când Îl vom vedea în persoană, nicio grijă, nu va mai fi nevoie să-L întrebăm nimic, pentru că va fi cam târzior... Acum ne este avocat sus în cer; atunci ne va fi judecător.
Like   Reply   20h

Comments to the Original Post, Embedded Facebook PrintScreen.
Source: Alina Preda, Published: 7 May 2022.

By introducing a supernatural being into the equation, M1 dismisses the relevance of the original post, showing his disagreement with its content and, consequently, attempting to persuade others that his deity of choice should be the ultimate judge in the matter of abortion, as opposed to any merely-human entity. His goal is instrumental in nature and in line with the evangelical drive instilled in cult members, who manifest utter disregard towards others' beliefs (or lack thereof) in one or more of the many supernatural beings whose existence has been postulated throughout the ages. Just like all those who proclaim deeply held beliefs, M1 is certain that the god he worships is the only

true one, the other conceptualisations of deities being merely figments of misguided people's imagination. Thus, he spells the word "god" with capital "G" and dismisses the OP's reply with no other argument than his strong belief which accounts for the 100% degree of certainty that his god is the one true God and all people should acknowledge Him (Fig. 1, 4). Moreover, M1 declares to be saddened by F1's sarcastic retort because, on the one hand, it implies that God could be a woman – a blasphemy in his view – and, on the other hand, it represents an attempt to bring the dispute back to the natural realm, leaving the supernatural aside (Fig. 5). As different from the OP's and from F1's lower-case spelling of the word "god", M2, although a non-believer, employs M1's capitalised spelling in his comment (Fig. 3), yet he promptly receives a patronising lecture, as illustrated by the diminutive *târzior:* "Don't you worry, next time we see Him it will be *a tiny bit too late* to ask anything", which reflects M1's growing frustration at witnessing resistance to his inflexible religious position on the matter (Fig. 4). M1 seems to resent the fact that others refuse to believe him when he tells them what God wants, as, although he is a simple human being, who has not yet died to go to Heaven, meet God in person and come back to bring us the news, he feels entitled to lecture others on the ways of God.

Numerous controversial claims punctuate M1's comments. For instance, following F2's statement that God's opinion is not "supposed to be upheld by law" (Fig. 3), M1 argues that it is on divine laws that the civil ones are based (Fig. 6) and, in reply to F3's declaration as to there being no reason why God should be brought up in this conversation, he states that anything seems permissible to us unless we acknowledge man's connection to God, adding that there is more to the issue than "My body-my choice", namely "my eternity", because we have a soul and there is also another's body involved, albeit a very tiny one (Fig. 7).
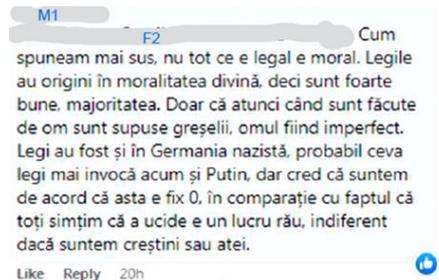
Figure 5.   **Figure 6.**

Comments to the Original Post, Embedded Facebook PrintScreen.
Source: Alina Preda, Published: 7 May 2022.

F3
M1 exact. Nici eu nu vad legatura cu God. My body. My choice.
Like   Reply   14h

M1
F3   Așa e; când nu vedem ce legătură are Dumnezeu cu omul, orice lucru pare bun. Aș mai completa simpla și aparent corecta ta schemă (my body - my choice): 1) Nu avem doar un trup, mai trebuie să ținem cont și de suflet. 2) În cazul unui avort, nu e vorba doar de „my" body, ci mai e și corpul altuia (chiar dacă foarte mic). 3) Schema nu se oprește la „my choice"; urmează și „my eternity".
Like   Reply   14h

F3
M1 le zici de parca esti sigur de tot ce urmeaza dincolo. My eternity = problema mea.
Like   Reply   14h

M1
Mulțumesc. Ție și celorlalți care vă întreceți în vorbe frumoase. Succes tuturor cu propria filozofie de viață și să vă bucurați de alegerile făcute și de consecințele lor! O seară faină!
Like   Reply   14h

Figure 7.   **Figure 8.**

Comments to the Original Post, Embedded Facebook PrintScreen.
Source: Alina Preda, Published: 7 May 2022.

M1's discourse becomes increasingly passive-aggressive, as he sarcastically thanks all those who expressed their anger in response to his comments, wishing them good luck in reaping the fruits of their life choices (Fig. 8). On reading F4's statements that "the only mention of abortion in the Bible is a straight-up how-to guide" so ¯_(ツ)_/¯" and that, according to the Bible, only at birth does the soul enter the body, M1 insists that he be offered the respective Bible quotes (Fig. 9, 15). F4 could obviously have quoted the ordeal of the bitter water from Numbers 5:11-31 and, respectively, Genesis 2:7 coupled with Ezekiel 37: 9-14, but she decided not to deliver, perfectly understanding F1's sarcastic "encouragement" to transform the debate into a rap battle by providing these Bible verses, which M1 would then counter with his own cherry-picked quotes or self-serving interpretations (Fig. 10). Although a very emotional response, F1's inferred refusal to accept, as a moral guide, the Iron Age book written by scientifically illiterate men was perceived as appropriate by F4 who, in the spirit of cooperation, complied with the implied request, instead of negatively responding to the sarcasm therein.

Figure 9.

Comments to the Original Post, Embedded Facebook PrintScreen.
Source: Alina Preda, Published: 7 May 2022**.**

Figure 10.   **Figure 11.**

Comments to the Original Post, Embedded Facebook PrintScreen.
Source: Alina Preda, Published: 7 May 2022

   The conversation takes a somewhat different turn when F1 accuses M1 of misogyny and expresses her fear that the daughter she is carrying might have to live in a world whose laws are shaped by men like M1 (Fig. 11). Her angst is not unjustified, given that the recent overturning of *Roe v. Wade* is the noxious work of far-right religious fundamentalists. Romania has its own Christian fundamentalist groups, one of the strongest being Pro Vita, an organisation whose members insist that abortion is never justified, even if the pregnancy is the result of incest or rape; moreover, since pregnancy is God's gift, not a disease, and abortion is not a cure, danger to the mother's health cannot be used to justify the procedure[4].

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[4] "Fiecare ființă omenească, indiferent de modalitatea venirii ei pe lume, își datorează existența unei voințe exprese și unei lucrări specifice a lui Dumnezeu în ceea ce o privește"./"Every human being, irrespective of how it came into this world, owes its existence to the express

Once F1 self-identifies as a pregnant woman, M1 disregards all her other statements and his style turns condescending (Fig. 12), as he expresses his hope that she will see the Creator when looking at her daughter.

Figure 12.

Comment to the Original Post, Embedded Facebook PrintScreen.
Source: Alina Preda, Published: 7 May 2022.

Later, he reports – as hate speech – her comment, which is deleted by Facebook officials and reinstated only after F1 protests, explaining that her statements are, actually, in compliance with Facebook's Community Standards (Fig. 13). M1's ensuing explanations of his action (Fig. 15) reflect an utter lack of empathy and an arresting inability to understand why comments such as his, especially when coming from individuals who will never know the trials of pregnancy and birth, are offensive to women, who justifiably object to men's use of supernatural entities in an attempt to infringe upon their body's autonomy. F1's reaction is to post the short YouTube video entitled "your body is mine", to show precisely what M1's comments sound like: "Hi, I am M1. I will never experience pregnancy, let alone an unwanted one, but I have theological opinions regarding what a woman can do when in need of surgical intervention" (Fig. 14).

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wish of God and to the specific work of God in what the respective being is concerned." (CartaPRO-VITA). "Medicina autentică trebuie să respingă ideologizarea sa prin echivalarea sarcinii cu o stare de boală și să condamne modificarea lipsită de temei, în sensul permiterii practicării avortului"/"Authentic medicine must reject the ideology that pregnancy is illness and condemn the unwarranted idea that it can harm one's health, idea which would allow doctors to practise abortions." (Manifestul PRO VITA). (Translation ours.)
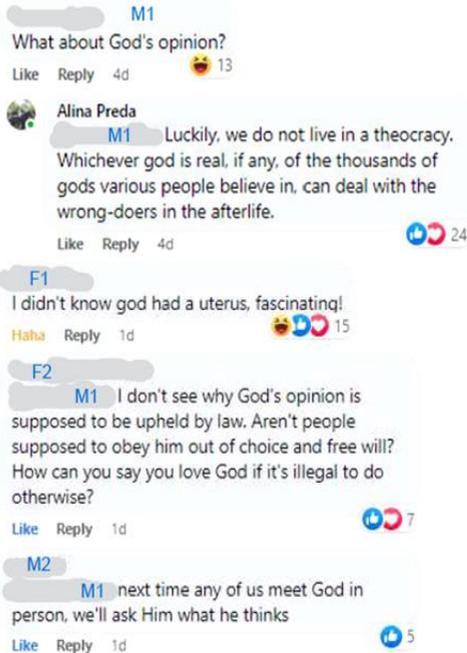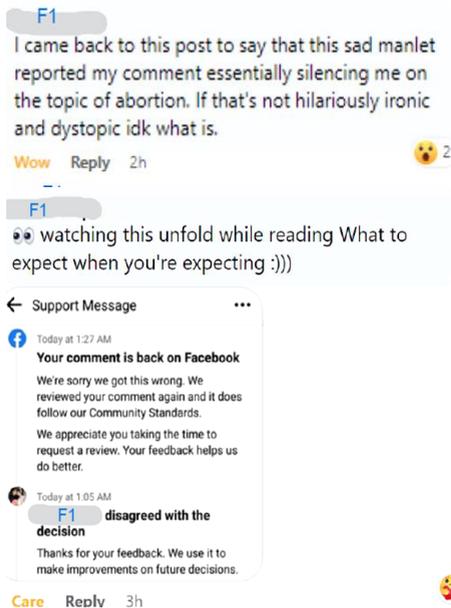
Figure 13.   **Figure 14.**

Comments to the Original Post, Embedded Facebook PrintScreen.
Source: Alina Preda, Published: 7 May 2022.

This emotionally charged exchange that eventually led to hostility soon stops with M1's sheepish denial that he wished to engage in conversation on the topic. Apparently, his comment was only meant to urge others to meditate on the thought that God (i.e., his god of choice) is against abortion. But the transparency of behaviour motives in the case of cult members resides in their required evangelical stance, hence the primacy of M1's instrumental goals. One of the behaviour motives driving his interventions surfaces when he quotes from the book of Matthew. Those who read not just the mentioned verse, 5:11, but also the one immediately following it cannot fail to notice that engaging in online battles in the name of the Christian deity supposedly carries huge benefits: "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:11-12). Conspicuously revealing his interpersonal self-presentation role, M1 situates himself, with smugness, on a moral high ground and, asserting his membership to the feature-rich category of white heterosexual Christian males, he feels entitled to engage in both mansplaining and religiousplaining, whilst feigning not only offense but also humility (Fig. 15).

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Figure 15.

Comment to the Original Post, Embedded Facebook PrintScreen.
Source: Alina Preda, Published: 7 May 2022.

Although a religious man himself, M3, who entered the debate upon the retreat of M1, argues from a position of exclusion, feeling offended by the fact that so many women endorsed the post's message. Self-identifying as a politically correct person who seconds equality, he professes not to be anti-abortion but insists that men must share the burden, as "the entire species' reproduction should not be left to women alone". Of course, his phrasing of the issue fails to take into account the fact that, as F5 pertinently points out, our human species overpopulating the planet is actually in no danger of extinction (Fig. 16).

Figure 16.

Figure 17.

Comment to the Original Post, Embedded Facebook PrintScreen.
Source: Alina Preda, Published: 7 May 2022.

Noticeably, since M3 began with the outrageous "My issue with this and with all the women who liked it is ..." (Fig. 16), F5 mockingly retorted with "My issue with this comment and all the men who repeat it is ..." (Fig. 17). F9 asks M3 how exactly, as a man, he could share the burden of pregnancy and also brings up the case of pregnancies resulting from rape (Fig. 16, 17). In utter disbelief, M3 vows to have been misunderstood (Fig. 18, 19):

M3
F9 please notice that nowhere in my initial comment have I used the term "pregnancy". And it s actually because of what F1 says above you. Im saying something else entirely, that is no specific case (such as preganancy danger). Im making a ✨general✨ point: it s stupid to ask half the people be reponsible for the reproduction of the entire species. It's also not fair ang against equal ...well anything.
That the biological risk and burden of the pregnancy (which I wansnt talking about) falls on women is no party's fault. I am not anti abortion! I just think "no uterus no opinion" is a totalitarian, unhealthy argument. We can do better

M3
F5 literally no one tried to, even remotely, attack women's rights or diminish the value of your lives. The fact that you all saw that in my comment is very difficult for me 😂

Figure 18.   **Figure 19.**
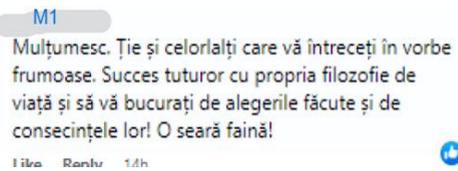
Comment to the Original Post, Embedded Facebook PrintScreen.
Source: Alina Preda, Published: 7 May 2022.

F1 refuses to accept his stance, reminding him of the tragic deaths and horrendous suffering that the abortion ban abetted during the communist regime (Fig. 21). To M3's "no uterus no opinion" is "a totalitarian, unhealthy argument" (Fig. 18), F1 vehemently replies that only through family planning-- which includes abortion and contraception, being thus opposed by religious groups--can both parents fruitfully co-operate and reach a decision as to if or when to have a child (Fig. 20).

F1
I love how men think this is 50%-50% when pregnancy is an absolutely wild state for a body to be in. There's countless risks involved, even death. For. The. Person. Carrying. Being pregnant is not cheap or easy. Men can offer emotional and or financial support, sure, but they are not the ones whose lives are in any actual danger. They just nutted :)) also men and women do have a say - together - if they can access family planning! That also involves abortion and other forms of contraception.
Like   Reply   1h   Edited

F1
Şi nu e totalitarist ca, de exemplu, soţul meu să poată decide dacă mor sau trăiesc în urma unei sarcini? Wow! Soţul meu nu se consultă cu mine dacă trebuie să-şi scoată apendicele sau amigdalele, nu îmi cere voie să lase celulele de sânge să i se coaguleze. E absurd şi dezgustător să trebuiască să cer okul cuiva ca să decid ceva cu medicul meu despre corpul meu. You didn't attack women's rights? You obviously don't see women as whole people capable of deciding for themselves. N-am învăţat nimic din comunism sau mamele noastre îşi povestesc traumele numai fiicelor?
Like   Reply   11w   Edited

Figure 20.   **Figure 21.**

Comment to the Original Post, Embedded Facebook PrintScreen.
Source: Alina Preda, Published: 7 May 2022.

F6 joins in with a vengeance, her words followed by a smiley, as if to soften the blow. M3 reacts with a sarcastic laugh and unwisely rebuts with a sneering remark preceded by an ill-fitted comparison promptly taxed by the recipient, but again, a smiling emoji is used as hedging to make the intervention seem less aggressive (Fig. 22):
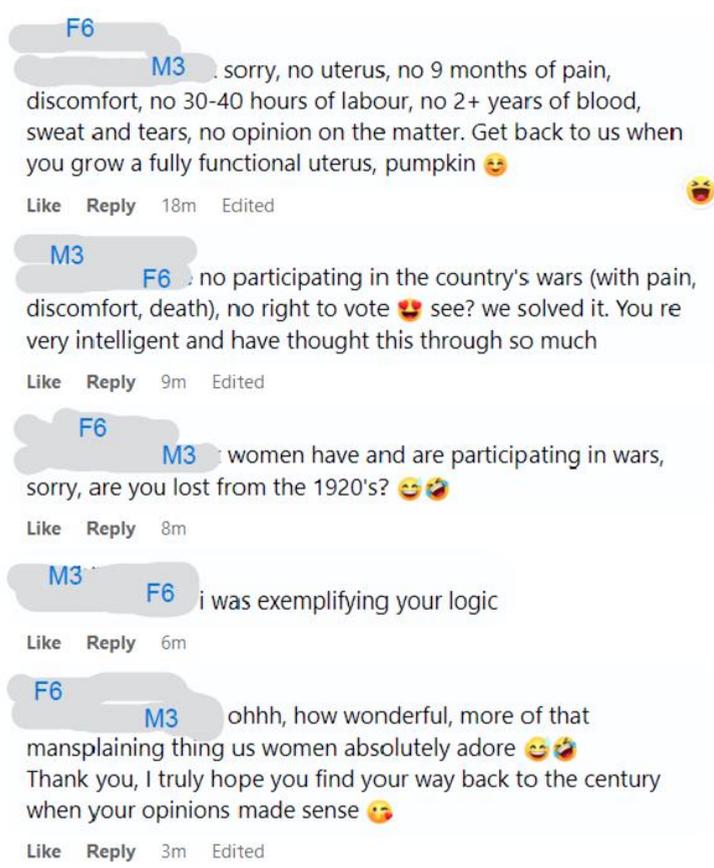
Figure 22.
Comment to the Original Post, Embedded Facebook PrintScreen.
Source: Alina Preda, Published: 7 May 2022.

M3's mansplaining elicits angry reactions and additional explanations from a less ironic F7 (Fig. 23), whilst F8 has admirable patience to further explain the reasons why his comments are perceived as inflammatory (Fig. 24):

Figure 23.   **Figure 24.**
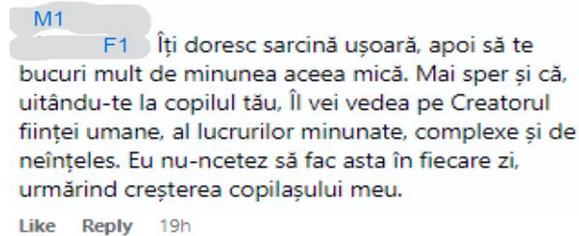
Comment to the Original Post, Embedded Facebook PrintScreen.
Source: Alina Preda, Published: 7 May 2022.

The last contribution in the feed belongs to F10, who points out again that a fair division is impossible when it comes to being pregnant and giving birth, ending her comment with a sarcastic laughing emoji (Fig. 24).

Remarkably, it is only in his interaction with the OP (Fig. 25, 26) that M1's focus slightly shifts towards relational goals, as he attempts to obviate conflict by affirming his respect for her, despite the opposite opinions expressed (Fig. 27). M3 also indicates his appreciation of the civility displayed by the OP throughout the interaction (Fig. 24) yet, despite a few attempts at actual communication, he is not always willing to integrate new information into his views on the topic. In the case of M1, there is an apparently striking lack of concern over what others have to say about the unsupported claims he makes but, to those familiar with Christian apologetics, his extreme lack of interest in an informed perspective on what is being discussed should come as no surprise.

Alina Preda

M1   Luckily, we do not live in a theocracy. Whichever god is real, if any, of the thousands of gods various people believe in, can deal with the wrong-doers in the afterlife.

Like   Reply   4d   24

Figure 25.

Alina Preda

M3   Well, we do need to share the burden of parenthood, as we share its joys and, indeed, many do. But the heaviest burden, that of pregnancy, is bound to be the woman's, for obvious reasons. In the happy cases, when children are wanted, there is a degree of collaboration and men support the women to a higher or lesser degree. But men cannot take over and be pregnant, even for a while. Having an abortion must be the pregnant person's choice. And, more often than not, abortion is a medical procedure sought in desperate cases (incest, rape, child abuse, health risks to the mother, abandonment by the father with dire financial implications.)

Like   Reply   2h   Edited   2

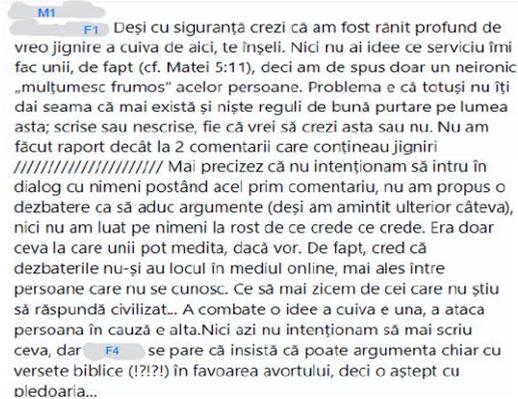**Figure 28.**

Comment to the Original Post, Embedded Facebook PrintScreen.
Source: Alina Preda, Published: 7 May 2022.

Alina Preda

M1   All those who believe in a god, or in a group of gods, do so with the same conviction that you are manifesting. And it is all right to believe as you choose. But all the others should enjoy the same right to entertain their own beliefs or to refuse to believe in the supernatural. You have your own body to make use of as you think might please your god. But it is absurd to claim the right to tell others what to do with their body just because you think your god dictates one action or another. My post reflects this clearly. Christian women may choose to never have abortions. Christian men may choose not to use penetration during sex to prevent abortion. But not everyone is a Christian. No woman desires to have an abortion, as it is an extremely invasive intervention. It is the last resort of someone in a desperate situation. And that last resort is her right.

Like   Reply   11w   Edited   14

Figure 26.

Alina Preda
The point is this: No one can use another's body/organs without that person's consent. If I die and I do not have a donor card, no one can take any part of my body to keep another person alive. No matter how immoral it might look. I no longer need the heart, being dead, and it would definitely save another's life! You should not force vasectomies on men, or tell women they must carry the pregnancy to term no matter what, because that would mean the fetus has more rights than any already-born human being, and women fewer rights than dead people. No one is pro-abortion! Just pro-human rights. One's body is one's own.

Like   Reply   22w   35

Figure 29.

Comment to the Original Post, Embedded Facebook PrintScreen.
Source: Alina Preda, Published: 7 May 2022.

M1
Alina Preda Vă apreciez mult ca persoană, v-am mai spus. Apreciez și felul de a răspunde, indiferent dacă avem unele păreri diferite. Unii ar trebui să ia exemplu...

Figure 27.

Comment to the Original Post, Embedded
Facebook PrintScreen.
Source: Alina Preda, Published: 7 May 2022.

The OP's more advanced age, professional status, career development and life experience are bound to translate into a social positioning that exacts considerable respect from current and former students, colleagues and friends. In fact, it is expected for this kind of "social identification dynamics" to trigger "more pronounced effects" in the case of computer-mediated communication than in instances of face-to-face interaction (Walther et al. 2011, 25). Nevertheless, in spite of the clearly articulated explanations of the female contributors, among whom the OP features heavily with several sound arguments (Fig. 25, 26, 28, 29), M1 and M3 cannot be swayed toward an understanding of how important abortion rights are for women. If one joins a debate from a position of self-avowed superiority, whether moral or intellectual, the focus being on converting others to your faith or on scoring points to improve one's self-image rather than on having an actual discussion, there cannot be room for any real productive conversation.

Conclusions

One of the reasons why people spend time reading, watching or listening to the news and discussing various news items on social media is that, while elaborating on current affairs in various interactions with their peers, not only do they have the opportunity to elicit reactions from others and to find out more about the subject, but they can also take a stand, express their personal view and attempt to influence those of others. Walther et al.'s reworking of Atkin's conceptualisation of the communicatory utility of social media content in interpersonal exchanges (1972) outlines an extended range of interpersonal goals, from self-presentation and self-representation to conversation starters and ammunition needed in order to reinforce one's views and persuade others to adopt them as well. The primacy of instrumental goals can lead to biased sampling of information provided by mass media or taken from one's "sacred" book of choice in order to support one's own position, whereas a focus on relational goals may influence the wording of one's comments in order to obviate conflict and, thus, maintain amicable relations. Additionally, one's choices might be guided by a drive to "express attitudinal agreement and convey interpersonal similarity" so as to establish, affirm or strengthen one's feeling of belonging to a certain group (Walther et al. 2011, 31); all these are bound to have a considerable impact on the "selection, interpretation, and retention of media information" (32), as well as on the form and content of the comments made on a certain Facebook post, which is "by definition, a public message, bordering on being broadcasted (or, at least, narrowcasted within the social network) for others to see" (33).

Throughout the debate outlined above, there is a clash between two distinct collective identities: masculinism, represented by M1 and M3, versus feminism, this category including the female contributors, as well as M2. On the other hand, there is a dispute between two other collective identities, namely those who are pro-forced-birth, for religious reasons in this case, all of them members of the same congregation, and those who are pro-women's lives. The discourses of the former, whether ambivalent or outright hostile, prioritise self-presentation and instrumental goals. They, thus, mirror the sense of entitlement displayed by privileged individuals who took the post's message personally and felt attacked in their self-assumed superior position as religious men, showing little, if any, concern for women's autonomy. The responses of the latter focus on relational goals and, even when the instrumental ones take precedence, there is no biased sampling of data but rather a generous sharing of personal information and of medically established facts pertaining to the procedure called abortion and to the importance of a right to choose for the physical and mental state of potential mothers.

The analysis of the debate supports Jenkins's claim that our interlocutors do not merely "perceive our identity, they actively constitute it" and this is done not simply "in terms of naming or categorising, but in terms of how they respond to or treat us" (Jenkins 2008, 96). The data show that F1 is justifiably feisty, having participated in both rounds of the debate, yet she consistently stands her ground using strong arguments to support her views. F2, F3 and F5 make pertinent inquiries, trying to have an actual conversation and hoping that, while considering how to answer, M1 and M3 might understand the errors of their ways. F7 and F8 attempt to reach a similar outcome via well-phrased explanations, whereas M2, F4, F6 and F10 mainly resort to sarcastic remarks. Unfortunately, M1 and, on occasion, M3, having informed their perspectives on the issue with falsehoods and stereotypes, instead of trying to understand what the others are saying, seem intent on protecting the perceived superiority of their "tribe". Thus, rather than shaping for himself the desired image of a gracious yet effective ambassador for Christ, M1 unwittingly comes forth as a self-appointed-online-crusader turned missionary-martyr, whose contribution to the debate amounts to nothing more than bible-thumping. M3, on the other hand, although lacking evidentially well-supported contributions, emerges as a slightly better communicator. Their projected self-identity is challenged by the others, who astutely scrutinise M1's and M3's premises and claims, judiciously analyse their interactional competences and sagaciously peer behind the smokescreen, gradually conveying the message that neither the interpersonal self-presentation goals of these two contributors, nor their instrumental goals have been achieved.

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EXPLORING LIMINAL AESTHETICS: THE "GLITCHY AND DECAYED" WORLDS OF VAPORWAVE, SEMIOTIC ASSEMBLAGES, AND INTERNET LINGUISTICS

Oana Teodora PAPUC[1]

ABSTRACT. *Exploring Liminal Aesthetics: The "Glitchy and Decayed" Worlds of Vaporwave, Semiotic Assemblages, and Internet Linguistics.* The topic of online identity formation in the realm of computer-mediated communication is nothing new. However, what does stand out, especially in recent years, in the larger framework of Internet-based sociolinguistic practices (David 2010; Williams 2006), is a much-needed exploration of various new microcultural aggregates. Some of these niche-genres are frequently encountered on YouTube, while others are primarily short-lived Instagram or TikTok community-driven trends. In essence, this paper states the belief that it is precisely these relatively contemporary microcultural trends that manage to accurately take the pulse of a new, post-pandemic world. Moreover, since many of these forms of artistic self-expression can be understood through a Cultural Sociolinguistic lens (Cotrău, Cotoc, and Papuc 2021), a translation of their particular symbolic meanings can only help decipher the increasingly chaotic, hypersubjective, and "semiotic assemblages" (Pennycook 2017) that individuals seem to be inhabiting and creating. Thus, the current paper aims to offer an analysis that ties together an array of only seemingly disparate elements, namely: cultural economy, creation and consumption of online cultural artefacts, and an affective processing that ties real-life traumatic events to the creation of particular cultural trends - liminal aesthetics and vaporwave, paired with a fascination with all things "glitchy and decayed" (Loignon and Messier 2020).

Keywords: online identity, sociolinguistics, Internet linguistics, multimodality, vaporwave, liminal aesthetics, semiotic assemblages

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REZUMAT. *În explorarea esteticii liminalității: universul „inexact și degradat" al genului vaporwave, asamblaje semiotice și lingvistica internetului.* Subiectul formării identității online în cadrul comunicării mediate de computer nu este neapărat unul inedit. Cu toate acestea, ceea ce se remarcă, mai ales în ultimii ani, în contextul mai larg al practicilor sociolingvistice digitale (David 2010; Williams 2006), este necesitatea explorării îndeaproape a unor noi și varii agregate microculturale. Unele dintre aceste genuri de nișă sunt des întâlnite pe platforma YouTube; iar altele iau forma trendurilor de scurtă durată, tipice comunităților utilizatoare de Instagram sau Tik-Tok. În esență, tema principală a lucrării de față sugerează importanța acestor trenduri microculturale contemporane, ele constituind exact instrumentele de analiză prin care se poate lua cu mai multă acuratețe pulsul unei lumi emergente, cea postpandemică. De asemenea, datorită faptului că multe dintre aceste forme de exprimare artistică pot fi înțelese prin prisma unei abordări cultural-sociolingvistice (Cotrău, Cotoc, and Papuc 2021), traducerea sensurilor particulare propuse de acestea poate doar ajuta în descifrarea „asamblajelor semiotice" (Pennycook 2017), tot mai haotice și hypersubiective ce par a fi concretizate și create, în mediul digital. Astfel, în cadrul lucrării de față se oferă o analiză ce urmărește să aducă laolaltă elemente doar aparent disparate, și anume: economia culturală, crearea și consumul de artefacte culturale online și o procesare afectivă ce face legătura între evenimente resimțite în viața reală ca având un impact traumatic și realizarea compensatorie de trenduri culturale particulare. Astfel, se remarcă în principal predilecția pentru estetica liminalității și genul vaporwave, alături de o vizibilă fascinație față de tot ce este „inexact și degradat" (Loignon and Messier 2020).

Cuvinte-cheie: *identitate online, sociolingvistică, lingvistica Internetului, multimodalitate, vaporwave, estetica liminalității, asamblaj semiotic*

Introduction

The purpose of the current paper is to lay the groundwork and frame new lines of research in the direction of exciting new developments taking shape in the field of Internet Linguistics (Crystal 2010; Cotrău, Cotoc and Papuc 2021). The digital realm itself has become embedded into our academic, professional, and personal lives to such an extent, that it is imperative to take the pulse of its emergent twists and turns.

These shifting patterns, the markings of what could be dubbed the living, breathing 'organism' that is the digital world, provide an array of clues for sociologists, psychologists, and sociolinguists to take the pulse of the current state of mind of its many dwellers and users. It is why I consider awarding crucial significance to analyses tackling an understanding of its many "digital tribes", as particular as they might appear at a first glance, not unlike Turner's (1974) early ethnomethodological work on processes of transgression and becoming.

Nowadays, in the aftermath of the COVID pandemic, it seems particularly important to understand how the digital affects the biological, and how offline modes of thinking and being affect virtual output, in the form of subcultural trends. In fact, this bidirectional highway of interconnectedness between the real and the digital, between the organic and the artificially created resembles the cultural boom of the industrial revolution, when rural inhabitants migrated to the city and a host of accompanying results took precedence, in the form of anxieties and subsequent feelings of loneliness due to the abrupt transition to a multiplicity of roles and newly emerging identities. These literal, palpable changes in space and time (routines) gave rise to many of our modern tropes, motifs and discourse markers.

Furthermore, whether we deem ourselves "digital natives" or "digital immigrants" (Prensky 2001), we can arguably identify similar patterns of accomodation to the affordances of the digital realm (El Ouirdi, et al. 2014). So, by taking note of current manifestations of Internet-based niche-identities, analysing modes of self-representation and self-expression, it becomes possible to draw a map of the ins-and-outs of whichever 'virtual tribes' spark our academic curiosity. It is only through uncovering, step by step, localised forms of meaning-making, be it through the use of symbolic imagery, or text, sound, kinetic visuals, and soundscapes (Pennycook 2017) etc., that we might get slightly closer to taking stock of the social, cultural and psychological shifts unfolding while we're still producing them and concurrently, influencing and being influenced by them.

Thus, piece by piece, the larger puzzle of the overlapping networks and focal points of meaning-making creates a direct link between Internet-based cultural artefacts and its creators/users. Furthermore, the concept belonging to the realm of sociolinguistics that would perfectly fit the demanding task of creating a narrow enough category to encapsulate the distinctive elements of the various emerging digital micro-tribes, but empty enough to function as a scaffolding, fit to accommodate the structures of other digital trends is Pennycook's "semiotic assemblage" (2017). According to Pennycook (3), this concept should be understood as a complex amalgamation of meaning-making symbols, which goes beyond the classic choice of the written or spoken word, or that of visual symbols in the forms of images to decode and convey messages. Other elements included would be the frequency, function and type of code-switches in conversation, switches from one social persona to another, as well as the inclusion of geographical and physical elements that directly inform communicative exchanges. An example used by the same author are the types of fish available for purchase in one particular shop, as well as the particular smells that informed buyers' on-the-spot decisions for buying and therefore negotiating and completing a communicative exchange that was not only highly multilingual, but multicultural too, the shop itself being described as one node

in an overlapping map of sociocultural networked scripts. The shop was advertised as a "Bangladesh, India, Pakistani, Island, Lebanese, African & Asian grocery" while being located in Lakemba, a suburb in southwest Sydney (5).

Furthermore, Turner's concept of liminality (1974) would also be of significant use to better understand the vaporwave community. Since liminality largely refers to a transitional period in which one undergoes a process of transformation, from one sense of identity to another, it is a concept rich enough in its uses and various interpretations that it lends itself perfectly to the current paper's aims. Lastly, with the help of the methodological tool most suitable for assessing processes of net-based identity creation, namely the lens of Cultural Sociolinguistics, we might just be able to grasp the inner workings of various 'digital tribes'.

Why Internet Linguistics?

The abrupt unfolding of events that took place worldwide, since springtime 2020, up until what are arguably dubbed these postpandemic times, stands as proof alone that what is currently needed is a much better understanding of how offline and online worlds influence each other and their residents and users. The imposed social isolation had varying effects, ranging from a whole host of silly trends that seemed to mobilise entire groups of people into taking up bread-making as a hobby, to virally shared short-lived food trends on TikTok, to more serious effects. These harmful effects were ultimately related to individuals' mental and physical health, recent studies indicating a sharp rise in reported cases of anxiety and depression (Yuzulia 2021; Barrot, Llenares and del Rosario 2021). For many, these were pre-existing issues that merely got exacerbated due to the measures taken during lockdowns: the fear and threat of the newly uncovered disease, a sense of loss of autonomy, loss of family members, loss of income, to name the most common of categories (Hidalgo-Andrade, Hermosa-Bosano, and Paz 2021). For teachers and students alike, the forced transition to an online or hybrid mode of communication, teaching, learning, and assessment was equally difficult and anxiety-inducing (Lischer, Safi, and Dickson 2021).

Ultimately, what seemed to take place was an exacerbation of our ambivalent relationship to the Internet and technology itself (Blut and Wang 2020). On the one hand, we welcome and express the desire to fully embrace these foreign territories. On the other hand, moral panics have never really ceased to raise alarm to potentially bring about the most dystopian of futures whenever new technologies displace obsolete but familiar methods, routines and ways of thinking, akin to past reactions to the emergence of new attitudes and subcultures (Chaney 1994). For instance, Carr (2010) describes the fearful attitudes present even at the invention and proliferation of the printing press.

The fear was that of losing, in essence, an organic manner of acquiring, transmitting and reproducing knowledge. In other words, these processes were intimately linked to a particular sense of identity, one where knowledge had to be obtained organically, without the use of other tools, so the biological, what we immediately know and can recognise as an intricate part of the human condition was thought of as being almost sacred (Turner 1974). Additionally, the same fear can also be read as the anxiety felt in the face of the assumed threat of becoming unable to recognize counterfeit, "fake identities" of individuals only mimicking the status and cognitive capabilities of their great predecessors (Carr 2010, 90-91).

Comparatively, I believe we are still navigating a very similar push and pull towards the limitless potentiality of the digital space. This isn't necessarily a novel observation, but I do believe that much more serious attention should be awarded to the various Internet-based niche-trends that circulate online. Since these are the products of what results at the crossroads between online and offline identity, between artistic self-expression and cultural creation, between appropriation and novelty, it becomes imperative to take on the task of immersing oneself in the analysis of such spaces.

The Cultural Sociolinguistic Approach and Web 2.0

In order to attain the goals described above, the parameters in which identity unfolds on the Internet can be traced through a series of crucial markers - textual, multimodal (visual, auditory, kinetic) and semantic. Thus, by deconstructing the activities and patterns of usage uncovered in various net-based repertoires, an ethnomethodological and critical approach may be used to start drawing a map of the confluence of a few major domains in the vast field of sociolinguistics - the Sociology of Language, the Social Psychology of Language, Discourse Analysis and lastly, an Ethnography of Communication (Hernández-Campoy 2014, 12). Thus, the artefacts that these neotribes produce and then circulate, distribute between their members and then to individuals outside their immediate subcultural affiliation amount to significant clues. Therefore, any form of visual, textual, auditory and kinetic (image in motion) symbol they seem to use repeatedly in functional, meaningful ways constitutes the foundation from which particular identities can emerge. As such, the Cultural Sociolinguistic lens would appear to be the best fit for the task at hand.

Before highlighting the particularities of some very intriguing digital tribes, a brief description of the online environment and some of its most typical forms of usage are warranted. Thus, a tentative social media taxonomy, as envisioned by El Ouirdi, et al. (2014) can be compiled by following three dimensions: *users* (the active participants engaged in communication and other Internet-based activities and can be subdivided in micro-, meso- and macro-level users); *content* (which may appear in various forms: texts, images, games, audio and/or video clips etc.); *function* (refers to the purpose of communication).

Tellingly, the above authors identify "sharing, collaborating, networking and geolocating" (120) as the underlying functions explaining why and how digital communication takes place. Additionally, studies have also indicated that online communication patterns seem to mirror those taking place offline, in terms of existing obstacles in the face of securing successful communication (119). The same authors draw attention to the fact that not enough research has been conducted on the content of what is being produced and consumed, and quite curiously so, since it most likely is the purpose of these socially mediated acts of communication to begin with:

> We suggested an inclusive working definition for the ever-evolving concept of social media as a set of mobile and web-based platforms built on Web 2.0 technologies, and allowing users at the micro-, meso- and macro- levels to share and geo-tag user-generated content (images, text, audio, video and games), to collaborate, and to build networks and communities, with the possibility of reaching and involving large audiences (123).

The above definition helps delineate the Web 2.0, or in other words "the social web" (123), which is mostly driven by user-generated content, from the Web 1.0. This earlier version of the Internet was mostly designed to function unidirectionally, in terms of information creation and distribution, while its audience was primarily passively consuming snippets of information or content offered by web creators (123). Moreover, the phrase "User Generated Content" refers to "the sum of all ways in which people make use of Social Media" (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, 61). In other words, it's not necessarily that the Web 2.0 presents tremendously innovative technologies, but it allowed for social interactivity to occur much more easily, "amateur users" adding their own creative spin on the digital products that we so readily take for granted today: blogs, vlogs, tumblr pages, Facebook pages, live streaming, YouTube channels, etc. (61).

In essence, social media activity can be analysed through a sociolinguistic lens, taking into account concepts such as social presence, social influence, while deconstructing the semiotic landscape and cultural products resulting from online interactions. This process can be aided by correlating these micro-level instances of cultural production, consumption and distribution with their macroeconomic counterparts, using Bourdieu's (1986) take on the functions and influence of "cultural capital". Accompanying parameters to take into account when discussing online identities should differentiate the content creator from the content consumer. These constitute different social roles, according to El Ouirdi, et al. (2010, 121-122), that promote differing levels of engagement in Internet-based behaviour, ranging from the active (creation and distribution of content) to the passive (redistribution of content on various other platforms through sharing, retweeting, commenting, liking, and merely viewing).

Ultimately, some characteristics of online communication are influenced by these acts unfolding in a virtual environment, free from the usual bounds of geographical space. Naturally, this aspect affects communication patterns, while individuals themselves are bound by their "place-identity" in quite specific ways - the lack of limitations of physical space when using various online personas provides freedom from having to necessarily self-present through the usual markers affiliated to embodied, sensorily perceptive beings (i.e., ethnic, gender and physical attributes, alongside cultural and subcultural affiliations signalled through clothing, styling, gestures, body movements, emotional cues, etc.). At the same time, online individuals are bound by another type of physicality and spatial relationship - the one influenced by the very hardware which makes communication via social media possible, in the first place. So, both self-presentation and self-disclosure may be linked to the breakdown of the traditional self (Newman 2015), since our digital avatars may resemble who we present ourselves offline, as much or as little as we want.

To this layer of complexity, another crucial shift occurs - a change in our perception of time-relations. The usual time restraints of offline communication are partially suspended/altered in the digital realm, communication acquiring a different set of valences: encouraging instant gratification, seemingly perpetually entertained by countless actors (known to various degrees) (ibid.). In fact, many of these connotations have been retroactively awarded as recognisable identity markers delineating the so-called 'nature' of different generations of digital immigrants: millennials, Generation Z and generation Alpha. In other words, youth culture has been redefined mostly through the lens of "participatory culture" (Smith 2020). Communication processing for Gen Z is perceived as continuous, transitioning between the online and offline, seamlessly and habitually, since a significant portion of social relationship management is done via social media. Furthermore, Gen Zers are described as quite skillful in their creation and management of online content, as access to information is easily attainable. In fact, these online traces have become "a visual representation of the rituals and markers of youth" (ibid.), so much so that they are perceived to be less "fake" or "inauthentic".

One may argue that the rise of an online culture of authenticity is a corollary of living in an "identity economy" (Akerlof and Kranton 2000). The rise of "Influencer culture" seems to be a testament to the rise of "hyperindividuality" and the emergence of niche-/microcultural aggregates embedded in their own microcosms and linguacultures (Cotrău, Cotoc and Papuc 2021), as predicted by Chaney (1994), by Blommaert's concept of transmobility (2010), and as a backlash due to the rise of highly multilingual modes of communication and increased patterns of migration in recent decades. These tendencies have also been indexed in the literature with the introduction of "hypersubjectivity" (Hall 2014) and "superdiversity" (Jørgensen and Ag 2012) to more closely resemble the accelerated

patterns taking place at both macro (socially, politically, economically) and micro levels (the rapid switch from identity creation, communication management and socialising taking place on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.). This transition could be explained by a growing preference for time engagement with social media apps to be shorter, the use of symbolic imagery seemingly gaining terrain over platforms geared towards primarily narrative modes of self-expression, that tend to be longer and quite verbose (Smith 2020).

Finally, the shift towards the so-called "tyranny of the subjective" (Finne 2018), the lamented loss of any semblance of objectivity in contemporary culture, is quite possibly an effect that grew out of the historical cult of personality, transgressing the boundaries of political discourse, infiltrating the media itself. This shift in culture has been seemingly taking place for decades, anticipated by its predecessors - reality TV and tabloids, the cult of the celebrity lifestyle being at its peak in the '00s (ibid). This cultural mutation translated into the final disintegration from a very sharp distinction being made between "popular culture" and "high culture" into a total collapse in "an era more profoundly organized by Big Tech than our own elected governments, the new culture to be countered isn't singular or top-down. It's rhizomatic, nonbinary, and includes all who live within the Google/Apple/Facebook/Amazon digital ecosystem (aka GAFA stack), (Busta 2021).

Online Niche-identities as Cultural Capital and Liminoid Phenomena: Vaporwave, Weirdcore, Traumacore and Ambient Back Rooms

Out of the varied forms of contemporaneous Internet-based subcultures, one in particular seems to stand out - vaporwave. It initially emerged in the online communities of the 2010s, as a rather specific brand of electronic music. It is usually accompanied by a host of symbolic imagery reminiscent of "early Internet days" (heavily pixelated texts and images, '90s videogame design, earlier versions of the Microsoft logo, Japanese iconography reminiscent of Japan's economic boom of the late '80s and '90s), mixed with images of Greek and Roman statues in pinkish, bluish hues, pastels or bright neon colours, and elements of corporate culture (logos, ads) from the '60s, '70s, and '80s. To these are added countless musical interpretations and reconfigurations of the genre, the general musical markers of vaporwave being largely dependent on virtually anyone's ability to sample and heavily slow down the tempo of older popular songs from the '80s, and to pair them with similarly repurposed elements from '80s and '90s smooth jazz, so-called elevator music, and elements of Japanese city-pop and '80s synths (McLeod 2018).

Due to the fact that the landscape of the vaporwave genre itself is so heavily linked to the use of elements of corporate and consumerist culture, both visually and musically (repurposing snippets of old Japanese and American

commercials, using elements of muzak and creating visual landscapes of abandoned malls), fans and critics alike seem to gravitate towards the idea that latter iterations of the genre are directly critiquing modern consumerism (Loignon and Messier 2020). This is suggested by the emotional charge that usually accompanies this specific musical and visual landscape - a paradoxical mixture of soothing dread, empty glamour, and the both liberating and entrapping mindless consumption tendencies of late capitalism, where "the commodification of the self" takes centre stage (Davis 2003).

Thus, vaporwave has been identified as a means to parody consumerism and corporate culture. Its visual markers however seem to have become ubiquitous in many campaigns, ads (i.e. Nike's Zoom Streak Spectrum Plus "Vaporwave" inspired 2018 products) and general online aesthetic trends, here included many of its offshoots. Therefore, some confusion exists as to the exact relationship between the origins of the genre and the different uses of affiliated microgenres - fashwave, labourwave, trumpwave[2]. These three examples of contemporary underground niche-cultures seem to have come together mostly for the purpose of spreading fascist or communist ideologies, under the appealing guise of vaporwave iconography. Naturally, these communities are much less popular and widespread as vaporwave, since such ideological revivals could only come from a place of a deep misunderstanding and lack of direct contact with the actual Soviet era, and would thus elicit plenty of backlash (as comments throughout YouTube and aesthetics.wiki seem to suggest). Perhaps the phenomenon itself could be considered indicative of a perceived collective sense of disillusionment with contemporaneous times - failure of capitalism and promises of becoming citizens part of the global village - the climate crisis, critique of fast fashion and the accelerated recycling of subcultural trends of the early 2000s as faulty coping mechanisms for the pandemic (Di Crosta, et al. 2021), the Afghan crisis, the war in Ukraine.

Ultimately, vaporwave has devolved into a parody of itself by being created and distributed entirely online. This is a subculture that makes use of "pre-existing graphics from old pre-millennial techno-culture that are often incongruously [displayed alongside] historic art or commercial images", giving it a "retrofuturistic" taint (McLeod 2018, 127). Hence, the vaporwave ethos is clearly DIY, and it capitalised on its nostalgic and hypnagogic inducing qualities, that it is virtually impossible to offer a clear definition of the genre. Furthermore, its classification is even harder to pinpoint, since it has been linked by musical theorists with older counterparts in the form of seapunk and hypnagogic pop, alongside a more recent iteration, in the form of synthwave (which has itself diffused in chillwave, simpsonwave, fashwave, sovietwave, signalwave, to name only a few), future funk, hard vapour, mallsoft, and lo-fi mixes.

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2   See "Laborwave", aesthetics.fandom.com, accessed October 15 2022.

Therefore, to acquire a better understanding of the core niche-trend under scrutiny in the current paper, namely vaporwave, and to then be able to grapple its subsequent offshoots, a general shift in the contemporary cultural discourse must also be addressed. This shift in our ongoing process of adapting to the rapid changes in our sociocultural, technological, and political landscapes is a consequential backlash of the pitfalls inherent to the Internet - anonymity, its extreme democratisation resulting in the effortless creation of so-called fake personas and their scrutinised artificiality.

This tendency has been counteracted, I believe, through a similar DIY ethos, militating for a return to "authentic" artistic expression. In other words, power is claimed by the individual repurposing cultural capital, and thus attempting to attack the status quo, or at least mitigate the damage created by the GAFA stack.

It is precisely this attribute that has also been used to perform analyses on the vaporwave phenomenon. In a video essay, titled *The Beauty of Degraded Media*[3], a very insightful take describes the primacy of "authenticity" (Finne 2018). The sensed artificiality, the constructed perfection of the digital world could perhaps explain some recurrent trends observable in different media in the form of motifs and themes. This gives way to the artificial embellishment of visual and musical elements with items seemingly countering the constructed perfection of the digital world, by intentionally incorporating elements meant to reflect imperfections, for the purpose of creating oxymoronically "authentic simulacra", "authentic hyperreality"[4].

Many of these embellishments give off the sense of watching "old VHS tapes" (ibid.), glitchy imperfections abruptly zapping their way through visual imagery. Disruptions in sound, image and movement are made deliberately to remember the days of "glitchy" analogue technology. Thus, as cultural capital becomes more complex in an environment oversaturated by hyperreality, to be a savvy consumer and producer of cultural capital, one needs to become a creative repurposer of symbols from a myriad of different genres and periods. The vaporwave genre allows for exactly that. In essence, vaporwave and its offshoots functioned as the liminal thresholds which helped process the emotional turmoil created by the increased visibility of uncertainty in our lives. Even though the pandemic arrived much later than the original emergence of the vaporwave genre, it successfully revealed that many of its effects were not necessarily novel, but simply got exacerbated by the pressures of coping with its sudden challenges.

Taking all of the above into account, what remains for this section is to highlight in detail how liminal and liminoid phenomena function in complex

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[3] See "The Beauty of Degraded Media", written by Polyphonic, aired October 24 2019, on YouTube.
[4] "The Beauty of Degraded Media", id.

societies, to argue that the vaporwave genre fulfilled the same cathartic functions for its many consumers. According to Victor Turner (1974), in the transition towards complex, industrial societies, from tribal and mostly agrarian societies, our relationship to culture has changed dramatically.

For Turner, engaging with different forms of culture, ranging from ritualistic, shamanistic and ceremonial acts to which the whole community was obligated to participate, to the modern-day individual choices to partake in festivals, religious events, and varying performing arts (movies, concerts, fine art exhibitions, etc.) was one important signifier "whereby groups became adjusted to internal changes" (54). In other words, the primary function of immersion in the artistic experience, whether producing it or merely consuming it, fulfils crucially important functions, for both the collective and the individual. On the one hand, it allows for a cognitive and emotional processing of one's role in the socio-cultural hierarchy of residence, meaning, it has a cathartic role. On the other, it possesses a dual purpose - it reveals how chaos can be repurposed into (new) order, but it also capitalises on its potential for restructuration through the destruction of that which no longer serves the collective, or the individual, and which necessitates novelty, improvement.

The critical take on the deliberate use of these elements takes on two opposing viewpoints. One stance believes that vaporwave artists specifically captured the collective disappointment with "the soft promise of early corporate culture [that] has collapsed in the dystopian economic nightmare, the capitalist 'rat race'" (ibid.). Others believe these effects to be accidental.

Thus, perceived authenticity and meaningfulness, especially in the vaporwave genre, are given by imperfections, a sense of decay, an accentuated sense of temporality, the awareness of the finite. This is perhaps done to help mitigate a distrust of the artificial, the impossibly perfect machine and its constancy over time, caught in numerous iterations of the same processes, carried out in the same exact manner, ad infinitum.

Musically and visually, the vaporwave genre attempts to alleviate this tension, by provoking both dread and awe, in its liminoid soundscapes, "heavily rely[ing] on the creative manipulation of samples of mellow adult-contemporary pop music and Muzak that date from the 1970s, '80s and '90s" (McLeod, 123). This manipulation takes the form of dramatically slowed down tempos of sampled popular songs, to the point where the vocals and other identifying elements of these pop artefacts become almost unrecognisable (124). Significant similarities between these microgenres lie in either concept, or form, one particular unifying thread being their tendency towards self-referentiality and irony (McLeod 125).

In fact, the term "liminal" itself is used quite frequently by receiving audience in YouTube comments or the titles of the videos themselves. Highly engaging are also more recent iterations of so-called "liminal genres", in the

form of traumacore, weirdcore and liminal backroom series (Tiffany 2021). Weirdcore, or dreamcore and the liminal backroom series are a specific set of genres that play on the eeriness of abandoned spaces where human activity usually occurs - specifically abandoned malls, empty playgrounds, or school hallways, empty airport waiting rooms, etc. The backroom series were also apparently inspired by scenes accidentally created in video games of the '90s and '00s that were left slightly unfinished by their graphic designers (ibid.).

Many of the motifs used in the weirdcore genre are reminiscent of vaporwave, aiming to create both dread and peaceful relaxation, being aesthetically centred on low-quality photography that lacks contextual cues. This genre makes use of relatively amateurish-looking video graphics, reminiscent of the Web 1.0 (ibid.). The commentary that usually accompanies these digital displays suggests that what is felt is a sense of nostalgia, even for spaces or time periods that one never really experienced. In its more extreme versions, the sense of dread, even horror is amplified in traumacore, a pretty controversial offshoot of the genre that is characterised by a violent clash between images vaguely referencing themes related to a sense of loss of innocence, childhood trauma, and abandonment, with superimposed textual phrases over imagery of plush toys, kawaii anime characters, Hello Kitty, hearts, bunnies in pinkish, glittery hues, such as: "im so sorry i cant stop", "it keeps replaying in my head/please make it stop" "its ok i deserve it", "i loved you WE WERE BOTH CHILDREN forget forget forget forget forget forget/ why would you do that to me"[5]. Critics of this particular form of aesthetic draw attention to the fact that partakers in the microgenre should be careful to not devoid it of significant meaning, or to inadvertently glamorise trauma, or dissociative states, as opposed to those who use this form of self-expression, for the purpose of emotional processing, akin to a visual diary, as an alternative form of therapy. Basically, the fear is placed once again on the shoulders of determining that which is authentic from that which is not. Unfortunately, authenticity itself has been commodified by the Internet, due to the emergence of a complex relationship between identity and "self-commodification" in capitalism (Singh 2016, 205).

Essentially, so much more could be added to further detail the intricate ways in which these microgenres are interrelated and used to help their audiences process the effects of our increasingly computational world. It also seems likely that further research might uncover what is only an assumption at the time being, that one crucial function of these forms of artistic expression is to help its creators gain a sense of control akin to that of a coping mechanism by way of creating cultural capital. This is only possible in a world where these digital sites of creation resemble the structure of Foucault's heterotopias

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[5] See "Traumacore", aesthetics.fandom.com, accessed July 31 2021.

(1984) – sites that "are capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several places, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (6). Such are the characteristics of both the Internet, as well as the vaporwave landscape. At the same time, these are worlds that have become available to each and every individual, due to the partial dissolution and contamination of high forms of culture with popular ones. Furthermore, the blurred lines between artistic consumption, creation, redistribution and identity creation in the digital realm, gives validity to the argument that these genres are particularly enticing since they get to fulfil the role of liminal and liminoid phenomena and act as powerfully cathartic instruments for making sense of and adapting to our ever changing online and offline environments.

Clearly, the success of these genres can also be made sense of with the help of Pennycook's definition of semiotic potential (2017, 2), by broadening the concept of "linguistic landscape", defined as:

> a study of 'the presence, representation, meanings and interpretation of languages displayed in public places" (Shohamy and Ben-Rafael 2015, 1) to include images, photos, sounds (soundscapes), movements, music, smells (smellscapes), graffiti, clothes, food, buildings, history, as well as people who are immersed and absorbed in spaces by interacting with LL in different ways (Shohamy 2015, 153–154).

To this definition, the concept of "boundary objects" is included, resulting in expanding the "semiotic potential" of meaning construction (Pennycook 2017, 6):

> [...] the mobile ideas, things or practices that are shared across different social, cultural, linguistic or geographical domains. Perhaps better called adaptable artefacts rather than boundary objects, they are sufficiently flexible to be taken up by different people in different contexts, yet also sufficiently robust to be recognisable as 'the same thing' across these different contexts.

This is in essence, descriptive of the cultural artefacts produced by vaporwave and its accompanying genres, as well as it manages to bridge the gap between the fields of sociolinguistics and Internet linguistics. The former has always analysed forms of language in a sociocultural context, while the latter expands this context to a multimodal one, which is inherent to any digital environment, where many other symbols beyond the mere use of text are made use of. In fact, the term "vaporwave" is a playful turn of phrase that was apparently inspired by the term "vapourware", meaning "a computer-related product that has been widely advertised but has not and may never become available"[6]. Ultimately, the term itself references absence and ethereal presence, all at the same time.

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[6] See Merriam-Webster. com/Dictionary s.v. "vaporware", accessed July 31, 2022.

The concept of liminality holds the exact same space for ambivalence. The term 'liminal' comes from the Latin, *limen*, meaning "threshold", "margin", to "transition between" (Turner 1974, 57), referencing the middle phase of a 'rite de passage'. In tribal societies, the process of transitioning from an identity relegated to childhood and teenagedom, towards becoming and establishing oneself as a mature member of society was done quite noticeably, in the form of a ritual. In this ritual, Turner, building on van Gennep's work, differentiates between three distinct stages. In the first phase, the neophyte is clearly removed from within "normal", usual society, displaced from the usual "place-identity" and even "temporal identity" to a new space, one devoid of any markers of one's past identity. Concurrently, in the liminal phase of any initiation rite, the neophyte is equally distant from its identity-to-be. The state is one of pure potentiality, in the here and now, far removed from the past and removed from the future, as well. It is a sacred space that knows no bounds, the initiand being invested with sacred powers - the order of the world is turned upside down, or is distorted, chaos is invited to help purge from the restrictions of an orderly social life with little to no affordances. States become heighted, masks may be worn to call for becoming invested with the powers of varying gods, dance and ritual becoming displays of hyperbolized forms of embodiment, all of these elements revealing the underlying nature of the universe - the cosmic order and chaos. "Liminality is the temporal interface whose properties partially invert those of the already consolidated order which constitutes any specific cosmos" (73).

In Turner's view (1974), because the space of the liminal becomes the space for both destruction and creation, for both death and life, the neophyte is both dead to their former identity and yet to be born in the one prefigured by the limitless potential. It is only in the postliminal stage when the neophyte individuates and is reincorporated into normal life, in an enriched status. As such, liminality is invested with powerful symbolism, is chameleonic in nature, and can shape-shif to potentially serve as the "scene of disease, despair, death, suicide". It may suggest feelings of "anomie, angst and alienation", it plays with social bonds, distorts them, and in more extreme cases, perverts them, satirises them without necessarily offering compensatory solutions for its violent upheaval (78). In essence, the "germ of societal change" resides in the liminal (76) and it marks the boundary between 'normal' and 'aberrant', 'deviant'.

At the same time, experiencing liminality can be socially positive, since it activates what Turner (1974) calls a sense of "communitas" (78). It is the force that helps the neophyte individuate in the liminal stage of an initiation rite, so it encapsulates both sameness and otherness. It is the feeling and awareness that, in its purest of forms, shows up spontaneously between individuals "freely relating", despite social contexts or social rules. However desired this feeling may be

though, whenever structure tends to be legislated for the preservation of the particular, as well intentioned as it may be, it denatures subjectivity into objectivity, creating gate-keepers, rules, status, the sacrosanct becomes quotidian (78). A similar mechanism was also observed by David Chaney, in his book *The Cultural Turn* (1994), which exemplified the processes whereby mainstream culture relates to subcultures or countercultures.

In fact, Turner (1974) himself further details the process by identifying three types of communitas - spontaneous, ideological and normative. The first takes place unmediated between individuals, and it is felt as "a single, fluid, synchronised event" (79). It also fires up a cognitive awareness of relating on an even playing field with another individual and it may produce a "flow" like state (concept borrowed from the work of the Hungarian-American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi). In ideological communitas, the subjective becomes the object of analysis, of remembrance, it is the moment when the experience of flow has ceased and has given way to reflection, usually mediated through the use of language and cultural artefacts (79). Lastly, normative communitas describes an "enduring subculture or group which attempts to foster and maintain relationships of spontaneous communitas on a more or less permanent basis" (80). It is this third case which strongly exemplifies the tension between 'natural' and 'artificial', or better said 'artificially imposed'.

In fact, it is communitas that tends to be the foundation for metaphors and symbols, that later become "sets and arrays of cultural values", in other words, become legitimised, once a group's forces of economic, legal and political frameworks approve of its "socio-structural character" (81). Thus, the very forces that help both create and destroy entire sociocultural systems can be understood with the help of liminality. Moreover, this concept manages to capture an essential part of the human psyche, namely the fact that order must necessarily be accompanied by momentary periods of chaos when instinct is given free reign (in tribal societies, the neophytes were invested with the power to pillage and abuse at will during the liminal phases of the rite of initiation, being both constrained by the rules of the community and its obligatory rite of passage, but being allowed to subdue and make use of the community's resources, as desired).

These issues, however, are compounded in industrialised, complex societies, where the stark delimitations between work, leisure and play are so strict, that liminal phenomena have given way to liminoid phenomena. The religious and sacred have been replaced by the religiosity with which work is regulated, "organic rhythms" have been substituted with technological ones (84) and the figure and function of the shaman is somewhat imposed onto that of the artist. In essence, the sacred has been divided into varying sections between play, leisure and the arts, while the means of artistic production and the source for

experiencing flow have been relocated from the obligatory participation of the collective in rituals and ceremonies to that of individuals mostly being engaged in artistic means of production, regulating cultural capital (84). Turner (1974) further describes this landscape as one that is "plural, fragmentary, experimental in character", "idiosyncratic, quirky" and usually generated by "individuals in particular groups, schools, circles" (84). At the same time, the seed of novelty, of liberation from mainstream forms of regulation are, of course, explored apart from central economic and political processes, in the marginal, and this plurality of meanings depicts the rhizomatic form of organisation inherent to contemporary culture, no longer dominated by any central focal point, but by an array of variously overlapping networks of meaning-making.

Ultimately, the distinction between *liminal* and *liminoid* resides in the distinction between the division of labour and leisure in post-industrial societies and informs individuals with the capacity to experience "flow states", usually individually, through play (in all its forms) and art consumption, and to experience communitas, in a group, so "in structure". Essentially, the two are intricately linked - structure and destructuration, "flow" and "communitas", since it is in the first which resides the potential for "liquefying" (89) existing forms of structure. Finally, in Turner's view (1974, 1986), processes of communitas and flow become necessarily imbued with the symbols that either generated them, or which they generate, these processes of emergence and destruction, being perpetually intertwined. In essence, the "content" of the experience is dictated by these processes of meaning-making, as they are particular to different systems and different groups, this being an argument towards the crucial significance of analysing localised forms of meaning-making, under the guise of, for instance, the vaporwave genre and its subsidiary Internet-based tribes.

To further support the use of liminality as a lens through which vaporwave and its offshoots can be deconstructed, the work of Andrews and Roberts (2015) deserves our attention. Theirs is an analysis on the use of liminality as a concept in the literature, across decades. What results is a poignant indication of the manner in which liminality has been adopted in relation to: the field of the anthropology of experience and its connection to theories of the self (Turner himself having published a book on the topic), the relationship between liminality and tourism studies, and lastly, the emotional weight investigated in studies on the borders and transgressions of spaces and landscapes (4). Ultimately, it is due to the inherent ambivalent nature, both creative and disruptive, of liminality itself that the aforementioned connections could be made. The same can be said about mobility studies in general, be they about the permanent or temporary, since transitions from place to place, or stagnations in the so-called "in-betweenness" of "interstitial places" that forge links between larger areas, necessarily involve travelling across time, spatial and time coordinates indexing changes in identity, as well (12).

Lastly, the final grand piece of the puzzle that merits careful consideration is the metastudy performed on the relationship between liminality and consumption practices, by Darveau and Cheikh-Ammar (2021). Their theory-building approach to the concept of liminality constitutes the main lifeline which reveals the direct entanglement of the former with the vaporwave genre. In fact, the methodology of the authors' analysis manages to coagulate a firmer theory of liminality, which was thoroughly missing from the literature (1). Thus, four main directions are followed in their analysis - the connection between liminality and temporal, spatial, relational and finally, corporeal lived experiences. It is precisely these four parameters that help describe the emotional charge and the meaning-making artistic output specific to the vaporwave community.

Furthermore, the same study proposes going a step further into categorising liminality in such a manner that it provides a palpable analytical lens through which artistic processes can be more easily defined in terms of functionality, structure, type and reception by audience members via consumption practices. Thus, the first category references the existence of so-called "liminal products (or services)" (875). These products help the "liminars" (individuals undergoing liminal or liminoid experiences) transition into or out of liminal phases, according to these objects' internal or external liminal properties. Objects that are themselves ambiguous in nature, meaning that their use is not necessarily indexed easily by age, or social status in relation to consumption practices are relegated by the authors to the category of "intrinsically liminal" products (875). These are by definition difficult to identify since their use is heavily dependent on consumer perception, which automatically places a large emphasis on the particular emotional context of individuals caught in a subjective relationship being forged between themselves as subjects and their use of various liminal objects. The visual iconography affiliated to the vaporwave community could be relegated to this exact category, especially in its incipient phases, when the predilection towards the creation of visually striking juxtapositions between for instance, Roman or Greek statues in combination with early web iconography began to coagulate in the form of an aesthetic style. The extrinsically liminal objects have no liminal inherent properties themselves, but by simply being bound to liminal space and/or time, they become "sacred" (875).

Secondly, liminal consumption is identified by the authors as an outcome of repeated interactions with liminal objects, individuals undergoing many transitory phases throughout their lifetime - i.e., the transition from childhood to adulthood through adolescence, the transition from academic institutions to workplace environments, changes in social status, or shorter and less life-altering phases of transition such as going on holiday, participating in festivals, consuming art, etc. Clearly, the act of either consuming or producing art could be deemed as participating in an act of liminal consumption. In fact, this process is theorised and defined as "a restorative obscurity replete with [the] consumption

activities of those who are essentially no longer, but not yet" (Cody and Lawlor 2011, 214 in Darveau and Cheikh-Ammar 2021, 876-877). In this case as well, liminal consumption is invested with two potential functions. One is to help precipitate the transitory liminal phase to escape its ambiguity, so in other words, to help soothe the anxieties or negative associations one might attach to being "in-between", no longer their former self, but not yet fully fleshed out into a new identity. In this case, even eating (as a coping mechanism) can be awarded symbolic and liminal properties. On the other hand, liminars might specifically seek out entering liminal phases because of their inherent ambivalence, which can also elicit positive emotions. In such cases, consumption of/with the help of liminal objects is done for the purpose of enhancing liminality and the process itself becomes "sacred", to a certain degree. In this latter case, we might speak of Turner's "liminoid phenomena", phases that are intentionally sought out, liminal space and time being invested with a sense of playful, creative escapism, and since the practices of consuming and producing art share these properties, the artistic persona resembles in a sense that of the shaman in ancient rituals. The appeal of the ambivalence and paradoxical nature of the vaporwave genre speaks for itself.

Interestingly enough, Darveau and Cheikh-Ammar draw our attention to two other possible manners of interpreting consumption and liminality (878) - one can elicit or precipitate the other. In other words, liminality might be the effect of engaging in consumption, might be induced by it, or consumption might be an effect of having transitioned through liminal phases. "Consumption-caused liminality" (878) might be used for amplifying the positive associations with the transitory process, but in such a case, if done repeatedly, addictively to escape from one's reality, we can speak of a type of pathological liminality, one where entrapment is deliberately searched for. However, the opposite can be true as well, consumption of alcoholic beverages, for instance, might precipitate for teenagers the sensation of short-circuiting maturation by way of appropriating what are perceived as 'grown-up' activities. The specific ways in which engagement is done in the vaporwave community can, of course, fall in either of these categories, but since critics and fans alike have claimed that entering in this particular online landscape produces feelings of a calming dread, of a nostalgic escape into past worlds reimagined (McLeod 2018), the tendency would seem to be that of nurturing a desire to deliberately escape into the liminoid world of vaporwave and its dizzying array of subgenres. It is almost as if the act of entering into such worlds, could be described as consciously or subconsciously attempting to devour one's feelings of anxiety in the face of a world in turmoil.

Finally, consumption itself might be the intentional by-product of undergoing liminal experiences (879). One type of consumption might be performed for the purpose of delaying entering liminal phases, in the effort of

holding onto past selves, while consumption practices might also be used to celebrate liminality. In this case, the authors suggest that specific objects might become invested with souvenir-like qualities. All in all, due to this particular analysis, what is clear is that artistic output such as the one in the vaporwave community can be associated with "modes of liminality" (879). These modes should be understood as "unique structures of meanings", experiential, subjective and very diverse, specifically because they target "lived experiences of change" (879), which are intrinsically emotionally charged.

Conclusions

Nowadays, the Internet has become much more than a form of escapism, becoming intricately connected to the mechanisms of capitalist production and consumption, in an "identity economy". The liminal qualities of the liminoid genres of vaporwave and its numerous offshoots and their striking influence and online success manage to showcase two important processes. On the one hand, these artistic forms of self-expression help in processing and coping with the emotional traumas of our current postpandemic world. On the other hand, it seems that these forms of identity creation and online communication have been repurposed as contemporaneous forms of initiation rites, suggesting that our vision of the self ought to be reconceptualized, as well, in the form of "network(s) connected to other networks – partially overlapping, partially distanced" (Wallace 2021), better resembling our multidimensional selves.

The self thus becomes "an inclusive network, a plurality of traits related to one another. The overall character – the integrity – of a self is constituted by the unique interrelatedness of its particular relational traits, psychobiological, social, political, cultural, linguistic and physical" (ibid.), a definition that manages to parallel Pennycook's take on the need for expanding our understanding of a "semiotic landscape". Ultimately, what is being proposed, is redefining the self in line with a new change in paradigm - the relational view of the self as "embodied, embedded, enactive and [making use of] extended cognition" (ibid.), and to help us better understand these emerging selves, we might just consider taking a closer look at the manifestation of contemporaneous Internet-based micro-tribes and their language and culture.

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THE CATCHINESS OF CODE-SWITCHING:
PLURILINGUALISM IN *CATCHY* (A ROMANIAN WOMEN'S E-ZINE)

Daniela HĂISAN[1]

ABSTRACT. *The Catchiness of Code-Switching: Plurilingualism in* Catchy *(A Romanian Women's E-Zine).* This case study investigates code-switching as a salient feature of women's online magazines. The corpus is made up of textual material posted on *catchy.ro*, self-proclaimed "the only premium-luxury-e-zine in Romania which privileges editorial content". In the first instance, Daniela Hăisan will look into the plurilingualism which characterises the structure and site map of the online magazine, and then into the plurilingualism which singularises the (feature) articles as narratives about identity, filtered through subjective experiences of everyday life. Four major criteria are taken into account when analysing the corpus: visual embeddedness, preferred embedded language(s), types of code-switching (tag-switching, inter-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching), and morphology of the embedded language. The main conclusions are that code-switching is used in order to make a statement about the writer's identity while fostering a rapport with the target group of readers, and that it is less a sign of language decline as it is of a gradual movement towards informality.

Keywords: code-switching, (women's) e-zine, discourse analysis

REZUMAT. *Caracterul proliferant al schimbării de cod: Plurilingvismul din* Catchy *(o revistă românească online pentru femei).* Prezentul studiu de caz investighează schimbarea de cod ca trăsătură distinctivă a revistelor online pentru

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femei. Corpusul este alcătuit din texte postate pe *catchy.ro*, autoproclamată "singura revistă online românească premium-luxury în care conţinutul editorial este primul cel preţuit". Într-o primă instanţă, vom analiza plurilingvismul care caracterizează structura şi harta site-ului revistei, apoi plurilingvismul care particularizează articolele şi editorialele ca naraţiuni despre identitate, filtrate prin experienţele subiective ale vieţii de zi cu zi. Patru criterii majore sunt luate în considerare în analiza corpusului: integrarea grafică a elementelor din limba engleză, limba/limbile secundare preferate, tipuri de schimbare de cod (tipul *tag*, intra- şi inter-propoziţionale) şi aspecte morfologice ale limbii secundare. Principalele concluzii privesc folosirea schimbării de cod ca declaraţie şi afirmare a identităţii scriitorului online dar şi ca modalitate de a stabili o relaţie de afinitate cu grupul-ţintă de cititori; schimbarea de cod este interpretată nu atât ca simptom al deteriorării limbii, cât mai ales al unei deplasări treptate către registrul informal.

Cuvinte-cheie: *schimbare de cod, revistă online (pentru femei), analiza discursului*

Introduction

The object of the present paper is, broadly speaking, code-switching within the (computer-mediated) discourse of popular culture. While a vast amount of research has been done on spoken code-switching, this case study investigates the proliferation of anglicisms in women's e-writing based on a corpus of a few hundred feature articles in a Romanian online magazine, *Catchy*. The more and more common Romanian/English code-switching is seen as a (perfectly explicable) trend in online communication rather than a threat to the Romanian language, and as a way for writers to shape self-identity while also strengthening group identity.

The choice of a topic which lies at the confluence of discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics naturally entails a discussion of a variety of issues such as plurilingualism, code-mixing (here, used interchangeably with *code-switching*), e-writing, (women's) language, etc., which will be succinctly addressed in what follows. This, however, being a case study rather than a fully-fledged research scheme, it will refer to the corpus at hand as illustrative of a more general linguistic phenomenon, thus aiming to provide a complement to previous research on Romanian/English code-switching, which focused mainly on the impact of English on Romanian (Zafiu 2001; Cocu 2016), on the speech of Romanian immigrants in English-speaking countries (Ene 2001; Bancu 2013, 2014), or on the code-switching patterns of Romanian/English bilinguals born and living in Romania (Greavu 2022).

The study relies on a recent (2015–2021) sample of posts (selected on account of pertinence and representativity of women's language and code-switching at the same) retrievable from https://www.catchy.ro/, which are subject to qualitative and (occasionally) quantitative examination. The main research questions have to do with the form and function of Romanian/English code-switching in women's magazines. How visible are linguistic varieties in the over-all text? What types of code-switching are used? What types of words are being code-switched? To what extent are practices like these born of a real need due to a gap in the Romanian lexicon? How do the *Catchy* writers'/editors' linguistic practices reflect and impact issues like language and social change?

1. Code-Switching as Part and Parcel of Online Plurilingualism

Plurilingual is generally employed to describe someone who speaks several languages (more than three, advisably, otherwise the right term is *bilingual* or *trilingual*), while *multilingual* can refer to territories, social groups or types of media in which several languages coexist – this assumption, however, does not change the fact that they may at times be used interchangeably. For Rainier Grutman, for instance, *multilingualism* "evokes the co-presence of two or more languages (in a given society, text or individual)" (Grutman 2001, 157). What is more, "the presence of a single loanword can theoretically be considered a minimal requirement for a text to be identified as multilingual" (158). The co-presence of languages may, if used consistently, lead to lexical interference in the form of borrowings, calques, semantic extensions, or may simply occur as code-switching.

In linguistics, *code-switching*, *style-shifting*, or *language alternation* is the practice of moving back and forth between two different languages, or between two different dialects or registers of one and the same language. Known to occur far more often in conversation than in writing, code-switching has, in time, turned into one of the most significant markers of online writing. Online multilingualism/plurilingualism is not only about websites translated into several languages; it is increasingly about individuals indulging in code-mixing when they text, write emails, or submit a blog post.

The general premise of code-switching is that there is always one dominant, preferred language—which Carol Myers-Scotton (2006, 244) likes to call *matrix language*—which sets the morphosyntactic frame of the bilingual clause and consequently dictates word-order and influences the choice of inflections. The other language—the *embedded language*, in Myers-Scotton's terms—simply supplies some content words (nouns, adjectives, verbs) or tag phrases; it is, therefore, 'tolerated' by the matrix language: sometimes functional,

and sometimes purely ornamental. In our case study, the matrix language is Romanian, while English fulfils the role of a secondary, embedded language (occasionally contrasted with French).

Current research normally takes into account three types of code-switching (see Poplack 1980; Romaine 1995):

1) tag switching (the insertion of an embedded language tag in an utterance which is entirely phrased in the matrix language, without syntactic rule violation)

2) inter-sentential switching (the alternation between two languages, which occurs at sentence boundaries, with one sentence in the matrix language and then the next in the embedded language)

3) intra-sentential switching (the switching that occurs inside the same clause or sentence).

There are several functions code-switching performs. As inventoried by William B. Gudykunst (2004), they range from hiding fluency or memory problems in the second(ary) language to exerting control, marking the passage from informal/casual situations to a more formal/professional context, announcing specific identities, aligning speakers with others in specific situations, and facilitating interpersonal relationships. As for the reasons to switch codes, they are even more numerous and diverse (e.g. they are useful when one is trying to change the topic, quote somebody, express solidarity or gratitude, clarify specific concepts, express group identity or fit in, etc.). As far as our corpus is concerned, intra-sentential switching appears to be the most common, and one of the main functions it fulfils is that of constructing a specific identity of/for the Romanian consumer of women's genres such as online magazines.

2. Women's Language

The subtle, peripheral, yet steady process of identity construction in an ever-shifting digital culture has already been scrutinised by many researchers. Sherry Turkle, among others, relies on metaphor to sum up the stupendous reverberations the Internet has had around the world and on our sense of self:

> At one level, the computer is a tool. It helps us write, keep track of our accounts, and communicate with others. Beyond this, the computer offers us both new models of mind and a new medium on which to project our ideas and fantasies. Most recently, the computer has become even more than tool and mirror: we are able to step through the looking glass. We are learning to live in virtual worlds (Turkle 1997, 9).

For Turkle, these new models of mind have led to a flexible, fragmentary self, lacking stability and changing constantly due to a different kind of communication between its parts.

Gender, although socially and discursively constructed rather than genetically inherited, is usually a dependable parameter when it comes to group identity delimitation and delineation. The strict polarity of masculine vs. feminine might have long fallen out of fashion but the issue of gender will probably never become obsolete. Judith Butler, who writes that "gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*" (Butler 1988, 519), provides a useful insight into identity construction, which needs to be constantly negotiated (with oneself as well as among one's fellows).

Defined in the specialised literature as both "language restricted in use to women and language descriptive of women alone" (Lakoff 1973, 48), women's language has long been seen as working against women's identity. The (in)famous differences pointed out by Lakoff (1973) in the choice and frequency of lexical items (e.g. women's use of precise colour terms and of evaluative adjectives; the reluctance to use swear words) and pragma-discursive features (e.g. tags, indirectness, lack of assertiveness) are still (partially) valid today. Mulac and Lundell (1995) analysed descriptive essays written by college students in terms of "male language variables" (such as judgmental adjectives and elliptical sentences) and "female language variables" (for example, references to emotion and hedge words), with a 75% rate of inferring the identity of the writer. Baron (2008) conducted a similar experiment and found out that "[i]f males were more likely to use contractions, females were the prime users of emoticons" (65).

Women's language if often described as a language of intimacy. Bullock and Toribio (2009, 104), while evoking John J. Gumperz' (1976) semantic approach to code-switching, speak about a *we-code* (minority language, commonly associated with in-group activities, and informality) versus a *they-code* (majority language, associated with formal speech).

Women's writing still relies a lot on the subjective experiences of ordinary life; it is there that the narrative of the self is most vividly formulated; it is there that the reflexive positioning of the self is most transparent – which is why (online) women's magazines make up a highly convenient corpus for analysing code-switching as a means of self-assertiveness but also of group assertiveness.

3. The Corpus

Catchy.ro, which provides the primary source data we will be relying upon in what follows, recommends itself as "the only Romanian premium-luxury magazine online in which editorial content comes first, out of respect for

you, our readers"[2]. It also claims to focus on essential topics[3] and to invite both sexes to pitch in, in a provocative yet stridency-free manner[4].

The e-zine (started in 2010) has a variety of 'columns' which range from politics to charity and from movie recommendations to fashion. It also contains numerous personal and lifestyle entries, which usually blend in the commercial content.

While all column titles (and sometimes article titles, too) are in English, this is not a bilingual site properly speaking, as it does not provide articles in both languages: Romanian and English. The online publication is thus introduced as a "Romanian" magazine (as far as the blurb says), it displays English titles throughout the website, and the editorial content allows English words and phrases on an *ad libitum* basis to be grafted on a basically Romanian blueprint. Here and there, all sorts of messages flash on the screen, with an obvious conative function (e.g. "Hi, it is July 31st 2022. Have a nice evening!" or "Subscribe to our newsletter!"), meant to create a friendly, familiar environment computer literate readers can enjoy. The website not only practises code-switching, it practically flaunts it.

The 'checkered' quality of the interface is as refreshing as it is puzzling. The readers' expectations of finding a well-written English text behind the English title that caught their eye are accordingly baffled by the discovery of a piece of writing barely tinged with Englishness. On the other hand, readers with only an approximate knowledge of English might be dissuaded from reading further.

The title of the e-zine (*Catchy*), together with its subtitle (*like a woman*) points explicitly to women as target readers. The features of the ideal target reader can be inferred from a special section of the website which advertises jobs and which lists the qualities of the project manager the *Catchy.ro* team (made up exclusively of women) are seeking: "studii superioare" [higher education], "experienţă, preferabil online" [work experience, preferably online], English proficiency, and familiarity with the idiosyncrasies of the contemporary 30+ woman as well as with luxury brands on the Romanian market. The profile of the *Catchy* reader is thus a knowledgeable, computer-literate, anglophone woman, a young yet mature professional. The very polysemy of *catchy* is reflected in both the interface and the editorial content: appealing and easily remembered pictures and topics, on the one hand, but also potentially deceptive headlines and occasionally spasmodic texts (given the linguistic indeterminacy and intermittence).

There are seven different thematic sections (aesthetics, culture, social life, domestic life), with a variable number of sub-sections, some of which with mantra-like English titles:

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[2] "Singura revistă online românească premium-luxury în care conţinutul editorial este primul cel preţuit, din respect pentru voi, cititorii noştri."

[3] "Noi povestim doar despre lucrurile care contează."

[4] "Provocator, dar fără stridenţe."

1) *Look at me* (sub-sections: *Beauty, Fashion, Shopping Spree*)
2) *Live with me* (sub-sections: *Deco, Dine & Wine, Go Green, Healthy You, Naturally Savvy*)
3) *Love me* (sub-sections: *Help me!, Men Talk, Talk Tabu, Yes or No*)
4) *Catchy Zone* (sub-sections: *Arts & Entertainment, Astro, Cars & Gadgets, Handpicked News, Read me, Start up, Travel*)
5) *Catchy W* (sub-sections: *Editor's Picks, Nitty-Gritty, The Happiness Project, Women R Us*)
6) *Catchy Events*
7) *World.*

Quantitatively, the e-zine offers compelling data: over 20,000 articles posted since 2010; 36 guest writers (personalities like journalist Rodica Culcer, feminist philosopher Mihaela Miroiu, editorialist Lelia Munteanu, translator and film critic Irina Nistor, poet Florin Iaru, translator and prose writer Radu Paraschivescu, theatre and film director Alexandru Tocilescu, etc.); 222 senior contributors; 298 junior contributors.

As expected, digital advertising (pop-up ads and native ads included) is profuse; luxury items are crucial in delineating the model of femininity the magazine proposes, as they promote consumerism under the guise of self-improvement. The fact that *Look at me* is placed first is definitely not at random, but in keeping with the 'makeover' feature, the infallible gimmick in every women's magazine. It is, again, a matter of strengthening group identity:

> The seductiveness of this formula, in which an ordinary reader is transformed by professional attention to her clothes, hair and make-up, lies in its ability to play both on our desire ('I could look that good') and our guilt ('why don't I look that good?'). It goes to the heart of a powerful fantasy for women in consumerist cultures, namely that such surface alterations as losing weight or cutting your hair will somehow transform your whole life and personality.
> This fantasy—perfectly encapsulated in the women's magazine cliché of the 'new you'—is one most men do not seem to share (Cameron 1995, 173).

Other common themes, like relationships, travel, abuse, health, sexuality, motherhood, or movies, also deal with issues the target readers can become interested in and identify themselves with, but they get significantly less editorial and ad space.

Nevertheless, the 'personal' texts are the ones forming the bedrock of the magazine, turning into an arena for self-expression. Readers are invited to contribute to the e-zine and personal experience is relied upon in order to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant topics. As noted by Ballaster et al.

(1991, 87–88), a crucial feature of women's magazines is the reader's contributions in the form of letters and true-life stories, because women's magazines assume a shared experience, a commonality between women. Personalised, relatable language, and the focus on the self is what characterizses these stories which often take the form of some sort of group therapy.

4. Corpus Analysis

Our corpus was both 'manually' and 'automatically' handled, the feature articles between 2015 and 2021 being scrutinised and selected (17 out of 14,000) in accordance with a significant occurrence of code-switching. In analysing the proposed selection, we resorted to four main criteria, namely:

1) visual embeddedness
2) preferred embedded language(s)
3) types of code-switching
4) morphology of the embedded language.

4.1. Visual Embeddedness

We already highlighted the fact that code-switching is so ostentatious on *Catchy.ro* that readers cannot but be struck by it as soon they reach the magazine's main page, and this is due to the fact that the main titles are in English, not in Romanian. This does not mean, however, that the words or phrases from a language other than Romanian (usually, English) are always graphically marked (by italics, for instance). In fact, in about 45% of the cases, they are unmarked. Or, as Rainier Grutman rightly observed, "[t]he impact (rhetorical, stylistic, etc.) of linguistic varieties depends as much on the ways in which they are visually embedded in the over-all text as on the values attached to them in extra-textual (i.e. real) society" (Grutman 2001, 158). The 45% of the English elements which are not italicised are highly significant, as they put code-mixing forward as a perfectly acceptable phenomenon, with English terms used not as coherence-disrupting exoticisms, but rather as natural interferences in the Romanian text, as if they had already been adopted as such by the matrix language. Here are two such examples[5] (*penny universities* and *skin care*) in their respective contexts. As neither *penny universities* nor *skin care* is italicised in the 'original' text, we reproduce them as such:

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[5] All the examples (E1–E17) are included in the Appendix, at the end of the paper, together with the exact title of the articles they were extracted from, the title of the sub-section they were published in, the author of the article and the date.

> E1: ...unele locuri percepeau o taxă de un penny la intrare, ceea ce a dus
> şi la o poreclă pentru ele – penny universities, recunoscându-li-se funcţia
> educativă. [...some of those coffee shops used to charge an entrance fee,
> which earned them a nickname – *penny universities*, thus acknowledging
> their educational function.][6]

> E2: ...am stat ore în şir la soare uitând de SPF doar pentru că momentul
> mi se părea mult mai important decât acel aspect de skin care. [I stayed in
> the sun for hours on end, forgetting about SPF just because that particular
> moment seemed to me much more important than the *skin care* aspect.]

Other recurring words which are never italicised are *trend* and *trendy*. *Trend*,
for example, which occurs in 385 texts, is never in italics.

Once quotations were left out, we were still able to find some anglicisms
written between inverted commas, too few to count, statistically (e.g. *mindfulness,*
update, for fun), all the more so as some of them were used ironically.

Paradoxically, even if English words are almost never explained (an
explanation, definiton or paraphrase would make them stand out graphically,
by means of parentheses, dashes or footnotes), they are sometimes used to
explain terms in other languages, like Turkish (v. *imaret*[7]) or even a Romanian
term which is meant as a mocking calque of an English one (*bulion*[8] for *bullying*),
on account of phonetic similarity.

> E3: Există şi varianta *imaret*-urilor, un fel de *soup kitchens*, multe făcând
> parte din aşezăminte religioase. [You could also consider the *imarets* as an
> alternative, a kind of *soup kitchens*, many of which belonging to religious
> settlements.]

> E4: ...o colegă, hater-iţă de-a mea, a făcut bulion cu mine (adică bullying) cum
> că am ochii graşi. [...a colleague, hater of mine, *bulion*-ed me (meaning she
> bullied me) on account of having fat eyes.]

Only exceptionally are linguistic interferences translated, and then, it is the
editor, not the author, who clarifies the meaning, as in the following example:

> E5: ...se ştie că un anume Boulanger a deschis un stabiliment în 1765
> unde vindea supe *(stock/bouillon)* considerate *restorative – hence the*
> *name of the restaurant*. (n. red: vindecătoare – iată deci de unde vine

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[6] Literal back-translation between brackets is always mine.
[7] *Imaret* refers to a public soup kitchen built throughout the Ottoman Empire from the 14th to
    the 19th centuries, which could be part of a larger complex serving as hospice for pilgrims or
    travellers (see Singer 2004).
[8] Literally, *bulion* (from French *bouillon*) is either broth or tomato sauce.

numele restaurant). [...it is well-known that one Boulanger opened an establishment in 1765 where he sold soups *(stock/bouillon)* considered *restorative – hence the name of the restaurant.* (editor's note: healing – hence the name of the restaurant).]

4. 2. Preferred Embedded Language(s)

Even if Romanian/English code-switching is the primary concern of the present paper, we cannot overlook the fact that English is not the only embedded language present in the corpus. French, Spanish, and Latin are also used, if sparingly. Given that the influence of French on Romanian has had centuries to decant and stabilise, interspersing texts (whether oral or written) with French is felt as natural, scholarly, classy, whereas English elements are still perceived as somehow forced, and often informal. *Je ne sais quoi* appears quite a few times in the corpus without italics, just like the recurring *haute-couturier* and *bouclé*. As expected, most French words are found in articles about cuisine, fashion, decoration, and furniture, and are not really necessary; they are used either for local colour or in order to flabbergast readers with a superior kind of knowledge or professionalism. Making a slalom between English and French is also common.

> E6: Câteva lămpi sunt *blue toile⁹* (le ador, *à propos*). [...] E o babilonie această încăpere [...], un *bric-à-brac* cu oarece sens și stil. [A few of the lamps are blue canvas (I adore them, by the way). [...] This room is the ultimate chaos [...], a jumble of things with barely a drop of meaning and style.]

Mention must be made of the fact that even though some of the French words have long been assimilated into the Romanian language and acquired a Romanian spelling (e.g. *apropo* for *à propos*; *boucle* for *bouclé*), the authors quoted above seem to favour the French orthography. This is obviously a matter of deliberate choice, intended to make a statement about the power of multilingualism as a prerogative of modern-day professionals.

4.3. Types of Code-Switching

Of the three known types of code-mixing, intersentential switching is the least common. The example below is one of the very few we could find in

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9 *Toile* is the French word for fabric, linen cloth, or canvas. The term entered the English language in the 12th century but many modern-day dictionaries do not mention it anymore. Nowadays, it is commonly used to refer to the original design aesthetic of the fabric manufactured in the town of Jouy-en-Josas (*toile de Jouy* – linen printed with romantic, pastoral patterns in a single colour – usually blue, black, or red*)*, in the suburbs of Paris, from 1760 until 1821 (see also Gril-Mariotte 2015).

hundreds of posts on *catchy.ro*. The switch to English makes sense in the context, as it is meant to draw attention to an interesting fact: the text speaks about eating out in Pompeii, the city destroyed in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79, but the way they used to bake bread back then clearly indicates a pizza ancestor:

> E7: ...pâinea se cocea cu rozmarin, usuturoi, ulei de măsline, brânză şi anchois, în cuptor cu lemne; (*wait a minute, did somebody say pizza?*) [...bread used to be baked with rosemary, garlic, olive oil, cheese and anchovy, in a wood-fire oven; (*wait a minute, did somebody say pizza?*)]

Tag-switching is much better represented than intersentential switching in the given corpus (one instance occurring as a sequel to one of the examples already meantioned above):

> E4: ...o colegă, hater-iță de-a mea, a făcut bulion cu mine (adică bullying) cum că am ochii graşi. I mean, Ochii graşi?! Ochii???? [...a colleague of mine, who hated me, *bulion*-ed me (meaning she bullied me) on account of having fat eyes. I mean, fat eyes?! Eyes????]

The main functions tag-switching fufills in our corpus actually have to do with the introduction of supplemental information, which is usually an expression of a particular emotional reaction.

I mean, in the example above, which insinuates itself into the text (given its regular font), is paradoxically more striking than any other type of typographical emphasis. It is used not so much for clarification as to express outrage at the very act of bullying as well as at the absurd reason which triggered it.

Speaking of which, in the next example, has the purpose of introducing parenthetical information, whereas *clotted cream* is probably used for lack of an exact equivalent in Romanian (or is it because the text addresses women, who are supposed to be food aficionados?):

> E8: ...se spune că sultanul Ahmed al III-lea [...] îşi trimitea vizirul [...] pe străzi, să îi aducă zilnic dulciurile preferate. *Speaking of which*, trebuie să spun că existau magazine ce vindeau cofeturi cu *clotted cream*. [...they say sultan Ahmed III used to send his vizier to go out and bring him his favourite sweets on a daily basis. *Speaking of which*, I have to say they had shops which sold *clotted cream* confectionery.]

Wrong, on the other hand, delivers a verdict at the end of a long paragraph bantering poor writers.

> E9: Tu nu ai nevoie să citeşti, pentru că tu ştii. Wrong!!! [You don't need to read anything because you already know everything. Wrong!!!]

Intrasentential switching is by far the most common type of switching in general, a fact supported by our findings, too. We can see in the examples below that resorting to English was not really called for. Using *parenting* when you have "educaţie parentală" [parental education] or "creşterea copiilor" [children's upbringing] at your disposal and using *gender* when you have got "gen" or "sex" are deliberate choices of words, due not to necessity but to the fact that bilinguals are sometimes so used to these words (both parenting and gender being widely debated topics) that they may seem more meaningful, more evocative in English than in their native tongue. The Internet facilitates access to knowledge but as this knowledge is often phrased in English, it is the English terms that stick to memory. English terms such as *parenting* and *gender* encapsulate the years people spent reading about the respective topics, and this makes the two words more appealing, more flavourful, and more relevant conceptually.

> E10: *Parenting* şi *gender* în zilele noastre... [Parenting and gender nowadays...]

Cook shops, eating houses, fine dining, take-out, and *street food* are all examples of specialised terms from the gastronomic field; their choice instead of the Romanian counterparts is also the consequence of their weight as concepts. They also manage to express a well-established reality in a more synthetical (thus economical) way.

> E11: Dacă voiai să mănânci în oraş, în Imperiul Otoman, aveai varianta unor *cook shops* şi *eating houses*, ambele cu abordări variate ale mâncării. [If you wanted to eat out, in the Ottoman Empire, you could always go to a sort of cook shops and eating houses – both of which offering a variety of approaches to food.]

> E12: Restaurantele de *fine dining* făceau aşadar *take-out* încă de la apariţie, ce spuneţi de asta? [Fine dining restaurants have practised take-out ever since they appeared for the first time, how about that?]

> E13: Şi tot ca atunci, *street food* nu era o mâncare a săracilor, ci a pofticioşilor de orice rang; ... [And, just like back then, street food was not the food of the poor, but rather of all sorts of foodies.]

Using terms from the contemporary American culture to describe the oriental cuisine of a time long gone (e.g. the Antiquity, the Middle Ages) in a Romanian text may be unusual, but this polyphony seems to be motivated by a desire to

'domesticate' the exotic culture by allowing readers to relate to concepts they might be more familiar with.

Other terms, like *open-minded* and *the place to be*, are probably among the most relevant examples of Romanian/English code-switching: they are definitely not necessary in the context, they certainly do not replace Romanian phrases which are difficult to retrieve from memory, they simply exist to emphasise the writer's desire to casually but proudly display her English competence, of imprinting the text with something which the group she is supposed to represent will instantly recognize and accept.

> E14: ...în România, oamenii îmi par mai conservatori, însă eu sunt cât se poate de *open-minded*. [In Romania, people seem to be resistant to change, but I am as open-minded as can be.]

> E15: În vara lui 79 AD, ultima din viaţă urbei, hanul lui Primus era *the place to be* în Pompei. [In the summer of AD 79, the last the city got to witness, Primus' inn was the place to be in Pompeii.]

4.4. Morphology of the Embedded Language

There are two morphological issues of interest here: one regards the different word classes found within the English switches in our data, and the other regards their degree of morphological integration in the matrix language (i.e. Romanian).

Nouns and noun phrases clearly dominate the classes of switched elements (more than half of the elements being bare nouns), followed by modifiers (mostly adjectives, among which *trendy*, with a total of 162 occurrences).

Some of the elements retain their source-language morphemes (e.g. the plural or participle morpheme: e.g. *bullies*, *bullying*, *bullied*), while uninflected forms are also present (see *street food* above), but most of them are morphologically integrated into Romanian. For example:

- the Romanian plural morpheme *–uri* is commonly attached to an English stem (as in *look-uri*)
- a feminine suffix like *–iţă* is attached to an English stem (as in *hater-iţă*)

Sometimes, a masculine indefinite article introduces an English noun the counterpart of which is, in Romanian, a feminine noun (e.g. *un* [a] *full body reconstruction* [approx. o remodelare corporală completă – with the feminine noun *remodelare* as head of the noun phrase]).

E16: Unul dintre cele mai bune look-uri a fost o rochie mini... [One of the best outfits – literally, looks – was a mini-skirt...]

E17: În același timp, mi-ar plăcea să am casa [...] caldă și șarmantă ca un *cottage* în Dorset... [At the same time, I would like my house to be warm and charming like a cottage in Dorset...]

The fact the inflectional morphology comes more often than not from the matrix language (i.e. Romanian) actually validates the so-called ''principle of the matrix language frame'' proposed by Meyers-Scotton (2002, 92), which postulates the grammatical supremacy of the preferred language over the embedded one, and also Sridhar and Sridhar's (1980) hypothesis that the guest language adjusts to the syntax and semantics of the host language.

Conclusions

Relatively few of the English elements in our corpus designate cutting-edge or exotic concepts for which Romanian lacks an accepted equivalent. Most of them are high-frequency terms with easily retrievable counterparts in Romanian (see, for instance, the preference for the French orthography of *à propos)*. Code-switching is thus used in order to make a statement about the writer's identity (i.e. a well informed, computer-literate, anglophone professional, creative enough to enjoy code-switching) while fostering a rapport with the target group of readers which is thought to welcome code-mixing, although, as pointed out by Rainier Grutman, ''writing that makes use of more than one language does not necessarily presuppose a polyglot public, though its deciphering more often than not requires some imagination'' (Grutman 2001, 158).

The presence of English words and phrases in these texts has to do with two things: the target readers (which are assumed to be young and avid technology users) and the movement towards informality in writing[10]. It is part of a language of intimacy, of bonding, of inclusiveness. The embedded language (namely English, in this particular context) functions like the minority language of the *we-code* delineated by Bullock and Toribio (2009, 104): the more informal the language, the more persuasive.

Romanian/English code-switching is thus more of a fad than a need (as far as our corpus is concerned), and the often superfluous use of English terms may well fuel the purists' anxiety about anglicisms spoiling the Romanian

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[10] *Cf.* ''The most obvious influence of Internet language on traditional writing is to reinforce two ongoing tendencies we have already described. One of these is strengthening the role of writing as a representation of informal spoken language. [...] A less obvious effect of the Internet on writing is the increasing uncertainty that many of us feel about whether a clump of language should be one word, a hyphenated word, or two words.'' (Baron 2008, 177)

language. ''Will the English-dominated Internet spell the end of other tongues?'', David Crystal asks in the preamble of one of his books (Crystal 2006, 1), and his answer comes promptly: ''I do not see the Internet being the death of languages, but the reverse'' (275). What we need to do is distinguish between language change and language decline: ''Since yesterday's change is often today's norm, we may simply need to wait long enough before an innovation stops being treated with opprobrium by language elites.'' (Baron 2008, 161–162). Words like *(fast-)food*, *bullying*, *take-away*, or *take-out* are taken into account and listed as borrowings in *DOOM 3* (2022), but they were not at the time these feature articles were written.

What *Catchy.ro* attempts in its persistent, sometimes non-judicious code-switching, is to offer a snapshot: not of the current stage of the Romanian language but of a stage in women's emancipation in an otherwise conservative society. It strives to construct empowering fictions, it encourages self-reflection and self-assertiveness, it ultimately capitalises on the catchiness of (Internet) English in order to draw the potential readers in.

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APPENDIX

No.	Example	Article/Sub-Section	Author	Date
E1	...unele locuri percepeau o taxă de un penny la intrare, ceea ce a dus şi la o poreclă pentru ele – penny universities, recunoscându-li-se funcția educativă.	*Istorii pe pâine. Eating out 4. Cafenele revoluţionare/ Dine & Wine* https://www.catchy.ro/istorii-pe-paine-eating-out-4-cafenele-revolutionare/165182	Adriana Sohodoleanu	March 13 2021
E2	...am stat ore în şir la soare uitând de SPF doar pentru că momentul mi se părea mult mai important decât acel aspect de skin care.	*Nu sunt o femeie frumoasă/Talk Tabu* https://www.catchy.ro/nu-sunt-o-femeie-frumoasa/173320	Corina Bezdîga	April 4 2022
E3	Există şi varianta *imaret*-urilor, un fel de *soup kitchens*, multe făcând parte din aşezăminte religioase.	*Istorii pe paine. Eating out 2. Imperiul Otoman/ Dine & Wine* https://www.catchy.ro/istorii-pe-paine-eating-out-2-imperiul-otoman/165178	Adriana Sohodoleanu	March 13 2021
E4	...o colegă, hater-iţă de-a mea, a făcut bulion cu mine (adică bullying) cum că am ochii graşi. I mean, Ochii graşi?! Ochii????	*Dacă o cunoaşteţi cumva pe D-na Premenopauză, spuneţi-i că e de porc/Talk Tabu* https://www.catchy.ro/daca-o-cunoasteti-cumva-pe-d-na-premenopauza-sa-i-spuneti-va-rog-ca-e-de-porc/171154	Erika Bloj	December 10 2021
E5	...se ştie că un anume Boulanger a deschis un stabiliment în 1765 unde vindea supe *(stock/bouillion)* considerate *restorative – hence the name of the restaurant.* (n. red: vindecătoare – iată deci de unde vine numele restaurant).	*Istorii pe paine. Eating out 5. Let Them eat Cake, she said/Dine & Wine* https://www.catchy.ro/istorii-pe-paine-eating-out-5-let-them-eat-cake-she-said/166251	Adriana Sohodoleanu	March 15 2021

No.	Example	Article/Sub-Section	Author	Date
E6	Câteva lămpi sunt *blue toile* (le ador, *à propos*). [...] E o babilonie această încăpere [...], un *bric-à-brac* cu oarece sens și stil.	*Paisley/Deco* https://www.catchy.ro/paisley/101065	Marius Constantinescu	September 27 2016
E7	...pâinea se cocea cu rozmarin, usuturoi, ulei de măsline, brânză și anchois; în cuptor cu lemne; (*wait a minute, did somebody say pizza?*)	*Istorii pe paine. Eating out 1. Pompei/Dine & Wine* https://www.catchy.ro/istorii-pe-paine-eating-out-1-pompei/165032	Adriana Sohodoleanu	January 15 2021
E8	...se spune că sultanul Ahmed al III-lea [...] își trimitea vizirul [...] pe străzi, să îi aducă zilnic dulciurile preferate. *Speaking of which*, trebuie să spun că existau magazine ce vindeau cofeturi cu *clotted cream*.	*Istorii pe paine. Eating out 2. Imperiul Otoman/ Dine & Wine* https://www.catchy.ro/istorii-pe-paine-eating-out-2-imperiul-otoman/165178	Adriana Sohodoleanu	March 13 2021
E9	Tu nu ai nevoie să citești, pentru că tu știi. Wrong!!!	*Nu te-a înțeles nimeni? Ai scris prost!/Life Bites* https://www.catchy.ro/nu-te-a-inteles-nimeni-ai-scris-prost/66567	Ioana Duda	January 12 2015
E10	*Parenting* și *gender* în zilele noastre...	*Și acum, eu ce să-i răspund?!/Talk Tabu* https://www.catchy.ro/si-acum-eu-ce-i-raspund/174546	Ramona Dogaru	July 22 2022
E11	Dacă voiai să mănânci în oraș, în Imperiul Otoman, aveai varianta unor *cook shops* și *eating houses*, ambele cu abordări variate ale mâncării.	*Istorii pe paine. Eating out 2. Imperiul Otoman/ Dine & Wine* https://www.catchy.ro/istorii-pe-paine-eating-out-2-imperiul-otoman/165178	Adriana Sohodoleanu	March 13 2021
E12	Restaurantele de *fine dining* făceau așadar *take-out* încă de la apariție, ce spuneți de asta?	*Istorii pe paine. Eating out 5. Let Them eat Cake, she said/Dine & Wine* https://www.catchy.ro/istorii-pe-paine-eating-out-5-let-them-eat-cake-she-said/166251	Adriana Sohodoleanu	March 15 2021

No.	Example	Article/Sub-Section	Author	Date
E13	Şi tot ca atunci, *street food* nu era o mâncare a săracilor, ci a pofticioşilor de orice rang; ...	*Istorii pe paine. Eating out 2. Imperiul Otoman/ Dine & Wine* https://www.catchy.ro/ istorii-pe-paine-eating-out-2-imperiul-otoman/ 165178	Adriana Sohodoleanu	March 13 2021
E14	...în România, oamenii îmi par mai conservatori, însă eu sunt cât se poate de *open-minded*.	*Şi acum, eu ce să-i răspund?!/Talk Tabu* https://www.catchy.ro/si-acum-eu-ce-i-raspund/174546	Ramona Dogaru	July 22 2022
E15	În vara lui 79 AD, ultima din viaţă urbei, hanul lui Primus era *the place to be* în Pompei.	*Istorii pe paine. Eating out 1. Pompei/Dine & Wine* https://www.catchy.ro/ istorii-pe-paine-eating-out-1-pompei/165032	Adriana Sohodoleanu	January 15 2021
E16	Unul dintre cele mai bune look-uri a fost o rochie mini...	*Elie Saab la Paris Fashion Week după doi ani – o explozie de culoare/Fashion* https://www.catchy.ro/ elie-saab-la-paris-fashion-week-dupa-doi-ani-o-explozie-de-culoare/ 171923	Catchy	January 27 2022
E17	În acelaşi timp, mi-ar plăcea să am casa [...] caldă şi şarmantă ca un *cottage* în Dorset...	*Paisley/Deco* https://www.catchy.ro/ paisley/101065	Marius Constantinescu	September 27 2016

ATTITUDES TOWARDS ROMGLISH IN ONLINE DISCOURSE

Alina OLTEAN-CÎMPEAN[1]

ABSTRACT. *Attitudes towards Romglish in Online Discourse.* As English has become a global language, it has also become the language of computer-mediated communication. The online medium has offered the ideal space for English to enter in contact with multiple other languages and, as a result, to contribute to the formation of new varieties. In Romania, this new variety is Romgleză or Romglish, a combination of Romanian and English that is used especially by, but not limited to the younger generations. However, language change does not come easy and, although it has been around for quite a while, Romglish is still considered as improper by some. The present paper analyses two sets of online comments in order to identify attitudes towards Romglish and the language ideologies behind them. To this end, monoglossic ideologies, such as the standard language ideology (Milroy 2001) and the purist ideology (Langer & Davies 2005) will be taken as references when analysing the online comments. The data focuses mainly on two online sources: the Ştirile Kanal D Facebook page and an Elforum thread, and it shows that rather than singular and static, language ideologies are multiple and rather fluid, with many online users displaying both monoglossic and heteroglossic ideologies.

Keywords: *language ideologies, heteroglossic ideologies, monoglossic ideologies, attitudes, Romglish, online discourse*

REZUMAT. *Atitudini relativ la romgleza din discursul online.* Engleza este atât o limbă globală cât şi limba comunicării mediate de calculator. Mediul online a oferit un spaţiu ideal pentru ca engleza să intre în contact cu numeroase alte limbi şi, astfel, să contribuie la formarea unor noi varietăţi. În România, aceastã nouă varietate este romgleza sau Romglish, o combinaţie între română şi engleză care este folosită mai ales de către tânăra generaţie, dar nu numai. Schimbarea

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însă nu este uşoară şi, deşi există de ceva vreme, romgleza este considerată încă nepotrivită de către unele persoane. Prezenta lucrare analizează două seturi de comentarii online pentru a identifica atitudini faţă de romgleză şi ideologiile lingvistice care le influenţează. În acest scop, ideologii monoglose, precum ideologia limbii standard (Milroy 2001) şi ideologia puristă (Langer & Davies 2005) vor fi luate în considerare. Datele culese sunt din două surse online: pagina de Facebook pentru Ştirile Kanal D şi discuţia de la o postare de pe Elforum. Acestea arată că ideologiile lingvistice nu sunt singulare şi statice, ci multiple şi mai degrabă fluide, utilizatorii online prezentând atât ideologii monoglose cât şi heteroglose.

Cuvinte-cheie: *ideologii lingvistice, ideologii heteroglose, ideologii monoglose, atitudini, romgleză, discurs online*

Introduction

Language ideologies are representative of speakers' beliefs and attitudes towards languages and they can shape and/or influence language use. However, language ideologies go beyond this since "they include the values, practices and beliefs associated with language use by speakers, and the discourse which constructs values and beliefs at state, institutional, national and global levels" (Blackledge 2005, 32). As a result, language ideologies are not just about languages and have influences both at the individual and the societal levels. Furthermore, "language ideologies contribute to the production and reproduction of social difference, constructing some languages and varieties as of greater worth than other languages and varieties" (Blackledge 2005, 33). This comes as a result of giving more prestige to certain languages and/or language varieties to the detriment of others (e.g. considering the official language or the standard variety as better than other existing languages or varieties).

Language ideologies can be generally divided into monoglossic and heteroglossic ideologies. The former consider that monolingualism should be the norm since linguistic homogeneity is regarded as necessary for national unity and identity, which are generally seen as threatened by multilingualism. The latter on the other hand generally consider multilingualism as something positive, viewing differences as assets, thus promoting inclusion rather than assimilation. However,

> [v]ery often, multilingual societies which apparently tolerate or promote heterogeneity in fact undervalue or appear to ignore the linguistic diversity of their populace. A liberal orientation to equality of opportunity for all

> may mask an ideological drive towards homogeneity, a drive which potentially marginalises or excludes those who either refuse, or are unwilling, to conform. (Blackledge 2005, 34-35)

Thus, both types of ideologies can ignore the linguistic variety and the actual linguistic practices of its speakers since both can promote one or some languages over another. For instance, in order to promote and even protect diversity the EU has created the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCPNM) and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML). However, as even the names of these documents show, they do not cover new minorities and their languages. Moreover, even countries that do not have an official language still promote one national language over others. This is the case of Australia where, according to their Home Affairs website, English "connects us together and is an important unifying element of Australian society. English language proficiency is a key contributor to better educational and employment outcomes and social participation levels". Thus, English as their national language creates unity, which shows that at least a certain level of homogeneity is the desirable state. Furthermore, while promoting equality in terms of opportunity, there is also a covert promotion of homogeneity.

In terms of monoglossic ideologies, there are four prevalent ones that are generally encountered among individuals: the one nation – one language ideology, the standard language ideology, the mother tongue ideology, and the purist ideology. The one nation – one language ideology connects language to state-formation since, for the latter to succeed, people need to be united under one homogeneous language. This can be done by choosing one language and/or language variety that is considered more prestigious than others. Thus, "by promoting invariance and uniformity in language structure [...] [standardization] consists of the imposition of [this] uniformity upon a class of objects" (Milroy 2001, 530) without taking into account the existing linguistic diversity. Similarly, the mother-tongue ideology is based on the idea that each individual has one mother tongue (MT) (Weber & Horner 2012). However, there is no clear definition and, according to Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) MTs can be defined based on various criteria. As a result, promoting language singularity is ignoring the actual linguistic realities of speakers.

Lastly, similar to all the previous ideologies, the purist ideology promotes one language variety over others. However, purism seems to draw the interest of both linguists and laypersons since

> ordinary speakers with many different mother tongues and with no formal training in linguistics [...] share certain belief about what language is, how it develops or should develop, whether it has good or bad qualities,

> etc. […] [and additionally] there is the recurrent phenomenon that speakers of a language agree that the state of their language is in decline, that it contains too many words from informal varieties, that it is threatened by modernising and foreign influences: in short, that it was better in the olden days and that nowadays something needs to be done to restore it to its former glory. (Langer & Davies 2005, 1)

Since people generally feel a strong connection to language, there is a significant interest in it, which can also lead to strong viewpoints on the matter, especially when changes start occurring, in what would be called "folk linguistics" (Langer & Davies 2005, 1). It should be mentioned that the so-called decline of the language could be caused by both internal (e.g. elements from informal varieties) or external (e.g. foreign elements) (Langer & Davies 2005, 3) depending on whether a more restrictive or permissive definition of purism is given. Furthermore, according to Langer and Davies (2005), purism is not interested only in removing undesirable elements but also in maintaining desirable ones, although subjectivity is generally at the basis of this differentiation. This also directly connects this ideology to the standard language one since "before one can remove elements from a linguistic norm, one has to have a linguistic norm" (Langer & Davies 2005, 4). This would mean that individuals would turn to dictionaries, for instance, in search of the desirable forms. However, this leads to a contradiction according to Langer and Davies (2005) since "linguistic folk turn to a standard dictionary to find out what standard is, but when they find things that they do not consider to be standard they reject the dictionary – hence the question is, why do they *ever* turn to the dictionary rather than trust their own judgement in the first place!" (9). This was encountered in one of the comments analysed for the present paper as well. In it, a Facebook user criticises the coordinator of the new Romanian dictionary, who is a researcher at the Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti Institute of Linguistics, for deciding to introduce over 3.500 words from other languages

> I saw and heard the Romanian professor from the Institute of Linguistics speak (on the news), the one who "coordinated and decided" the introduction of over 3.500 words from other languages in DEX! She was stuttering and speaking like a primary school pupil!!!!! With hackneyed phrases, typical for communism, this person has titles like [Elena] Ceauşescu, for show!!!!! (my translation)[2]

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[2] Am vazut-o si auzit-o vorbind pe profesoara de limba romana de la institutul lingvistic (la stiri). Cea care a "coordonat si decis" introducerea in dex a peste 3.500 de cuvinte din alte limbi! Se balbaia si se explima ca un elev de clase primare!!!!! Limba de lemn, tipic comunismului, individa are titluri ca ceauseasca, de sanchi !!!!!

Thus, because this user did not agree with the introduction of the new words, they turn against the linguist seen as responsible for this. Interestingly, they do not seem to turn against the dictionary itself. It should be mentioned that folk linguistics also involves a lack of knowledge about how language and/or dictionaries work. For instance, critics such as the one mentioned, do not seem familiar with the fact that the introduction of new words in a dictionary does not mean that they become the norm but rather that these words are encountered often enough in general speech that they need to be acknowledged. Furthermore, words introduced in the dictionary in one edition can just as well be removed from future editions.

The four mentioned ideologies, although discussed separately, are interconnected since they all promote the same idea of homogeneity and singularity. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, heteroglossic ideologies can lead to ideals similar to monoglossic ones. This makes the discussion about ideologies more complex since "on a societal and an individual level one will not be able to identify only one single ideology rather everyone is influenced by multiple discourses and will display different language ideologies depending on time and place" (Iversen & Mkandawire 2020, 37). Thus, like languages, ideologies are not fixed entities but rather fluid and can change over time and according to context (Blackledge, 2005). For example, previous research conducted by this author (Oltean-Cîmpean 2019, 2021) has shown that young adults who are multilingual can have multiple ideologies, both monoglossic and heteroglossic, depending on the context and the subject of discussion. The present paper is interested in analysing comments from two comment threads in order to identify attitudes towards Romglish and if and what language ideologies influence them.

Online Discourses and Attitudes towards Romglish

Although language ideologies have always been encountered in the public discourse, the development and spread of the Internet has allowed ever more individuals to express their views and attitudes towards languages. For instance, since the 2010s there have been multiple news pieces or blog entries that discuss and, mainly criticise, the changes in language use encountered among Romanian expats.[3] The included comment sections criticised in part the expats for forgetting Romanian and using words from a different language as

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[3] See https://www.gabrielursan.ro/dragi-romani-din-strainatate-care-ati-venit-in-vizita/ and https://www.nasul.tv/romanii-intorsi-in-tara-in-vacanta-de-vara-au-primit-o-lectie-de-la-vanzatorii-buticurilor-se-fac-ca-au-uitat-limba-romana-si-pocesc-cuvintele-asa-ca-au-fost-intampinati-cu-un-anunt-fabulos-va-r/comment-page-1/

well. Initially the discussions were mainly about expats from Italy who were criticised for forgetting (or "pretending to forget") their MT. However, the focus of the discussion switched once English started to increasingly influence language change among people living in Romania.

Over the years English has reached the level of global language mediated by various reasons ranging from economic, mass media and international communication to education and technology (Crystal 1997, 2008). This influence has become noticeable in Romania as well, especially starting with the 90s and, in the 21st century, the interest shown towards English has only increased. On the one hand, English has gained ground in the educational system (now the language can be studied starting with kindergarten). On the other hand, a growth in access to mass media has increased Romanian speakers' contact with English. As in the case of other language, this constant contact between English and Romanian has given rise to a new language variety, namely Romglish (Romgleză).

The label Romglish has been used, in the public discourse, by both non-linguists and linguists alike and, according to Vişan (2016) it was "coined in the 90s by Eugen Simion […], to refer to what he perceived as the increasing hybridisation in the post-communist discourse of the Romanian media" (138). Furthermore, Simion, when speaking about Romglish in a newspaper article, stated that it was an "intolerable jargon which tends to spread like scabies and to slutify language, to uglify it" (Vişan 2016, 138 – her translation). Therefore, the term Romglish has a pejorative connotation attached to it and it is used to describe what is perceived as the decline of the language. Furthermore, this has been noticed in other public discourses in the media as well. For instance, in 2018, in his show, "Pastila de limbă" (The Language Pill – my translation), author Radu Paraschivescu discusses "Ridiculous forms of expression in 'Romglish'" (my translation)[4] and begins his segment by defining Romglish as "the hotchpotch of Romanian and English that Romanians sometimes use as a form of expression" (my translation)[5] and by stating that it is a "risk that we do not diminish by declaring ourselves scandalised, but by trying to explain why some hybrid constructions are ridiculous and why it would be preferable to give them up" (my translation)[6]. The words used when describing Romglish ("hotchpotch", "ridiculous", "risk") show that it is seen as an improper use of the language but also as a threat to the integrity of Romanian. Furthermore, as a conclusion to the segment, Paraschivescu states that "It is all about borrowing in moderation, with discernment and to not transform necessity into

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[4] Explimări ridicole în „romgleză"

[5] ghiveciul de română şi engleză în care se exprimă uneori românii

[6] Romgleza este un risc pe care nu-l micşorăm declarându-ne scandalizaţi, ci încercând să explicăm de ce anumite exprimări hibride sunt ridicole şi de ce e preferabil să renunţăm la ele

haughtiness" (my translation)[7]. These statements reveal a desire for Romanian homogeneity and that there is one correct version of the language and way in which language change should take place. This view does not take into consideration that languages are not fixed but fluid entities and that speakers influence language change. These views also shape the general understanding of what Romglish means, namely "to loosely designate those cases which are perceived as "excessive borrowings" (especially for those lexical borrowings from English that do not undergo morphophonological adaptation) or for the adaptation of lexical elements or phrasal constituents from English into Romanian, such as calques, and sometimes for the cases of code-mixing [and code-switching] […]" (Vişan 2016, 138). This understanding can be noticed in some of the reactions found in public discourses, with many of them related to what is called "corporate jargon"[8], which generally involves various degrees of code-switching and is considered as improper language.

This interpretation of Romglish is reminiscent of the position George Pruteanu had in the early to mid-2000s. In his view, new words were welcome into the language as long as they were necessary and they were "integrated in the system, assimilated […] according to Romanian rules of writing and pronunciation" (Pruteanu 2007). As a result, Pruteanu supported words such as *chic, mouse, click, look, hacker, airbag* as long as they underwent an adaptation to the Romanian system in the form of *şic, maus, clic, luc, hekăr, erbeg* (Pruteanu 2007). Although Pruteanu considered that Romanian needed to be protected and separated new words into good and bad borrowings, his more nuanced perspective is more in line with that of some linguists.

In her 2016 article, Vişan analyses two interviews on the topic with two well-known and appreciated linguists, namely Rodica Zafiu and Marius Sala. As shown by the analyses, both linguists show purist overtones in their answer to various degrees. For instance, Zafiu takes a more moderate position stating that what she does not agree with are linguistic calques rather than borrowing itself since they "interfere *there where they aren't needed* and *modify the existing structures of that language*" (Vişan 2016, 140 – her translation and emphasis). Sala, on the other hand, shows more purist overtones in his answers, referring to borrowings (especially those from American-English) as a "*passing fashion* (practised especially by *snobbish semiliterate people*)" (Vişan 2016, 141 – her translation and emphasis). While neither of the linguists adopts a strong purist

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[7] Totul e să importi cu măsură, cu discernământ, şi să nu transformi necesitatea în fandoseală

[8] See https://cluju.ro/romgleza-cuvinte-ridicole-folosite-in-multinationale-si-nu-numai/, https://razvanpascu.ro/2011/05/27/gandim-si-vorbim-romgleza-am-decat-o-ideea-about-that/, https://adevarul.ro/educatie/scoala/conversatii-romgleza-vorbeste-multinationale-afecteaza-limba-romana-1_54d22472448e03c0fd45e794/index.html.

ideology, they both promote the notion of a "proper Romanian" (Vişan 2016) that is homogeneous. Thus, they seem to adhere to more monoglossic ideologies while also mentioning the benefit of some borrowings. Moreover, if we consider Sala's perspective, there is quite the negative view of people who use these words borrowed from English, making most likely a covert reference to the use of code-switching more than anything else. This might also be reminiscent of a more traditional view of multilinguals, namely that they are two or more monolinguals in one body and, as a result, they should use each of the known languages independently.

A similar perspective can be noticed in Dragomirescu and Nicolae's 2011 book on language mistakes (book that is a part of the "Viaţa cuvintelor" / The Life of Words Series (my translation) and coordinated by Marius Sala). In it, they have a chapter dedicated to Romglish, namely "Romgleza noastră cea de toate zilele" (Our Daily Romglish – my translation) where they start the section on borrowings stating that instead of adopting a purist view, they decided "to let the language decide what it will keep or not from this wave of Anglicisms" (my translation)[9] (Dragomirescu&Nicolae 2011, 31-32). However, they conclude the section by stating that "some recent English borrowings [...], which, although, at times, welcome in the technical fields in which they were borrowed, extended their meaning and replace, without justification, already existing words" (my translation)[10] (Dragomirescu&Nicolae 2011, 32). Moreover, in a previous section, Dragomirescu and Nicolae (2011) mention that the English influence is not negative but that such language changes "can easily become language mistakes, if they do not respect rules, if they are rather individual than systematic, if they do not fit in the stylistic register in which they appear" (my translation)[11] (31). Even though the two linguists do not adhere to a purist perspective, there are still monoglossic ideologies that seem to guide their position. For instance, there is a separation between proper and improper borrowings – this in fact reminds of the purist ideology, borrowings need to respect a certain register and pattern – this reminds of the standard ideology, and, finally, the statements seem to ignore the actual linguistic (multilingual) practices of Romanian speakers.

The importance of the positions presented by linguists in the public discourse stem from the fact that non-linguists look at these positions as

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[9] să lăsăm limba să decidă ce va păstra şi ce nu din valul acesta de anglicisme

[10] unele împrumuturi recente din engleză [...], care, deşi sunt, uneori, bine-venite în domeniile tehnice în care au fost împrumutate, s-au extins în afara acestor domenii, şi-au lărgit sensul şi înlocuiesc, fără justificare, cuvinte deja existente

[11] pot trece cu uşurinţă în domeniul greşelilor de limbă, dacă nu respect regulile, dacă nu sunt sistematice, ci individuale, daca nu se potrivesc registrului stilistic în care apar

guidelines, even when they disagree with them. Furthermore, politicians and policy-makers might ask for these experts' opinions on the current state of the language. This was noticeable in the 2000s when the so-called Pruteanu Law, which stipulated in part that correct Romanian should be used everywhere in the country, came into effect. Thus, these public positions can influence both individual and social perspectives and even policies.

Analysis and Discussion

For the analysis of attitudes towards Romglish in online discourse, two main platforms were selected, namely Facebook and Elforum. The comments chosen for analysis are from a KanalD news piece on Romglish (Facebook) and those from a thread on Romglish (Elforum). Both sources are fairly recent, with the KanalD video being posted in January 2022, while the thread on Elforum is from August 2021. Additionally, at the moment of selection, the Facebook post had 193 comments from 149 users, while the Elforum thread had 83 messages from 23 users.

Romglish: An English invasion or the new 'golden' Romanian

The news piece has as a topic Romglish and, under the title "Limba română, asaltată de engleză" (Romanian Invaded by English – my translation), it presents how the younger generation increasingly uses English words while also showing interviews with young people stating, in short, that they feel comfortable enough with English to use it very often (they give some examples as well) and that they sometimes think in English rather than Romanian. The piece also includes a short interview with a linguist who mentions code-switching as used especially by young people "either because the words are specialised in a field or because we seem cooler" (my translation)[12]. The news piece ends by stating that over 3000 English words were introduced in the latest version of the dictionary and by mentioning that "linguists say that the purpose is to establish the manner in which [these words] are written correctly [and] not to replace Romanian words" (my translation)[13]. Although the news piece in itself is not the focus of the present paper, it should be mentioned that it is representative of a media discourse that is critical towards Romglish and one that covertly promotes monoglossic ideologies, mainly purist and standard language ideologies. This can be noticed in the use of the word "invaded" in the title which implies that English is attacking the integrity of Romanian. Moreover, it

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[12] fie pentru că termenii sunt specializați unui domeniu, fie pentru că părem mai cool

[13] lingviștii spun că scopul este stabilirea modului în care [cuvintele] se scriu corect [și] nu înlocuirea cuvintelor românești

is stated that the combinations between Romanian and English are made "by ear", with the rest of the piece reminding viewers how young people choose English even though there are Romanian equivalents. Furthermore, the news piece separates English users between proper and improper ones by mentioning that linguists use English terms as well but "knowingly" ("în cunoştinţă de cauză" – my translation). Certainly, what this news piece fails to do is consider the actual linguistic practices of speakers by implying that there is only one proper way of using language in Romania and even the interviewed linguist seems to contribute to this idea.

This news piece has elicited quite a few responses, both in terms of reactions (through the 7 Facebook emojis) and comments. Thus, there were 674 reactions (316 like emojis, 255 laugh emojis, 71 angry emojis, 14 sad emojis, 7 wow emojis, 6 love emojis, and 5 care emojis) and 193 comments from 149 individuals, with only 17 people writing multiple comments (one person wrote 20 messages of which 18 were the same comment posted multiple times). As it can be noticed from the numbers given for reactions, only 85 individuals had negative reactions to the news piece. This is different from the comments since out of the 193 comments only about 14 individual comments could be considered positive or somewhat positive, with the majority being quite negative (a few even including insults towards young people in general and the ones in the video in particular).

Unlike the Facebook comment thread, the Elforum thread has the format of a conversation with most users actually discussing the topic rather than simply reacting to it. The original poster (OP) created the post because they disliked Romglish, which they defined as "that strange neo-Romanian language" ("Acea struţocămilă de neo limbă românească" – my translation), and there are too few people "preoccupied by the mutilation of Romanian" ("preocupaţi de pocirea limbii române" – my translation). Moreover, Pascu's blog entry on the topic of Romglish is used as a conversation starter. While, similar to the Facebook comment thread, most users show a degree of dislike towards Romglish, one of the main differences is that some users brought sources and examples for their positions. For instance, one user posted a short article by linguist Rodica Zafiu, another posted an article from a translator, while others gave examples of words of foreign origin.

In terms of positive reactions, most of the 14 Facebook comments make an attempt at explaining why people use Romglish or why people dislike the use of Romglish as shown in the following examples:

"It's not about forgetting Romanian. It's just that some words sound better in English" (my translation)[14]

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[14] Nu e vorba de uitarea limbii române. Doar că unele cuvinte suna mai bine în engleză.

> "C'mon stop criticising so much 'cause the Chinese and Indians and others around that area + many African nations use English, so we are talking about aprox ¾ of the global population…" (my translation)[15]
> "Oh, c'mon what's the problem 'cause I don't get it… I think it would be best for all of us to switch to English and be done with it… that's the problem, that we speak in English also, it is worse when you don't know it and you need it… as if your pension would increase if they would only speak in Romanian." (my translation)[16]
> "I think that you are offended that you don't know English my favourite patriots, I kiss you" (my translation)[17]

These comments, at first sight, show that these individuals have no issues with the use of Romglish. In fact, the last comment includes the use of Romglish ("va kiss"). However, language ideologies can be noticed in their positions as well. For instance, in all four examples there is more prestige given to English to the detriment of Romanian prompted by statements such as "some words sound better in English" and "approx. ¾ of the global population" speak it, "it would be best for all of us to switch to English and be done with it".

There were also three individuals on Facebook who tried to give more comprehensive explanations, with one repeating the same message 18 times in the comment thread stating that "movies are in English, documentaries (history, geography, chemistry biology ones etc) are in English as well, other explanations [are] in English, jokes [are] in English and so on. After all of these English will certainly come to mind first" (my translation)[18]. The other two comments come as a response to someone who called the use of Romglish "a disgrace" and "snobbery":

> "it's not snobbery ma'am, they are exposed to too much English content and the Romanian content on TV is most often of poor quality, so they don't accumulate a rich enough vocabulary in their mother tongue" (my translation)[19]

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[15] Hai nu mai criticaţi atâta că şi chinezii şi indienii şi ăilalţi de pe acolo + multe naţii africane folosesc engleza, deci vorbim de aprox ¾ din populaţia globului...

[16] Ete fleoşc si care e problema ca nu inteleg... cred ca mai bine trecem toti pe engleza si gata... aia e problema ca vorbim si in engleza, e mai prost atunci cand nu o stii si ai nevoie de ea... de parca daca o sa vorbeasca astia doar romana va creste voua pensia.

[17] cred ca sunteti ofensati ca nu stiti engleza patriotii mei preferati, va kiss

[18] filmele sunt in limba engleza, documentarele (de istorie, geografie, chimie biologie etc) sunt si ele in engleza si tot asa. Dupa toate astea sigur ca iti vine in minte intai engleza

[19] nu este snobism doamna, sunt expuşi la prea mult conţinut în engleză iar conţinutul românesc este de cele mai multe ori de proasta calitate, aşa că nu acumulează un vocabular destul de extins în limba materna

> "Ma'am, you have no idea what you are talking about. Language change is the norm, it is not a shameful situation. The Internet helps with a faster spread but this was happening for thousands of years before it was invented. In the 19th century Romanian was terraformed by the then academy through French, we have expressions from them, cultural customs, jokes, +50% of the Romanian modern vocabulary is borrowed from French. What you are saying about how kids speak today the peasants from the 19th century were saying about your present language. The 'vulgarisation' of a language is a natural life process. Why do you speak Romanian instead of Latin? It's actually in reverse, the 'literary and unaltered form' of a language is a 20th-century Balkan concept and you are snobbish through the lack of understanding of the subject's realities" (my translation)[20]

As it can be noticed, two of these comments use too much access to English content as a cause for Romglish. In both cases it seems to be a matter of prestige since there is a preference for English. In the second comment this is made clearer by mentioning the "poor quality" of "the Romanian content on TV". Furthermore, in this comment there is the implication that this makes one deficient in Romanian, i.e. their MT. Therefore, here as well, language ideologies seem to guide their interpretation of language use. Moreover, the complexity of language ideologies can be identified here since contact with English is not necessarily considered negative, and while more prestige is given to English the MT (which is singularly in the form of Romanian) is seen as suffering from this contact.

There were users who tried to explain why Romglish is used on the Elforum thread as well. For instance, one user mentioned how Romanian language use can be influenced when the language is only used at home and for a small number of hours a day, while also stating that they "avoid as much as possible mixing words from different languages – some uses seem forced and strange. However, sometimes, a foreign word can be more relevant in a discussion than the Romanian equivalent" (my translation)[21]. Others stated that

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[20] Doamnă, nu aveţi habar ce vorbiţi.Schimbarea unei limbi este norma,nu este vreo situaţie ruşinoasă.Internetul ajută la răspândirea mai rapidă dar asta se întâmplă de mii de ani inainte ca el să fie inventat. In secolul 19 limba romăna a fost teraformată de academia de atunci prin limba franceză,avem expresii de la ei,obiceiuri culturale,glume,+50% din vocabularul român modern este imprumutat din franceză.Ce spuneţi dumneavoastră de ce vorbesc copii (sic) azi au spus tăranii secolului 19 despre limba dumneavoastră de azi.„Vulgarizarea" unei limbi este un proces natural al vieţii.Dumneavoastră de ce vorbiţi română ci nu latină? Tocmai ca eare (sic) invers,„forma literară" si nealterată a unei limbi este un concept al secolului 20 în balcani iar snobismul il prezentaţi dumneavoastră prin lipsa întelegerii realitătii subiectului

[21] Evit cat pot amestecul de cuvinte din limbi diferite – unele exprimari par fortate si ciudate. Dar, uneori, un cuvant strain poate fi mai relevant intr-o discutie decat echivalentul romanesc, chiar de pare bizar sa o zic asa.

"Romanian is alive and over generations it has borrowed words from all cultures with a great influence [...]. Generally, the persons who use borrowings from other languages do it because it is fashionable or because that's the manner of speaking in their social circles. There are also those bilingual persons who, when having a language lapse make use of the known foreign language instead of stuttering or having a blockage (mainly consisting in emigrants). Another category that is less understood and known is that of persons who have studied and are practicing a profession [...] in a foreign language" (my translation)[22]

"Romanian is not a dead language [...] not limited to what to [...] what the Academy has approved, but a live one [...] that is changing daily - becoming enriched- according to communicational necessities,[...] [and these changes] need to be made quickly and thus they are often made through "shortcuts", a shortcut being represented even by quickly borrowing -directly!- from English [...] some words, expressions or shortenings, without trying or waiting for the adaptation, translation or introduction of some equivalent Romanian expressions" (my translation)[23]

In these comments both monoglossic and heteroglossic ideologies can be identified. For instance, while they view borrowings as normal, these users also consider that there is a norm and that Romglish is a departure from said norm. This is shown through the use of words such as "fashionable", "strange", "shortcuts". Furthermore, their views do not include all speakers and all linguistic practices since they are limited to certain categories of people (e.g. emigrants). Thus, Romglish is seen more as an exception rather than something that happens regularly. Additionally, there is a clear reference to standard language both on Facebook and Elforum through the mentioning of the Academy, which shows a more prescriptive view on language.

This more prescriptive view is noticeable in other Elforum comments as well. Although none of the users here seemed to be against borrowing words

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[22] limba romana este o limba vie care de-a lungul generatilor (sic) a imprumutat cuvinte din toate culturile cu influenta mare [...]. In general persoalele (sic) care folosesc cuvinte imprumutate din ale (sic) limbi o fac pentru ca e la moda sau din cauza ca in cercurile sociale in care se regasesc acela e modul usual de vorbire. Mai sunt si acele persoanele (sic) bilingve care in momentele de lapsus in loc sa se balbaie sau blocheze se ajuta de limba straina cunoscuta (majoritar compusa din emigranti). O alta categorie mai putin inteleasa sau cunoscuta e acee (sic) a persoanelor care au invatat si practica o meserie [...] intr-o limba straina.

[23] Limba romana nu este o limba moarta [...] nu este limitata [...] la ceea ce a aprobat Academia, ci este o limba vie [...] care se schimba -se imbogateste- in fiecare zi pe masura necesitatilor de comunicare, [...] [si aceste schimbari] trebuiesc facute rapid si de aceea adesea se fac prin multe "scurtaturi", o scurtatura constituind-o inclusiv preluarea rapida - si de aceea directa!- din engleza [...] a unor cuvinte, expresii sau prescurtari, fara a mai incerca sau astepta adaptarea, traducerea ori introducerea unor expresii romanesti echivalente.

from English, or another language, or using other languages beside Romanian, they did consider that there is a right way to do this, namely when needed – "when the translation changes the meaning" ("când traducerea schimbă sensul" – my translation) –, and under "clear rules" ("reguli clare" – my translation) or at least some "common sense rules" ("reguli de bun simţ" - my translation). Moreover, one of the users supports the introduction of neologisms but it should be limited to them since "when speaking of shining, job, implementation, banner, advertiser, slim, moisture, hair stylist, strike and many others etc. we're talking about barbarisms. This doesn't fall under language enrichment! And neither does it lead to its improvement" (my translation)[24]. Thus, while showing heteroglossic ideologies as well, there is a tendency towards more monoglossic ones. One language is considered as more prestigious, namely Romanian, and in need of protection – this is implied through the mentioning of rules. Furthermore, borrowings are divided into proper (neologisms or words from specific fields or related to specific development) and improper ones. Thus, there is a purist ideology here, as well as a standard language ideology since there needs to exist an official body to decide on the appropriateness of words and a variant of the language that would be considered the norm. This is quite similar to Pruteanu's position as well, especially when considering that the last user adapted the English words to Romanian spelling.

As previously mentioned, the vast majority of comments show negative views about young people and their use of Romglish. Similar to the positive messages, language ideologies are shaping these attitudes as well. For instance, a strong connection between language and identity could be noticed in Facebook messages such as:

> "we need to keep out identity ..... our values" (my translation)[25]
> "I'm not saying it is bad to study in other languages as well, on the contrary, but to avoid yours, or to mix it with other foreign words, seems like you don't love your people and their tongue. If they would be educated in school and told that the Dacians were the first speakers of Latin, from which all the other languages derive, maybe they would understand and be proud of their own origin" (my translation)[26]

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[24] Dar, cand vorbim de şaining, job, implementare, benăr, advertisăr, slim, moisture, heăr stilist, straic si multe etc. vorbim de barbarisme. Asta nu intra la categoria imbogatirii limbii! Si nici nu duce la imbunatatirea ei.

[25] trebuie să ne păstrăm identitatea noastră .... valorile noastre

[26] Nu spun că e rău să mai studiezi şi alte limbi străine, dimpotrivă, dar ca să o eviţi pe a ta, sau să o amesteci cu alte cuvinte străine, mi se pare că nu-ţi iubeşti neamul cu graiul lui. Dacă li s-ar face educaţie în şcoală şi s-ar povesti că Dacii au fost primii vorbitori de latină, din care derivă toate celelalte limbi, poate ar înţelege şi ar fi mândri de propria lor origine.

"I believe that this is a consequence of globalisation, of the present increased spread of anti-Romanianism. The young should be reminded of the many Romanian heroes who have fallen defending Romanian" (my translation)[27]

From these messages, the connection that exists between language and identity, in the case of some speakers, is quite clear, especially in the first comment. These responses are also based on the presumption that there is one single, homogeneous language that unites the speakers of the country – this is similar to the one nation – one language ideology. Furthermore, in the third message multilingualism (represented by globalisation) is seen as a threat to the Romanian spirit, language, and even unity. There is also more prestige given to Romanian than any other language through the mentioning of Dacians and the national "heroes fallen while defending Romanian". However, while promoting monoglossic ideologies, these users ignore linguistic diversity both within the country's territory and within Romanian itself.

Monoglossic ideologies can be encountered in other Facebook comments as well, as shown in the following examples:

"Such disgrace! Well-trained people who live abroad for tens of years have not forgotten Romanian and some brats who live here don't know how to speak it anymore! This is snobbery, to not call it something else! They are ashamed of their mother tongue! Bravo, Romania's youth!" (my translation)[28]
"...you think in English but you don't know how to write grammatically correct in the language of the country you were born in…" (my translation)[29]
""Breaking news, dance on ice, week end, Survivor, Extra night"! Crikey, don't we like Romanian anymore?" (my translation)[30]
"Dudes, speak in Romanian, aren't you ashamed of yourselves? This is your mother tongue, you were born with it, you live in Romania not America" (my translation)[31]
"The new type of illiteracy: to try and speak a foreign language when you can't even correctly speak your mother tongue" (my translation)[32]

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[27] Eu cred că acest fapt este o consecinţă a globalizării, a antiromânismului tot mai răspândite astăzi. Ar trebui sa li se amintească tinerilor câţi eroi ai neamului românesc au murit de-a lungul timpului pentru apărarea limbi române.

[28] Mai mare rusinea! Oameni bine pregatiti care locuiesc de zeci de ani in strainatate nu au uitat limba romana si niste plozi care stau aici nu mai stiu s-o vorbeasca ! Asta e snobism,ca sa nu zic altfel ! Le (sic) se rusine cu limba materna !Bravo, tineretul Romaniei !

[29] ...ginditi in engleza dar nu stiti sa scrieti corect gramatical limba tarii in care v-ati nascut...

[30] „Breaking news,dance on ice,week end,Survivor,Extra night"! Aoleu,lb.romana nu ne mai place?

[31] Vorbiti fratilor in limba romana ,nu va este rusine?Asta e limba voastra materna,cu ea v-ati nascut,traiti in Romania nu in america (sic)

[32] Noul gen de analfabetism: sa incerci sa vorbesti o limba straina cand nici macar pe limba materna nu o poti vorbii (sic) corect.

> "I ask you, do you know how to speak Romanian correctly, or are you ashamed of your own mother tongue ???" (my translation)[33]
> "Romanian is beautiful, one of the most beautiful languages. I don't understand why they dirty it with other Anglicisms ?!" (my translation)[34]

The language ideologies guiding these attitudes are mainly the standard language, mother tongue and purist ideologies. The MT of the speakers in the news piece is mentioned several times, showing that those commenting consider that, on the one hand, speakers have only one MT and, on the other, that all Romanians have the same MT. This was observed on Elforum as well when the OP stated that "I've said it before, we either speak Romanian or we switch to English as a mother tongue" (my translation)[35]. Furthermore, the MT is considered as more prestigious and, also, as important for identity. Thus, using English is considered "snobbery" and something that should make one feel ashamed. This is pointed out in one of the comments where examples of English titles used on Romanian television (e.g. *Breaking News, Survivor*) are given as criticism for not choosing Romanian versions. Additionally, Romglish users are perceived as lacking education and MT knowledge, as pointed out by an Elforum user: "To know and use a foreign language regularly, has nothing to do with the mutilation of Romanian! Snobs, the uneducated, the half-witted, use Romglish thinking that they are showing us fools that they know English. No, they are in fact showing us they have no clue about their mother tongue" (my translation)[36].

Moreover, there is one variety of Romanian, namely the standard one, which is considered as correct and, thus more prestigious. This can be noticeable in the comments about the correctness of the Romanian used by young people. In terms of purism, part of the criticism is related to using English words, mixing the two languages, with examples of individuals who have been living outside Romania for several years and still know and use the language without code-switching. In fact, this is presented like a badge of honour since it makes them good Romanian users by comparison to the "brats", "illiterate" Romglish users. Furthermore, there were quite a few comments that, similar to one of the comments above, used "dirty" when referring to the use of English words.

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[33] Eu vă întreb ştiţi să vb română corect , sau vă este ruşine să vb propria limbă maternă ???
[34] limba romana este frumoasa, una din cele mai frumoase limbi. Nu înţeleg de ce o murdăreşte cu alte englezisme ?!
[35] Am mai zis şi altă dată, ori vorbim limba română ori trecem la limba engleză, ca limbă maternă!...
[36] A sti si folosi curent o limba straina, nu are nimic de-a face cu pocirea limbii române! Snobii, incultii, sfertodoctii, folosesc romgleza crezind ca ne arata, noua, fraierilor, ca stiu limba engleza. Nu, ei ne arata, defapt (sic), ca habar nu au de limba materna.

Final Remarks

The analysis of the comments chosen for the present paper has shown that people's attitudes towards Romglish are influenced by language ideologies. Furthermore, both monoglossic and heteroglossic ideologies were identified among both the Facebook and Elforum users. While most users from the two sources held an overall negative attitude towards Romglish, there were some positive comments as well. And yet, even comments that showed support for Romglish had some underlying monoglossic views as well. Among the monoglossic ideologies, the most common ones were the standard language, mother tongue and purist ones. At the same time, most users exhibited multiple ideologies rather than just one. This comes to show the complexity of language ideologies.

While the two sources had different formats with the Elforum thread representing a conversation rather than simple reactions, similar attitudes were encountered in both. Although the views and comments analysed do not necessarily express the general views of Romanians, they could be seen as representative for categories of individual who use and comment on the two platforms. Furthermore, since the chosen sources offered comments from almost 200 individual users, the findings can be considered relevant in terms of language ideologies, especially when taken together with previous research done by this author.

What the present article can conclude is that language ideologies guide and shape people's attitudes towards and about language(s). Furthermore, ideologies are not simple and fixed but rather complex and fluid, as there have been multiple ideologies identified with single individuals. In addition, the views that linguists have could be noticed among non-linguists as well. For instance, the separation between good and bad borrowings, the adaptation of the spelling of English words, the view that Romanian needs to be protected and that there is a proper form of the language were all encountered both among the linguists mentioned and among many of the users. Thus, this shows that public positions on language(s) can influence the views and attitudes of non-linguists. However, more extensive research is recommended, research that could take into account various variables (e.g. age, sex, education) so that to attain a more comprehensive understanding of language ideologies both among linguists and non-linguists.

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IS THE FUTURE HYBRID?
AN ANALYSIS OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIGITAL EDUCATION

Bianca Doris BRETAN[1]

ABSTRACT. *Is the Future Hybrid? An Analysis of Opportunities for Digital Education.* The year 2020 undoubtedly marked a turning point in education. The abrupt passage to online teaching created an overwhelming feeling of uncertainty regarding the aims, efficiency, and outcome of this type of educational endeavor. Nevertheless, the two years with strict anti-epidemic measures and frustrating lockdowns have opened an opportunity to rethink the in-person traditional teaching experience. The current article wants to analyze the main concepts that provide the framework for online teaching and to answer the following research question: Are post pandemic undergraduate students more willing to use online learning? The research method is based on responses to a questionnaire survey sent to students in one subject area: legal studies. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis is then used to provide a framework to better understand the present and future situation of online education. The conclusion suggests that the recent online teaching experience changed students' perception on digital pedagogy, indicating a new direction to all educators.

Keywords: hybrid education, pandemic, digital skills, online learning, SWOT analysis

REZUMAT. *Va fi viitorul hibrid? O analiză de oportunități în educația digitală.* Anul 2020 a marcat un punct de cotitură în educație. Trecerea abruptă la învățarea online a creat un sentiment generalizat de incertitudine în ceea ce privește obiectivele, eficiența și finalitatea demersului didactic de acest tip. Cu toate

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acestea, cei doi ani presărați cu măsuri anti-epidemice stricte și restricții frustrante au deschis perspectiva regândirii pedagogiei clasice. Articolul de față își propune să analizeze principalele concepte care au contribuit la modelarea unui cadru pentru învățarea online și să răspundă următoarei întrebări: Sunt studenții generației post-pandemie mai deschiși spre învățarea online? Metodologia utilizată implică folosirea unui chestionar adresat unui grup de studenți în primul an de studiu la Facultatea de Drept. În urma analizării datelor și validarea întrebării propuse a fost utilizată analiza de tip SWOT.

Cuvinte-cheie: *educație hibridă, pandemie, competențe digitale, învățare online, analiză SWOT*

> **Motto:** "A crisis is a terrible thing to waste."
> (Paul Romer)

Introduction

The current article uses this statement as a starting point because it sets a rational perspective on how one should approach an unprecedented and potentially negative situation. The coronavirus pandemic was a global challenge for both communities and individuals in terms of coping with individual and collective distress while adapting to new everyday situations. Nevertheless, the Covid crisis brought to the surface broad opportunities in many sectors. In education, it put forward a new paradigm: the pedagogy of online teaching and learning. This involved an adaptation of learning practices with a sustained effort from all the actors involved: institutions, teachers, and learners. But the question is: will higher education return to known concepts and traditional methods of teaching and learning in the post-pandemic period, or will the digital transformation last beyond the pandemic?

Literature review

Why is the magic virtual world so alluring to people nowadays? To give an answer to this question we need to look at some social and psychological explanations of self-identity development in the age of networks. This introduction's aim is not to explore the topic in depth but to provide a framework for the current research. The point is to understand how technology use has shaped our lives and social interactions and to admit that it needs to be included in any educational project. Thus, the literature review focuses first on making a link between Mead's theory of social behaviorism and Turkle's idea of identity in the age of the Internet. The two visions are discussed because they help us educators explain attitudes, preferences and choices made by our digital-native learners.

In short, Mead's thesis (Mead 1967) about "self" states that the self is the result of a process of social communication that enables viewing oneself from the perspective of others. A "self" has two components: "me" (which is a phase of the self that displays a set of attitudes associated to the social group to which one belongs) and "I" (a phase that responds to "me," a construct consisting of the several viewpoints of others reflected in separate roles). Without the viewpoints of others that form the "me," there would exist nothing to which the "I" could respond. Without society's offer to act several separate roles, a self could not arise. Therefore, self is a social construct and people need to belong to a social group and to communicate with its members to develop it.

More than forty years later S. Turkle approaches the issue of self-growth and communication from a distinct perspective in a 2012 Ted Talk. She introduces the syntagm "alone together" to define the realities of a new era in which technology has subtly become part of everyday life reshaping human relationships. Without grounding her thesis on social behaviorism, Turkle also shares an interest in people's inner identity and describes a new situation in which the self is involved in a multitude of social interactions and performs several roles offered by a diversity of social platforms, games, and Apps. She thinks that the self is trapped in a network where communication is overly enhanced by using tweets, emails, text messages that all have in common one thing: they do not take place in real time. This way individuals could present the self as they want it to be instead of revealing it spontaneously as in a face-to-face conversation. In her opinion "I share therefore I am" is an illusion of companionship as far as it does not involve the demands of friendship. Control (of attitude, words, emotions) is preferred over intimacy that implies the openness of the self.

In her talk, Turkle describes a reality where technology has gone beyond its primary role to help people in various aspects of their lives. This situation takes us a step forward in researching the cause of these circumstances. Van Dijk (2006) asks a fundamental question: "What are the causes of the rise of networks in contemporary societies? (29) "He approaches the answer from two perspectives. The first is a social explanation that emphasizes the need to use networks at all levels of society: "The use of networking is an evident social need in an individualizing society. Networks can be seen as the social counterparts of individualization." (2006, 29) On the labor market networking is an essential ingredient for survival in competition (business) or societal demand (non-profit organizations). His second explanation contains a historical viewpoint according to which "Networks also cause a comprehensive restructuring of society at large. They are breaking old modes of organization as they help organizations in their search for new scale levels, new markets, and new ways to govern and control." (2006, 29). Furthermore, "networks have accelerated modernization" by supporting globalization and socialization on the one hand and localization and individualization

on the other (2006, 29). The network described by Van Dijk becomes this time the place of "convergent architectures" (Papacharissi 2011) that "may provide the stage for interaction, linking the individual, separately or simultaneously, with multiple audiences." (304). If we think in terms of the self and its needs then, social networks provide an ideal nurturing sphere as they enable both identity expression and community building. (Papacharissi 2011, 305)

The question posed at the beginning of the literature review section is not rhetorical. The answer could be found in the theories presented that all share a red thread: the inseparable need for development of the self and communication, the feeling of belonging to a group without apparent effort, the illusion of having control over situations and relationships. As the aim of the current article is to clarify an issue related to online teaching, another question that should be asked is the following: where do social and network theories meet pedagogy and in what way are they connected? At a crossroads the self, the physical body, and the machines meet and take the same route, following a common goal: learning. In short, the connection between the theories described above lies in the fact that they form a pool of models that can be used to describe and explain the learning processes.

The next point of interest for the current research is to provide a framework for online learning. To understand its roots and specificity, we will focus on clarifying terms such as hybrid pedagogy, blended learning, and digital pedagogy.

Stommel (2012) defines hybrid pedagogy as "learning that happens both in a classroom (or other physical space) and online". In providing this definition Stommel considers the physical space where the learning takes place. From this perspective, according to the same author, the term hybrid sometimes overlaps with the concept of blended learning. Though the two concepts are not similar. The important distinction between the two is that the term "blended" describes a practice whereas "hybrid" implies a methodological approach (Stommel 2012). For this, hybrid pedagogy has "deeper resonances" because it brings "the sorts of learning that happen in a physical place and the sorts of learning that happen in a virtual place into a more engaged and dynamic conversation." (Stommel 2012).

Although the name contains the word "digital," digital pedagogy is not an area of pedagogy that is reduced to the employment of technology in teaching. It is a learning management system in which the space of learning is more fluid and adaptable than teachers were used to. It is a learner centered system in which the single, classical learning space is multiplied in different pieces, each representing a learning environment for students. They should be able to choose their own tools and use the web to support their learning. (Morris 2014)

The current article's aim is to find out if post pandemic undergraduate students are more willing to use online learning. It has three parts: a research methodology section (that describes the method, participants and the tools

involved in the study), results and discussion section (which presents the outcome of the study and contrasts the data with a recent official European Union document on the impact of the pandemic in education) and conclusions.

Research Methodology

The present research is a prospective, quantitative study using new data collected for this purpose. It is based on the hypothetic-inferential method. The main research instrument is a Google forms online questionnaire that consists of a mix of ten close-ended (multiple choice or Likert scale) questions, aiming to gather students' perception and attitudes towards online learning before and after 2020 (the year regarded as a cornerstone in teaching for both teachers and learners). Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics and interpreted by employing a SWOT analysis.

Forty-two participants filled in the questions in the survey. All of them were first year undergraduate students at the Faculty of Law, Babes-Bolyai University from which 30 were females and 12 were males. A link with the online questionnaire was sent to them via email in May 2022. The data collection time limit was set for June, the last month of the second semester of the 2020/2022 academic year. The online questionnaire was written in Romanian (as this was the respondents' mother tongue) to avoid a lack of answers due to a low level of English. Students completed it anonymously, and each student could fill it in only once. Before completion, students were fully informed about the study's aim and agreed to participate voluntarily. All questions were mandatory and no exclusion criteria were set.

The variable element of the study is the major in Law that all the undergraduate student responders have. Moreover, the research addressed legal studies students at a particular point in time, therefore students at the same university with a different major and from a different academic year could have responded differently. This issue is responsible for one of the limitations the research has. The other limitation is caused by the size of the group of respondents. Forty-two students are a small number compared to the total number of undergraduate students majoring in Law. Thus, data cannot be generalized. Despite these limitations, the research provides an insight on the degree to which perception on online learning has changed.

The research question posed was: Are post pandemic undergraduate students more willing to use online learning? Data obtained from the survey were put in a new framework employing a second research instrument meant to extend the area for the initial research question. The aim is to correlate undergraduate students' willingness to study online with an educational offer. Would such an initiative be regarded as justified? To find the answer to that question we used SWOT, a type of analysis that was initially implemented in

business to move forward with a strategic product. Its goal is to provide a template that a business can use to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for their product. In fact, the term SWOT is an acronym for these four factors. In this type of analysis, the first two factors are internal (related to organizational resources) whereas opportunities and threats, by contrast, are external realities and refer to competition, the market, or changing trends that could affect the company.

The first concern for the researcher was to find out if this type of template could be used in a completely different field, namely, in education. The study of online references related to the topic revealed that the SWOT analysis has been employed as a trusted, reliable tool in education. Stoller (2020) used it as "a time-honored tool for helping to formulate organizational strategy" in medical education related research.

Orr (2013, 383) thinks that "A SWOT analysis of a teacher education program or any program can be the driving force for implementing change. It is one tool to use in a strategic planning process." His suggestion is to use this tool in any undergraduate or degree program to adjust curriculum, internships, learning activities or education policies. In one of his articles Kundra (2018) suggested that employing a SWOT analysis to give general solutions in planning the post-elections course of education in Fiji would be beneficial. His opinion is that, if SWOT is adapted for determining the objectives of educational planning and identifying the internal and external factors that assist in achieving the set objectives, it could be used as a reliable tool.

Results and discussion

The survey is made up of ten questions that can be grouped according to their purpose in the following way:

- One set of questions has the aim to reveal respondents' level of familiarity with online learning before 2020 (Table 1);
- Three sets of questions aim to investigate respondents' attitude towards online learning before and after the coronavirus pandemic (Table 2, 5, and Table 5);
- Two sets of questions want to explore the connection between the type of online interaction the respondents used before 2020s and their ability to access online learning during the pandemic (Table 3 and Table 4);
- One set of questions aims to reveal the respondent's main difficulties in accessing online learning (Table 7);

- One set of questions wants to investigate respondents' preference of online learning activities (Table 8);
- One set of questions wants to explore respondents' opinion on the crucial element for successful online learning (Table 9);
- One set of questions aims to find out respondents' opinion on the importance of including online courses in the education offer of universities (Table 10).

Table 1. Rating of respondents' online learning abilities before the 2020 Covid pandemic

How would you rate your online learning abilities before the 2020 Covid pandemic?	n (%)
Particularly good	6 (14.3%)
Quite good	19 (45.2%)
Not good at all	17 (40.5%)

The purpose of this question was to determine if the respondents had previous online learning experience. It must be mentioned that, before 2020, online education was not accredited by the Ministry of Education in schools, therefore the generalized type of learning was in-person. In Higher Education it was accredited only for long distance and life-learning programs. This peculiarity of the Romanian system of education made the step towards online teaching extremely difficult for both teachers and students. In this context, the reasonable high number of responders that admit to having particularly good abilities (14.3%) and quite good abilities (45.2%) could be seen as comforting for the class instructor and a good starting point for future online educational endeavors. The three sets of questions in Table 2 and 5 and 6 are aimed at revealing a change of attitude towards online learning.

Table 2. Respondents' attitude towards online learning in 2020

How would you define your attitude towards online learning before the 2020 Covid pandemic?	n (%)
A useful way to acquire knowledge	11 (26.2%)
A way to acquire knowledge more useful in the future than it is now	12 (28.6%)
A way of learning that could occasionally be used to enhance traditional methods	24 (57.1%)

Table 2 contains the set of answers related to the year 2020. The results here indicate that, at the time, the survey takers did not credit it as a useful way to acquire knowledge (a low percentage of 26.2 agree with this statement). Surprisingly, more than a quarter of them (28.6%) did not regard it as a way of

acquiring new knowledge in the future. This could be an indication of the perspective the responders, as learners, have on education, which was traditional, on-site and in-person oriented. This could be the explanation for the fact that 57.1% of them viewed online learning as a collateral tool for teaching that could have been used occasionally to enhance traditional methods.

Table 5. The shift in responders' attitude towards online learning in the last couple of years

Have the last two years changed your attitude towards online learning?	n (%)
Yes	30 (71.4%)
No	12 (28.6%)

Table 5 focuses on measuring if there is a shift in attitude after a two-year online teaching and learning experience. The answers reveal an expected and overwhelming "yes" (71.4%). This is a direct result of the fact that this type of instruction was consistently used as the main educational tool in an institutional framework during the pandemic.

Table 6. Respondents' current attitude towards online learning

How would you define your current attitude towards online learning?	n (%)
A useful way to acquire knowledge	22 (52.4%)
A way to acquire knowledge more useful in the future than it is now	1 (2.4%)
A way of learning that could occasionally be used to enhance traditional methods	19 (45.2%)

Table 6 contains the same set of questions as table 2 except for the year of reference. This time the responders express their current opinion on the same topic. Compared to the previous data 52.4% instead of 26.2% of them think online learning is a useful way to acquire knowledge. However, 45.2 % continue to see online learning as a way of learning that could occasionally be used to enhance traditional methods. This fact could indicate a certain degree of traditionalism combined with difficulties in adaptation.

Table 3 and 4 focus on finding data on the survey-takers' usual type of online interaction before 2020 with the purpose to reveal a connection between this and the way they approach the online experience.

Table 3. Respondents' usual type of online interaction

On what purpose did you use online interaction before 2020?	n (%)
Drafting emails	25 (59.5%)
Social media	42 (100%)
Active citizenship (petitions, civic projects, correspondence with local authorities)	6 (14.3%)
Others	5 (11.9%)

In the set of questions from Table 3 multiple answers were allowed. As results show, all the responders used online interaction to access social media, an expected answer from a generation of young people that are very dynamic users of Facebook, Instagram, Tik-Tok and other Apps of the kind. Second in importance (59.5%) was the use of the Internet for drafting emails. A lower percentage (14.3%) used it to get involved in community problems and act as active citizens (by filling in petitions, writing to local authorities etc.). The lowest percentage (11.9%) is rated for the use of the Internet for different purposes, not mentioned.

Table 4. The rating of the degree to which respondents' previous online interaction affected their approach towards online learning

To what extent did the above-mentioned activities help you approach online learning?	n (%)
Significantly	13 (31%)
Quite a lot	24 (57.1%)
Insignificantly	5 (11.9%)
Did not affect	0 (0%)

Table 4 shows the results for the set of questions regarding the degree to which respondents' previous online interaction affected their approach towards online learning. As outlined in Table 3, the survey-takers did not use the Internet for learning purposes. Nevertheless, they immersed themselves in a virtual space presenting some features like those specific to educational platforms (expressing opinions and feelings through chat, posts, emojis, video options, group interaction). Therefore, it could be said that online activities equip students with some of the prerequisite skills needed for online learning. This assumption is supported by a substantial number of students (57.1%) who agreed with the fact that their online activity helped them quite a lot in this respect versus 11.9% who were insignificantly helped.

Table 7 aims to reveal the respondents' main difficulties in accessing online learning. Multiple questions were allowed.

Table 7. Respondents' main hurdles in online learning

In your opinion what were the main hurdles in online learning?	n (%)
Lack of technology (access to laptops, software, iPads) and technical problems (poor Internet connection)	7 (14.7%)
Lack of educational apps and platforms	17 (40.5%)
Lack of initial induction training on using educational apps and platforms	20 (47.6%)
Lack of socializing with peers	24 (57.1%)
Lack of self-discipline and difficulties focusing on learning tasks during classes	31 (73.8%)

As the results show, the main hurdle for students was the lack of self-discipline and difficulties related to focusing on learning tasks during classes. A reason for this could be the lack of self-directed learning skills. These skills include developing individual learning strategies that cover time management, learning techniques, planning strategies, self-assessment, and self-reflection (Harmer, 2001). It is important to focus on students' autonomy, which should be learned at school, but learning is always social. The next difficulty mentioned in the paragraph confirms that the lack of socializing with peers (57.1%) was a problem for most students. For many of them (47.6%) the lack of induction training on using educational apps and platforms (40.5%) or the lack of educational apps and platforms was a serious disadvantage.

Table 8 reveals respondents' preference of online learning activities (with multiple answers). The aim here is to have a roadmap of the most suitable activities to use online. On top three we have whiteboard collaborative learning and completing an individual project followed by presentation sharing the same score (66.7%) followed by classroom debates (54.8%). The first preferred activity shows that collaboration is enjoyed as part of online learning (and is made possible with the proper platform) and the fact that this type of activities could be used to "reinforce a sense of belonging among the group members" (Harmer 2001:114). The second one is the opposite in interaction: individual work on a project. The third one is a classical speaking activity that students enjoy because it gives the opportunity to share their opinion while interacting with peers. The lowest score is attributed to writing activities, a productive skill that usually takes time and patience to develop.

Table 8. Respondents' preference of online learning activities

In your opinion, what activities are best suited for online learning?	n (%)
Case studies	21 (50%)
Classroom debates	23 (54.8%)
Whiteboard collaborative learning	28 (66.7%)
Pair work and group work in breakout rooms	6 (14.3%)
Completing an individual project followed by presentation	28 (66.7%)
Learning vocabulary by completing interactive tasks (fill in, quizzes, online games)	8 (19%)
Reading and listening activities	11 (26.2%)
Writing activities	2 (4.8%)

The set of questions in table 9 aims to highlight the essential elements of successful online learning (multiple answers). The answers give credit to the teacher who is seen as having the leading role: 78.6% think that the teaching strategy and activation techniques used by the teacher are the key factor of success in online learning. The second place belongs to the personal motivation to learn (73.8%).

Table 9. Respondents' opinion on the crucial element for successful online learning

In your opinion what element is crucial for successful online learning?	n (%)
Personal motivation to learn	31 (73.8%)
The educational apps and platforms used in teaching and learning	13 (31%)
The teaching strategy and activation techniques used by the teacher	33 (78.6%)
Others	0 (0%)

Table 10. Respondents' opinion on the importance of including online courses in the education offer of universities

In your opinion how important is it for universities to include online programs and courses in their education offer?	n (%)
Particularly important	15 (35.7%)
Quite important	25 (59.5%)
Not important	2 (4.8%)

The goal of this question is to check if respondents are interested in attending online courses in an institutional setting in a post pandemic age. This way, the usefulness of online learning is related to an outcome that implies recognition of academic effort. This could indicate how much respondents correlate learning with an institutional framework. It could be deduced that the

demands and rules established by the Ministry of Education are considered when choosing an educational offer. As the results show, an important number of responders (59.5%) confirm their interest in this type of course.

As a follow-up for the answers provided in the questionnaire, the SWOT analysis is meant to reveal the degree of opportunity for any educational institution to offer online courses/programs. The next table contains the four specific elements to this type of inquiry: strengths (what an online course offers to learners), weaknesses (what could lower the chances of success), opportunities (the positive aspects that could make the course interesting) and threats (the dangers for online learning). The analysis was performed referring to the answers provided by the researched lot of undergraduate students. It could be expanded by considering more responders. This fact would add an increased number of items for each of the four elements.

Table 11. A SWOT analysis of online learning

STRENGHTS	WEAKNESSES
A useful way to acquire knowledge	Lack of technology and software
A way of learning that could be used in addition to traditional learning	Lack of socializing with peers
	Lack of self-discipline in learning
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Personal motivation to learn	Lack of online study programs from universities
A positive change of attitude towards online learning	

Although the impact of the analysis is reduced because of the small number of participants, it still gives a clue about the success that online learning (seen as a strategic product) could have if implemented. To support this affirmation, we will discuss the conclusions of a recent official EU (European Union) document on how the pandemic's impact has been valued for digital and online learning practices. If we overlap our research and SWOT analysis findings with the conclusions provided by the above-mentioned document, we notice that they have some common elements. To mention just a few:

- "The COVID-19 pandemic has cultivated a new cohort of students who were not interested in fully online learning previously, representing a sizable new source of online learners" (Capranos et al. 2021), facts revealed by the current study, see tables 2, 5 and 6.
- "The expansion of online offers needs further monetary investments, in particular in digital infrastructure and personnel," see table 7

- The "innovative forms and formats of lifelong learning will only attract potentially interested people permanently if an online certification is recognized and/or valued in the labor market later" see table 10 in which students express their wish to have online study programs included in the education offer of universities.

Additional to these findings, a recent survey has reported that in the European Higher Education Area, most HEIs have confirmed that they have plans to enhance digital capacity (75%) and explore new ways of teaching (92%) beyond the crisis (Gaebel et al. 2021).

Conclusions

The hypothesis launched at the beginning of the study was: Are post pandemic undergraduate students more willing to use online learning? The analysis of the data collected from many undergraduate student responders provides a positive answer to the research question. This fact is highlighted by the change of attitude discussed in Table 6, which is a clear indicator that most students currently accept online learning as a useful way to acquire knowledge. The two years in which they relied on online education have made them understand the way learning could be achieved and practiced in a different environment. The second argument in favor of a positive response to the same question is given by the answers to the question in table 5 where 71.4% of the responders agree that their attitude has changed. Could we say that their perception changed because of the recent online teaching experience? We can only assume that such a logical consequence exists but there is no direct data to support it.

We think these data suggest digital pedagogy should be considered as the new paradigm in teaching, indicating a new direction to all educators. They support the statement according to which: "Driven by the need to digitalize education and training in record time, the disruption to face-to-face education reshaped established educational practices fundamentally" (Hodges et al. 2020). What is important and we should consider as teachers is that digital pedagogy is just another innovative way to engage students in learning.

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THE ARTIST'S WEBSITE. DISCOURSE FEATURES
OF ONLINE IDENTITY AND BRAND

Anda-Elena CREȚIU[1]

ABSTRACT. *The Artist's Website. Discourse Features of Online Identity and Brand.*[2] The present study aims to reveal those discourse particularities displayed by the artist's home page/website (used interchangeably for our current purposes[3]) as a device to create an artist's online identity. Specific methods (and steps) throughout the process of creating an online identity overlap with the advertising strategies of branding. Our interest concerns the discourse strategies involved in the two activities in the context of online communication. The particularities of the artist's home page have been studied from a genre analysis perspective. The aim is to demonstrate that the genre features of the home page (as a cyber genre) determine or at least influence the site's content. The present research also aims to determine how the content is negotiated within the website's structure to serve the communicative goals of establishing an online identity and an artist's brand. The findings reveal several discourse strategies at play to reach the final purpose and that they belong to advertising and e-commerce, on the one hand, and the specialized field of the visual arts, on the other.

Keywords. *Internet communication, WWW, digital genres, discourse features, artist identity and branding*

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[2] The present study continues a previous one (2013), by the same author, regarding the discourse particularities of the artist's blog.

[3] While it is generally understood that a home page is a kind of front cover of a website, the present approach considers the two aspects as a whole, for an in-dept analysis of the structure and content of this genre, as well as of its specific rhetoric.

REZUMAT. *Website-ul artistului. Trăsături discursive ale identității sale virtuale și brandului său.* Prezentul studiu are ca scop decelarea particularităților discursului ce caracterizează website-ul artistului/pagina web (termeni folosiți aici interschimbabil) văzut/ă ca instrument pentru crearea unei identități artistice virtuale. Metodele specifice (și unii pași) ale procesului de creare a unei identități artistice virtuale se suprapun peste strategiile publicitare ale *brandingului*. Ne interesează aici strategiile discursive implicate în cele două activități, în contextul comunicării virtuale. Particularitățile paginii web a artistului sunt studiate din perspectiva analizei genurilor. Scopul este de a demonstra că trăsăturile generice ale paginii web a artistului (ca gen virtual) determină, sau cel puțin influențează, conținutul site-ului. Prezentul studiu urmărește de asemenea să afle cum este negociat conținutul în interiorul structurii site-ului, pentru a servi scopurilor comunicaționale de a crea identitatea virtuală a artistului și brandul său. Rezultatele prezentei cercetări disting diverse strategii discursive ce conlucrează pentru acest scop și faptul că ele aparțin atât sferei publicitare și a comerțului online, cât și domeniului artelor vizuale.

Cuvinte-cheie. Comunicare virtuală, WWW, genuri virtuale, particularități ale discursului, identitate și brand ale artistului

1. Introduction

The birth of the Web (World Wide Web) in 1991 and its availability for everyday use (starting from 1993-4) made a New Age of Information possible. In the beginning, there were a few websites[4] for general interest. Still, soon their number increased exponentially, spreading information worldwide using computers connected to the Internet[5]. Today there are almost two billion websites in cyberspace, and their number plummets with every second[6]. The quantity of information shared by them is hard to imagine. The types of information may hardly be defined since data can be about anything. Therefore, a simple classification of the websites seems to raise an unlimited number of questions. There have been many attempts to classify them, but apparently, all of them refer to the most common types. Some have distinguished 11 types (blog, business, brochure, crowdfunding, educational, e-commerce, media or entertainment, non-profit, personal, portal, portfolio) (Whitfield 2021). Some

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[4] The first website was created in August 1991 by Tim Berners-Lee at CERN.

[5] The Internet is two decades older than the Web

[6] 1,933,428,700, on July 27, 2022, 10:30, according to https://www.internetlivestats.com/total-number-of-websites/#:~:text=Sources%20and%20References%20There%20are%20over%201.5%20billion,Of%20these%2C%20less%20than%20200%20million%20are%20active.

have added more types, like the niche websites, which deal with specific topics such as non-profit, magazine and news, forums, Wiki, and membership websites (McKinnon 2022). However, it is generally agreed that the first genuinely digital genre was the home page (including personal and corporate types[7]).

Each of the above types has its purposes for whose achievement the most efficient strategies are put to work. They include designing a functional structure, filling that structure with the most appropriate content, making it functional, and adding any valuable media (images, videos, podcasts).

Probably one of the essential purposes a website may have is to offer its audience an online identity of its owner and, in many cases, build a brand identity. Establishing communication with the intended audiences is also crucial for each website.

It is generally believed that nowadays if you are not on the Internet, you do not exist (in the eyes of possible and desired audiences). The last two pandemic years made that presence an almost mandatory one. Not just businesses, research, communication among and within organizations, education, etc., moved online. Culture, art included, did that as well.

It is also undeniable that artists could benefit from the generosity of the Web to display their work(s) and enlarge their public and number of customers. A typical device to achieve the goal is building an artist's website. Some may list it under the portfolio type, which aims to showcase the owner's work(s) and business products. However, it does more than just this, which makes it a more complex genre than the portfolio type.

2. Theoretical Background

A website (or site) can be defined as a collection of web pages that may include resources such as images, video files, text (multimedia), and code. The start web page is known as the home page, displaying the different constituents of the site and redirecting to those. The visitor can navigate through the site as per design. One needs a browser to reach a certain website; a search engine is used to search for something specific. The places one reaches this way are allotted web addresses (or URL-s). Examples of some pages included on a business website may include "products page", "services page", "about us", "contact us"," privacy policy", "career page", "FAQ-s", and sometimes even a blog page. The designer gives it a specific appearance, a kind of "look-and-feel," adds scripts that make it functional, and different resources (like images, sounds, videos). All these may be true for

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[7] There are, however, many opinions according to which these two types have to be considered as separate genres, due to their different arrays of functions.

established genres, but virtual reality changes at such a speedy pace that new genres appear, emergent genres that may or may not have the established structures or audiences. Therefore, it may be a difficult task to catalog such new realities.

Web (or Internet) genres may be defined along such coordinates as content, form, and functionality. In analyzing a web genre, the same attention should be paid to the generic features as for the paper genres. Not surprisingly, the communicative purpose is the most reliable coordinate for establishing genres. Crowston and Miller (1997, 9-10) argue the importance of the purpose when defining a web genre since forms are so diverse and audiences may be unpredictable. Although genres are meant to address specific discourse communities, the Web makes everything available to everyone. A random visitor of a home page (or a web page, for that matter) may relate to its content if the purpose is recognizable. The form me be utterly new to them.

There is an inevitable confusion in the Web genres research. Sometimes the different web pages are considered genres or sub-genres (e.g., the "about us" section, the "FAQ-s" section). An explanation could be that the creator of a website has almost absolute control over its form, content, and functionality. It may also be that a web page could be perceived as belonging to different genres. We shall consider the artist's website as the actual genre and its various web pages as belonging to its structure. Each such page may indeed have its own communicative purpose, but that is subscribed to the website's general purpose/s.

In their research, Andrew Dillon and Barbara Gushrowski (2000) studied over 100 personal home pages to determine whether or not they constitute a genre. Despite the expected idiosyncrasy the "personal touch" is supposed to bring, they discovered that their corpus shared common features such as title, email address, update date, table of contents, short bio, images, etc. They concluded that this genre has not derived from paper genres, being "the first uniquely digital genre." (Dillon & Gushrowski 2000, 202)

Genres have evolved and changed over the last decades. When, in 1990, Swales spoke about them, all were conceived as paper-based. With time, some moved online and changed a lot or received new functionalities. The classical paper-based newspaper met a long evolution. Initially, the paper-based newspaper was simply put (uploaded) on the Web, replicating the original, with some navigation links. Then the number of columns increased, and sections were added. Today it offers personalized news according to the user's interests. Research articles also changed to specific editing requirements, starting with research sources. If up to a point, the blog may be considered the online translation of the personal journal, the website is an entirely new genre born due to the vast potential the Web offers. Therefore, an artist's website has to be seen as a completely new cyber (sub)genre, although it comprises several other former paper-based genres as web pages.

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Besides a particular structure, Internet genres also employ language. Susan Herring defines the language used on the Internet as "the human(-like) language produced and displayed through computer-mediated communication (CMC) systems"; some synonyms she suggests are *computer-mediated language*, *computer-mediated discourse*, *online discourse*, and *electronic discourse* (Herring 2008, 1, accessed March 9 2022). She distinguishes two approaches to the respective discourse: a prescriptivist one and a descriptivist one. The former expresses some concerns regarding the danger of this non-standard type of language's influence on the quality of standard language. On the contrary, the latter appreciates this discourse's creativity, playfulness, and functionality (1-2). Herring suggests that no matter how researchers of this type of discourse deal with it, it is safe to look at it like the new generations of Internet users do: by treating it like any plain language. However, the study of language and digital media will be relevant for years to come. (4)

Studies of the Internet discourse are also interested in "e-grammar" (including typography, orthography, morpho-syntax), multilingualism (e.g., language mixing, language alternation, English as a *lingua franca,* translations), Web 2.0 (an approach converging text, images, videos, voice, emotes, avatars, sharing devices, etc.[8]), or methodological approaches (using large corpora, transcribing them, etc.). Any new methods of research and approaches to the field of CMD[9] should adapt to the extreme dynamism of the field. (Herring 2011)

However complex the CMD, due to its extensive use of different media, activities, applications, groups/communities, etc., there is one thing not lost through time: its recourse to language. The approaches dedicated to Internet language use (in context) may reveal certain peculiarities, developments, alterations, etc. Herring names this approach computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA), "a methodological toolkit and a set of theoretical lenses through which to make observations and interpret the results of empirical analysis" (Herring 2004, 4). Such an analysis may concern the microlevel of this kind of discourse or/and the macrolevel (revealing aspects connected to community, identity, coherence, gender, etc.) when dealing with corpora of computer-mediated texts. She considers that any CMDA should address the four levels: 1) structure (e.g., word-formation, sentence structure); 2) meaning (of words, utterances—speech acts, larger macrosegments; 3) interaction (turn-taking, topic development, different interacting exchanges); and 4) social behavior (language revealing such relations as, conflict, power, group membership) (3).

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[8] Facebook is a best example of this type of Internet discourse, combining text, different activities and applications, offering "private Inbox messages, private chat, semi public 'notes' that resemble blog entries, and several types of semi-public 'wall' communication: status updates, posting of links, videos, and images, posts on others' walls, and comments on all of the above." (Herring, 2011, 3)

[9] Computer-mediated discourse

The theoretical backgrounds of CMDA rest on such assumptions as 1. the fact that discourse exhibits recurrent patterns; 2. it involves participants' choices; 3. it may be influenced or shaped by the CMC[10] systems. The linguistic content of CMD may be analyzed from qualitative and/or quantitative points of view. (4) A fundamental concept of CMDA refers to the virtual community. The very term "virtual community" has been questioned by many researchers of Web communication, from considering that all participants on the Web form a virtual community to denying it at all. Some believe the term is difficult to define because of "the fluid membership, reduced social accountability, and lack of shared geographical space that characterize most groups on the Internet" (Herring 2004, 6). Susan Herring proposes a list of six criteria that shape a virtual community, which should display the following traits:

1) active, self-sustaining participation; a core of regular participants
2) shared history, purpose, culture, norms, and values
3) solidarity, support, reciprocity
4) criticism, conflict, means of conflict resolution
5) self-awareness of the group as an entity distinct from other groups
6) emergence of roles, hierarchy, governance, rituals (Herring 2004, 14)

Research grounded in real-life (and virtual life, for that matter) is based on corpora. As Lynne Flowerdew noted, "Corpus-based methodologies have been informed by genre principles of text analysis, while at the same time it has been shown that genre theories can profit from corpus-based methodologies" (Flowerdew 2005, 329-30).

Marià José Luzón Marco (from the University of Zaragoza) analyses the prototypical characteristics of corporate home pages as a dominant Internet genre (Luzón Marco 2002, 42-56). Her corpus comprises 72 corporate home pages belonging to the specific field of computing companies. She is interested in how the interplay of purpose, functionality, content, and form generates those features of the corporate home page that are perceived as genre-specific. Those characteristics are grouped into four types, according to the functions they are assigned in the economy of the home page. She distinguishes the following functions: a) creating a positive image of the company; b) introducing and offering products; c) strengthening the relationship with the customer; d) asking and giving information about the page itself. She concludes that the corporate home page is a genre with multiple purposes and shares some features with promotional genres while incorporating many extra interactive and connectivity features.

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[10] Computer-mediated communication

3. Method and Corpus

The research questions to be answered were:

a) May the artist's website be considered a different (sub)genre?

b) If so, which are the typical features of the artist's website that may account for its generic status?

A corpus of artists' websites was considered to answer these questions. The analysis of the selected corpus was done through a combination of applied genre analysis (following the guidelines offered by Swales, 1990 and Bhatia, 1993) and corpus-based CMDA. An ESP approach to the selected texts has also been adopted to distinguish the specificity of the art discourse used by the websites under scrutiny. The working thesis maintains that there are certain particularities, both at micro- and macro-levels of CMD, specific patterns that shape the artist's website/home page, differentiating it from other websites/home pages. To reveal those possible particularities, the web content analysis paradigm suggested by Herring (2010) is adopted as well, primarily due to the expected multimodal aspect of an artist's website. The content analysis considers images, themes, features, links, exchanges, and language (Herring 2010, 12). The home page is a cover page that lists the website's contents. However, since the two cannot be separated, we shall look at them as a whole. Any element on the home page needs to be further viewed through the page(s) dedicated to it.

Since any genre analysis also deals with a discourse community, a question arises: is there a virtual community of artists, art institutions, and the art public? While it is true that the artist's website is a genre belonging to the artistic discourse community, it is also true that its audience goes beyond a specialized one. This feature is also shared with other genres of this discourse community (e.g., the art review, the artist's blog, the artist's statement). For the current purposes, we shall consider that we can speak about a virtual art community comprising an undefined number of people (art creators and art consumers) and institutions that are connected in different ways to art and displaying most of the characteristics mentioned by Herring. This virtual art community should necessarily share a common specific discourse, respectively specific genres, like the artist's website.

To distinguish the specificity of the discourse used by the artist's website, the corpus of 42 websites was selected from a list of "45 Examples of Stunning Artist Websites" made up by Steve Benjamins, the founder of Site Builder Report ("the best-known, most trusted name in website builder reviews") (Benjamins, 2022, accessed March 16, 2022). The art galleries' websites were excluded from the list. The artist websites were in existence at the beginning of the current year and were created using different site builders.

The analysis focused on the communicative purpose/s, the move structure (adapted to the web designs), and rhetorical strategies involved in the content creation of the respective websites. More specifically, they were analyzed along the following coordinates: the purpose/s (declared or implied by the content); the macrostructure (the content organization as displayed by the home page—in direct relation with the chosen software/site builder—, navigation options/buttons, user's position); the microstructure (the content of the different pages: visual and verbal elements, hyperlinks); the elements shaping the artist's creative identity/ "brand": the display of artist's identity (as creator and business person), the display of works (portfolio), business features (shop), other online presence (hyperlinks to other personal social media accounts); communication tools (contact, newsletter/mail lists); discourse particularities (other involved genres, register, rhetorical devices, multimodality).

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Purpose/s of the artist's website

Of the 42 websites, only 3 were group websites; the others were individual; although many art groups share a common artistic identity, artists often see themselves as individual creators. Just like a company, the artist clearly defines their goals: to offer their audience a positive image, to present their creations (both for visual enjoyment and, most often, for sale), to provide the kind and amount of information the art public may need, and to keep and strengthen the relationship with the audience.

As expected, the common purpose of the 42 websites was to showcase the artists' creations as part of their creative identity. A goal for which artists build the websites is that, especially in this digital era, artists understand art as a kind of personal business and prefer to develop their own (like a small company) and directly sell their creations without necessarily involving galleries in the process. In fact, the website functions as a personal virtual gallery. There are also cases of studio services (usually in photography and film/video production). In some cases, the services are educational: studio classes in different branches are offered as part of the business, besides selling works – 6 instances. In one case, the website also hosted the artist's foundation, the workshop ("laboratory"), and some charitable events (suggesting the complexity of his endeavors).

Even if the artist does not directly sell the creation on the website (9 cases), they suggest asking about such details using the contact form; some images in the gallery are marked "sold," or there may be suggestions of the services the artist can provide, prompting the possible customers to inquire for

a quote directly. In just a few cases, some hyperlinks and/or contact details of the representing galleries are provided, suggesting the way to purchase the works- 3 cases.

Therefore, although one might expect that the artist's website is just meant to display the artist's creations, apparently, it has become a reliable medium for building up a real art business, the artist's private-owned company. In this context, we can see the artist's website as an instrument used to shape the artist's brand, not just an artistic identity, and promote their "small company." Thus, besides just showcasing creation, the artist's website does more: it reaches potential customers while also displaying credentials and expertise; it informs; it educates; it is used for self-advertising and promoting the products of creation and art events. These make the artist's website a multi-purpose genre, sharing features with promotional genres, corporate, academic, and personal websites.

4.2. The macrostructure

The moves of the artist's website highly correspond to the home page header buttons: identifying the website, indicating content structure, identifying the artist, displaying credentials and expertise, displaying creations, selling creations, and establishing relations with the public/customers.

The software site builders the artists used for their sites were as follows: 28% *Squarespace* (payable; one can use pre-built website templates and drag-and-drop elements to create and modify webpages.); 26% *Format* (portfolio-based), 21% - *Wix* (free, allowing plug-ins for social media, e-commerce, online marketing, contact forms, email marketing, and community forums); the rest were GoDaddy, Shopify, and Weebly.

The role of any home page is to function as a cover page by offering visitors an overview of the website and as an official gateway to the website's content through the navigation menu. The title gives the very first information provided by the home page. In 40 cases, the title contained the name of the artist (or of the group – "The Tokyoiter"); the other two metaphorically or rhetorically suggested the content ("Almost Real" displaying photography by eleven artists; "Creature Creature" owned by a duo creating mural "creatures"). In most cases, there was a subtitle indicating the type of art created by the owner of the website (paintings, photography, sculpture, etc.) and even the style ("American Hyper-Realist artist"; "Miss Aniela Surreal Fashion"). Some subtitles suggested the preferred theme/s of the artist: "for Beauty & Truth"; "a return to understanding as felt by the spirit", some eco militantism ("create more than you consume"), or even a welcoming message ("Welcome to Ben & Julia studio. Film, Art & Joy").

One can navigate the site by clicking on the buttons provided by the header (or tabs), which are intra-links to the different content pages. These buttons may be lexical (words) or images (suggestive symbols such as "search" or "cart", or "log in"). Most often, there is a *menu* (a kind of table of contents) leading to the site's pages, but there are many cases when the artist directly displays the content headers (tabs) on the home page.

The home pages also showcase samples of the artist's work, using different layouts (grids of thumbnails, animations, vertical or horizontal slideshows/sliders). In two cases, the whole creation is displayed if one scrolls down.

The most typical structure of the websites included a menu, an "about" button, a "gallery" button, "contact & newsletter," cart, hyperlinks (as icons) to the artist's other web accounts/social media, or blog. In a few cases, at the bottom of the page, one could access the necessary legal buttons, as displayed by any corporate home page or e-commerce page, as well as some shopping tools ("Privacy Policy," "Delivery & Returns," "Terms & Conditions" + cart+ secure pay).

4.3. The microstructure. Content pages

One can access any constituent page by clicking on the respective button. The "About" button is meant to offer the visitors important information about the artist. Usually, this is provided by the typical résumé. This genre text includes details (the genre's moves) about education, professional experience(s) (e.g., internships, residencies, participation in creation camps, contests, festivals, conferences, etc.), list of exhibitions (chronologically arranged or otherwise— solo, group, at home or abroad), "press" (an exhaustive selection of texts/articles, interviews, videos hosted by art magazines and other media, most often with links, or providing additional proofs), awards (establishing the credentials and expertise of the respective artist), collections (presence of the works in private or institutional collections, also adding to the artist's credentials).

Sometimes, when pressing the "About" button, one can find a small or a more extended bio (a short or longer narrative text) and/or an artist statement (sometimes a recorded video). Less official than the résumé, they are meant to offer information about the artist while reducing social distance. In a few cases, both a résumé (even a downloadable C.V.) and a bio are provided (so that the necessary information finds its way to any recipient, private or institutional). In one case, each member of the artist group is introduced through an interview, and the visitor can access the necessary information by watching a short video of the respective interview. Another original way of providing information about the artist was, in one case, a FAQs section, where the artist imagined a set of questions a potential audience might ask and provided the necessary

answers. Under the same "About" button, one website displays, side by side with the bio and artist statement, several "kudos to the artist" from recent clients (e.g., "Your work is exquisite ... a mirror of you ... you're truly one of the most wonderful human beings ever to grace this planet", signed AMB, collector)

Together with the artist's visual identity, the information provided under this header, contained in different genre texts or video materials, is meant to shape a strong, solid artistic and professional identity, even to build a brand, which may influence potential customers.

Sometimes, the "press" information, the exhibition list, and even a list of clients may be accessed by clicking on separate links under the same "About" button if a complete résumé is not provided. There are a few cases (4) when the "About" button is replaced by "Info." Here visitors may get information about the services provided by the artist, the skills/expertise, location of the studio, and link to the shop/shops where they can purchase the works they like; in another 3 cases, one can get information about the artist through the dedicated "CV" or "Biography" buttons.

The most important page of the website is the one displaying the artist's works (under such headers as "Gallery," "Works," "Portfolio," and "Projects"). This page is also the richest in content. The works are showcased using different layouts: a grid of thumbnails, sliders (vertically or horizontally moving), thematically or chronologically grouped, or even displayed in a row, irrespective of any criteria. Most often, the visitor can click on an image and obtain a larger view of it and technical information (the technique, the dimensions). In some cases, an artist statement regarding the clicked work is provided, too, to facilitate a visitor's better understanding and appreciation of the piece. Suppose the art product was an installation, a fashion collection, or an on-place work (like a mural). In that case, photographs of the respective work or groups of works are provided and glichées[11] after the pieces may be offered for sale; sometimes, slideshows and recorded videos of the performance may be accessed. In one case, attached to the work's image is a short video in which the artist explains the creation process. If the work is for sale, commercial information is provided, an "add to cart"/"buy" option, or a link to the shop. One may even find this announcement: "All paintings on this page are for sale. See Prices page for details".

Although one might expect that such a "gallery" page is meant just to showcase an artist's creations, in practice, the displayed works (presented as images/photographs) are most often to sell, whether directly from the gallery or through a link to the shop. The art practice is not just about exhibiting works but also about selling them. One website even displays a badge for an "accredited business."

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[11] fine art digital prints made on inkjet printers

If the website does not include a shop and no other links to any exterior shops are provided (9 cases), the artist expects the possible clients to reach them via included contact tools. Sometimes this is stated in the contact form (suggesting direct sales, commissions, orders). There is a "shop" button (or link) in most cases. Visitors may access the works for sale via this button or directly from the gallery. When an image of the desired art object is clicked, one can get an enlarged version of it, details about the technique and the dimensions, and some options. One can opt between different sizes, techniques (e.g., painting or print), framings, and payment methods. Some other legal and commercial details may also be included: deliveries; refund policy; privacy policy; terms of service, similar to any online shop. There are three cases in which the artist sells the works through other specialized art-selling platforms (with links), and another two give links to the representing galleries.

When the artist also provides educational services (workshops of different types), these are not included under the "gallery" header but usually have a dedicated button where information about what is offered, schedules, and prices is provided, as well as testimonials and even some teaching materials. For other types of art services (e.g., post-production & Motion Design services), those interested need to contact the artist directly or click on a dedicated link.

Strengthening the relationship with the audience while building a loyal group of possible future customers is vital for any artist (similar to what a company might wish). The website may facilitate that relationship. One way to get in touch is the "Contact" button. Visitors will find an email address, sometimes a phone number, and even a physical address. They might be asked to fill out a contact form (for most of the researched websites), provide a name, and an email address, formulate a message and then send it. Another way is by a newsletter subscription form (or a mailing list), through which the artist's fans can keep updated about what is new and get new offers. Almost all the websites also provide other instruments: links to the artist's social media accounts (on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, or YouTube), some sharing tools, and even a "let's chat" box. Sometimes, a blog button is integrated with the header bar. Since blogs are supposed to be frequently updated and keep a more familiar tone, the fans can find out the "latest news" about the artist's practice[12].

4.4. Discourse features. A multimodal genre

The most relevant aspect of the artist's website is its multimodality. As expected, an artist's dominant mode of expression is visual. Therefore, that mode will dominate all the pages of the site. In one case, five images (selfies)

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[12] For an analysis of the artist's blog, also see Creţiu, 2013 a).

are placed under the "About" button, and no text is attached. Images may be still, or moving, arranged in different layouts; videos (even sets of videos) and podcasts are often integrated. Written texts (belonging to different genres) are also present (such as résumés, artist statements, bios, service descriptions, advertisements, etc.). Forms are part of the website, too, as are the different icons and links. Although the site builders somewhat prescribe the formats, there is a certain freedom to choose between layouts, colors, and fonts. An interesting observation about how creative artists can and should be when building their sites is made by the reviewer of the 42 websites:

> A good artist website should showcase your art. Think of how art galleries are designed— they are functional and austere with plenty of whitespace on walls. They do this to get out of the way and showcase the art. Remember, people didn't come to your website to look at an artistic looking website— they came to look at art: paintings, sculptures or photos. Don't make the mistake of trying to make the website its own piece of art— that rarely goes well. (Benjamins, 2022, accessed July 21)

So, apparently, no matter how much art is displayed on the artist's website, the website itself should keep "less artistic." All 42 websites seem to obey this guideline, although one cannot neglect the creativity the artists proved while playing with all the available tools. Another interesting feature of this type of website (probably a more recent one) is the commercial one. Artists learned and borrowed a lot from the CHP (corporate home page), the academic pages, and the online shop pages and adapted their discourse to serve their purposes.

One can notice a combination of formal and informal registers (even on the same website) in the written texts; this mixture reveals the preoccupation of the artist to look/sound professional (even "business-like") while also trying to bring the audience closer, by reducing social distance. In a few cases, the degree of familiarity of the texts is a bit unnatural for this genre (probably due to confusion between genres or a wrong understanding of appropriate standards). However, most artists balanced a formal register with a less formal one. The formal register is standard for the résumé genre; the biographical texts and artist statements tend to be more familiar. The register also depends on the type of information the artist needs to share, whether personal, professional, or commercial.

While résumés are formatted as lists with several headings, narratives are to be found in biographies (some trying to sound "poetic") and descriptions (narrative descriptions), in artist's statements, in process descriptions, in gallery labels. There are even some advertorial-type small texts and sales pitches when the artist wants to convince the possible buyers about the "good deal" they are offering when selling an artwork (even announcing 30% sales and offering

coupons). Imperatives like "don't miss this opportunity" combine with such qualitative descriptors like "this awesome painting" to influence and prompt an expected action from the visitors (to buy the work).

Another interesting combination of discourse features refers to a mixture of 1st and 3rd person pronouns on the same website, in direct relationship with the degree of formality the artist tries to imply. Some biographies are written in the 3rd person, which indicates some objectivity (even if it is the same person speaking about themself (!), see e.g.s. 1, 2, and 3 below); others use the 1st person to sound more natural and seem more honest as well as to reduce social distance and bring visitors closer (e.g.s. 4, 5 and 7 below). The latter rhetorical device is sometimes sprinkled with some interjections ("yey!"), some adverbs ("awesome!"," cool!"), even one or two "smiley faces"; the use of the 2nd person (see e.g.s. 6 and 7 below) suggests more of a conversation-type of discourse.

> e.g., 1 On the side of his Arctic endeavor, Benjamin has worked for over five years for the Icelandic outdoor clothing brand [...] (https://benjaminhardman.com/about, accessed July 27, 2022)

> e.g., 2. Mel Volkman is a fine artist based on the rustic coast of Maine. She is most known for her atmospheric perspective and nuanced approach to seemingly insignificant moments. Her work communicates depth and meaning beyond evident visuals. (https://melvolkman.com/pages/about, accessed July 27, 2022)

> e.g., 3. In her current body of work of process-based hanging sculpture and installations, Andrea plays with color, paint, paper, plastics, and fiber to explore the ways we construct identity. Andrea is dedicated to building communities [...] (http://www.andreamanningart.com/bio, accessed July 27, 2022)

> e.g., 4. Hello, Philippa Rice here. I'm an artist, cartoonist, author, animator, craft-maker??? I like making things! (http://philippajrice.com/about, accessed July 27, 2022)

> e.g., 5. Hey there! My name is Alex Tran and I'm a Montreal based commercial and editorial photographer specializing in portraits and headshots. (https://alextranphotography.com/info/, accessed July 27, 2022)

> e.g., 6. If you want to see the finished picture, it's here http://www.flickr.com/[...] (http://philippajrice.com/about, accessed July 27, 2022)

> e.g., 7. You're currently on my commercial website. I also have a second website for my personal photography projects if you're interested in checking it out. (https://alextranphotography.com/info/, accessed July 27, 2022)

For artist's statements, the use of the 1st person is standard ("I am in love with paint as a substance, in its viscous, muddy form and its dry, flexible skin. I build with paint and with color…") (http://www.andreamanningart.com/bio, accessed July 27, 2022)

Another discourse feature of the artist's website (although less present than in other genres of art criticism and theory) is the *Artspeak[13]* . It includes specialized vocabulary and typical rhetoric: "Sophie Kahn's work investigates the complexity, and the poetics, of capturing the female-identified body in the digital age" (https://www.sophiekahn.net/bio, accessed July 27, 2022).

Three websites also offer partial bilingual texts (English and French) since the artists are Canadian, Belgian, or French.

5. Conclusions

The present research concludes that the artist's website is a complex, hybrid cyber genre.

The CHPs (Corporate Home Pages) have been considered to manifest what Fairclough refers to (in the context of intertextuality) as "hybrid information-and-publicity discourse (or telling and selling discourse)" (1992, 116), a new discourse type constituted through a mixture of existing types. In that case, we may also look at the artist's website as a manifestation of a hybrid discourse, especially considering its multimodal appearance. The artist's website displays features belonging to CHP as well as a portfolio type of website. On the one hand, the artists provide their "information"; they showcase their works (the "showing" part) while, on the other, also trying to sell their artistic production (a sort of "showing and selling"). Any successful CHP provides potential clients a list of previous (satisfied) other clients (sometimes as testimonials). The artist's website adds a list of exhibitions, a list of collectors (private and public), some relevant professional experiences, and prizes to increase the artist's credentials and their art business (but not dissimilar to academic home pages). The artist's website is, to a large extent, part of an art business these days, rather than just simply showcasing the artistic creation (portfolio), so some newer features of the online shop proved very helpful in this respect

Multimodality is adamant for this type of website with a stress on the visual mode. Both images (of different styles and arranged in various layouts) and texts, skilfully combined, are meant to build the story of the SELF, the artist's self, to proclaim their identity as a person, but most importantly, as a creator.

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[13] For more information about the *Artspeak*, also see Crețiu, 2013, b

When business features are brought in, all these elements contribute to constructing an artist's brand. If a suggestive logo represents a company's visual identity, an artist's visual identity is extremely vast: their whole portfolio. The website provides an online identity that integrates that portfolio within the genre frame. The artist's website, though, goes beyond a portfolio-type of a website because the purposes for which it is created reach beyond the simple showcasing of the works, testing the realm of e-commerce. This may undoubtedly be considered proof of the artists' adaptation to the new digital era and economic conditions.

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UNDERGRADUATE SELF-STUDY:
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF IMAGESETS ON STUDENT BLOGS

Ethna Dempsey LAY[1]

ABSTRACT. *Undergraduate Self-study: Discourse Analysis of Imagesets on Student Blogs*. Student writers' relationship to the screen is initially grounded in their writing experiences in social media, but they come to view their course blog as a connecting space between themselves and their readership, a space which becomes one on which they self-destruct and reconstruct their identity as they learn to write (Serfaty 2004). By asking students to post a digital image of themselves, Ethna Lay initiates an important dataset, one which suggests a great deal about their relationship to writing. Through these images, students construct their independent writerly identities and simultaneously express membership in the class as a discrete discourse community. Students work collaboratively on a discourse analysis of the imageset, categorizing the class's images as data about its relationship to writing. These imagesets are an opportunity for student writers to stage themselves; they perform how they would like to be seen (or not seen). This performing of the self is at once a private act as well as a communal and public activity (Tifentale and Manovich 2015; Rettberg 2005). The screen then has a dual nature, functioning as either a veil or mirror for student writers (Serfaty 2004). Students classify the imagesets into categories or types, which are fairly consistent across classes. Oftentimes students acknowledge the class had become its own discourse community, its deixis enabled by blogging together and by investigating their blogs, and decide that this result is only possible given the nature of the blog. The students become participant-observers in this respect, and the end result is an auto-ethnography of the pictured self in a social and academic setting.

Keywords: *blogging, discourse community, images, self-study, writerly self*

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REZUMAT. *Studenții și auto-cunoașterea: O analiză discursivă asupra seturilor de imagini din cuprinsul blogurilor studențești*. Relația studenților-scriitori începe cu experiențele lor auctoriale pe rețelele de socializare, ca mai apoi să descopere în blog (ca sarcină de curs) spațiul în care se produce conexiunea dintre ei și cititori, precum și dezasamblarea și reconstruirea identității proprii atunci când învață să scrie texte (Serfaty 2004). Trasându-le sarcina de a posta imagini cu ei înșiși, autoarea inițiază crearea unui set important de informații în virtutea faptului că acesta sugerează multe despre relația studenților cu scrisul. Prin aceste imagini studentul își reconstruiește identitatea de scriitor autonom, care își exprimă, totodată, și calitatea de membru al clasei, aceasta din urmă constituind o comunitate discursivă distinctă. Studenții realizează colaborativ o analiză discursivă asupra setului de imagini, cu imaginile clasei catalogate ca informații despre relația lor cu scrisul. Aceste seturi de imagini le oferă studenților-scriitori oportunitatea de a se pune în scenă; ei se prezintă în rolul în care își doresc a fi văzuți sau dimpotrivă. Acest joc de sine este, simultan, un act privat și o activitate comună publică (Tifentale and Manovich 2015; Rettburg 2005). Ecranul, prin urmare, capătă o natură duală, el funcționând fie ca un văl, fie ca o oglindă pentru studentul-scriitor (Serfaty 2004). Seturile de imagini sunt clasificate drept categorii sau tipuri, care se regăsesc cu relativă constanță în toate cursurile parcurse de studenți. Adesea studenții observă clasa transformându-se ea însăși într-o comunitate discursivă, deictica fiind facilitată de activitatea de *blogging* colaborativ și de studierea blogurilor colegilor. În final, aceștia ajung la concluzia că rezultatul se datorează tocmai naturii acestui tip de blog. Astfel, studenții devin observatori-participanți iar rezultatul final - o auto-etnografie în imagini în cadrul mediului social și academic.

Cuvinte-cheie: blogging; comunitate discursivă; imagini; auto-cunoaștere; sinele auctorial

Student writers' relationship to the screen is initially grounded in their writing experiences in social media, but they come to view their course blog as a connecting space between themselves and their readership, a space which ceases to be a phatic social arena, becoming one on which they self-destruct and reconstruct their identity as they learn to write (Serfaty 2004). By asking students to post a digital image of themselves representing their writerly selves, I initiate an important dataset, which suggests a great deal about their relationship to writing. Through images, students construct their independent writerly identities and simultaneously express membership in the class, which becomes a discrete discourse community. Using this data (images and reflections about their significance), students work collaboratively on a discourse analysis

of the imageset, categorizing the images as data about the class's relationship to writing. These images are an opportunity for student writers to stage themselves; they perform how they would like to be seen (or not seen). This performing of the self is at once a private act as well as a communal and public activity (Tifentale and Manovich 2015; Rettberg 2005). The screen then has a dual nature, functioning as either a veil or mirror for student writers (Serfaty 2004). The veil is a kind of dubious protection that may reveal as much as it conceals; the mirror is a kind of disingenuous reflection that may distort as much as it reflects.

Using their own imagesets as data, students create a user-generated categorization of image types, classifying them into categories, which appear to be consistent across classes and years. Some classes reject the veil-mirror binary, concluding that writing on blogs – and in fact all writing – is an act of exhibitionism. Others acknowledge that the class becomes its own discourse community, its deixis enabled by blogging together and by investigating their blogs, and decide that this result is only possible given the nature of the blog (Yancey 2005; Brooke 2005; Krause 2006). Through this self-study, student writers recognize and reflect on their relationship to writing, a necessary step in learning to write.

Students write, portray, and imagine themselves into a variety of multimodal spaces, and, for this study, I will focus on their presentation of themselves in image. Initially, I found students made peculiar choices in the images of themselves that they chose in order to represent their writing self. They are caught between two modes of making – word and image – one for their own social purposes, one for school. Their signals are crossed, making for their selection of odd images which do not effectively represent their relationship to writing. This discrepancy stems from the dual nature of the screen, which enables all sorts of controversial and peculiar discourses, in text and image, on the Internet. This can be related to Viviane Serfaty's findings in her study of American bloggers and diary writers, and traces this discrepancy to the paradoxical screen environment:

> The screen seemingly offers a protection against the gaze of others, enabling each diary writer to disclose intimate thoughts and deeds, thus attempting to achieve transparency and breaking the taboo of opacity regulating social relationships. The screen, which mediates Internet access, thus establishes a dialectical relationship between disclosure and secrecy, between transparency and opacity (2004, 223).

This notion is useful here in a study of student bloggers, who frequently admit they simultaneously want and do not want attention for their postings. There is a strange desire to be heard and not heard, to be seen and not seen. Writing

online for an academic setting reinforces the lesson that writing is not an isolated, solitary endeavor but instead a social negotiation. This notion is relevant to this study in that students are constructing what they know based on their own experiences in social media and adapted for a class setting. In other words, writers think they own their writing, when in fact they are participating in a dialectal process that they create. John Gallagher in *Update Culture*, writing about the influence of commentary on online posters, reinforces this importance of participatory culture (2020, 9). By introducing problem-solving, collaborative activities into a curriculum, I propose that students can collaboratively develop arguments of negotiation, persuasion and inquiry. This can be problematic "as much of the work of the writing classroom depends upon a certain amount of social cohesion" (Brooke 2005, http://cconlinejournal.org/brooke/brooke.htm), which is likely absent, or at best, hard-won in the first-year classroom. Blogs become small-world networks for the students as they read and write to each other. The blogging experience, both text and images, fosters a community of writers who feel capable to practice communication in new ways. It is incumbent upon instructors to allow students space and media to teach us how these ways function for them rhetorically.

First-year writing students have limited experience with the networks of disciplinary knowledge and limited understanding of writing practices. Additionally, their perspective of first-year writing is skewed by whether or not they self-identify as writers. Most often, students regard first-year writing class as a series of obligatory chores, a series of experiences that do not at first glance seem relevant to the real work of their prospective majors. As a result, the teaching of writing involves "subject[ing] our students to a certain, necessary degree of standardization -- shared texts, assignments, activities, evaluation criteria, ... the ethos of centralization and expertise underwrites this [learning] space" (Brooke 2005, 11). The professional at the center puts novice writers at a distinct disadvantage, making student writers feel at times fraudulent or unqualified to contribute, and at times belated, left out of the process of making and knowing. It is a weird climate for learning – in part David Bartholomae's idea of "inventing the university" (2005), part Harold Bloom's "anxiety of influence" (1973/1997).

In the awkward social space of the first-year writing classroom, students respond to these notions of invention or anxiety with respect to writing in their writing. In the writing classroom, student blogs are an efficient means for cultivating the dynamic agency supporting what Collin Gifford Brooke claims constitutes a necessarily deictic system – deictic in the sense that the collective knowing of the class as expressed in language is dependent on its context (2005). The collection of student blogs on the blogroll "provide a relatively

stable space for variation, a deictic system for writing, that only partly overlaps with the expectations typically found in the writing classroom. Blogs allow for a proliferation of discursive gestures, both inward and outward ...” (Brooke 2005, 14).

In this research study, students prepare the work – the writing on their blogs – that becomes the object or problem of study. I have taken the “Writing About Writing” charge very literally, for students glean primary research from the writing of their peers (Downs and Wardle 2007). The kinds of primary research students can accomplish in a semester are limited. Because the proposed research was not outside of the room but rather in it, students can conduct research on their own writing and that writing is readily accessible to them on their blogs. In the blogosphere - the interstitial space between the screen and the minds of students - students re-identify themselves as writers and learners. On their blogs, they are authorized to respond and question the class discussion, to respond and question other students' writing in productive ways, and, most importantly, for this discussion, to respond and question each other’s images of writerly self. When instructors ask students to interpret the collective blogwork of a course, they are enlisting students as participant-observers. When students revisit what they have made and what their peers have made from a distance, they learn even more. The content of student invention blogs is often uneven, given its nature as a place to invent and to generate meaning. Student blogs often exhibit an overwhelming amount of developmental, unrevised writing. Certainly, when students turn to evaluate each other’s work, they are understandably unsure how to proceed. Having students include images of writerly self changes their relationship to writing dramatically. These images lead students to textuality when they explain them independently and collaboratively. In this way, the textual explication remediates the imagesets. The text lends credibility to their images, giving voice to their rhetorical choices. This is a productive remediation and not merely an annotation of the image but instead another representation (or re-presentation) of the student writer’s self.

The prompt is an invitation to claim the blog’s space by posting an image representing themselves as writers. Its intention is to give student writers another medium to communicate, another way to write themselves in. But these students are the children of social media, and they already have attached certain ideas about how to perform in an online space. This particular assignment is both familiar and novel, familiar as their Instagram accounts and novel in its academic setting or situation. This is why these images are true *essais* into an often-failed identity performance, one often communicating a partial identity, the wrong message, or a dishonest one. This exploration attempts to unpack what these student writers intended to convey by their selections. Traditional portraits and

self-portraits are coded messages, situating the subject in a particular manner that will achieve the renderer's goal. Most often, portraits invite the favorable opinion of the viewer, showcasing the subject as desirable, either in appearance or social status. Portraits are imbued with clues that project attributes for the viewer's consideration. In the case of the images shared on student blogs, it may be argued that the production of or selection of digital images is not as thoughtful nor time consuming as a commissioned portrait, so these comparisons have no parity. However, students' experiences with social media – as both consumers and producers – have prepared them or predisposed them to make rhetorical choices that resonate and are effectively meaningful and consistent with their purposes as makers. I argue that, by their first year of college, they likely have more experience in the *produsage* of images than with writing. They inscribe the world via imaging well before they write long-form texts. I would also argue that contemporary students create, curate, and post so consistently that they are absolutely mindful of their sharing's impact and are their own brand managers. Given their expertise as image-makers, students are equally expert image assessors.

The first part of my argument then is that students are better prepared to compose (or at least more experienced) in images and self-portraits than they are to write. Whether or not they select an image that appropriately responds to the prompt's invitation is the next consideration. My students make a blog with an [About] page hosting a digital image that suggests something of the student writer's relationship to writing. The assignment prompt follows:

> Your first assignment is to set up your own blog dedicated to the work of this course. Use wordpress.com and choose a title for your blog that suggests something about the blog's purpose as a space to generate, develop, and present ideas and arguments. Next, you should draft a short [About] page that indicates something about your writerly self. You may also wish to include a digital image of yourself, especially one that suggests something about the way you feel about writing.

Having blogged with students since 2009, I have a great deal of data that shows how student writers benefit and grow from the variety of opportunities to compose in a social platform. However, I focus this investigation on the images students use to represent themselves as writers, and, when available, I pair them with their written explanations and their peer collaborative analyses of those images. For this study, I share data from three time periods: (i) group who can opt to post a non-required image representing their writerly self (2009 – 2011); (ii) group who posts a required image representing their writerly self with accompanying explanation (2015); and (iii) group who posts a required

image representing their writerly self with accompanying explanation and with the added collaborative self-study of the class imageset (2016). The students of the latter groups, 2015 and 2016, become participant-observers in this respect, drawing keen distinctions realized between the student writers who post singly and those who self-study. The end result is an auto-ethnography of the pictured self in a dual setting, equally social and academic.

Beginnings 2009 – 2011

Before the assignment to post an image of writerly self was mandated, less than half the students elected to share one. Using a sample of 165 student blogs over four semesters (Fall 2009, Spring 2010, Spring 2011, and Fall 2011), only 43% of students posted an image (see Figure 1). Willingness to post an image representing one's writerly self divided sharply along gender lines, with women twice as likely to share an image than men. This ratio is consistent with gendered social media practices of the time, with women more readily sharing their digital portraits than men (Subrahmanyam and Smahel 2011).

Number of total blogs	165
Number of blogs with images	71
Number of blogs without images	94
Percentage of blogs with images	43%
Number of blogs by women	102
Number of blogs by women with images	54
Percentage of blogs by women with images	52.9%
Number of blogs by men	63
Number of blogs by men with images	16
Percentage of blogs by men with images	25%

Figure 1. Data from four semesters: 2009 - 2011

During this period, students treated their images like other social media photos, glamorized shots which presented them as attractive but not actually representing their relationship to writing. Female-identifying students favored direct poses. When male-identifying students shared images, they were often obscured, picturing themselves in costume, in groups or substituting their selves with inanimate objects. Moreover, what students were representing via their selected images was often undecipherable and unresponsive to the assignment prompt. In the first years of blogging (2009 – 2011) with students,

many used attractive representations of self that were optimized for some other purpose but did not effectively fulfill the assignment's prompt. Students anticipated how they would have liked to be perceived, and they presented or staged themselves for a variety of readers. But who did they think they were writing to? They sidestepped the academic situation. Curious about their intentions, I introduced an assignment asking them to reflect on the images. By asking students to explain their own image, I would learn a great deal about the correlation of image to the student writer's identity. In their reflections, students would similarly learn a great deal about their writing practices as well.

2015

The next stage of this investigation began in spring 2015. Forty students in two sections of the second course of the first-year writing sequence participated. As part of their blog project, students were asked to include an image of their writerly self with accompanying explanatory text. It should be noted that 7/40 (or 17.5%) students did not complete this assignment, which is a sizable non-compliance rate. For these non-participating students, there may still have been residual hesitation about how social media is used in a classroom environment. Note, however, that while all the students blogged publicly, 17.5% of students chose not to post images representing their writerly selves. A review of these posts, including images of writerly self from that semester, shows certain types of images that emerged, which were consistent with earlier years. In my estimation, students staged themselves in the following categories: (i) idealized, (ii) awkward/not idealized, (iii) in costume, (iv) in a group, and (v) via substitution. This assessment seemed to ask certain research questions, including: Why are their images of the same types? Are they derivative? Or, are they representative of a larger cultural influence of the images they post in social media elsewhere? These, however, are my observations and my questions, and not the ones that my future students would ask. I will return to this in my discussion relevant to 2016. My investigation reconsidered my assessment of the student writer's intentions. By asking students to reflect on their images, I might learn how these photos are legitimate commentaries on their relationship to writing. I would learn to think differently about their images. Maybe these images are not commentaries, but instead, serve as writing itself and appropriately represent their relationship to writing and the way these students inscribe the world. In 2015, I decided to make the assignment required. In this section, I will share a descriptive sample of the images students chose in order to represent themselves as writers.

What I observed is that students opted to share idealized and perfected images of themselves to claim the blog's space as a way to socialize. Their over-determined images of writerly self ultimately do not share something of themselves as writers. Instead, this rhetorical move gestures toward another understanding of *blogwork* that is related to the presentation of the self on other social media platforms. Other students crafted more responsive images to represent their writerly selves, including substituting images of themselves enacting other creative activities such as playing the violin or using a camera. They seemed to be suggesting that they were not writers, but that they inscribed the world using other apparatus and with other modes of inscription. These, too, were idealized, offering a comparable substitution for the assignment.

Students also use images with awkward compositions, acknowledging the limits of their choice in their written reflections about them. Awkward compositions mimic or correlate with the social media practices of users on sites like Finsta (aka fake Instagram) or B-Roll; both social media sites add another layer, a produced reality that purports to be more authentically representative of the real. These sites are limited to discrete communities of followers or insiders.

Students who post deliberately awkward images of self are not ostensibly addressing their inner circle of friends but rather a new community, located in the classroom and occupied by peers, as well as by the instructor. Such postings might also correlate with their feelings of writing apprehension in that such a not-idealized image parallels their awkward status as a developing writer, signaling an acceptance of the constraints – whether skill or time – that limit their ability to write. One particularly awkward composition has the student writer, Steph T, presented while hugging another person whose face is not visible. The two are wrapped in a plush, blue blanket. The image does not reveal much of the student's body, but her face in profile is clearly smiling. The composition of the photo seems incidental, with the student's head centered in the layout. At first glance, the photo is not memorable, but her writing enlarges its import. She notes:

> The image of my writerly self isn't anything special. The blanket I cover
> myself in is meant to hide myself because I don't identity myself as a
> writer, but at the same time you can clearly see me smiling. I guess the
> best way to explain how I feel about writing, and how it relates to this
> image in general is that even though I don't identify myself as a writer,
> I still secretly enjoy writing. I know that sounds a little complicated, but
> I guess I've just never thought my writing was any good, and I think that
> being a writer means something a little more professional than writing
> essays for class. Writing in the traditional sense isn't something

> I particularly enjoy, I don't know anyone who looks forward to writing an essay for a class, but I enjoy expressing thoughts through unconventional forms of writing. In relation to the image the blanket hides how I feel about writing outwardly, but the facial expression and clear view of my countenance expresses my feelings for other types of writing through images and movies.
>
> EXPLAINING MY WRITERLY SELF, April 24, 2015. Retrieved June 14, 2022 https://anotherwaywithwords.wordpress.com/2015/04/24/explaining-my-writerly-self/

The student discloses that while she does not identify as a writer, she "still secretly enjoy[s] writing." Her relationship to writing is contradictory, or, as she explains, "complicated." Perhaps she co-opts the metaphor of the blanket to cover and conceal in the same way that Jill Walker Rettberg adopts the metaphor of the veil (*Blogging* 2014). But the concealment is disingenuous, for this student writer secretly enjoys writing. How can both be true? Is this an invitation for the reader to find the writer and give her back to herself? Can her revelation that she is a writer in other media – in images and film – be key to making sense of her presentation? What is fascinating about this set of students in 2015 is that they are coy about writing. And yet, they are performing their various selves unabashedly, on their own terms, even though the assignment is required. At this time, these are low-stakes assignments. No one is required to post them, but most students do. This participation suggests that the interface matters, as does the time. Because students have become more accustomed to working in social media in the context of the academy, they accept the assignment more readily.

They also adopt the practices familiar in social media, like selfies, for academic purposes. Not all images recorded are selfies, but the majority are. In recent years of blogging with my students, there has been a movement away from idealized images of self towards a progressive use of selfies. Those pictures never actually nor accurately represented how the student writer felt about writing or about their writing self, but that identity can be secured by reading their reflective posts in combination with viewing their images. But the selfie occupies another space in that it permits the student writer or maker some autonomy in its making. And this making of the self-portrait reveals an important stage for the student writer. Selfies return agency to the student writer in that they manage their self-representation. Rettberg (*Seeing Ourselves Through Technology* 2014) discusses the changing nature of self-representation with digital technologies, especially as it relates to the idea of self-documentation. She shares that selfies, as self-portraits, employ a device that can "simultaneously

see our reflection and record it" (11). This is an important distinction, as selfies permit the maker some control in the image-making. Rettberg contends: "A selfie also exists in a social context, once shared. But just as importantly, creating and sharing a selfie is a form of self-reflection and self-creation" (12). The images of writerly self that students post are akin to the profile photos posted on various social media platforms (e.g. Facebook), except that student bloggers usually post their image only once and not serially. Rettberg explains the role of profile photos as visual identity this way: "We often use photographs taken by other people for our profile pictures, so they are not always selfies, but a profile picture is a visual expression of our identity, and our choice of profile photos is clearly a form of visual self-representation" (*Seeing Ourselves Through Technology* 2014, 40). The serial nature of these images is a reflection of change, that an individual is growing. In a course setting, a fourteen-week period, it is less likely that a student will feel compelled to offer multiple profile pictures. Serial profile pictures suggest an evolution in identity, one that student writers do not readily present in academic settings, but the single image is reflection enough for the purposes of this study. The images put forward are curated, with exigences that do not always correlate with writing. What they always do offer is a kind of wishful thinking, a wistfulness perhaps, a wish-fulfillment strategy whose purpose is clear: "I want to be seen this way." More than this, they seem to present the idea that their reasons do not need to be explicit, or "My reasons are clear to me, even if they do not seem related to the prompt." While students are not necessarily responding to the assignment prompt from the instructor's perspective, they believe their response is appropriate, reasoning perhaps that their image of writerly self indeed embodies their identity for this context.

On occasion, the images represent and perhaps even reject text by embracing some other way to inscribe the world, some other sequel to literacy. For instance, Dylan L, a non-native English speaker, reveals himself as an expert photographer on his blog, communicating effectively across language and culture through his camera's lens. For his image of writerly self, Dylan poses against a large wall, brightly covered in graffiti. His slim form seems a kind of dark exclamation point across a wall of text which is equally word and image, hybrid writing that is unconventional and stylized. What this photo's composition suggests to me is the swelling of language into enlarged, bright, colorful shapes. In short, text becomes image. Moreover, the posture of the student against the wall declares – or rather dares – the viewer-reader to contradict the power of the image. Indeed, in this instance, writing yields.

Similarly, Alessandro I, another non-native English speaker, presents himself as a young child, posing as if lifting a large boulder, to depict his writerly self. The student's agency in this image is more powerful than at first glance.

The child is just tall enough for his fingertips to brush the lintel's overhang. There is pride, true sweetness, in the child's expression, some coyness that suggests he is well pleased. Indeed, this student writer is delighted with himself. Alessandro's blog title, "Write or be written," evinces this determination as well. This signals determination to get the job – this first-year writing class – done. He has committed to doing the work at hand, but he also flirts with his readers via the posted image. Posing as a small child with lofty ambitions, the student offsets his bravado, counterbalancing it with cuteness.

There are students in this cohort who elect not to include images, and they suggest reasons for their non-compliance. Brenden M declares: "I really don't have a writerly self. It is more like some random dude who shows up sometimes and does writing assignments when he needs to and spaces out in other classes to write dumb stories…" He presents himself as "some random dude," an intellectual vagrant who "shows up sometimes" and performs itinerant labor on demand. This character, who "does writing assignments," seems a lackluster, uncommitted player. He makes an interesting declaration, using the modal "do" to contrast "I do writing assignments." with the declarative "I write." or perhaps with "I am a writer." There is little agency in Brenden's [About] page and, of course, no image of writerly self shared. While Brenden does confess to enjoyment in writing, especially with respect to sharing the many "dumb ideas that float around in my head," he puts himself forward as a writer and then hastily retreats. He is at once engaged and not engaged. He is performing both roles. His [About] page concludes poignantly: "… but I am kind of a weaker writer so the writings don't contain all I want to share." This moment, when he declares his writing apprehension, is worth waiting for.

Another student, Brianna O, is clearly overthinking her presentation of writerly self. In her [About] page, 21 out of 144 of the words she employs are personal pronouns. The preponderance of pronouns suggests the writer's desire to denote perspective and point of view for her readers. She is tentative about what her blog will and will not do. She is effectively illogical, employing circular reasoning: "I've never blogged before but writing is a way to express yourself and your ideas about the world, so I guess this is what my blog will do." Her blog will **do**, not her. The blog has agency. No writer here, just the medium, and the writer is invisible or rather a non-entity. Brianna O acknowledges the disconnect between herself and her writing. She is pictured in her image of writerly self, but she is quite reduced and practically indiscernible. She does not distinguish herself in the outdoor café setting, admitting instead how she prefers to remain unobtrusive: "In my image of writerly self, my face is hidden, facing away from the camera. I am far from the camera and seem fairly small in comparison to the surroundings."

She is indeed camouflaged, but she is direct in her writing about her concealment. Her writerly self is not for viewing, but her text is.

The texts of student blogs afford the possibility of an authentic audience. In online spaces, students initially perform some other version of self, something close to what they have already constructed as their online persona or presentation of self. They reveal this relationship to the screen in image and in text. For instance, Dylan's [About] page does not express his relationship to writing at all. Instead, it is a clever play on a personal ad: "Made in China… ." But paired with his image – one dominated by street art – his message is clear: I have no textual identity to share at this time. He reinforces this in his short second paragraph, which is wrought with generalities and is noncommittal. While his text lacks fluency, his text in concert with his image evinces clarity.

What are these students professing about their views of themselves as writers? Are they responding to some activity that I did not fully understand and thus could not interpret? What am I (and other readers) to make of such presentations? It seems that the ways student writers see themselves respond to a cultural moment. Alise Tifentale and Lev Manovich's *Selfiecity* (2015) demonstrates the way selfies conform in international macro-settings, and this data helps me understand what happens in my classroom micro-setting. The creative mind evaluates the opportunity to present and puts forward what it thinks best fits. But what is fitting is up for interpretation. Note that fit-ness or suitability of an image is variable. These images are not always responsive to the prompt which asks students to visualize themselves in relation to writing. Student writers in 2009-2011 responded in a particular way, distinct from student writers in 2015 and 2016. (Post-COVID, student writers in 2021 are different again, but that is a subject for another study.) Student writers are perpetually in new territory when writing in social media for the university, regardless of the year. Students' control of their self-presentation suggests an important departure from their former ideas of school and assignments. Because students compose in this non-academic and radically un-school space, they abandon whatever prior knowledge they have about school genres and present something simultaneously more honest and more deceptive. Their response to the prompt "who am I when I write online?" seems to be "I am who I want to be." They inhabit a new literacy moment, informed by their frequent, ludic experiences in social media. Nonetheless, this presentation of self is somehow bounded, some hybrid self. Two selves meet and generate a curious misfit, and I can see what fitting images they have crafted after all.

For their last assignment, I asked them to collaborate in small groups to share what they observed about the imagesets students posted. They made some stunning observations. For instance, in the case of Alessandro I's image of

writerly self as a child pretending to lift a boulder, one group responded that he looks strong. They did not remark on the facetious pretense of the child lifting the stone but instead noted the young boy's alleged presentation of strength. This observation strikes me as generous but also important. This student writer adopted a picture that, on the one hand, claimed that he is young and inexperienced, but on the other hand, portrayed him as strong. In other words, his image of writerly self announces that he may be a young writer, but he imagines himself a capable one.

Another group was surprised that family was not represented more frequently in the images. The group argued that family should have been pictured more frequently, given the origins of literacy. This absence, the group decided, was a glaring omission. They questioned why student writers – themselves included – failed to recognize and thus represent their family members as literacy partners in the images of writerly self. This was another odd moment for me. They were applying new values and a new awareness of literacy to what could be presented in the images and potentially based on what they had reviewed in the class.

A third group categorized the images by creating a description for each. Afterwards, the group sorted and generalized the images into five representative categories, although their categories often overlapped and intersected in interesting ways. Their categories (i. personal, self-reflection; ii. calming, good vibes; iii. emotion; iv. chaos within perfection; and v. determined, showing within) were not systematically coded, making for slippage among the types. I was going to have to work with future students on the formation of more meaningful categories. However, I did not want to be overly prescriptive in doing so; I wanted to learn what only they could teach.

2016

In spring 2016, I adopted a new approach. During a class meeting in late April, far enough into the semester that there was an established sense of community among class members, each student revised her [About] page to include an image of her writerly self and added language in her [About] page articulating the meaning of the image. Small groups peer reviewed each other's [About] pages. Students sorted the images of writerly self into two categories, namely "mirror" (as a reflection of actual, physical self) or "veil" (as a replication or re-appropriation of a concealed, disguised self). The class considered whether or not these visual arguments were rhetorically consistent. In other words, the class discussed whether or not these two distinctions necessarily or consistently documented a positive or pejorative view of one's relationship to writing. In other words, if a student writer shared an image of writerly self categorized as

a mirror, did they necessarily signal or correlate to a positive relationship to writing? This discussion was fruitful on many levels, most especially in how effectively students discussed the ways the images both reveal and conceal. In the next meeting, the class complicated its understanding of these images as mirrors or veils through reading two brief excerpts from Serfaty's *The Mirror and the Veil: An Overview of American Online Diaries and Blogs* (2004). After discussing the excerpts, the groups separated the images into new categories and re-sorted the images into their own, newly prescribed categories.

Kathryn's Group	Tia's Group	Emma's Group	Anthony's Group	Shelly's Group
self	artsy	natural self	with nature	physical self - mirror
nature	thought provoking	hidden self	with technology	nature - veil
inanimate objects	writerly	interest	with personal information/ hobbies/interests	technology - veil
abstract(ion)	transparent	concept	with blog title	interest - mirror

Figure 2. Group Categories of Imagesets (2016)

Serfaty expresses the difference between the veiled and mirrored aspects of computer and digital presentation, rightly calling this mirror-veil binary "the paradoxical twofold metaphor" (13). Indeed, by asking students to post images of their writerly selves, I have crossed wires. Students readily assessed this interference, with Kathryn's group noting: "A computer is a veil because nobody can actually see the person who posts something online. Users know that the writer is there, but they will never see them in person." In this way, my request to stage themselves online is transgressive. Students re-sorted categories along the mirror-veil rubric, which they initially splintered into many categories, just as their 2015 predecessors had done. Ultimately, they settled on the categories for the imagesets in Figure 2. Kathryn D's group denied the overt veil distinction, favoring instead a four-part categorization that essentially only reveals: self, nature, inanimate objects, and abstract[ion]. Kathryn D's group concluded that the symbolism of many of the images is a substitution for and not a cover for writerly identity, stating that: "On a symbolic level, the screen veils an author's face yet offers a blank slate where fantasies and dreams can be projected and come to life." While this group's last three categories might be deemed veil-like, Kathryn D's group did not interpret them this way. The group declared that, by the end of the semester, they could read each other's signs and interpret the objects pictured as stand-ins for one's writerly self (e.g. a basketball equals Erin T; a book, Emma S).

Tia D's group also crafted four categories for the same imageset, which at first glance appear wildly different. Tia D's group assessment initially seemed much less sophisticated, given that they did not set down nor define parameters for their categories. For instance, it is difficult to know what characteristics distinguish images coded as *artsy* from *thought provoking*. However, their explanation when they defined the categories revealed some meaningful synchronicity between the two groups. The group explained: "We first got the idea of creating a 'transparent' category from excerpt A (Serfaty) where the author creates a spectrum from opaqueness to transparency." The group co-opted the term transparent to mean that the images revealed the self (or natural self), concluding: "Through these images we are reflecting our hopes and dreams, thoughts, and hobbies. Similar to how we recreated our textual essays in Prezi, our [About] images allow us to recreate our pages visually." This group understood the image as a remediation of their text. Moreover, the students' interpretation was derived in part from what they had learned about each other during the semester. Most of their knowing, I would argue, was based in reading each other's blogs. This deixis helps us to understand the developing student writer. Here-and-now becomes a worthwhile object of self-study for a class, its relativity a valued asset. Oftentimes, we understand knowing as the accumulation of things discovered. What happens in this context, when knowing is relational, is that students can represent their particular vision and understanding of the deictic moment of a singular semester and contribute to some larger knowing. Both of the two groups presented, Kathryn D and Tia D, reframed Serfaty's paradigm into a more nuanced classification for their particular class. They supported their claims by working with the imagesets, as discrete images and as a group, in combination with the student writer's companion written reflections.

Conclusion

Students' rhetorical moves in presenting their imaged selves – how they stage themselves - are fairly consistent over time. Their images propose ostensibly what they believe is a favorable portrait, but what does this portrait favor? Caught between their online social identity and an academic exigence, students play it safe for the most part. Their images can be sorted neatly into a series of types which tell the story—or some part of the story—of their relationship to writing.

A careful study of these types reveals something more of the online folklore of their educational and online experiences. Sometimes they disclose that they are not academically situated as writers—that teachers do not always appreciate their writing—but that they feel strongly that they have some inherent creativity that they long to nourish. This wish-fulfilment pose is prevalent, which positions the instructor as both wizard and antagonist. Vanquishing an

assessor is liberating, and here, in the blogosphere, a writer can reach multiple audiences who will know better. In a blogging environment, with multiple potential readers, assessors proliferate. The audience is distributed among instructor, peers, invited readers, and future readers. The onus for communication is returned to the writer, which makes the writer newly accountable. As student bloggers accept this agency, they make all sorts of appeals, and an important one is mediated through their self-portrait. There are frequent motifs that have recurred every semester in students' presentations of writerly self; they picture their younger selves, as innocent and sometimes disheveled babies, in costumes, in company, with a significant other, with their faces obscured, turned away from the camera, as a graphic, avatar, or meme. And each of these suggests a kind of deficiency or lack of confidence in their ability to express themselves. By suggesting a sense of inadequacy in their self-representations, students share their apprehension about doing this work, and they also share their comprehension about the value of reflecting on who they are as writers. One does not learn to write in absolute stages; one learns to accept the interactions as mutable and layered. Writing well takes persistence and maturity. The inclusion of a writerly self that suggests inadequacy or lack of experience is a fruitful step in understanding the complexity of writing as an activity system. The sweetness of these images is consistent with the hopefulness that students have as they enter the first-year writing classroom.

A portrait satisfies many goals—cultural, aesthetic, patron—and a self-portrait is just as careful in a more self-serving way. As one seeking approbation, the student writer who understands this task or outcome crafts a writerly image that answers the prompt directly. The key is to find out what prompt they are answering. In their companion written reflections, students try to explicate the why of their choices. In other semesters, when this reflection was not assigned, I was sometimes mystified by what the images purported. The combination of image and text led them to a more complete understanding of how they fashioned themselves. They tell themselves. And in the telling, in this self-reflection, they grow as writers and critical thinkers.

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MAPPING LANGUAGE LEARNING WITH EMOJIS: FROM PHATIC COMMUNICATION TO IDIOMS AND FLASH FICTION

Ioana MUDURE-IACOB[1]

ABSTRACT: *Mapping Language Learning with Emojis: From Phatic Communication to Idioms and Flash Fiction.* By roaming around digital resources in search of a customised learning approach, language learners often identify as netizens accustomed to a coded Internet language which is rarely juxtaposed with the language taught in the ESP classroom. To keep pace with shifting trends in online communication, teachers often need to expand the discursive membership by empowering learners to turn from users into content creators. By referring to the potential of using emojis in the framework of speech acts, the current paper aims to indicate directions of embedding emojis as social marking tokens and instruments of developing language and digital literacy skills in the foreign language class. The process of embedding emojis in language teaching stems from the integration of emoji as markers in the teaching of phatic communication, to reinforce the locutionary and illocutionary act of speech. Moreover, emojis can be used as an extension of teaching idioms, whereas the illocutionary and perlocutionary function of emoji is explored in interactive vocabulary practice tasks or within gamified sequences. Eventually, using emojis as perlocutionary acts in language learning is applied to storytelling as a mechanism of developing a multiliterate discourse, by means of which learners are introduced to writing emoji stories and flash fictions and then to translating them into words.

Keywords: emojis, content creators, speech acts, multimodality, participatory culture

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REZUMAT: *Infuzarea învăţării limbii cu emojiuri: de la funcţia fatică la expresii frazeologice şi ficţiune flash.* Navigând printre resurse digitale în căutarea unei abordări personalizate de învăţare, studenţii se identifică adesea ca internauţi familiarizaţi cu un limbaj codat al Internetului, care e rar corelat cu limbajul specializat învăţat la cursurile de limbă străină. Pentru a ţine ritmul cu noile tendinţe din comunicarea virtuală, profesorii sunt deseori nevoiţi să-şi extindă apartenenţa la o tipologie discursivă prin încurajarea studenţilor să devină creatori de conţinut. Analizând potenţialul utilizării emojiurilor în cadrul actelor de vorbire, prezenta lucrare încearcă să indice variante de integrare a emojiurilor ca marcaje sociale şi ca instrumente de dezvoltare a abilităţilor lingvistice şi digitale în cadrul cursurilor de limbă străină. Procesul de utilizare a emojiurilor în predarea limbilor străine porneşte de la integrarea emojiurilor ca indicatori în utilizarea funcţiei fatice a comunicării, pentru consolidarea actelor locuţionare şi ilocuţionare ale limbajului. De asemenea, emojiurile pot fi utilizate în predarea expresiilor idiomatice, prin explorarea funcţiilor ilocuţionare şi perlocuţionare în activităţi interactive de vocabular sau secvenţe gamificate. Utilizarea emojiurilor ca funcţii perlocuţionare în învăţarea limbii străine se aplică şi scrierii narative, ca mecanism de dezvoltare a discursului de multiliteraţie, prin scrierea de naraţiuni de tip *flash fiction* folosind emojiuri şi apoi prin decodarea acestora în text.

Cuvinte-cheie*: emojiuri, creatori de conţinut, acte de vorbire, multimodalitate, cultură participativă*

1. Introduction

The changing needs and interests of digital natives regarding communication and learning have reshaped the process of language teaching to such an extent that teachers and instructors may often need to switch between multiple roles in order to cater for such needs. From instructor to content creator, entertainer or assessor, language teachers are confronted with finding new ways of embedding content into more Netspeak[2]-oriented frameworks. This attempt to innovate the learning process is supported by the importance of teaching students 21st century skills along the language learning process, from critical thinking, and problem-solving, to digital skills and visual literacy or content creation.

Such complex teaching patterns that suit learners (whose brains are wired for games and the visual) can be customised either by using particular digital tools and apps that make learning more engaging, by pairing teaching

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[2] Netspeak, referred to as the internet language is often encountered in online forms of communication and can be embedded in teaching and learning by using emoji, memes or gifs, as facets of virtual expressions, supporting a more fluid form of communication for digital natives.

with gamification or by mapping the learning process with visual literacy cues. The last option, which refers to teaching and learning while empowering visual literate learners, is not a new approach in terms of using text and images to support comprehension. However, the current paper focuses on analysing and indicating potential ways in which emojis, as visual markers, can be used as resourceful instruments of language teaching and learning.

There are various premises to consider prior to describing the practical teaching sequences and rationale behind this endeavour. Firstly, the use of visual cues and Netspeak, understood "as a blend between speech, writing and electronically-mediated features" (Crystal 2006, 48), stems from the dual coding theory coined by Paivio (1971), which states that the embedding of multiple codes of representation leads to better processing of information. By favouring visual support via emojis in their learning, digital natives perceive language learning coded this way as more engaging, while also allowing them to become more autonomous learners.

Secondly, the rationale behind using the dual code of information theory and tailoring language content with Netspeak features was to sketch the language class according to the principles of participatory culture:

> a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices. A participatory culture is also one in which members believe their contributions matter, and feel some degree of social connection with one another. [...] Participatory culture shifts the focus of literacy from one of individual expression to community involvement (Jenkins et al. 2006, 4)

With learners exhibiting a hype of communication and a need for in-group sense of belonging, on the one hand, and teachers mastering a complex network of methods, approaches and know-how, on the other hand, the crossroads in terms of language learning can be identified in the use of language classes as participatory culture repositories. Moreover, such participatory culture can be supported by customising the teaching-learning process as affinity spaces, defined as "prime space where people engage in 21st century teaching, learning, doing and being [...] primarily defined by an affinity for solving certain sorts of problems that include things like media production, citizen science, political activism, fan-fiction writing, video games." (Gee 2017, 28) For language classes, the affordances of affinity spaces allow for using the foreign language and Netspeak-infused language as a vehicle for learning, while also teaching students 21st century skills.

Thirdly, the paper aims to explore the functions and practical integration of emojis as carriers of linguistic utterance features in language teaching and learning with reference to the theory of speech acts (Austin 1962, Searle 1969).

The objective is to draw on frameworks of using emoji as markers of linguistic expression, by tailoring learning activities and sequences for all speech acts, from using emoji and phatic communication as icebreakers, to teaching idioms and vocabulary by using the illocutionary and perlocutionary force of emojis and, eventually, exploiting the perlocutionary force of emoji into scenarios of digital storytelling.

2. Contextualising Emojis in the Framework of Language Teaching and Learning through the Lenses of Speech Acts

The capitalisation of non-verbal cues as substitutes for facial expressions, phatic communication, or emotions is not a recent addition to the fields of communication and education, particularly with regards to computer-mediated learning (CML). Emoticons, memes and emojis have been devised to improve the potential of written text by structuring information in a more Netspeak-framed context, thus becoming more engaging with Gen Z learners. Emojis, having emoticons as their precursors,

> (from the Japanese e[picture]+ moji [character]) are graphic symbols with predefined names/IDs and code (Unicode), which include not only representations of facial expressions (e.g., 😄), abstract concepts (e.g., 🥰), and emotions/ feelings (e.g., ❤️), but also animals (e.g., 🐼), plants (e.g., 🌹), activities (e.g., 👯), gestures/ body parts (e.g., 🙏), and objects (e.g., 🍴) (Rodrigues et al. 2018, 394)

Created by Shigetaka Kurita as a set of typographic symbols in the late 1990[3] to provide an equivalent of facial expressions, gestures and objects and prevent digital miscommunication, emojis gained their rapid popularity with the development of Unicode[4] for social media. "These typographic symbols, also referred to as emoji code, are currently integrated in nearly all text-based digital interactions, rendering discourse more affective and being a digital alternative to paraverbal cues" (Mudure-Iacob 2021, 646). Emojis, though apparently structured

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[3] Emojitimeline (https://emojitimeline.com/), the platform designed for the tracking of cultural and technical events in the history of emojis, records that the first emoji set was released in 1997 and later (1999) expanded into a 176-emoji set created for the "i-mode" feature of mobile phones, allowing communication that was limited to 250 characters. The event marked the becoming of emoji as a global phenomenon.

[4] Unicode is responsible for providing software internationalization standards (adopted as international standard) and data, while also specifying how text is represented in software products such as smartphones, PCs, laptops or iPads. It represents the mechanism by which Japanese emojis were constantly added to updated software products.

in face and non-face non-verbal cues, cover a wide variety of categories that fall under the sections: content (smileys and people, animals and nature, food and drink, travel and places, activity, objects, symbols, flags), meaning (behavioural, non-behavioural) and emotion (positive, neutral, negative).

The potential of using emojis is not restricted to acts of social media communication and consistent research (Bai et al. 2019) has been conducted in various other fields of study, from Computer science, to Communication, Psychology, Marketing, Linguistics, Medicine or Education. Furthermore, Li (2019) enumerates a set of functions that emojis have, from users choosing to express emotions within online conversations, to serving as pictorial cues, to conveying tone and strength of an emotion in writing, as politicons (10) or as modes of artistic expression. With regards to the literature review in specific fields of study related to the current topic (Communication, Linguistics), research on emoji was centred on "1. the role of emoji in computer mediated communication. 2. the effect of emoji on user and emoji preference in different contexts" (Bai et. al. 2019, *10*) and respectively on "1. the pragmatic functions of Emoji as non-verbal clues. 2. the possibility of emoji functioning as independent languages" (10).

The synthetised conclusions of the reviewed research (Bai et. al. 2019, *10*) sketched on the potential of emojis to replace the lack of non-verbal cues, to enhance online social interaction and convey more complex meanings, as well as highlighted links between emoji preference and cultural and linguistic background. Likewise, the pragmatics approach research indicated that emoji and speech acts can be correlated, with the emoji replacing a morpheme unit.

Regarding the use of emojis in educational frameworks, more specifically in language learning and teaching, studies have delved on their effectiveness in education (particularly children's and online learning). Bai (et. al.)'s (2019) review indicated that there is scarce research in this direction, while the few studies focus on the potential of emojis for language classes as a means of overcoming language barriers and enhancing English learning, as a mechanism of facilitating more genuine communication in online interactions and as awareness triggers regarding the non-verbal features of communication.

Referring to semantic functions, emojis can impact language learning due to their visual rhetoric function, allowing a more complex understanding of meaning in computer-mediated communication. Text integration of emojis (Zhou et al. 2017), as well as emojis as supplement to text (Ai et al., 2017) are used as the two dimensions of reference in this paper, for drafting language teaching scenarios with the aid of emojis. Likewise, a brief presentation of the Speech Act theory is deemed necessary, to locate the potential of emojis in the framework of language teaching and learning through the lenses of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary forces.

First presented by Austin (1962) and later developed and reconceptualized by Searle (1969), the Speech Act theory was founded on the premises that upon the production of an utterance (be it spoken or written), simultaneous speech acts are produced. The three speech acts identified by Austin are the *locutionary act,* the *illocutionary act* and the *perlocutionary act*. While the locutionary act of any utterance represents the production of the linguistic form of utterance (sounds, morphemes, syntax, semantics), the illocutionary act entails the intended meaning, and the perlocutionary act refers to the effect of the utterance on the hearer.

Searle (1969) brings significant modifications to Austin's theory by rejecting the distinction between locutionary and illocutionary acts and argues in favour of the inseparability of the two parts. Moreover, Searle provides a detailed classification of illocutionary acts into categories, which include assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations, indicating how some utterances can have juxtaposing functions. Taking into account these features of language while teaching, communication is thus built as a cause-and-effect mechanism of reactions, intentions and meanings, which can further be enriched when the non-verbal dimension is added. In addition to the impact of speech acts upon written and spoken text, the speech act theory encompasses non-verbal communication like signs and pictures, and emojis.

The particular use of emojis in computer-mediated learning indicates the performance of all speech acts, according to specific contextual uses and types of communication. The locutionary act can be triggered with the use of emojis as replacements of portions of a text or words, such as in the example: "I ❤️ my English classes", where the partially coded meaning is represented by the emoji. Secondly, the addition of an emoji to accompany a sentence/phrase (either embedded in the text or at the end of the text) triggers the illocutionary act, with the function of disambiguating meaning. The example: "Write your name on the exam paper! 👩‍🏫" illustrates the illocutionary act, by means of which the intended purpose of the statement is amplified by the emoji, the non-verbal cue showing a teacher and emphasizing the directive dimension of the act (the teacher trying to get the student to do something). Thirdly, the perlocutionary act can also be identified in the use of emojis as the effect of communication on the hearer, a substitute for verbal communication, where reactions and responses can be provided by gestures, facial expressions or body posture. In computer-mediated learning, such an example would be a brief dialogue between the speaker: "I passed my final exam with flying colours." and students: "🥳", wherein the emoji (partying face) fulfils the effect function of the speech act, a reaction of joy and celebration.

The three instances of emojis in reference to the three Speech Acts will be illustrated in the following section, with an emphasis on how language teaching and learning activities can be designed using emojis. The educational

potential has been little analysed in the framework of online learning despite the growing popularity of these typographic symbols among digital natives. Likewise, the intent is also to illustrate how the design of language learning tasks centred on emoji use can enhance a more participatory culture, supporting the language class as affinity space.

3. Building Vocabulary Skills One Emoji at a Time

A significant need for change in the architecture of language teaching occurred with the shift into online and hybrid learning formats generated by the Covid-19 pandemic period. In addition to having to adapt worksheets, textbooks and materials to suit the digital framework, language instructors also dealt with a recurrent lack of interest and disengagement from students, caused either by online fatigue or limited digital literacy skills. To bridge this gap, most language instructors designed online classes that would be closer to the online identities of digital natives, in an attempt to create a participatory culture in the class. Netspeak infusion of content teaching (via memes and emojis) and embedding of gamification in the practice and formative assessment scenarios appear to provide a reliable framework for building language skills in a more learner-vernacular manner.

The scope of the current paper is to indicate ways in which emojis, as non-verbal symbols and as carriers of linguistic utterance features, can be integrated in tasks developing vocabulary, communicative and productive skills. The projection of vocabulary and storytelling sequences was done over the academic year 2021-2022 (mostly online format) to a group of 75 pre-service primary school teachers, using a set of digital tools and repositories that allowed the language instructor and learners to become more engaged in the collaborative features of online learning. The students' overall level of English was B2 (as established by an initial placement test), whereas their digital skills varied from beginner to advanced (students were encouraged at the beginning of the term to assess their level by using the Europass Digital Skills Test available online) To depict these teaching-learning scenarios, this section describes and illustrates categories of tasks and their speech act functionality, as well as the speech act functions triggered by the dual coding of information via emojis.

3.1. Phatic communication, emojis and building rapport in the English class

Stemming from the premise that language learners are multiliterate actors whose interaction in an online environment is improved if the participatory culture is built, the initial step was to initiate a form of discursive membership. The underlying liaison was established as the Netspeak feature, encapsulated in the recurrent use of emoji in online interactions, and used as a tool for

building phatic communion, which, "in interaction, constitutes the use of language and/or paralanguage to create ties of union, where this purpose takes precedence over transmitting information" (Aull 2019, 210). By encouraging learners to customise or import their online identities into the language class, the intention is to project a more engaging learning environment, where students can feel more at ease with their multiliteracy skills. Laver cited in Aull (2019) describes phatic talk as marked by openings and closings, along marginal phases of communication, and is considered to be "essential to first establishing the relationship and finally reinforcing their continuation beyond interactional encounters" (210).

Considering that emojis can provide a Netspeak-based structure for initial interaction and the building of phatic communion as generator of phatic communication, we designed a pre-class asynchronous task to initiate learners in the network of making introductions via emoji-based phatic talk. By using Genial.ly as the digital repository, students were required to use 5 emojis of their choice (Emojipedia was indicated to insert the emojis into the document) to describe themselves, provide a textual description and send the dual coded bio to the teacher, who later created the Genial.ly board displaying only the emoji codes first. A sample coded bio was provided by the language teacher, as illustrated in Figure 1, for students to use as model and for a marker of phatic talk.
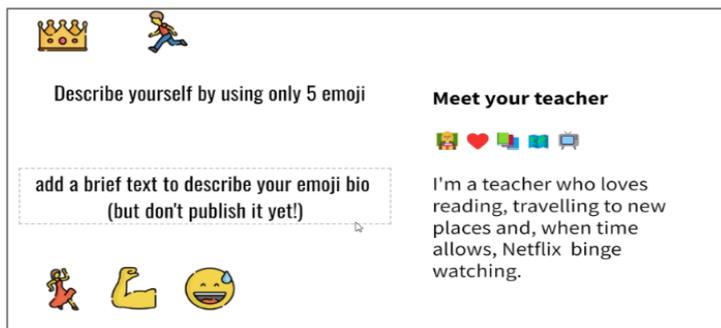
Figure 1. Teacher's coded emoji bio and textual description
Source: Genial.ly presentation designed and distributed on students' Learning Management System https://view.genial.ly/62e24c8b8e85840011d75eb7/interactive-content-emoji

In the first online interaction during class, students were asked to choose another colleague (a randomising app was used) and provide a textual/verbal interpretation of the emoji bio for the assigned peer. After having obtained the peers' interpretations, the teacher displayed on the board both students' own emoji bio and textual descriptions (shown in the text under each emoji set in Figure 2) and the textual interpretations provided by their peers in class (shown in each yellow speech bubble in Figure 2).

Figure 2. Students' introductions using emojis and textual bios
Source: Genial.ly presentation designed and distributed on students' Learning Management
System https://view.genial.ly/62e24c8b8e85840011d75eb7/interactive-content-emoji

Coined as an icebreaker activity, the task aimed to allow learners to express themselves by using emojis, but also by using English language as the instrument of decoding the non-verbal bio. Upon the virtual interaction, students were challenged to bring their own interpretation to the emoji-coded bio provided by other students in advance and were later shown the original text written to accompany each emoji bio. Such a task delves on both the illocutionary and perlocutionary forces of emoji, the former supported by the student-writer's control over the manifestation of his/her original intentions, whereas the latter indicates the effect of the coded utterance on the hearer/ reader that is in this case. Taking into account that "the illocutionary force of an utterance is part of what a speaker means by the utterance, part of what he or she intends to convey by making it" (Dressner and Herring 2010, 261), the accompanying of the emoji with a textual description was intended to create a space for communication and exchange of meaning.

The perlocutionary force is supported by the peers' interpretation of the coded emojis, as their textual interpretation was the effect that the visual cues had on them as hearers/ readers. The differences between the textual descriptors and the interpretated meaning confirm that emojis are "not simply decoded, but inferred[...] and there is a gap between the prototypical referent of an emoji and its eventual interpretation in a context" (Yus 2019, 2). To illustrate this disparity, the example indicated in Figure 2 above shows a student's emoji bio 🤑🍔⚽📺👪 , which was produced with the intention of saying "I have a business with burger restaurant. I like football, but just watching, no playing. I have a nice family." (the wording belongs to one student). The interpretation made by a reader of the emoji code was "I. likes making money,

eating burgers and playing football? She has a family and they like watching movies." (the wording belongs to one student), which emphasizes the importance of the perlocutionary force and how emojis can be used to teach difference in meanings in the online processing of interactions.

The benefit of using such an icebreaker task (which entails asynchronous preparation and online interaction as well) was that students found themselves at ease in the online learning environment by having to operate with their own digital skills and Internet language, while at the same time, being able to express themselves using English and admit to fears, concerns, interests in an act of phatic communion. Moreover, the opening section of the class served as a foundational ground for participatory culture, clearly expressing that learners are expected to become content creators and manifest engagement in the language learning process.

3.2. Coding and decoding vocabulary with emojis and speech acts

The subsequent purpose of teaching vocabulary and designing practice and formative assessment scenarios using emojis was to verify the usefulness of these non-verbal symbols in the teaching and practice of language skills, on the one hand, and to observe how emojis can be markers of linguistic inference, on the other hand. The current section illustrates how vocabulary tasks were configured to serve these purposes and how content was structured in terms of emoji coding and decoding, particularly through the teaching and practice of idiomatic expressions.

The process of embedding emojis in language teaching and designing vocabulary practice tasks around these symbols includes several steps, meant to get learners accustomed to the insertion of Netspeak features into the learning process and to the decoding they need to use in order to process meaning. The choice of idiomatic expressions as the vehicle of testing emoji usefulness in terms of language learning was accounted for by the usual lack of interest manifested by students towards idioms. Either because students consider idioms difficult to remember in the exact structure, or because idioms have different alternatives in one's native language, idiom-based vocabulary tasks are often regarded as increased difficulty activities and often avoided by learners. By dual coding idioms in terms of text and/or visual (emoji), the intention was to facilitate more engaging learning environments for students and motivate them to invest more effort in the study of this vocabulary section.

The manner of structuring vocabulary tasks around emojis was founded on Yus' depiction of emoji functions as

emoji within (the text) - the emoji aids in (or alters) the inference of the propositional content of the text next to which the emoji is typed, and may also favour the generation of non-propositional effects, emoji without (the text) - the emoji performs communicative functions on its own […], emoji beyond (the text) - the emoji has a qualifying role but not towards the content of the message next to which it is typed, but towards the act of communication as a whole (e.g. is inferred in parallel to verbal content) (Yus 2019, 7).

To develop students' language and digital literacy skills in this respect, emoji tasks were structured in the following gradual sequences: 1. Teaching idioms with the addition of emojis next to text (the emoji beyond the text function); 2. Exposure of idioms with minimal to partial emoji replacement of text (emojis within the text function); 3. Idioms practice tasks with emoji decoding activities (emojis without the text) and vocabulary tasks focusing on inference (combined functions). All three sequences will be described and illustrated in the following paragraphs, with supporting arguments for how speech act features are carried out by the insertion of emojis.

The first sequence, *teaching idioms with the addition of emojis next to text,* served as the initial stage of the vocabulary teaching process and was used during the initial classes to set the pace for using Netspeak-embedded features and familiarise learners with the functionality of emojis in language learning. Various idioms were shown, explained and accompanied by emojis next to the text, to cater for the dual coding of information and to provide as complex a meaning as possible. The emoji code that accompanied the text was created by the language instructor using the Rebus Club digital tool[5].

Figure 3. Example of idiom explained by emoji addition and textual description
Source: Jamboard designed for teaching idioms https://jamboard.google.com/d/
1LrnuUDZEZrgZ5dpib4jWrVnLIH6zxusf-EEH2xetw6E/edit?usp=sharing

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[5]   Rebus Creator Club is a digital tool and platform that can be used for creating puzzles using emojis, icons and pictograms. It allows teachers to introduce the word/concept/phrase, select a difficulty level and/or choose from a variety of languages, and the platform transforms the word into a sequence of emojis that will be further used as coded text. In order to decode the meaning indicated by the pictogram different mental operations need to be performed: + signifies the addition of a letter/morpheme, - signifies the removal of a letter/morpheme, = signifies the replacement of a letter/morpheme, with combined operations being possible upon one pictogram.

The illustration shown in Figure 3 above is an example of an idiom taught during class in this initial sequence and consists of three parts: the idiom, *pain in the neck*, the accompanying emoji representation and the textual definition, *someone or something that is very annoying*. Using the emoji beyond the text function as described by Yus (2019), the same criterion can be applied to the use of emojis in teaching vocabulary with the emphasis that "the emoji does not qualify the content of the [...] message but connotes the act of communication as whole" (42). By exposing students to a multimodal display of a vocabulary item, the process of comprehension is both more engaging and complex, as compared to the traditional exposure to idioms shown with only the textual description/definition. To match the actual structure of the idiom, students also had visual (one pictogram for each word) and textual support. After being presented with idioms in this manner, vocabulary practice tasks followed (matching, fill in the blanks, cloze tasks etc.) to facilitate retention. Emoji used in this manner, with added textual support and description of meaning, perform the locutionary act, and add visual imagery to a new vocabulary unit.

The second sequence consisted in *recurrent exposure of idioms with minimal to partial emoji replacement of text* (emoji within the text function), in an attempt to explore if emoji can influence the way the accompanying text is interpreted and how meaning can be generated when text is partially replaced by visual symbols such as emojis. The replacement of text within an idiom with emojis was gradually performed, starting with the exposure to idioms that were displayed with both text and emojis, without the added written text that described the meaning of the idiom and continuing with the teaching and practice of idioms in which most of the parts were shown as emoji.
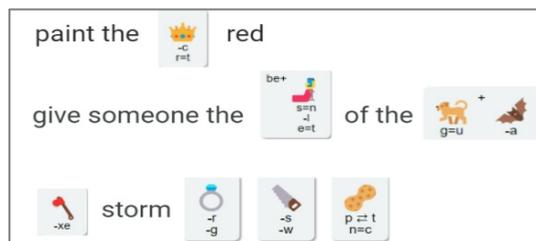
Figure 4. Example of idioms with emoji inserted within text
Source: Jamboard designed for teaching idioms
https://jamboard.google.com/d/1LrnuUDZEZrgZ5dpib4jWrVnLIH6zxusf-
EEH2xetw6E/edit?usp=sharing

Figure 4 shows an example of how idioms were taught in this sequence, where learners were exposed to vocabulary units by using the same dual coding framework, but with a higher visual insertion frequency. Students could learn

idioms that were shown with one word replaced with an emoji, or with multiple words being replaced by emojis. The motivation for doing so stood in the importance of having learners retain the correct and full structure of idioms, as quite often, they may remember an idiom, without being, however, *able of* accurately writing or using it. The three examples illustrated above show the idioms *paint the town red*[6], *give someone the benefit of the doubt*[7], *a storm in a teacup*[8], with minimal to partial replacement of words with emojis.

By replacing verbal elements within idioms, emojis can here be used to increase the processing effort, thus making learners become more involved in their learning. Moreover, this function of emoji within (the text) communicating propositional information (content) through the emoji- enriched text relies on the illocutionary and perlocutionary forces, as the meaning can be generated based on the speaker/ teacher's intention in creating the dual coded idiom and the hearer/learner's decoding capacity to process the meaning by understanding the pictograms that emojis communicate, along with the additional micro-processes of replacing or eliminating letters to reach the intended word. A derived advantage of exposing learners to idioms coded in such a manner is that it requires them to use their vocabulary skills when identifying the pictogram represented by the emoji, which enhances the use of productive skills.

The third sequence in the process of teaching idioms by using emoji was designed with a focus on *idioms practice tasks with emoji decoding activities (emoji without the text) and vocabulary tasks focusing on inference (combined functions)*. The emoji without the text function coined by Yus (2019) refers to the fact that "the emoji is the only source of information […] when the emoji has no accompanying text" (22) and entails activating learners' ability to use creative thinking and their language skills to decode first the pictogram and then the correct word order of the emojis.

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6   The word *town* was here replaced with the emoji pictogram 👑 (*crown*) that students had to identify correctly, then remove the letter *c* (-c) and replace the letter *r* with *t* (r=t).

7   Two words were replaced in this idiom, *benefit* and *doubt*, the former illustrated in the emoji pictogram 🤳 (*selfie*), for which students had to add the particle be- in front, replace the letter *s* with *n* (s=n), remove the letter *l*(-l) and replace *e* with *t* (e=t), and the latter, *doubt*, shown as a combination of emoji 🐕 (*dog*) and 🦇 (*bat*), with the replacement of the letter *g* with *u* (g=u) and a removal of the letter *a* (-a) in the second word, thus resulting into the word *doubt*.

8   The idiom *a storm in a teacup* was shown as a combination of four emojis and one word and the decoding was done the following way: *a*, shown as the emoji 🪓 (*axe*) from which letters *x* and *e* were removed (-xe), *in*, shown as the emoji 💍 (*ring*), with the removal of letters *r* and *g* (-r,-g), *a*, displayed as the emoji 🪚 (*saw*), without the letters *s* and *w* (-s,-w) and *teacup*, shown as the emoji 🥜 (*peanut*), where the letters *p* and *t* were switched (p->t) and *n* was replaced with *c* (n=c).
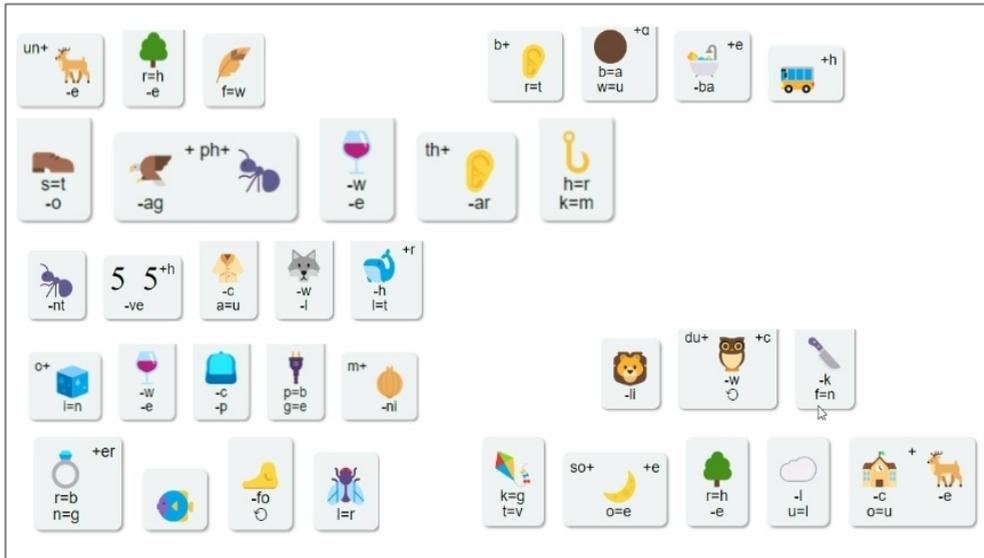
Figure 5. Example of idioms expressed as emoji without text
Source: Jamboard designed for teaching idioms
https://jamboard.google.com/d/1LrnuUDZEZrgZ5dpib4jWrVnLIH6zxusf-
EEH2xetw6E/edit?usp=sharing

The examples[9] shown in Figure 5 above were made to be associated with different vocabulary practice tasks. To solve these tasks, students first had to decode them by putting them into words. The perlocutionary force is used in this case, as the learner needs to reconstitute the parts of the utterance, select each proper item of the idiom (particularly since some emoji may indicate multiple meanings[10]) and then "assemble" it into a correct idiom, to be further used in vocabulary practice tasks. Some types of vocabulary practice tasks were matching (match the emoji coded idioms to the correct meanings), text infilling (complete the sentence with one correct idiom chosen from the list of emoji codes) and open cloze (use one idiom to complete the sentence) tasks.

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[9] The emoji coded idioms read (from right to left, top to bottom) as such: *under the weather, beat around the bush, the elephant in the room, a fish out of water, once in a blue moon, on cloud nine, bigger fish to fry, give someone the cold shoulder.*

[10] One example is the emoji 🙏, which can be read as *thank you* or *please*, but also, in slang, as *high-five*.

Figure 6. Example of open cloze task customised for emoji coded idioms
Source: Jamboard designed for teaching idioms https://jamboard.google.com/d/
1LrnuUDZEZrgZ5dpib4jWrVnLIH6zxusf-EEH2xetw6E/edit?usp=sharing

The open cloze task shown in Figure 6 above was designed to enable learners to practice their vocabulary skills, by identifying the proper idiom and then recreate the idiom by decoding the emoji pictograms. In processing these steps, the emoji without the text required the learner to grasp the intended meaning of the utterance/idiom. The other types of vocabulary practice tasks were matching tasks and fill in the blanks using a set of emoji-encoded idioms.

Lastly, the practice of vocabulary skills was also extended in gamified formative assessment scenarios designed as Digital Escape Rooms, in which students were challenged to escape virtual locked rooms consisting of different vocabulary, reading, listening and speaking tasks by obtaining passwords to unlock these virtual rooms. Some of these passwords were hidden in emoji-based idioms that learners were supposed to decode.

Figure 7. Sample from virtual room in the Digital Escape Room
Source: Digital Escape Room https://ubbcluj-my.sharepoint.com/:o:/g/personal/
ioana_mudure_ubbcluj_ro/ErGxyuVWhXdNkVwqZQajxmABFrM4wc0S8IyexBZU-m_cjg

However, the visual representation of idioms as emojis in Figure 7 was, in this case, different from the other above-shown examples, where each pictogram would represent one item in the idiom structure. Instead, the idioms in the Digital Escape Room were depicted by emojis hinting at the overall meaning of the two idioms[11], rather than the prior literal-visual representation. The purpose of encoding idioms with emojis in a different manner was to assess learners' capacity to combine critical thinking, digital literacy and language skills in order to find the correct idioms. By decoding the emojis into the correct idioms, learners were able to boost their inference skills, while making use of the perlocutionary force of speech acts and using the emoji without the text feature to turn visual comprehension into textual meaning.

3.3. Writing an emoji story in two speech acts

Having initiated students in the practice of receptive skills and use of idioms with emojis, the last part of this endeavour was to use emojis in the teaching and practice of productive skills, writing and speaking, relying on the potential of emojis to fulfil pragmatic functions such as signalling emotions, as an effect of the illocutionary and perlocutionary force. Students were also encouraged to explore in their free-time use of social media any language-related uses of emojis[12] to understand how these symbols can be used beyond the communicative feature. The two types of tasks carried out during language classes aimed to develop productive skills and included: *speaking tasks,* in which learners had to produce sentences using emojis as prompts, and *writing tasks*, in which groups of students created a digital story by using six emojis.

The speaking tasks were customised as *oral chain emoji stories* that students had to produce, after having been assigned into groups of eight (and encouraged to work in breakout rooms when instruction was online). The visual support consisted of a board with emojis from which each student had to choose an emoji and make a verbal sentence by using the character/place/emotion of activity indicated by the emoji. The following speaker in the group would then choose a different emoji and use it as a prompt to continue the story, by linking it to the previous speaker. For a more dynamic process, a name generator was also used within groups, and, at the end of the activity, groups

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[11] The idioms *don't put all your eggs in one basket* and *bigger fish to fry* have been previously taught and practiced in different tasks.

[12] Two of the recommended resources were Disney's YouTube channel *As told by emojis*, a video channel that reconstitutes popular Disney movies into emoji short animations and Twitter's topic-based #EmojiArtHistory, a collection of art work examples retold through emoji sequences, supported by renowned museums and art galleries.

were invited to show the sequence of eight chosen emoji and retell the story to the class. The illocutionary and perlocutionary forces of speech acts are used by learners in their attempts to produce sentences based on one item of visual imagery, bearing various functions such as expressing emotion, creating a sequential meaning or inferring from the sense intended by previous speakers.

The writing tasks were structured as *six-emoji flash fiction*, with students working in groups of four, the requirements being to create flash fiction using six emojis[13], a fictional work that is very short (up to 1,000 words), but has characters and plot, similar to a short story. In their groups, students had to create their set of six emojis and write a flash fiction using emojis as prompts and pre-taught content on the structure of stories, suitable connectors and linking devices. After the emoji set was agreed on within the group, it would then be passed on to the next group of students, who would write their text story using the same combination of emojis. Circulating the six-emoji sets among all groups led to having six different versions of text for the same set of emoji, which revealed differences in perception and interpretation among groups.
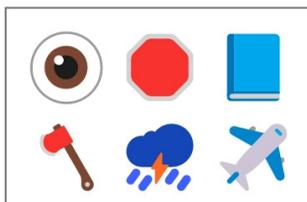
Figure 8. Example of a six-emoji visual story created by students
Source: https://jamboard.google.com/d/1LrnuUDZEZrgZ5dpib4jWrVnLIH6zxusf-EEH2xetw6E/edit?usp=sharing

The example shown in Figure 8 above illustrates one of the visual stories created by one group of students, who chose 6 emoji and also provided the textual translation into words of the emoji story. Since the requirement was to first create the six-emoji story and pass it further to other groups, without accompanying the textual representation, each of the visual stories received a number of eight textual alternatives (for the eight groups of learners). The original textual translation, made by the same group that created the visual emoji set, was:

Ben didn't see the stop sign and was about to be hit by a car because he was reading a very interesting part in his book. All of a sudden, he saw a woman chasing her husband with an axe because he got a tattoo with his

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[13] The choice over the use of only 6 emojis was based on one subcategory of flash fiction, the six-word stories, which require the use of creativity and language skills.

ex's name. She was fuming with rage. So, to avoid a murder, he jumped in front of the woman and screamed Beware! Plane crash! Then everything went dark. (translation from emoji-coded story, made by group 1)

To show how the perlocutionary force has effects also on visual imagery, not solely on textual cues, another description was chosen, from a group of students who had to decode the six-emoji story by using inference and employing the emotional features that emojis bear. Their textual outline of the same emoji story was:

One day, a man was walking down the street, fed up with life. Arriving in front of a bookstore, he stopped because he saw a book in the window that said: "Restart your life from the beginning so that it brings more light into your days". Walking down the street and reading the book, he was struck with love at first sight, seeing the most beautiful woman ever. Next minute, they were embarking in a plane, ready to start living a happy life. Or not really. (translation from emoji-coded story, made by group 2)

While repeating some of the words illustrated by the emojis (book, seeing, plane), the plot differed significantly, as well as the way in which learners chose to switch between affective tones. This confirms how the perlocutionary force in case of the second group enabled hearers/students to give a different meaning than the original one, crafted due to the illocutionary force in the case of group 1. Also, this coding and decoding sequence among groups was relevant for the activation of the class participatory culture, as students were visibly enjoying working on the task and collaborating. The main outcome of using this activity as a productive skills task was that, by working with emojis, learners had the opportunity to use their creativity by becoming content creators, spotlight the proper language in decoding the stories, while also activating background knowledge of emoji coding and decoding, as well as collaborating to negotiate content. In this respect, such tasks can be holistic practice samples that enable learners to use and enhance their 21st-century skills, while also allowing them to indulge in the familiar Netspeak dimension this time customised to recreate the affinity space of the language class.

4. Conclusions

The customisation of ESP classes with multimodality and the insertion of visual imagery via Netspeak implies a dual effort, particularly given that the vernacular language of the Internet is not always mastered by both teachers and learners. While using the visual literacy potential of emojis in the teaching and practice of vocabulary and productive skills, the impact upon language

learners can be manifold. The pragmatic functions that emojis can have, with the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts that are performed to grasp meanings were the premises of the current paper. Having sketched dimensions of relevance and effectiveness for the use of emojis in the teaching, learning, practice and assessment of language, students were challenged to experiment content creation and the blend between Internet language and foreign language within the language class, which was considered an affinity space.

The experimental process included three stages, all customised with the embedding of emojis in the teaching of receptive and productive skills, and with the subsequent purpose of facilitating participatory class culture, while learners were exposed to multiliteracy and language content. The preliminary stage focused on building phatic communion and rapport, with students' interactions and introductions using an emoji-coded presentation to set the pace and the foundation of participatory culture. The second, most consistent stage, referred to the teaching, practice and gamified assessment of idioms using emojis, either as additions to textual descriptors, as partial replacements or as codes that entailed perlocutionary and illocutionary acts as deciphering mechanisms of idiomatic expressions. The last piece of the experiment empowered learners to become content creators by engaging in emoji - textual storytelling and visual imagery tasks to support the production of speaking and writing skills.

The usefulness of this endeavour was confirmed, on the one hand, through the personal observations carried out along the two semesters, with significant increases in students' vocabulary quiz results along the academic year, and, on the other hand, from students' feedback and enthusiasm in working with the customised vocabulary sequences. Despite the considerable effort in creating such tasks and providing frequent vocabulary recycling learning environments, the students were more motivated in their language learning process and became more accustomed to use multimodality as a means of autonomous learning.

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Webography:

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https://ubbcluj-my.sharepoint.com/:o:/g/personal/ioana_mudure_ubbcluj_ro/ErGxyuVWhXdNkVwqZQajxmABFrM4wc0S8IyexBZU-m_cjg
https://jamboard.google.com/d/1LrnuUDZEZrgZ5dpib4jWrVnLIH6zxusf-EEH2xetw6E/edit?usp=sharing

TALKING ABOUT EXAMS. DISCURSIVE IDENTITIES
OF ROMANIAN YOUTUBERS

Cristina VARGA[1]

ABSTRACT. *Talking about Exams. Discursive Identities of Romanian Youtubers.*
The main objective of the present study is to analyse the construction of
discursive identity on YouTube in young youtubers' talks about preparing for
the A-level exam. Its theoretical framework is based on the socio-communicative
model described by Patrick Charaudeau (1992, 1993, 1994, 2000, 2002, 2005,
2006), using specifically the description of the construction of the speaker's
identity. Thus, a model of analysis of Romanian youtubers' identities was
developed. This model brings together in the discursive construction of the
speaker's identity both the social identity and the discursive identity. With regard
to the discursive identity, its components "credibility" and "gaining attention" were
also analysed. Within each component, their specific attitudes were also analysed
(Charaudeau 2009). The present research has been successful in outlining the
way in which the speaker's identity is constructed within a specific communication
situation.

*Keywords: discourse analysis, socio-communicational model of discourse, discursive
identity, social networks, discursive organisation*

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REZUMAT. *Discuții despre examene. Identități discursive ale youtuberilor români.* Obiectivul principal al acestui studiu îl reprezintă analiza construcțiilor discursive ale identității în discuțiile tinerilor despre examenul de Bac, pe rețeaua socială YouTube. Cadrul teoretic ales se bazează pe modelul socio-comunicativ de analiză a discursului descris de Patrick Charaudeau (1992, 1993, 1994, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2006), punând accent, mai ales, pe descrierea construcției identității vorbitorului. Acest cadru a permis elaborarea unui model de analiză care să permită observarea modului în care se construiesc și se dezvoltă identitățile discursive ale youtuberilor români. Identitatea vorbitorului este analizată ținându-se cont de două componente de bază ale acesteia, identitatea socială și identitatea discursivă. De asemenea, atitudinea fiecărui vorbitor analizat s-a realizat în funcție de parametri precum „credibilitatea" și capacitatea de „atragere a atenției" (Charaudeau 2009). Chiar dacă analiza se bazează pe un corpus relativ restrâns, ea reușește să descrie și să analizeze cu acuratețe identitatea youtuberilor români în contextul unei situații de comunicare date.

Cuvinte-cheie: analiza discursului, modelul socio-comunicațional al discursului, identitate discursivă, rețele sociale, organizare discursivă

1. Introduction

Social networks are virtual environments where users engage in conversations about any topic. Some of them are perceived in everyday life as being uninteresting or tiresome issues, for instance studying for exams. However, some social media influencers attract hundreds of users on social networks such as YouTube eager to watch them talk about the topic and their videos get tens of thousands of views and thousands of likes. Bearing this in mind, it's worth questioning the reasons why a topic of low priority in everyday life gets so much attention on social media.

In this paper we will start from the assumption that the popularity of exam preparation related communications is due to a change of perception of this topic. What makes people interested in talking about school and studying on social media is the speaker. Thus, unlike teacher or parental discourse, which can bore or annoy, this discourse is received very positively by younger generations. Based on this hypothesis, the objective of our research is to answer the following questions: a) how does the Romanian youtuber construct his/her identity through discourse? b) what discursive strategies does the Romanian youtuber use in order to get the attention of other users? c) what are the different discursive identities displayed by those who discuss about examinations on YouTube?

For this purpose, we will use the *Socio-Communicative Model of Discourse Analysis*[2] and start from the idea that "each speech-act is the result of the combination of a situation, a discursive organisation and a certain use of forms" (Charaudeau 2002). Thus, in the communicative situation of talking about preparing for A-level exams on YouTube, the locutor acts as a knowledge/experience holder who wants to transmit it to other users. The analysis of the identities assumed discursively by Romanian youtubers in their discourse about preparing for exams is based on a small but carefully selected corpus of videos from YouTube, all of which sharing the same subject of discussion.

The present research will aim to provide through discourse analysis a deeper understanding of how the speaker constructs his discursive identity and what discursive strategies he/she uses to make him/herself seem credible and to get the attention of the collocutor. This analysis of the identity of the speaker in a specific context can provide a starting point for analysing the construction of the identity of Romanian youtubers in other communicative contexts.

2. Constructing Speaker's Identity. Theoretical framework

The identity of the speaker in discourse analysis is a complex issue that has been analysed from different theoretical perspectives. Several scholars (Amossy 2010, Charaudeau 2005, Maingueneau 1999, 2000), who belong to the French school of discourse analysis, use the concept of *ethos* when referring to the analysis of speaker identity. In their perspective, identity is discursively constructed through the speaker's discourse and its main purpose is to be credible (Amossy 2010, 25):

> L'ethos est l'image que l'orateur construit de lui-même dans son discours afin de se rendre credible.[3]

Furthermore, discourse analysis studies highlight the existence of different types of speaker identities, such as *prediscursive ethos, told ethos*, and *shown ethos* (Maingueneau 2014, 34-35) *social identity* and *discursive identity* (Charaudeau 2009), *digital identity* (Perea 2010, 10) or *declarative identity, acting identity*, and *calculated identity* (Georges 2009, 179). All these terms represent identity

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[2] We would like to point out that the *Socio-Communicative Model of Discourse Analysis* described by Patrick Charaudeau (1992, 1993, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2009) is conceptually different from the *Critical Discourse Analysis* and that our research will not fall into this paradigm.

[3] Ethos is the image that the speaker constructs of himself in his discourse in order to make himself credible. (my translation)

as a discursive construct of the speaker about himself and approach Amossy's (2010, 25) definition of *ethos*.

The theoretical framework of reference for our research is represented by *the socio-communicative model of discourse* (Charaudeau 1992), a perspective which places the speaker at the centre of the situation of communication, as the initiator of the communicative act that establishes a communicative interaction with an interlocutor:

> Il faut se représenter l'acte de communication comme un dispositif au
> cœur duquel se trouve le sujet parlant (le locuteur, qu'il parle ou écrive),
> en relation avec un autre partenaire (l'interlocuteur).[4]
> (Charaudeau 1992, 634)

Charaudeau (2000) places the communicative act in the context of the situation of communication, which fundamentally determines it. According to the author, the situations of communication fall into two categories: *monolocutive situations of communication* and *interlocutive situations of communication*. Based on this distinction, the situations of communication involving the speaker on the social network YouTube fall into the *monolocutive* category, as the speaker does not share the same physical space with the other participants to the situation of communication. Thus, the locutor is a relatively master of the *space of thematization*; he can control it as best he can regardless of the reactions of the other parties involved in the communication situation.

Within this theoretical framework, the locutor may construct his/her identity in several ways:

> [...] on parle (ou écrit) en organisant son discours en fonction de sa
> propre identité, de l'image que l'on a de son interlocuteur, et de ce qui a
> été déjà dit.[5] (Charaudeau 1992, 643)

Thus, depending on the assumed identity, the speaker will express him/herself in a certain way, will present him/herself in accordance with the assumed identity and will refer in a specific manner to the topic of communication. By means of what he/she says, the speaker constructs his/her own discursive identity and establishes a specific relational connection with the interlocutor.

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[4] It is necessary to imagine the act of communication as a device in the core of which stands the speaking subject (the locutor, whether he/she speaks or writes), in relation with another partner (the interlocutor). (my translation)

[5] [...] one speaks (or writes) by organizing his or her discourse according to his or her own identity, the image that one has of the interlocutor, and of what has already been said. (my translation)

Analysing the concept of identity, Patrick Charaudeau (2009) distinguishes between a general concept of identity, as described by modern philosophy and based on the consciousness of self, *a social identity*, and *a discursive identity*. In his view, it is the *social identity* that legitimates the speaker's discourse in a communicative situation. This is what enables the speaker to organise his discourse in a certain way, assuming a legitimate communicative position. Based on a mechanism of recognition of the social position assumed by the speaker, it is precisely this social identity that makes the other participants in the communicative situation to accept the speaker (Charaudeau 2009):

> La légitimité est une notion qui n'est pas exclusive du domaine politique. D'une façon générale, elle désigne l'état ou la qualité de qui est fondé à agir comme il agit. [...] Le mécanisme par lequel on est légitimé est un mécanisme de reconnaissance d'un sujet par d'autres sujets, au nom d'une valeur qui est acceptée par tous, ...[6]

Discursive identity is constructed and assumed completely by the speaker through his/her discourse and it involves elements such as *credibility* and *gaining attention* (Charaudeau 2009). The *credibility* of the speaker is an important component of his/her discursive identity since in the situation of communication the speaker intends to be listened to and to be trusted by the other social media users. For this purpose, the speaker will construct a credible discursive identity with the help of various discursive strategies such as: *neutrality, objectivity, involvement*, and *demonstrative attitude* (Charaudeau 2009).

Gaining attention is a further component of discursive identity that comes into play when the interaction between locutor and collocutor is not one of authority, of power. Under such circumstances, the speaker resorts to different discursive strategies in order to be able to persuade the interlocutor to engage in the situation of communication, or in order to convince him/her to perform in a determined manner. Thus, among the *persuasion strategies* we mention: *polemical attitude, seductive attitude* and *dramatic attitude* (Charaudeau 2009). For example, in the context of a discourse concerning exams issues in Romania, a *polemical attitude* is the one that challenges the educational model, the teachers' competences and even goes as far as challenging the usefulness of schooling, an attitude that is quite common in Romanian traditional media. In the same context, a *seductive attitude* is the one in which the speaker comes helping the interlocutor whom he wants to give him support with the exams, to

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[6] The concept of legitimacy is not exclusive to the political domain. Broadly speaking, it refers to the state or the quality of being entitled to act as one does. [...] The mechanism by which one is legitimated is a recognition mechanism of a subject by other subjects, in the name of a value that is accepted by all, ... (my translation)

get knowledge, and to obtain optimal exam results without much effort. An attitude that occurs very often in social media communication. The *dramatic attitude* is the one in which the speaker appeals to life stories, to the staging of a situation, to emotional involvement of the interlocutor. In this category fall all the school tales passed down from generation to generation.

Taking into consideration the components of the speaker's identity, we can say that identity is constructed in a complementary way and that both social identity and discursive identity participate in its construction. Thus, when the speaker takes the floor, he assumes a social position that gives him the legitimacy to speak and through what he says he discursively constructs his identity so as to be credible and to draw the attention of the other users of the social network to the subject he wishes to debate.

3. Methodology of Work

In order to be able to analyse the characteristic features of the speaker's identity within the communication on YouTube, a working methodology has been established, structured in several working phases, each phase being based on the empirical data provided by the preceding phase. These are the following: *establishing the theoretical framework, creating a multimedia corpus in Romanian, setting up a protocol for discourse analysis*, and *analysis and interpretation of data*.

3.1. Theoretical Background

The theoretical framework of the current research is the socio-communicative model of discourse analysis developed by Patrick Charaudeau. We consider this theoretical framework to be very useful due to the fact that it focuses on the speaker in the communicative situation and describes social and discursive identity and their components in detail. Thus, the theoretical framework presents the advantage that it situates the speaker in a more general conceptual system of discourse analysis that includes: *the situation of communication* (Charaudeau 2002), *the communicative contract* (Charaudeau 1993, 1994), and *the discursive genre*. This allows to further develop the research initiated with the analysis of speaker's identity and to continue it for a better understanding of communication on social networks in Romanian.

3.2. Multimedia Corpus

The multimedia materials in Romanian analysed in this article have been organised in the form of a reduced corpus of multimedia texts. To create it, the principles that underlie the creation of a corpus were followed: *representativeness,*

balance, thematic, size and *homogeneity* (L'Homme 2004; Sinclair 2004). Thus, to begin with, a simple thematic search was carried out for videos in Romanian on the social network YouTube. In order to respect the *thematic principle*, it was established that, given the importance accorded to the A-level exam in schools, searches on this topic would be carried out. With the materials obtained, an initial list of 100 videos was made, of which only 10 were retained in the corpus of analysis (see annex *Corpus online sources*). Therefore, from the initial list were excluded those videos that were not linguistically *representative*, all videos in which a different language than Romanian from Romania is spoken were excluded. Furthermore, given the aim of the research, all videos in which the speaker does not appear on camera were excluded. These are videos with animations and slideshows, in which there is a narrative voice of an indeterminate speaker. Observing the *principle of balance*, the selected videos all fall into the category of short videos, none of them exceeding 30 minutes. In terms of *homogeneity*, in selecting the videos, the period in which they were published on the social network YouTube was taken into account; the corpus covers a time span of 5 years (2016-2021). Moreover, in terms of language, *discursive homogeneity* was taken into consideration, as all videos displayed an informal linguistic register.

The size of the corpus was determined according to the aims of the current research and according to the number of videos found in Romanian on the selected topic. Thus, given the limited extent of the present research and also the limited number of videos corresponding to the criteria of the corpus building, we consider that the 10 selected videos are representative in order to outline the identity profile of the Romanian speaker on YouTube talking about preparing exams.

3.3. Protocol for the Analysis of the Identity of Romanian Youtubers

The protocol of analysis for the identity construction on the social network YouTube was established, according to the theoretical framework described previously, embracing the distinction *discursive identity - social identity* of the speaker. Furthermore, for each identity, the discursive strategies used by the speaker were analysed.

Taking into consideration the objectives of the research, the videos have been transcribed plainly due to the fact that no suprasegmental elements have been involved in the analysis. The transcription has been followed by a sequential analysis of the transcribed discourses. From each discourse, only the discourse sequences referring to the speaker's identity were selected. This analysis was carried out according to the following protocol:

	Speaker identity	Discourse strategies/attitudes	
1	*social identity*	*profession/occupation/status*	
		values	
		experience	
		knowledge	
2	*discursive identity*	credibility	*neutrality*
			objectivity
			involvement
			demonstrative attitude
		gaining attention	*polemical attitude*
			seductive attitude
			dramatic attitude

In order to systematise the analysis and not to infringe the rights of the authors, the name of the authors of the videos are not mentioned. Each video is numbered from 1 to 10, and this number has been assigned to the speaker in this research. For each video, both *social identity*, which legitimates communication, and *discursive identity* with its *credibility* and *gaining attention* components were taken into account. In addition, for each component of discursive identity, specific attitudes have been analysed.

4. Construction of the speaker's identity on YouTube

YouTube is a social network where participants interact in monolocutive situations of communication. Thus, the locutor does not share the discursive space with the collocutor and does not have to negotiate its discursive space according to the collocutor or the audience. This allows him/her more freedom in the choice of discursive strategies through which he/she constructs his/her discursive identity.

4.1. Construction of social identity on YouTube

The speaker's identity is formed from the very beginning of the utterance with the opening sequence of the situation of communication. It can be observed that most locutors use the opening discourse sequence to first construct the *social identity* consisting of *first name/last name* and/or *profession/occupation*. Thus, locutors 4, 6 and 10 start the construction of their identity by mentioning their first and last name, while locutors 1, 2 and 7 mention only their first name. Locutors 1, 2, 7 and 10 additionally include a greeting sequence in their initial statement. It is an informal greeting (hey, hello, hello), conveying the idea of

somebody approachable and communicative. Locutors 2, 4 and 6 also add their occupation to the social identity (*I'm a second-year law student, I'm a teacher, first year student at the University of the Arts in London*) which legitimises the speaker as being qualified to talk about the topic of communication.

> *1. Hei salut sunt <prenume> / Hey hi I'm <first name>[7]*
> *2. Salutare lume, eu sunt <prenume> și bine ați venit la un nou vlog. /*
> *Hi everyone, I'm <first name> and welcome to a new vlog.*
> *4. sunt profesor <nume prenume> / i'm a teacher <first name>*
> *6. Eu sunt <nume prenume> / I am <first name>*
> *7. Bună, eu sunt <prenume>, bine ați venit pe canalul meu /*
> *Hi, I'm <first name>, welcome to my channel.*
> *10. Salutare! Bine te-am regăsit, sunt <nume prenume>și mă bucur că ai venit din nou la acest videoclip / Hello! Welcome back, I'm <firstname> and I'm glad you came back to this video.*

Four of the youtubers registered in the analysis corpus (3, 5, 8, 9) do not construct their social identity on the basis of their name, which is not mentioned in their discourse.

Social identity, which legitimises the speaker's speech in a given communicative situation, can also be constructed on the basis of the assumption of an experience/know-how. In the context of talks about the A-level exam, YouTube users invoke their previous experience that qualifies them to talk about the topic. There are different expressions of the speaker's experience, one of the most recurrent being that they have also taken the exam. For example, locutor 1 and 2 mention only that they have taken the exam, without adding further details:

> *1. Am fost și eu student și mi-a fost greu să învăț pentru examene /*
> *I was also a student and found it hard to study for exams.*
> *2. dar pentru a ajunge aici a trebuit să dau și eu bacul / but to get here I had to take the A-level exam myself.*

Other locutors include an additional element such as the emotional element of their experience (4), the fact that they did not try too hard to learn (5) or, on the contrary, they argue that they got the highest mark in the exam (9):

> *4. am pășit și eu prin prin proba aceasta și am trecut de examenele de clasa a VIII-a, de clasa a XII-a. Mi-aduc aminte, erau emoții puternice, erau temeri, dar la final, au venit succesele. / I also went through this test and*

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[7] A translation of the Romanian discursive sequences is provided after each example. The translation was realized by the author of the article.

passed my 8th grade exams, 12th grade exams. I remember, there were strong emotions, there were fears, but in the end, success came.

5. Eu unul, după ce am terminat liceul și am dat examenul de bacalaureat, pe care nu l-am luat chiar cu note foarte mari, dar nici n-am fost la coadă, de leneș ce-am fost, de fapt. / Me, after I finished high school and took the A-level exam, I didn't really get very high marks for, but I was not between the last students, I was lazy.

6. ...sper să îmi amintesc ce notă am luat, că [...] deci la română, am luat inițial 9.60, am depus contestație, am luat 9.45, dramă. La istorie am luat 10, iar la geografie am luat 9,80. Targetul meu era să iau 10 la toate, dar nu le putem avea pe toate, așa că cu asta defilăm momentan, am avut o medie inițială de 9,80, după aceea a scăzut la 9,75 / ...I hope I remember what grade I got, that [...] so in Romanian, I initially got 9.60, I appealed, I got 9.45, drama. In history I got 10, and in geography I got 9.80. My target was to get 10 in all of them, but we can't get them all, so that's what I have at the moment, I had an initial average of 9.80, then it dropped to 9.75.

9. am dat examenul de bac la cele 3 materii orale
Am luat, pentru că sigur o să fie întrebări de cât am luat la bac, am luat 10. [...] Media generală fiind 10. / My A-level exam consisted in 3 oral subjects
I got, because I' m sure there will be questions of what I got in the bac, I got 10. [...] The overall average being 10.

One' s own example can also be used as a strategy to legitimate communication about the A-level exam. Through this experience the speaker can make appropriate recommendations based on their own knowledge:

5. O să vă zic ce-am făcut eu ca să trec acest examen... / I'll tell you what I did to pass this exam...

7. Eu pot să vă spun ce făceam eu, nu știu ce faceți voi mai departe. Nu trebuie să vă panicați să stați în continuu cu nasul în carte. / I can tell you what I did, I don't know what you do next. You don't have to panic to keep your nose in the book.

3. eu am învățat vreo 3 zile pentru bac. Fără caterincă. Bine. Am mai repetat eu pe drum, câte ceva și o să vă explic cum am reușit eu să învăț și să iau bacul în trei zile / I studied for the exam for 3 days. No joke. Ok. I've repeated a few things along the way and I'll explain how I managed to study and take the A-levels in three days.

There are also expressions of legitimation that individualise the identity of the speaker. This is the case of the locutor 10 who claims his expertise online as a trainer in webinars and emphasises the assertion that what he says is true:

> *10. Vreau să spun sincer că am organizat multe webinarii în ultima perioadă. / I want to frankly say that I have organised many webinars lately.*

The assumed discursive identity of an autodidact (6), the emphasis on self-effort, and learning capacity constitute also aspects of speaker legitimation:

> *6. sunt autodidactă de fel. Deci, m-am descurcat.*
> *Nu am luat meditaţii la absolut nimic, este exclusiv munca mea şi efortul meu / I am an autodidact by nature. So, I've handled the situation.*
> *I didn't take classes on anything at all, all it's exclusively my own work and effort.*

We also have spotted one youtuber (8) who mentions no experience and does not seem to think it is necessary by any means to legitimise his speech.

Therefore, it can be stated that the *social identity* of Romanian youtubers who talk about the A-level exam is that of: *students, teachers* or *trainers* who want to be trusted by other users of social networks, which is why they legitimate their discourse by mentioning: *the exam experience, their own example, their experience as a trainer* or *their own struggle*.

4.2. The Construction of Discursive Identity

The construction of the speaker's discursive identity comprises two major components, credibility and gaining attention, both of which are essential for the speaker to get the message across and make other social media users pay attention.

Credibility implies that what the speaker says is accepted as a content having value as truth. From among the discursive strategies identified in the corpus of analysis as being used to construct a credible identity are: *involvement, demonstrative attitude*, and *objectivity* (Charaudeau 2009). Moreover, it can be observed that the most used strategy by the Romanian youtubers is the *involvement*. This entails that the speaker, is concerned about other users and considers helping them with their preparation for the A-level exam.

To show involvement, the speaker engages discursively and *transmits* knowledge/know-how. The speaker assumes the identity of a holder of a knowledge which is missing for those who have not had the examination. He/she offers to pass on to the others the knowledge of which he/she disposes. Through involvement, the speaker supports the other youtubers. Different types of assistance can be provided to others, such as explaining methods and techniques to help preparing for the exam:

1. ... foloseam o tehnică pe care sunt gata să ți-o prezint, să o împărtășesc cu tine, ... / 1. ... I was using a technique that I'm ready to reveal to you, to share with you, ...

Other locutors (4, 6, 7, 8) provide advice based on their own exam experience and it can be noticed that their advice does not differ at all from that of teachers at school or parents at home. The recurrent advice is to learn:

4. vreau să vă ofer aceste sfaturi ca să vă ajute să luați o notă cât mai bună. / I want to give you this advice to help you get the best grade possible.
6. dacă aveți nevoie de un sfat pe care aș putea să încerc să vi-l dau, sunt aici. / if you need advice that I can try to give you, I am here.
7. Așa că vreau împărtășesc cu voi ceea ce făceam eu și sfaturile pe care mi-aș fi dorit să le știu și eu de la început atunci când am dat bacul. / So I want to share with you what I used to do and the advice I wish I had known when I first took my A level exam.
8. ...chiar vă sfătuiesc să învățați cât mai rămâne din perioada asta pentru bac. / ...I strongly recommend that you study while there is still time left for the A-level exam.

Suggesting motivational (1) and mobilising (6) exercises to prepare the collocutors for the exam is a strategy perceived in the corpus of analysis, with the speaker presenting these exercises as solutions for preparing for the A-level exam:

1. ...fă acest exercițiu pentru că o să te ajute. / ...do this exercise because it will help you.
6. Ideea stă cam așa: trebuie să vă puneți pe treabă... / The idea goes like this: you need to get to work...

It can be noticed that one locutor (10) considers that the preparation for the A-level exam relies on some secrets, which he wishes to reveal to his YouTube followers. This is a way of gaining attention and stimulating users' curiosity.

10. Astăzi o să îți arăt care sunt cele mai mari secrete pentru bacul de la română. / Today I'm going to show you the biggest secrets for the Romanian language A-level exam.

The transfer of know-how (9, 10) can also be achieved by providing tips and tricks that can improve exam results:

> *9. niște tips and tricks pe care vreau să vi le spun și vouă acuma ca să vă crească un pic media și să nu uitați niște lucruri care poate sunt destul de normale și de elementare / some tips and tricks that I want to tell you now to raise your average a bit and not to forget some things that are perhaps quite normal and elementary*
> *10. ...care sunt cele mai, care sunt acele tips and tricks-uri care îți pot câștiga puncta / ...what are the most, what are those tips and tricks that can earn you points.*

Besides specific advice, recommendations and exercises, some speakers (2, 3) also want to transmit materials that they have used in preparing for the A-level exam to those interested in the subject. These materials consist of summaries, systematizations of the lessons or even videos:

> *2. Vreau să împărtășesc cu voi materialele pe care le am, care sunt structurate destul de bine zic eu, [...] eu le-am făcut cât să învăț ... Deci, vreau să vă dau și vouă această materie, celor care sunteți în clasa a XII-a, și urmează să dați bacul. / I want to share with you the materials I have, which are structured quite well I say, [...] I made them enough to learn ... So, I want to give you also this subject, those of you who are in the 12th grade, and you are about to take the exam.*
> *3. Băi, clipul ăsta îl fac exact cum am mai făcut un clip Cum să săbești, ca să ajut unele persoane, să le scap de anumite chestii. / Hey, I'm doing this video just like I did a How to Sauté video before, to help some people, to get them out of certain things.*
> *3. fac clipul ăsta să vină în ajutorul vostru... / I'm doing this video to help you...*

A unique situation is that of the locutor 4 who not only makes it clear that he wants to be of service and wants to be considered as a source of information to those who are taking the A-level exam but assumes an identity of a friend. This is a situation of unique emotional involvement, the other locutors merely transmitting advice and materials.

> *4. Vreau să vă fiu de folos. Considerați-mă un prieten și, de ce nu, o resursă la care să apelați atunci când aveți nevoie. / I want to help you. Consider me a friend and, why not, a useful resource to consult when you need it.*

An attitude which is the opposite of that discussed but which also contributes to the construction of a credible identity of the speaker is *objectivity*. It is a detached attitude towards the subject of discussion, emotionless and uninvolved, which is usually assimilated to the attitude of an expert.

In the attitude of the Romanian youtuber, objectivity is less evident in the construction of the discursive identity, within the context of the transmission of knowledge/know-how. This attitude concerns particularly the discursive sequences of knowledge transmission. After the introductory sequence, the speaker mentions the pressure felt by those preparing for exams and suggests to continue the discussion on the topic of the exams. Some of the speakers (9) are more efficient than others and proceed directly to the transfer of knowledge, while others, those whose content falls into the category of deceiving content continue to digress on different topics (5).

> *5. Acum să trecem exact la motivul pentru care sunteți aici! Se apropie perioada examenelor de bacalaureat și ești destul de stresat în legătură cu asta, nu? / Now let's get to exactly why you are here! The A-level exams are approaching and you're pretty stressed about it, right?*
> *9. Dacă tot mai este puțin timp până când vine examenul de bacalaureat, să vorbesc despre bac. Și, mai important, să vorbesc despre cum să ne organizăm timpul înainte de un examen super important, cum să ne planificăm materia și ce să învățăm, pe ce să punem accentul, atunci când avem foarte mult de recapitulat și vrem să luăm notă cât mai mare. / While there is still a little time until the A-level exams are coming up, let's talk about the A-levels. And more importantly, let's talk about how to organize our time before a super important exam, how to plan our material and what to study, what to focus on, when we have a lot of revision to do and we want to get the highest grade.*

The identity of locutor 5 is a *deceiving identity*[8], based on a false content. This can be noticed when, the discursive sequence corresponding to the objective attitude contradicts the entire videoclip. The speaker announces already from the title of the video that the content of the videoclip is "How to take the A-levels exam easily and without stress". However, the content he provides completely cancels out the previously constructed discursive sequences. Basically, the speaker states that it is not possible to take the A-levels exam easily and effortlessly, contradicting himself.

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[8] In this article we will refer to *deceiving identities* as to those discursive identities assumed in the virtual environment that deviate from the originally assumed identity and discourse. Thus, the locutor instead of providing knowledge and information about the A-level exam, gets lost in trivialities without offering any information. The term is inspired by current practices on social networks called *identity deception* (Janczewski&Colarik 2008, 93) and/or *faking identity* (Scott 2015, 205-236) a complex phenomenon associated with forgery and fraud.

> *5. ...vreți să luați examenul de bacalaureat cu ușurință, da? Ei bine, surpriza e că nu prea ai cum să iei bacul fără să treci cu ușurință pentru că trebuie să muncești pentru tot ce-ți dorești în viață, nu o să capeți nimic de valoare și de durată dacă ai făcut în grabă, fără cap și, cel mai important foarte ușor. / ...you want to take the A-levels with ease, right? Well, the surprise is that you can't really take the A-levels easily because you have to work for everything you want in life, you won't gain anything of value and lasting if you did it in a hurry, thoughtlessly and easily.*

The discourse closes by clarifying that the videoclip created is just "a dose of motivation" for the audience in order to start learning, but without transmitting any knowledge (ideas, methods or materials).

> *5. Ei, cred că ți-ai luat doza de motivație ca să te apuci de învățat pentru examenul care îți va schimba viața. / Well, I think you've had your dose of motivation to start learning for your life-changing exam.*

We consider such discursive fractures to be an unsuccessful attempt to construct a credible identity.

The demonstrative attitude is required to construct a credible identity; however, this attitude is the least frequent in youtubers' discussions about the A-levels exam. A demonstrative attitude is illustrated by the situation in which the speaker aims to convince the other participants to the situation of communication that what he or she claims is true and provides evidence in favour of what he/she claims. Even though several youtubers in the corpus of analysis mention their exam grades, only one (2) provides evidence to prove the truth of what they state.

> *2. Înainte de toate o să pun aici probabil un screenshot cu notele mele de la bacalaureat și cu codul meu dacă vreți să-l verificați și nu mă credeți. / First of all, I'll probably put here a screenshot of my A-level exams grades and my code if you want to check it and don't believe me.*

On the other hand, the poor prevalence of this demonstrative attitude is also due to the informal communication setting, which does not require the speaker to demonstrate credibility.

Attention-getting is the component of the speaker's identity that enables utterances to be perceived by the other participants in the situation of communication. In order to gain attention, the speaker has to display different attitudes during the utterance of his/her speech. These include: *polemical, seductive or dramatic attitudes.*

The *polemical* attitude is rather controversial and therefore seldom used, especially in the school context, which is already a very controversial and contested field in Romania. The corpus analysis suggests that only speakers 5 and 8 display a polemical attitude in their discourse. Regarding the speaker 5, we have already noticed the *deceiving content* of his discourse. Thus, speaker 5 continues to construct a *deceiving identity* and he discursively represents himself as an unreliable source of knowledge because of his polemical attitude. He fails to gain attention from the audience.

> *5. școala nu a făcut nimic altceva decât să-mi umple capul cu prostii. Bine, e mult spus să-mi umple capul, că eu nu prea îmi umpleam capul cu nimic din ceea ce privea școala. Eu învățam doar ca să nu rămân repetent, deci cam asta era ideea. Și uitam imediat to ceea ce învățam. / school has done nothing but fill my head with nonsense. Well, that's saying too much, because I didn't really fill my head with anything school related. I was just studying so I wouldn't fall behind, so that was pretty much the point. And forgot everything I learned.*

The polemical attitude of speaker 8 is not so extreme, but it can be noticed that the speaker gives a lot of room in his discourse to other issues instead of focusing on the transfer of knowledge. It can also be noticed that the topic of the speech is addressed ironically in a manner which is not appropriate in this context.

> *8. Poate nu ar chiar ieși foarte bine dacă nu ai învățat deloc. Deci, un pic acolo, trebuie totuși să înveți. Asta-i pentru părinții care se uită la videoclip. / Maybe it wouldn't really turn out very well if you didn't study at all. So, a bit there, you still have to learn. That's for parents watching the video.*
> *8. ...ai nevoie de un coleg de treabă și conștiincios, care să îți trimită cursurile, adică paginile care s-au scris la școală când tu erai „bolnav" și nu te-ai dus. / ...you need a nice, hard-working, thoughtful classmate who will send you your coursework, i.e. the pages that were written in school when you were "sick" and didn't go.*

In the closing of his discourse, the speaker admits that the videoclip falls short of its stated communicative purpose but he believes that the manner of putting forward the ideas in the discourse is "very funny". Therefore, the fact that the speaker fails to gain the attention of the other YouTube users is due to the shift in the communicative purpose of the discourse. By doing this, the speaker constructs a *deceiving discursive identity*.

> *8. Nu a fost un video prea serios, sau mă rog, lucrurile pe care le-am spus*
> *în acest video să zicem că au puțină dreptate doar că au fost reprezentate*
> *într-o manieră foarte amuzantă. / This wasn't a very serious video, or*
> *whatever, the things I said in this video, let's just say that they were a little*
> *bit right, only that they were said in a very funny way.*

The two polemical attitudes suggest that, due to the fact that the discursive identity of the speaker (5, 8) is not consistently and credibly constructed, communicative content diminishes in relevance.

The seductive attitude is the one most often used in youtubers' communication about the Romanian A-level exam. Therefore, in order to gain attention, the Romanian youtuber adopts a friendly, informal, relaxed attitude, in an attempt to be popular and well accepted by other youtubers. A seductive discursive attitude adopted by the speaker (1) consists in inviting the collocutor to a discussion on a topic of importance to the latter, namely the A-level exam.

> *1. ... și hai să vorbim de un subiect foarte important în perioada asta. Cum*
> *să-mi iau bacul / examenele / ... and let's talk about a very important topic*
> *at this time. How to pass my A-levels/exams*

Other seductive gaining attention attitude consists of a warm greeting and a friendly tone, typical of teachers who know how to involve students in the teaching process.

> *4. Dragi elevi, mai bine zis prieteni, nu-i așa? / Dear students, or should I*
> *say friends?*

In the same context of gaining attention, the locutor (9) constructs a very friendly identity and treats the other YouTube users as if they were very close friends (*Bună dragilor*) and claims that she "missed" them.

> *9. Bună dragilor, bine ați venit pe canalul meu de YouTube, sincer să fiu,*
> *mi-a fost dor de voi. / Hi darlings, welcome to my YouTube channel, to be*
> *honest I've missed you.*

The seductive attitude may be used when the speaker has no authority over the collocutor and, by this attitude, he/she tries to make him act according to his intentions. This way, sometimes a speaker (10) intentionally adopts the role of a person who needs the help of the others and incites the audience to establish a communicative interaction with him. Also, the closing sequence of the speech is one intended to engage young YouTube users, being a typical encouragement characteristic of their language:

10. ...ajută-mă, motivează-mă și tu. Lasă-mi un comentariu și lasă-mi poate idei ... [...] dă un mare share [...]. Poți să mă urmărești și pe celelalte rețele de socializare [...] Și dacă ai întrebări poți să-mi scrii. Așa că, până data viitoare, să-i spargem la bac! / ...help me, and motivate me. Leave me a comment and leave me ideas... [...] give a big share [...]. You can also follow me on other social networks [...] And if you have any questions you can also write to me. So, until next time, let's smash the A-level exams!

Dramatic attitude is used by the speaker to gain the attention of the audience in different ways. Thus, a first discursive strategy identified in the corpus of analysis is the inclusion in the speaker's discourse a story describing how he helped a friend to pass his exam (1).

Another dramatic attitude is the speaker's inclusion in his discourse of a story about how he prepared for the A-level exam. This type of interpreted narrative succeeds in gaining attention because it insists on the fact that the speaker did not prepare at all for the exam and yet managed to score enough to pass it. The first-person narrative emphasises that the narrator did not study, did not make any effort preparing for the exam and knew nothing until very shortly before the exam. Basically, the gaining of attention strategy within this discourse (2, 3) is based on the speaker statement that he/she was able to prepare quickly and effortlessly for the exam. Simultaneously, one can observe the construction of the speaker's identity as a student with no interest in studying.

2. M-am pus eu să învăț ... chiar deloc. Adică, vă dați seama că am fost într-o vacanță practic de 3 luni în care n-am avut chef să fac nimic. Și m-am trezit pe data de 1 iunie [...] și zic: „Bă, mai sunt trei săptămâni și vine bacul." Și eu nu am depus efortul ... necesar pentru un elev silitor. [...] atunci aveam un minim de cunoștințe, dar eu nu depusesem efort să stau eu să-mi scriu comentarii sau să stau să le învăț, nu. Învățam înainte de testul ăla [...] / I put myself to study ... really at all. I mean, you realize that I was on basically a 3-month vacation where I didn't feel like doing anything. And then I found myself on the 1st of June [...] and I said: "Well, three weeks to go and the exams are coming up." And I didn't make the necessary ... effort for a diligent student. [...] at that time I had a minimum of knowledge, but I hadn't made the effort to sit and write literature comments or to sit and study them, no. I was studying before the test [...].
3. ...câte o zi pentru fiecare materie [...] Bă, n-am deschis o carte, n-am citit un eseu, nimic. Nimic. Eu ieșeam pe-afară n-aveam treabă că e bac. Ce-i dacă e bac? Mai am eu timp hă! hă! Până vine bacul pă 25. [...] rămân 3 zile pân la bac. Și eu nu mai aveam timp [...] nu mai știam nimic despre logică. Ce-am făcut? Băi! E un om extraordinar pe YouTube aicea. [...] face, teoretic meditații la logică fără să-l plătești. [...] La română [...] l-am găsit

pe un om de făcea clipuri despre cum să înveți la română... / ...one day for each subject [...] Well, I didn't open a book, I didn't read an essay, nothing. Nothing. I was going out, I didn't have any work to do because it was the A-levels. What if it's the A-levels? I still got time. Till the exam comes on the 25th. [...] I got three days until the exam. And I didn't have time [...] I didn't know anything about logic. What did I do? Hey! There's a great man on YouTube here. [...] he does, theoretically, logic tutoring without paying him. [...] For Romanian language and literature [...] I found a man who made videos on how to learn Romanian language and literature...

There are also speakers (6, 7) whose discourse displays no gaining attention attitude. These are discourses that pay more attention to the objective description of the work steps required to prepare for the exam, these are discourses in which the transfer of knowledge comes to the fore.

As far as can be noticed, when talking online about exams, Romanian youtubers use all types of strategies to gain the attention of their peers. It can also be noticed that, quite often, youtubers aim to gain attention without conveying the knowledge they promise, leading to deceiving content.

5. Conclusions

As a conclusion, we would like to point out that through the analysis of the discourses performed by Romanian youtubers we have been able to outline several main aspects of the construction of locutor's identity within the context of their talks about the A-level exam. Therefore, they are young people who, in the majority, would like to be known by their real name and surname, only a few considering this aspect of their identity not important. The identity they all assume is that of a keeper of knowledge, methods, techniques and materials for preparing the A-level exam. Most Romanian youtubers promise efficient, fast, stress-free preparation methods with optimal exam results.

From the analysis carried out, it can be stated that the identity assumed by Romanian youtubers when they talk about exams is, from a social point of view, a legitimate one. All youtubers assume a social identity that allows the collocutor to validate the fact that they are qualified to communicate on this topic being a student, trainer or teacher. Furthermore, in order to reinforce the credibility of the speaker's identity, most of the youtubers bring as an argument the fact that they have taken the exam, while some mention the marks they took in the A-level exam and some others mention their experience in the teaching process.

When it comes to the construction of a credible discursive identity, Romanian youtubers mostly display an attitude of subjective involvement, all of them showing their eagerness to help, to advise or to share their knowledge and experience with other youtubers. This knowledge takes the form of methods, words of advice, tips and tricks, exercises, materials and videos. So far as can be noticed, the constructed identities which only remain at the level of involvement can generate deceiving content. Youtubers who also assume an objective or demonstrative attitude are the ones who generate a most suited content to the situation of communication and to the expectations of the collocutor. These locutors are also those who, in terms of YouTube statistics, have the highest number of visitors and likes.

The need to gain the attention on social media makes locutors reveal more of their discursive identity. Therefore, the attitude which is most influential in online communication in Romanian is the seductive attitude, which makes the speaker approachable, friendly and empathetic. To this also contributes the informal register adopted by all Romanian youtubers without exception. Less successful attitudes for gaining attention are the polemic attitude and the dramatic attitude that are characteristic of speakers susceptible to digressions and detours from the main topic of communication, that can also generate deceiving content.

To conclude, it can be stated that young people are more attracted to talking about exams on social media by the fact that the speaker is charismatic and proves experience in the field, the language is familiar and informal and the speaker assumes an identity that proves concern for the others and gains attention through his/her personality.

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3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qxM4-VSiu4&t=2s
4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zp1dodorEnI
5. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kg78WEaQ_4&t=697s
6. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AYWeBuGByHo

7. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79-LgqA6S70&t=3s
8. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uaI0Z5B5jQ&t=7s
9. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhPUvFEf2r8&t=82s
10. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGRLhZqFGGk&t=29s

L'ORDINE DELLE PAROLE NEL *CHRONICON VULTURNENSE*

Rossana CICCARELLI[1]

ABSTRACT. *Word Order in the Chronicon Vulturnense.* The aim of this paper is to present a linguistic analysis of the *Chronicon Vulturnense*, a "roborated chronicle" written in Latin in the first half of the 12th century by a monk of the monastery of San Vincenzo at Volturno. The work, which is characterised by the repeated interweaving of chronological and documentary parts, offers interesting insights for the study of the interaction and co-presence of different linguistic repertoires in the written forms of the centuries immediately following the first attestations of vernacular Italian. In particular, the study of word order shows a tendency towards constructions with the verb in a final position in narrative parts and in a central position in documentary parts, while throughout the chronicle proper there is a high frequency of constructions with postverbal subjects, as occurs in many texts of ancient Italian.

Keywords: medieval chronicles, latin-romance transition, medieval latin, word order, pragmatics, postverbal subject, ancient Italian

REZUMAT. *Ordinea cuvintelor în Chronicon Vulturnense.* Scopul acestei lucrări este de a propune o analiză lingvistică a *Chronicon Vulturnense*, o „cronică roborata" scrisă în limba latină în prima jumătate a secolului al XII-lea de către un călugăr de la mănăstirea San Vincenzo al Volturno. Lucrarea, care se caracterizează prin împletirea continuă a unor părţi cronologice şi documentare, oferă o interesantă sursă de reflecţie pentru studiul interacţiunii şi coexistenţei diferitelor repertorii lingvistice prezente în scrierile din secolele imediat următoare primelor atestări ale limbii italiene vernaculare. În special, studiul ordinii cuvintelor arată o tendinţă spre construcţii cu verbul în poziţie finală în părţile narative şi în poziţie centrală

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în părțile documentare, în timp ce în întreaga cronică există o frecvență ridicată a construcțiilor cu subiect postverbal, așa cum se întâmplă în multe texte italiene veche.

Cuvinte-cheie: *Tranziție latino-romanică, cronici medievale, latină medievală, ordinea cuvintelor, pragmatică, subiect postverbal, italiană antică*

1. Introduzione

In questo lavoro intendo proporre un'analisi linguistica del *Chronicon Vulturnense*, un'opera scritta in latino nella prima metà del XII secolo. La cronaca, che ha ricevuto l'attenzione degli studiosi della lingua soprattutto perché al suo interno sono riportate le formule latine che corrispondono alle prime testimonianze del volgare (le formule contenute nei giudicati campani di X secolo)[2], mostra nella sua totalità una complessità linguistica che è ancora tutta da indagare[3]. Nel corso dell'analisi si cercherà di comprendere il "campo di tensione" (Sornicola 2017, 23) tra latino e volgare e di spiegare le compresenze linguistiche che sono tipiche delle scritture giuridiche e cronachistiche di quei secoli.

Le modalità compositive e le strutture testuali delle cronache di questo periodo e in particolare del *Chronicon Vulturnense*, caratterizzato da un continuo alternarsi e intrecciarsi di parti narrative, propriamente cronachistiche, e parti documentarie, propone una serie di spunti di riflessione che possono arricchire le conoscenze che abbiamo della complessa interazione in questa fase della lingua non solo tra latino e volgare ma anche tra "strati"[4], repertori linguistici e tradizioni discorsive diversi. Questa interazione è individuabile a diversi livelli dell'analisi linguistica e risulta particolarmente evidente nelle scelte sintattiche adoperate dal cronista nelle sezioni cronachistiche e in quelle documentarie.

Se nel passaggio dal latino alle lingue romanze si assiste a un cambiamento della struttura interna della frase e dell'ordine delle parole, cambiamento associato generalmente al collasso della flessione nominale e alla perdita di distintività delle marche di caso, il latino di questi secoli, testimoniato in particolar modo dalla documentazione notarile e dalle cronache, mostra una variabilità degli

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[2] Si vedano, tra gli altri, gli studi di Folena (1960), Sabatini (1962), Castellani (1976), Proietti (2019).

[3] Come scrive D'Angelo (2003: 1), «la scrittura storiografica prodotta in Italia meridionale nei secoli XI-XIV non si sottrae alla regola generale, per cui le opere storiografiche del Medioevo, intensamente studiate e sfruttate ai fini delle diverse tipologie di ricostruzione 'storica', vengono molto meno analizzate 'in sé' in quanto cioè prodotti specifici della letteratura mediolatina». Va ricordato in proposito lo studio di Paolo Greco (2012) sulla complementazione frasale nelle cronache scritte nell'Italia centro-meridionale tra X e XII secolo.

[4] Nel senso di Aebischer (1978).

schemi d'ordine in cui coesistono costruzioni tipicamente latine (con un ordine SOV) e costruzioni tipicamente romanze (con un ordine SVO) e la presenza piuttosto diffusa di costruzioni con soggetto postverbale (VS) indipendentemente dal mantenimento o meno della morfologia nominale. L'analisi dei testi di questa epoca mostra, infatti, che la compresenza di costruzioni sintattiche diverse non può essere associata soltanto alla morfologia nominale né soltanto alla natura sintattica della frase (transitività del verbo o pesantezza dei costituenti) ma richiede un approccio per così dire "olistico" (Baldi & Cuzzolin 2011) in cui un ruolo di primaria importanza è giocato da fattori di tipo pragmatico e contestuale (Ciccarelli 2021). È quanto si cercherà di fare nelle prossime pagine. Prima di entrare nel vivo dell'analisi linguistica può essere utile, pertanto, dare alcune informazioni sull'opera.

2. Il *Chronicon Vulturnense*: finalità e struttura dell'opera

Il *Chronicon Vulturnense* è un'opera scritta nella prima metà del XII secolo da un monaco dell'abbazia di San Vincenzo al Volturno di nome Giovanni, eletto abate nel 1139 con il nome di Giovanni VI[5]. L'opera rientra in quella tipologia testuale che viene definita "cronaca roborata", un tipo di testo storiografico piuttosto diffuso nell'Italia meridionale dell'XI secolo e più avanti anche in tutta l'Europa occidentale (D'Angelo 2012, 165), dove si ritrovano le vicende relative ai monasteri in cui venivano prodotte, corroborate, appunto, da una serie di atti notarili pubblici e privati che avevano l'obiettivo «di ricostruire la storia del chiostro e di sostanziarne le rivendicazioni territoriali e patrimoniali» (D'Angelo 2004, 26). Caratteristiche comuni di questi testi[6] sono da un lato la loro origine monastica e il loro carattere intrinsecamente privato e utilitaristico e dall'altro una estensione dei propri orizzonti narrativi a vicende storico-politiche di più ampio raggio: ne deriva una commistione di storia pubblica e storia privata, di documentazione pubblica e privata che rende vano qualunque tentativo di rigida definizione (D'Angelo 2003, 41). In particolare, la finalità del *Chronicon Vulturnense* era quella di «raccogliere e conservare in volume i titoli di possesso, diritti e

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5 Il manoscritto, conservato nella Biblioteca Vaticana (Barb. Lat. 2724), ha visto una prima edizione a stampa nel XVIII secolo grazie a Ludovico Antonio Muratori e una prima (e finora unica) edizione critica nella prima metà del Novecento per opera di Vincenzo Federici. Attualmente disponiamo anche di una nuova edizione a cura di Massimo Oldoni con una traduzione italiana di Luisa Roberti De Luca e con un saggio introduttivo di Federico Marazzi. Questa edizione, pubblicata nel 2010, ha l'indubbio vantaggio di essere fruibile anche per coloro che vogliano conoscere la storia di San Vincenzo al Volturno e in generale anche i metodi compositivi di una cronaca roborata, pur senza avere dimestichezza con il latino e in particolare con il latino medievale.

6 Oltre al *Chronicon Vulturnense*, ricordiamo come testi più o meno coevi e geograficamente contigui il *Chronicon Casauriense* e il *Chronicon monasterii Sancti Bartholomei de Carpineto*.

prerogative della badia in tempi in cui la stabilità della residenza era molto precaria» (Federici 1940, XIX). I documenti inseriti, infatti, erano necessari, come scrive Marazzi (2010, XXII),

> a puntellare, con la forza di una tradizione e di una memoria plurisecolari, la traballante *auctoritas* del cenobio vulturnense nel quadro di un Meridione, ormai dominato dai normanni, in cui erano da tempo scomparsi gli antichi interlocutori istituzionali del monastero (l'impero e i principati longobardi) e se ne era fortemente indebolita la base patrimoniale, un tempo base della sua indiscussa primazia spirituale.

La fase redazionale del *Chronicon*, del resto, avviene nel momento in cui si verifica l'abbandono della vecchia e gloriosa sede fondata dai Longobardi e ingrandita in età carolingia e il trasferimento in un nuovo complesso costruito sulla riva opposta del Volturno, che sarebbe stato inaugurato nel 1115 in occasione della visita di papa Pasquale II. Il *Chronicon* doveva creare, pertanto, un documento di collegamento tra il nuovo monastero e quello antico (Marazzi 2010, XXXIII).

È probabile che proprio la finalità e le condizioni contestuali in cui l'opera viene iniziata abbiano determinato la particolare struttura compositiva e la scelta delle vicende narrate nel *Chronicon Vulturnense*. A differenza delle altre cronache del tempo (quelle di Farfa, Montecassino, Casauria, Subiaco) che presentano un testo narrativo separato dalla serie di documenti, il *Chronicon Vulturnense* è un continuo alternarsi di racconto e atti notarili: probabilmente il cronista vulturnense aveva intenzione di fornire rapidamente la disponibilità delle informazioni narrate e contenute nei documenti (Marazzi 2010, XX). L'inserimento dei testi legali all'interno della narrazione comporta, inevitabilmente, una disomogeneità che riguarda tanto la struttura quanto la tipologia testuale, disomogeneità dovuta anche al fatto che l'intera opera fu composta probabilmente non da un solo scrittore ma da più persone attive nello *scriptorium* abbaziale. Come sottolinea Federici «pochi codici serbano le tracce di una collaborazione così ricca e varia» (Federici 1939, 150). In effetti, mentre le parti cronachistiche possono essere attribuite interamente al cronista Giovanni (che si servì comunque di due copisti), le trascrizioni dei documenti furono effettuate da altri tredici monaci del monastero, oltre a un interpolatore, un rubricatore e alcuni miniatori (Federici 1939, 149 ss.).

Un'altra differenza importante rispetto alle altre cronache del tempo consiste nel fatto che il monaco Giovanni, pur dichiarando in apertura del primo libro le sue intenzioni di collegare la storia del cenobio vulturnense alla storia universale, resta sostanzialmente concentrato sulla storia del monastero, ricostruita peraltro quasi esclusivamente dagli atti notarili allegati: il testo si configura come

una sorta di dossier in cui la parte narrativa finisce per avere sostanzialmente una funzione di "cucitura" tra le diverse evidenze documentarie e di introduzione (talora piuttosto sbrigativa) alle medesime» (Marazzi 2010, XXII)[7]. Tuttavia, non è semplice stabilire con certezza l'attendibilità dei 204 documenti (che vanno dall'inizio dell'VIII secolo al 1115) inseriti nella cronaca: soprattutto per quanto riguarda quelli che sono datati prima del sacco saraceno dell'881 (circa una novantina) e in particolare i documenti pubblici (di duchi longobardi, re e imperatori franchi, e pontefici) sono molto probabilmente totalmente falsi o rimaneggiati. Molti sono stati riconosciuti come falsi sulla base di evidenze storiche. E, del resto, anche un'analisi linguistica e stilistica può confermare la falsità di un documento, come viene mostrato nel corposo apparato critico dell'edizione di Federici. All'interno della cronaca, infatti, è possibile scorgere alcune tendenze che accomunano le sezioni cronachistiche e le parti documentarie e che fanno ipotizzare, pertanto, se non la totale falsità del documento, quanto meno un consistente rimaneggiamento da parte del cronista. Se si analizza sintatticamente e stilisticamente uno dei documenti ritenuti falsi da Federici, come il documento n. 10 del primo volume, documento che testimonierebbe la venuta di Carlo Magno nel monastero di San Vincenzo al Volturno e la sua conferma di alcuni possedimenti[8], risulta chiaro quanto appena detto.

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[7] Può essere utile ripercorrere comunque brevemente la struttura e i contenuti dell'opera, così come si presenta nell'edizione di Vincenzo Federici: nel primo volume sono presenti, oltre alle aggiunte dei secoli XII e XIII i libri I-III della Cronaca di Giovanni, che comprendono i documenti 1-73, le vicende del monastero dalla sua origine alla distruzione ad opera dei Saraceni il 10 ottobre 881. Nel secondo volume è contenuto il libro IV, che comprende i documenti 74-183 che vanno dal 10 ottobre 881 al 30 novembre 1011. Del terzo volume, che all'epoca della presentazione dell'opera era ancora in lavorazione, si anticipava che avrebbe contenuto il libro quinto e i documenti 184-207, che vanno dal 1011 alla metà del XII secolo e le aggiunte dell'abate commendatario Cesare Costa (XVI secolo) che aveva intenzione di completare l'opera di Giovanni. Di fatto, l'ultimo documento dell'edizione del *Chronicon* di Vincenzo Federici è il documento 208, datato 1383. Seguono nel terzo volume le pagine contenenti quei documenti «perduti o che non furono trascritti nella Cronaca, perché il cronista Giovanni i suoi collaboratori non li conobbero, o, se trascrittivi in fine, andarono poi perduti con le ultime carte dell'originale manoscritto» (Federici 1938: 125). I documenti aggiunti sono datati dal 686 al 1239.

[8] Nelle note che costituiscono l'apparato critico di Federici, infatti si legge: Falsificazione, parallela all'altra di Carlo n. 19 (colla quale ha comuni i passi « declarantes - usque in Sangrum »; Precipimus preterea - predicto monasterio»), eseguita, col sussidio di altri diplomi Vulturnensi, forse dal monaco Pietro e non dal cronista Giovanni, […] per avvalorare il diploma di Gisulfo (n. 9) e per attribuire maggiore antichità ai diritti di possesso di S. Vincenzo sulle chiese di S. Maria in Due Basiliche (sul Sangro e di Penne); S. Maria in Canneto; S. Maria in Palene; S. Vincenzo di Tocco; S. Sossio nel bosco Pantano. Per quanto riguarda le incongruenze temporali Federici fa notare che nel 715, anno di datazione del documento, Carlo Magno non era ancora nato e che in nessun'altra fonte risulta una venuta di Carlo Magno a Roma prima del 774 (Federici 1925: 140, n. 2).

In effetti, se si esclude la datazione topica che ricorda la formula incipitaria degli atti notarili, il documento ha uno stile non dissimile da quello che caratterizza la narrazione degli eventi. Siamo in un punto della cronaca in cui si racconta che l'imperatore Carlo, avendo saputo da un suo ambasciatore della straordinaria umiltà e religiosità dei monaci del monastero di San Vincenzo al Volturno[9], qualità che non si sarebbero potute trovare altrove né nelle province dei Franchi né nel regno italico, decide di recarsi personalmente al monastero e in seguito di premiare quella generosità confermando alcuni possedimenti del monastero e aggiungendone degli altri. Per avvalorare la narrazione, il cronista inserisce un documento che mostra diverse somiglianze stilistiche con la sezione cronachistica da cui viene introdotto: una tendenza all'ipotassi con frequente uso del *cum* narrativo e dell'ablativo assoluto; ricorso a costruzioni con accusativo e infinito per le completive frasali; rispetto dell'accordo morfosintattico sia tra nome e aggettivo sia tra nome e verbo, e rispetto della norma del latino classico nei sintagmi preposizionali; prevalenza della posizione finale del verbo. Perché sia chiaro quanto appena detto e al fine di agevolare l'individuazione non solo dei singoli fenomeni grammaticali ma anche dell'intera compagine testuale, riporto di seguito un'ampia porzione di quella parte cronachistica che introduce il documento 10, dove si possono notare le costruzioni appena menzionate (*cum* narrativo: *cumque omnia hec piissimus imperator audisset*; ablativo assoluto: *properante autem imperatore* e *convocato ad se archicancellario suo*; completive costruite con accusativo e infinito: *asserebat enim se neque in Francorum provincia neque in aliis terrarum partibus constitutis monasteriis aut audisse aut vidisse tunc temporis tante religionis viro*s e *precepit imperialem scribi preceptum*):

> cumque omnia hec piissimus imperator audisset, omnipotenti Domino gratias referens, suos omnes exortari cepit, ut pro Dei amore et eius martyris Vincencii <obsequii devocione> Christi famulos visitare et locum hunc conspicere deberent. quod et factum est. properante autem imperatore ad monasterium cum universis magnatibus suis et valida multitudine nobilium Francorum, sanctissimi patres cum sacro collegio monachorum eunt obviam cum cereis, lampadibus et diversis thimiamatibus […]. asserebat enim se neque in Francorum provincia neque in aliis terrarum partibus constitutis monasteriis aut audisse aut vidisse tunc temporis tante religionis viros, et iccirco se obnixe petere ut ab ipsius imperiali munificencia aliquid accipere dignarentur pro sua suorumque incolumitate, pro regni stabilitate et future vite, mercedis augmento […]

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[9] Noverit, domine meus, vestra certissime imperialis sublimitas, non sola que vobis olim delata sunt in Dei servis, sed multo alciora re[li]gionis exercicia eminere, nec unquam meminisse scias vel in Francorum provinciis vel in Italici regni ambitu clariores huius ordinis repperire <posse> viros» (*Ch.V.*, I, 137). D'ora in poi i riferimenti al testo analizzato saranno indicati come segue: *Ch.V.*, volume, pagina.

> tunc clementissimus imperator horum peticionibus libentissime annuit et,convocato ad se archicancellario suo, precepit imperialem scribi preceptum, secundum quod Dei famuli voluissent, et hoc preceptum quod ab imperiali manu acceperunt.

La formula *et hoc preceptum quod ab imperiali manu acceperunt* che chiude questa parte della cronaca serve a introdurre il documento che viene riportato subito dopo dal cronista. A suddividere le due parti, quella cronachistica e quella documentale, e a segnalare la natura documentale del testo successivo (che riporto di seguito dall'inizio) è soltanto la formula incipitaria *In nomine domini Dei et salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi. (Carolus gratia Dei rex Francorum et Longobardorum ac patricius Romanorum*). Il testo che segue conserva, invece, le stesse scelte stilistiche e sintattiche della parte cronachistica precedente (*cum* narrativo, una costruzione participiale con una incidentale introdotta da *ut*, una subordinata temporale costruita con *cum* e il congiuntivo, una causale resa con l'ablativo assoluto e una relativa):

> In nomine domini Dei et salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi. (Carolus gratia Dei rex Francorum et Longobardorum ac patricius Romanorum) Cum constet nos a summo, viro et vero Deo in seculo isto mortales, esse creatos et eius divine miseracione pietatis tam regni apicem quam inimicorum victoriam nobis datam credamus, iure illi nos semper subditos esse oportet et eius ecclesiis digna cum reverenda honorem impendere ac ea que sunt necessaria nostro obsequio exhibere debemus. Quod nos, ut possumus, salubriter agentes, cum ad beati Petri corpus Rome divina gracia de Francorum provincia venissemus, comperta opinione eximie religionis cenobii Christi martyris Vincencii, quod a sanctis viris Paldone, Tatone et Tasone in Samnii provincia super Vulturnum fluvium edificatum fuerat, devote illuc pergere nostrorum fidelium consilio curavimus. A quibus gratifice suscepti eorum nos oracionibus commendantes, cum (eos obnixe peteremus ut sibi aliquod competens beneficium a nostra imperiali magnificencia expetere dignarentur), iamdicti venerabiles Christi servi nostram exoraverunt clemenciam, ut illorum predia et possessiones seu ecclesias per diversos fines regni Italici sibi subiectas, precepta quoque regum Langobardorum et ducum seu quorumlibet aliorum oblaciones virorum ac Deo devotorum eidem cenobio Christi martyris Vincencii confirmaremus[10].

Le scelte sintattiche appena mostrate caratterizzano gran parte dell'opera, rendendola non tanto un alternarsi quanto un intrecciarsi di parti cronachistiche e parti documentarie. Nel *Chronicon Vulturnense*, infatti, cronaca e documenti

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[10] Si tratta del documento n. 10 inserito nel primo volume dell'edizione di Federici: *Ch.V.*, I, 141.

sono disposti in un modo che non consente di stabilire un inizio e una fine se non per la scelta di alcune formule (come quelle viste sopra) alle quali l'autore fa ricorso per segnare il discrimine tra le parti. Tuttavia, è possibile scorgere una differenza tra le diverse parti dell'opera grazie a un'analisi a grana fine di alcuni brani. Se si estende lo sguardo anche ai fenomeni morfologici e morfosintattici presenti nel testo, si possono individuare, infatti, tendenze che sono tipiche della tradizione giuridica altomedievale e tali da consentire l'individuazione della differenza tra i due generi presenti nel testo.

3. Tra cronaca e documenti. Uno spoglio linguistico

I fenomeni linguistici più evidenti che caratterizzano i testi notarili riportati nel *Chronicon Vulturnense*, distinguendoli dalle parti cronachistiche, sono legati anzitutto alla morfologia nominale. Infatti, se si escludono quei documenti che anche dal punto di vista stilistico, oltre che storico, possono essere considerati decisamente falsi o quelli in cui risulta chiaramente il forte intervento normativo del cronista, le caratteristiche più visibili delle carte riportate nella cronaca sono quelle relative al mancato accordo morfosintattico e talvolta alla totale perdita di distintività delle marche di caso, caratteristiche che si ritrovano in altra documentazione notarile altomedievale[11]. Di seguito riporto alcuni degli esempi che evidenziano i principali fenomeni relativi al sintagma nominale e al sintagma preposizionale:

i. *in* + ablativo, per indicare il moto a luogo: «et sicut memoravimus de his fratribus, qui post conversionem *in aliquo crimine* sunt lapsi» (*Ch.V.*, I, 26); «veniens ergo prefatus apocrisarius *in monasterio* a sanctis patribus cum omni solacio humanitatis studiose susceptus est» (*Ch.V.*, I, 136-137);

ii. *cum* + accusativo per indicare il comitativo: «et inclitam curtem meam quam habeo in finibus Caudetane, loco Paulisi, *cum duos servos meos*, qui ibidem ordinati esse» (*Ch.V.*, I, 250);

iii. uso sovraesteso dell'accusativo e dell'ablativo per indicare il soggetto oltre che l'oggetto: «interesset Petrus iudex et *aliis bonis hominibus* et *subscriptos testes* ego qui supra Berardo et meis heredibus omni tempore defendere obligamus» (*Ch.V.*, I, 16); «*hec autem rebus*, unde nos iam supra diximus, cum predicte ecclesie et cum suis scripcionibus et pertinenciis omnia infra se vel supra se habentes tota et integra offeruimus» (*Ch.V.*, I, 16); «obligo me ego qui supra Berardo et *meis heredibus* ad pars predicti monsterii et eius rectoribus eadem offercione, que supra legitur, integra defendere *ego et meis heredibus* ab omnibus hominibus omnibusque partibus» (*Ch.V.*, I, 16);

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[11] In proposito si vedano anche i lavori di Molinelli (2005) e Sornicola (2017).

iv. uso del nominativo in sintagmi preposizionali: «et si aliquando tempore ego qui supra Berardo vel meis heredibus *ad pars* predicti monsterii aud eius rectoribus, per qualecumque racione aut ingenio» *Ch.V.*, I, 17);

v. *ad* + ablativo, in luogo del dativo, per indicare il beneficiario: «neque ad me ego qui supra Berardo neque *ad filiis meis*; ea racione ut a modo et semper a pars eiusdem ecclesie et *ad eius rectoribus* iam dicta mea offercione ego qui supra Berardo et meis heredibus omni tempore defendere obligamus» (*Ch.V.*, I, 17);

vi. discordanze morfosintattiche tra nome e aggettivo: «*per hanc* quoque videlicet *cartula*, pro redempcione anime mee et de filiis meis atque pro Adeltrude uxori mee, offero monsterium Sancte Columbe» (*Ch.V.*, I, 16);

vii. uso di *de* + N in luogo (o in cooccorrenza con) del genitivo sintetico: «per hanc quoque videlicet cartula, pro redempcione *anime mee et de filiis meis* atque pro Adeltrude uxori mee, offero monsterium Sancte Columbe quod situm est in territorio *de Frisolone*» (*Ch.V.*, I, 16).

I fenomeni legati alla morfologia nominale appena mostrati non hanno alcuna pretesa di esaustività ma sono utili a comprendere da un lato le caratteristiche linguistiche generali dei testi presi in esame e dall'altro l'incidenza che una flessione nominale priva di distintività morfematica può avere sulla sintassi e sulla testualità dell'opera. Se il latino arcaico e classico era una lingua con un ordine dei costituenti libero, dal momento che le funzioni sintattiche potevano essere garantite dalle marche di caso[12], nel latino tardo l'ordine VO diventa decisamente prevalente rispetto all'ordine OV (Adams 1976)[13]. Secondo Adams (1976, 95), con l'affermarsi di un ordine VO si ha anche una progressiva emersione dell'ordine VS, il cui primo nucleo si può ritrovare nelle costruzioni passive, dove il soggetto ha lo stesso ruolo di paziente dell'oggetto delle costruzioni attive:

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[12] Il verbo poteva essere in posizione finale, posizione mediana e posizione iniziale, ma l'ordine maggiormente attestato nel latino arcaico e classico è quello SOV, del tipo *Antiochus epistolis bellum gerit* (Catone, *Origines,* frg. 7). Tuttavia, in alcuni contesti questo tipo di ordine poteva essere invertito ed alcuni elementi potevano trovarsi in posizioni enfatiche (*Tonstellen*), ossia all'inizio e alla fine della frase per ragioni di enfasi (*Betonung*) nella prosa o anche per questioni ritmico-prosodiche in poesia (Hofmann 1963: 397). In alcuni contesti si poteva avere un ordine non marcato con il verbo in posizione mediana, un ordine SVO dunque. Già in Cicerone, ad esempio, è attestata una sequenza SVO quando l'oggetto è costituito da un quantificatore o quando è seguito da una specificazione sintagmatica (Hofmann 1963: 404). Il verbo, infine, poteva trovarsi anche in posizione iniziale e questo avveniva generalmente in due contesti: con i tempi storici e per indicare un passaggio ad una nuova situazione all'interno della narrazione; con l'imperativo o con il congiuntivo iussivo (Hofmann 1963: 403).

[13] Secondo lo studio di Adams nell'*Itinerarium Egeriae* il rapporto tra la struttura VO e quella OV nelle frasi principali è di 42 : 18 e nell'Anonimo Valesiano di 22 : 2. In questi testi sono presenti attestazioni di ordine VO anche nelle subordinate a verbo finito.

> in vulgar texts of late antiquity in which the order VO is definitely the predominating pattern there is a high incidence of the order V (pass.) + S. [...]. The frequency of this type of inversion can be explained from the fact that the subject of a passive verb is the same as the object of the corresponding active structure. At a time when VO was the norm even in written varieties of the language, the subject of a passive verbs, being the patient of the action, tended to be placed in the object position after the verb.

I diversi studi sull'ordine delle parole hanno mostrato in generale l'insufficienza di ricorrere a una sola spiegazione che possa motivare il cambiamento dal latino alle lingue romanze[14]. Come nota Sornicola (1994, 28),

> [s]yntactic, semantic and pragmatic factors mix together in different ways in different text types, but in the great majority of cases it cannot be ascertained which one is the real «causer» of the WO pattern actually occurring. One has to admit that this amounts to saying that the nature of the relationship between such factors and WO phenomena is probabilistic, not deterministic. WO is sensibly affected by lexico-semantic factors (the verb sub-class) as well as pragmatic factors (the Given/New distribution), textual strategies [...], syntactic factors (the occurrence of a constituent in top position, the relative-locative context), rhythmic factors (heavy constituency).

Anche la documentazione altomedievale, in cui si assiste a una grande variabilità degli schemi d'ordine, conferma la necessità di analisi multiprospettiche (Ciccarelli 2021).

Nel testo preso qui in esame, sebbene la morfologia nominale sia spesso ben mantenuta, gli schemi d'ordine attestati sono generalmente indipendenti dal mantenimento della flessione del nome. A incidere maggiormente sembrano invece fattori pragmatici e testuali, legati al tipo di enunciato, alla salienza informativa e alla datità o novità del referente in funzione di soggetto o di oggetto.

Per quanto riguarda l'ordine relativo di verbo e oggetto, si ha una generale tendenza alla posizione preverbale dei referenti già menzionati nel testo, in particolare nelle frasi subordinate, piuttosto frequenti all'interno delle sezioni cronachistiche. Anche i referenti in funzione di oggetto che siano menzionati per la prima volta all'interno del testo o che abbiano un alto grado di informatività, si ritrovano generalmente anteposti al verbo nelle parti cronachistiche mentre sono generalmente in posizione postverbale nelle parti documentarie, fatta eccezione per quei documenti che sono interamente falsificazioni, dove si ha

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[14] Si vedano in particolare i lavori di Weil ([1844] 1991), Adams (1976), Panhuis (1982), Ramat (1984), Sornicola (1994), Bauer (2009), Spevak (2010).

nella maggior parte dei casi una preferenza per le costruzioni a verbo finale. Si può dire che in generale in tutta la cronaca si ha una predilezione per l'ordine OV nelle parti cronachistiche e una per l'ordine VO nelle parti documentarie:

(1) de nichilo enim cuncta creavit, et hec ipsa materies de nichilo creata est (*Ch.V.*, I, 217);

(2) His diebus Augustus Hludovicus, qui tocius Italie, post pie memorie Carolum genitorem suum, regni iura susceperat (*Ch.V.*, I, 220);

(3) Post hec iterum imperator Ludovicus Romam venit, Liguriam, Emiliam, Apuliamque peragravit et diversas ecclesias multis in locis construens, predia delegavit; et aliis que possidebant, precepti sui firmitate roborabat (*Ch.V.*, I, 225).

Tuttavia, questa tendenza di natura eminentemente stilistica può essere legata talvolta alle caratteristiche sintattiche e semantiche del sintagma nominale in funzione di oggetto. Se in (1) e in (2) si hanno oggetti sintatticamente e informativamente "leggeri", in (4) e in (5) i sintagmi nominali in funzione di oggetto sono sintatticamente pesanti e costituiscono l'elemento con il maggior grado di informatività, dal momento che denotano l'oggetto del negozio giuridico del documento riportato:

(4) Ego, in Dei nomine, Hildeprandus gloriosus et summus dux ducatus Spolitino, donamus atque concedimus in monasterio Sancti Vincencii levite et martyris Christi, quod situm est in territorio Beneventano, super fluvio Vulturno, ubi Iosue venerabilis abbas regimen tenet, ecclesiam Sancti Donati in territorio Comino, cum terris et montibus, ubi ipsa qcclesia edificata est, et mons ipse nominatur Pezzullu (*Ch.V.*, I, 243-244);

(5) Concessimus nos, vir gloriosissimus grimoaldus, Dei previdencia, Beneventaneprovincie princeps, per rogum Aodoaldi referendarii nostri, in monasterio Sancti Vincencii martyris, qui situs est in finibusSamnie, iuxta Vulturno flumine, ubi venerabilis vir Iosue abbas custos esse videtur, curtem nostram, quami habemus in finibus territorio Benafrano, cum inclitis terris et montibus uno se tenente, et vocatur terra ipsa Cicerana (*Ch.V.*, I, 244-245).

Molto più interessanti risultano le variazioni relative alla posizione del soggetto rispetto al verbo. Anzitutto va detto che nel testo, anche nelle sezioni documentarie, sono presenti numerose strutture con il cosiddetto soggetto sottinteso, cosa che è piuttosto rara nella documentazione notarile altomedievale. Anche questo può essere un indizio del rimaneggiamento posteriore dei documenti

da parte dei trascrittori. È interessante notare poi l'elevato numero di costruzioni con soggetto posposto, che si trovano sia nelle parti cronachistiche sia in quelle documentarie. Questo dato sembra essere in linea con le strutture sintattiche sia della documentazione mediolatina (Ciccarelli 2021) sia dell'italiano antico (Benincà 2010, Fesenmeier 2003), dove si assiste a un'alta frequenza di costruzioni con soggetto postverbale condizionate da diversi fattori di tipo sintattico, testuale e pragmatico[15].

Nel *Chronicon* la posizione postverbale del soggetto sembra essere condizionata in particolare da fattori sintattici e pragmatici. Dal punto di vista pragmatico, sembra che a favorire la posposizione del soggetto sia il tipo di enunciato: si ritrovano costruzioni con soggetto postverbale i) in quegli enunciati, interamente rematici o presentativi secondo la definizione che ne dà Venier (2002), in cui viene introdotto un referente nuovo o una situazione nuova; ii) in enunciati prescrittivi (costruzioni in cui il verbo è al congiuntivo); iii) in enunciati performativi. Dal punto di vista sintattico e testuale, il soggetto si trova generalmente posposto quando è sintatticamente e informativamente pesante. Di seguito riporto alcuni brani esemplificativi:

(6) maledicant illum Pater et Filius et Spiritus sanctus. et respondeant omnes: amen. maledicant illum beatissima virgo Maria mater domini nostri Iesu Christi: amen; maledicant illum omnes sancti angeli et archangeli Dei: amen; maledicant illum omnes sancti patriarche et prophete Dei: amen; maledicant illum omnes sancti apostoli Dei: amen; maledicant illum viginti quattuor seniores et quattuor evangeliste Dei: amen; maledicant illum omnes sancti innocentes et omnes sancti martyres Dei: amen; maledicant illum omnes sancti confessores et sacerdotes Dei: amen; maledicant illum omnes sancte virgines et vidue Dei: amen; maledicant illum omnes sancti et electi Dei: amen (*Ch.V.*, I, 18) ;

(7) fiant vermes in corpore eius et ulcera in carne illius; veniat mors super illum et descendat vivens in infernum, degluciat illum terra sicut degluttivit Dathan et Abiron; sit socius lude traditoris domini nostri Iesu Christi et cum Anna et Caypha; fiat habitatio eius deserta et non sit qui inhabitet in ea; fiant dies eius pauci et divicias eius possideat alter; fiant filii eius orphani et uxor eius vidua (*Ch.V.*, I, 18).

Nel brano (6) si ha la ripetizione di una costruzione VOS in cui il verbo è al congiuntivo attivo con valore imperativo / ottativo, il sintagma nominale è un referente già menzionato nel testo (come si evince dal determinante all'accusativo

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[15] Per una discussione teorica sul soggetto postverbale in latino e in italiano si vedano i lavori di Venier (2002), Sornicola (2004) e Bonvino (2005).

illum) e il soggetto costituisce l'elemento nuovo e con maggiore salienza informativa all'interno del testo. Nel brano (7), invece la posposizione del soggetto si trova sempre in enunciati di tipo imperativo / ottativo e con verbi intransitivi (*fiant vermes*, *veniat mors*) oltre che transitivi con oggetto noto (*degluciat illum terra*). Strutture con soggetto posposto si trovano anche in altri contesti in cui il verbo è sempre al congiuntivo con valore imperativo / ottativo ma in forma passiva:

(8) sit maledictus fructus terre illius et fructus ventris ipsius; sint maledicta omnia opera illius, maledicta domus, orrea et cellaria illius, maledicta frumenta et omnia cibaria illius, maledicta indumenta, calciamenta et omnia vestimenta ipsius (*Ch.V.*, I, 18);

(9) non sit illi adiutor nec sit qui misereatur pupilli eius; fiant nati eius in innteritu, in una generacione deleatur nomen eius; fiat contra Dominum semper et dispareat de terra memoriam eius; sint super omnes maledicciones quas Dominus mandavit super contemptores legis; sit anathema maranatha (*Ch.V.*, I, 19).

La posposizione del soggetto si trova anche in altri contesti in cui il verbo non è al congiuntivo e l'enunciato non ha valore prescrittivo. In questi casi si trova o in enunciati presentativi all'interno della narrazione oppure all'interno dei documenti nella sezione in cui si stabilisce la natura del negozio giuridico. Per quanto riguarda le parti narrative, è interessante l'altissima frequenza di costruzioni con soggetto postverbale nell'orazione dell'abate Autperto. In questa parte della cronaca la posposizione del soggetto si trova sia in frasi principali sia in frasi subordinate di tipo temporale e causale, in cui la posposizione del soggetto può trovarsi in enunciati presentativi (10, 17, 18); in contesti in cui il soggetto è fortemente rematico (13, 14, 15), in costruzioni copulative in cui si ha un focus sulla parte nominale (21, 22) e in costruzioni medie (22):

(10) Cum venit plenitudo temporis, misit Deus Filium «suum factum ex muliere, factum sub lege, ut eos qui sub lege «erant redimeret, ut adopcionem filiorum reciperemus» (*Ch.V.*, I, 102);

(11) ait enim ipse Dei Filius: Sic Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium «suum unigenitum daret» (*Ch.V.*, I, 102);

(12) «Qui», inquit Iohannes, «dicit se in Christo manere, debet sicut ille ambulavit et ipse ambulare» (*Ch.V.*, I, 103);

(13) Hii ambulant super aspidem et basiliscum et conculcant leonem et draconem, in his ambulaverunt apostoli, hos martyres atque confessores sunt subsequuti, hos per gressus perfecti incederunt (*Ch.V.*, I, 103);

(14) Quia habundabit iniquitas, refrigescet caritas multorum (*Ch.V.*, I, 104);

(15) Exilit inde Taso tacito pede, pectore grato (*Ch.V.*, I, 113);

(16) Sed ut ostenderet omnipotens Deus quanti reatus crimen ammisissent hii, qui pastorem a Deo sibi preelectum abiecissent, nequaquam hac penitencia placatus, mox sine mora iudicium exercuit ulcionis (*Ch.V.,* I, 118);

(17) obiit autem Tato predictus pater tercio idus ianuarias in pace (*Ch.V.*, I, 119);

(18) Cecidit accusator fratrum nostrorum (*Ch.V.*, I, 122);

(19) «Qui enim diligit», ait Apostolus, «legem implevit» (*Ch.V.*, I, 123) ;

(20) iam nullus erit metus mortis (*Ch.V.*, I, 123) ;

(21) Tres fuerunt viri religiosi fideles famuli Christi (*Ch.V.*, I, 125);

(22) sumus enim Beneventane civitatis cives; vocitamur Paldo, Taso et Tato (*Ch.V.*, I, 127).

Anche all'interno dei documenti è possibile notare che la posizione postverbale del soggetto è attestata con una certa frequenza. Date le caratteristiche contestuali delle carte contenute nella cronaca, nei documenti si registra un più alto numero di costruzioni transitive con oggetto espresso o con oggetto ellittico: le carte, infatti, sono registrazioni di negozi giuridici e quindi generalmente sono concessioni o vendite (nel *Chronicon Vulturnense* sono perlopiù concessioni, dal momento che tutta la cronaca nasce da un bisogno di affermare il possesso di un bene ceduto al monastero di San Vincenzo al Volturno). Per questa ragione i verbi maggiormente attestati sono transitivi trivalenti. Come nelle parti cronachistiche si assiste a una preferenza di costruzioni con soggetto posposto tanto in enunciati prescrittivi (23 e 24), usati anche nella formula al passato (25 e 26) come talvolta accade nella documentazione notarile (l'atto risulta una registrazione di quanto è stato stabilito precedentemente) tanto in enunciati presentativi (27). Di seguito riporto alcuni brani di questo tipo :

(23) et divicias eius possideat alter (*Ch.V.*, I, 18);

(24) Nec audeat aliquis ipsos abbates vel monachos ad sacramentum invitare, quia contra divinam auctoritatem et contra regulam est (*Ch.V.*, I, 143);

(25) decrevi ego Taso, indignus abbas monasterii Sancti Vincencii, simul cum collegio et consensu fratrum nostrorum, ut sicut iusta regulam beati Benedicti, quamquam neglegenter contendimus vivere, ita secundum eam de transactis vel recensioribus nostris offensis penitenciam agere debeamus. (*Ch.V.*, I, 25-26);

(26) Concessimus nos domnus vir gloriosus Gisolfus, summus dux geutis Longobardorum [...] in territorio sacre nostre civitatis Beneventane, super Vulturni fiuminis fontem, terras et possessiones, per designatos fines (*Ch.V.*, I, 133-134);

(27) interesset Petrus iudex et aliis bonis hominibus et subscriptos testes (*Ch.V.*, I, 16).

Va detto, però, che il rapporto tra la natura pragmatica dell'enunciato o la novità o datità testuale e contestuale del referente non sono condizioni necessarie per la posposizione del soggetto. In alcuni casi, infatti, si possono avere costruzioni praticamente equivalenti dal punto di vista sintattico e testuale ma con diversa posizione del soggetto rispetto al verbo. Si osservino, per esempio, i passi riportati di seguito, in cui si ha una costruzione con *cum* e il congiuntivo e un referente noto o già menzionato nel testo:

(28) hec omnia cum videret predictus apocrisarius nimis illorum conversacionem ammiratus, tandem illorum pedibus prostratus, et multum se omnium commendans oracionibus gaudens et exultans ad dominum suum augustum reversus est;

(29) cumque omnia hec piissimus imperator audisset, omnipotenti Domino gratias referens, suos omnes exortari cepit, ut pro Dei amore et eius martyris Vincencii <obsequii devocione> Christi famulos visitare et locum hunc conspicere deberent.

Come si è visto, non è possibile stabilire una tendenza univoca valida per tutta l'opera né rinvenire in modo incontrovertibile fattori che siano determinanti di una determinata struttura sintattica. Il *Chonicon Vulturnense* si configura come un'opera in cui è possibile rinvenire strutture linguistiche che appartengono a diverse fasi della lingua latina. La differenza che si può scorgere tra parti documentarie e cronache può essere dettata talvolta dall'interazione tra il testo e l'intervento normativo dello scrivente.

4. Conclusioni

L'analisi di alcuni aspetti linguistici del *Chronicon Vulturnense* ha messo in evidenza come le scritture mediolatine, viste non come semplici contenitori di persistenze latine e innovazioni volgari ma come un "campo di tensione" tra forze compresenti nel repertorio linguistico degli scriventi, siano ancora delle miniere inesplorate se si intende interrogarle per comprendere la complessa interazione non solo tra latino e volgare ma anche tra diversi repertori linguistici e diverse tradizioni discorsive attive in questo periodo. Tale complessità non può ridursi nei termini di un *ante quem* e *post quem* ma va piuttosto studiata e

analizzata caso per caso. Solo in questo modo è possibile scorgere all'interno dei testi fenomeni linguistici che possono essere ricondotti non a un ipotetico modello di latino standard, ma a molteplici influssi che possono essere propri ora della tradizione giuridica (e religiosa) che continua in qualche modo a seguire schemi suoi propri anche nelle lingue moderne ora della libertà stilistica e della competenza scrittoria dei singoli autori. La particolarità del *Chronicon Vulturnense* è quella di avere un alternarsi e intrecciarsi continuo di parti cronachistiche e parti documentarie, probabilmente per l'intento dell'autore di fornire sempre rapidamente ai lettori la prova di quanto si andava narrando nella cronaca. Questa particolarità si traduce, a livello sintattico e testuale, in un *continuum* che rende difficile il discrimine tra cronaca e documento e che induce a ipotizzare che il documento allegato a prova della veridicità della narrazione possa essere in alcuni casi scritto *ex novo* e in altri rimaneggiato dal cronista. Un dato rilevante emerso, infatti, è proprio legato all'importanza di un'analisi stilistica del testo anche per stabilire l'attendibilità di un documento. Quest'operazione, fatta finora sulla base di dati storici, può avvalersi anche di osservazioni di tipo linguistico. Si pensi, per esempio, alla tendenza alla posizione finale del verbo nelle parti cronachistiche e in quei documenti che risultano falsi già da evidenze storiche. Se questo accade per l'ordine relativo di oggetto e verbo, lo stesso non può dirsi relativamente alla posizione del soggetto e in particolare a quei contesti in cui il soggetto compare in posizione postverbale: l'ordine VS, infatti, occorre allo stesso modo tanto nelle parti cronachistiche quanto in quelle documentarie, in particolare in quei contesti in cui il soggetto sia l'elemento nuovo o rematico in enunciati predicativi, nelle costruzioni all'interno di enunciati presentativi o ancora in enunciati prescrittivi / desiderativi. La tendenza alla posposizione del soggetto anticipa una sintassi molto ben attestata in italiano antico, in opere cronachistiche e in libri di conti, di cui si ha un'ampia trattazione in Fesenmeier (2003). Questi dati costituiscono soltanto i primi appunti di uno studio che merita certamente ulteriori approfondimenti. Ricerche future potranno fornire nuovi spunti per far sempre più luce su questa complessa fase della storia della nostra lingua.

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MOYENS D'EXPRESSION DE LA POSSESSION INALIÉNABLE DANS LES CONSTRUCTIONS VERBALES AVEC DES NOMS DE PARTIES DU CORPS (DOMAINE FRANÇAIS-ROUMAIN)[1]

Daniela DINCĂ[2], Ilona BĂDESCU[3]

ABSTRACT. *Means of Expressing Inalienable Possession in Verb Structures with Body Part Nouns (French and Romanian).* Departing from the verb structures with the possessive dative that express the inalienable possession between a noun that names body parts (Nbp) and its possessor in Romanian (Ro: *I*-a rupt *gâtul. /* Fr. Il *lui* a rompu *le cou*), we set out to establish a typology of verb structures consisting of two subclasses: (1) Verbs that place the possessor in the possessive dative and the Nbp in the accusative (direct object); (2) verbs that place the Nbp as an adverbial modifier and the possessor in the possessive dative, possessive accusative or genitive. The second objective of our study is to carry out a comparative-based analysis of the ways of expressing the inalienable possession in the verb structures of the two Romance languages, constructed with the lexeme Fr. *cou, gorge* / Ro *gât*, to highlight the similarities and differences in this relationship-type structures specific for the two Romance languages. For

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the analysis we resorted to an authentic corpus, complied from real-life examples sampled from journalistic texts (Corpus *Leipzig*, online newspapers), supplemented by electronic dictionaries (*TLFi, CNTRL, Dex online*). Given the richness of verb structures and the considerable number of differences between the two languages, we systematised our analysis in several stages: (1) identifying the verb structures built with the possessive dative; (2) establishing a verb structure typology according to the syntactic function assigned to the Nbp (subject, direct object, indirect object, adverbial modifier) and its possessor (possessive dative, possessive accusative, genitive); (3) highlighting the similarities and differences between the two languages in terms of the construction of the inalienable possession relationship between the Nbp and its possessor.

Keywords: *possessive dative, inalienable possession, noun denoting body parts, possessor, syntactic function*

REZUMAT. ***Mijloace de exprimare a posesiei inalienabile în construcțiile verbale cu nume de părți ale corpului (domeniu francez-român).*** Pornind de la construcțiile verbale din limba română cu Dativ posesiv care exprimă posesia inalienabilă între obiectul posedat, un substantiv parte a corpului (Spc), și posesorul său (Roum : *I*-a rupt *gâtul. /* Fr. Il *lui* a rompu *le cou*), articolul de față își propune să realizeze o tipologie a construcțiilor verbale care pot fi repartizate în două clase: (1) Verbe care distribuie posesorul în Dativ posesiv și Spc în Acuzativ (complement direct); (2) Verbe care distribuie Spc în funcția de complement prepozițional / circumstanțial și posesorul în Dativ posesiv, Acuzativ posesiv sau Genitiv. Al doilea obiectiv al studiului nostru este acela de a realiza o analiză comparativă a modalităților de exprimare a posesiei inalienabile în structurile verbale din cele două limbi construite cu lexemul fr. *cou, gorge* / roum. *gât* pentru a pune în evidență asemănările și deosebirile în construirea acestei relații în cele două limbi romanice. Corpusul pe care se bazează acest studiu este autentic, fiind format din exemple atestate în texte jurnalistice (Corpus *Leipzig*, ziare online), sau preluate din dicționare electronice (*TLFi, CNTRL, Dex online*). Având în vedere bogăția construcțiilor verbale și numărul mare de diferențe dintre cele două limbi, am organizat analiza noastră în mai multe etape: (1) identificarea structurilor verbale construite cu Dativul posesiv; (2) realizarea unei tipologii a construcțiilor verbale plecând de la funcțiile sintactice ale Spc (subiect, complement direct, complement indirect, complement prepozițional, complement circumstanțial de loc) și ale posesorului său (Dativ posesiv, Acuzativ posesiv, Genitiv); (3) punerea în evidență a asemănărilor și deosebirilor de exprimare a relației de posesie inalienabilă în cele două limbi.

Cuvinte-cheie: *dativ posesiv, posesie inalienabilă, nume de părți ale corpului (Npc), posesor, funcție sintactică*

1. Introduction

L'expression de la possession par d'autres moyens que l'adjectif ou le pronom possessif est une caractéristique des noms de parties du corps (Npc) qui construisent la relation de possession inaliénable avec leur possesseur par le Datif possessif (clitique personnel ou réfléchi) : Fr. On *lui* a coupé le cou. / Roum. *I*-au tăiat gâtul. ; Fr. Il *s*'est coupé le cou. / Roum. *Și*-a tăiat gâtul. Dans ces exemples, la construction de la relation de possession inaliénable par le Datif possessif est une caractéristique commune pour les deux langues mises en exergue, le français et le roumain.

Partant de cette constatation, nous nous proposons de faire une typologie des constructions verbales qui établissent une relation de possession inaliénable entre deux actants - le Npc (fr. *cou, gorge /* roum. *gât*) et son possesseur ou la personne affectée par l'action exercée sur cette partie du corps - afin de dégager les similitudes et les différences dans la construction de cette relation dans une perspective comparative (français-roumain). Vu la richesse des constructions verbales et le grand nombre de différences entre les deux langues, nous avons organisé notre analyse dans plusieurs étapes :

1. Identifier les structures verbales construites avec le Datif possessif autour des Npc fr. *cou, gorge /* roum. *gât* ;
2. Faire une typologie des constructions verbales selon les fonctions syntaxiques des Npc (sujet, complément d'objet direct, complément d'objet indirect, complément prépositionnel, circonstant de lieu) et des formes casuelles de son possesseur (Datif possessif, Accusatif possessif, Génitif) ;
3. Illustrer les similitudes et les différences dans la construction de la relation de possession inaliénable entre le Npc et son possesseur dans les deux langues.

Pour faire la typologie des constructions verbales formées autour du Npc analysé (fr. *cou, gorge /* roum. *gât*), nous avons ressenti le besoin de partir de constructions authentiques, c'est-à-dire des exemples attestés dans les corpus de textes journalistiques (*Corpus Leipzig - CL*[4], mais aussi des journaux en ligne[5]) ou des exemples puisés dans les dictionnaires électroniques français et roumains (*TLFi, CNTRL*, ou *DEX online*).

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[4] *CL* - Corpus Leipzig https://corpora.uni-eipzig.de/?corpusId=fra_mixed_2012.
[5] Le Corpus de textes journalistiques est formé des publications suivantes : *Adevărul, Evenimentul zilei, Le Parisien, Libertatea, Ouest-France.Bretagne, Ziare, Revista presei, Reviste, Știri locale.*

Vu les zones d'interférences entre les deux langues, notre article se constitue comme un inventaire des moyens d'expression de la possession inaliénable au service des locuteurs roumains qui utilisent le français comme langue étrangère ou qui travaillent dans le domaine de la traduction.

2. Le Datif possessif et l'expression de la possession inaliénable en français et en roumain

L'utilisation du Npc en tant qu'argument interne du verbe est indéniablement reliée à la présence du Datif possessif appelé « datif de la possession inaliénable » (Van Peteghem 2006) puisque « […] seuls les noms de parties du corps dénotent des possessions essentielles de l'homme » (Simatos 2015 : 138). Dans ce sens, Cristea (1977 : 251) souligne la similitude qui existe entre le roumain et le français dans l'expression de la possession inaliénable par le Datif possessif.

Mais, en roumain, il n'y a pas de distinction entre l'emploi du Datif possessif auprès des noms [±possession aliénable] de sorte qu'il apparaît auprès des noms [+possession aliénable], là où la langue française utilise un adjectif possessif : Roum. *Îmi* iau dicționarul. [*Me* DAT[6] prends dictionnaire-le] / Fr. Je prends *mon* dictionnaire.

En plus, en roumain, le Datif possessif est considéré comme une forme non marquée de la possession [±aliénable], ce qui veut dire qu'il y a aussi des structures emphatiques construites avec le possessif :

> Les structures avec le Datif possessif représentent la manière non marquée d'exprimer la possession aliénable et inaliénable en roumain actuel, tandis que les structures possessives correspondantes (*Am văzut cartea ta la* expoziție. Fr. *J'ai vu ton livre à l'exposition*) sont emphatiques, étant utilisées pour exprimer le contraste discursif (*cartea ta, nu cartea lui* Fr. *ton livre, pas son livre*).[7] (GALR I 2008 : 207) (notre traduction)

En effet, pour exprimer la possession inaliénable, le roumain dispose d'une structure marquée, exprimée par la présence d'un adjectif possessif :

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[6] Nous utilisons les abréviations suivantes: ACC pour l'Accusatif, DAT pour le Datif et GEN pour le Génitif.

[7] „Structurile cu dativ posesiv verbal reprezintă modalitatea nonmarcată de exprimare a posesiei alienabile şi inalienabile în româna actuală, în timp ce structurile corespondente cu posesiv (*Am văzut cartea ta la expoziție*) sunt emfatice, folosite pentru a exprima contrastul discursiv (*cartea ta, nu cartea lui*)."

(1) *I*-a tăiat gâtul. [*Lui* DAT a coupé cou-le] (forme non marquée) ;
(2) A tăiat gâtul *lui*, nu gâtul *ei*. [A coupé *son* cou *à lui*, pas *son* cou *à elle*] (forme marquée).

Dans son étude sur la possession inaliénable exprimée par le Datif possessif (a. *Max a tordu le bras à Luc* ; b. *Max lui a tordu le bras*), Lamiroy (2001 : 82) définit les traits caractéristiques du Datif possessif dans les termes suivants :

1. il n'est pas lexical car « il n'est pas sélectionné par la valence du verbe », mais plutôt par la partie du corps avec laquelle il établit une relation partie-tout ;
2. il est possessif « parce que le référent auquel il renvoie indique le possesseur d'une entité conçue comme inaliénable, en particulier une partie du corps ».

En termes de réalisateurs, la possession inaliénable établit une relation entre le Npc et son possesseur dans une construction avec le pronom personnel (Fr. Il *lui* a cassé *le cou*. / Roum. El *i*-a rupt *gâtul*. - le pronom personnel au Datif possessif et le sujet de la phrase n'ont pas le même référent) ou le pronom réfléchi au Datif possessif (Fr. Il *s'*est cassé le cou. / Roum. El *şi*-a rupt gâtul. - le pronom réfléchi au Datif possessif et le sujet de la phrase ont le même référent).

En plus, la langue roumaine dispose d'un terme spécifique qui assure la fonction syntaxique du clitique au Datif possessif (pronom personnel ou réfléchi), à savoir le « complément possessif » (roum. « complement posesiv »)[8]:

Dans sa forme prototypique, le complément possessif est un composant du groupe verbal qui s'actualise dans une structure ternaire et qui exprime le possesseur par un clitique pronominal réfléchi ou personnel avec le trait sémantique [+Animé], établissant par le verbe régissant une relation sémantique de possession (et d'autres relations subsumées à la possession : appartenance, dépendance, etc.) avec un autre nominal de la structure, qui exprime 'l'objet possédé' (au sens large), par exemple : Roum : *Ion îşi respectă / iubeşte părinţii / vecinii.* [Ion *se* DAT *respecte / aime ses parents /ses voisins.*] Fr. : Ion respecte /aime ses parents / ses voisins. *Ţi-am auzit vocea* [*Te* DAT *ai entendu voix-la*] Fr. : J'ai entendu ta voix ; *Ţi s-a auzit vocea* [*Te* DAT *s'est entendu voix-la*] Fr. : On a entendu ta voix.[9] (GALR II 2008 : 463) (notre traduction)

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[8] Convention d'écriture : entre […] nous avons donné la traduction littérale en français et entre (…) l'équivalent en français.
[9] „În forma sa prototipică, complementul posesiv este un component al grupului verbal care se actualizează într-o structură ternară şi exprimă posesorul printr-un clitic de pronume reflexiv

D'après cette définition de la GALR, la présence du complément possessif au Datif possessif auprès des noms exprimant la parenté (*parents, voisins*) ou des facultés inhérentes aux humains (*voix*) est spécifique à la langue roumaine, ce qui n'est pas le cas pour la langue française comme on peut le constater dans ces exemples : Roum. Ion *îşi* respectă/iubeşte părinţii / vecinii. [Ion *se* DAT respecte/aime ses parents /ses voisins] / Fr. Ion respecte/aime *ses* parents/ses voisins. ; Roum. *Ţi-am auzit vocea* [*Te* DAT *ai entendu voix-la*] Fr. : J'ai entendu ta voix. ; *Ţi s-a auzit vocea* [*Te* DAT *s'est entendu voix-la*] Fr. : On a entendu ta voix.

Quant à la relation entre le sujet et l'objet indirect auprès d'un Npc ayant la fonction de complément d'objet direct, le Datif possessif manifeste ce que Simatos appelle « la proéminence de la personne sur la partie du corps, au niveau syntaxique et sémantique », ce qui lui attribue la fonction de 'sujet secondaire' entretenant une relation avec un autre membre nominal de la phrase» (Herslund 1988, 1996 *apud* Simatos 2015 : 131). Dans ce sens, l'emploi du Datif possessif a été associé à la notion de « partie du corps passive » car le Npc passe au second plan : « les parties du corps sont affectées par l'action en tant qu'objet de celle-ci », étant donné que « l'attention se porte sur la personne entière du possesseur et non sur la partie du corps elle-même, et les actions décrites sont plutôt stéréotypées, typiques, automatiques » selon le schéma suivant (Lavric 2001 : 152) :

parties du corps actives: article défini ou possessif
parties du corps passives: article défini + pronom datif, ou possessif
(Lavric 2001 : 155-156)

3. Typologie des constructions verbales avec le Datif possessif

Vu la relation qui s'établit entre le Npc et son possesseur, les verbes s'intégrant dans les structures associant Datif possessif et Npc sont des « verbes de contact physique » (Simatos 2015 : 130). Ces verbes ont été également appelés « verbes dynamiques » pour les mêmes raisons relevant de la relation qui s'établit nécessairement entre le Npc et le possesseur affecté par cette action : « […] il faut que le verbe exprime l'une ou l'autre action susceptible d'affecter le possesseur » (Lamiroy 2001 : 11).

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sau personal cu trăsătura semantică [+Animat], stabilind prin intermediul verbului regent o relaţie semantică de posesie (şi alte relaţii subsumate posesiei: apartenenţa, dependenţa etc.) cu un alt nominal din structură, care exprimă „obiectul posedat (în sens larg), de ex. *Ion îşi respectă / iubeşte părinţii / vecinii., Ţi-am / Ţi s-a auzit vocea.*"

En ce qui concerne le noyau verbal de la phrase, celui-ci est représenté par des prédicats transitifs à trois arguments. Dans ce sens, Tellier & Valois (2006) ont fait la typologie des constructions de possession inaliénable où le possesseur est au Datif possessif (réalisé sous forme de clitique) :

1. Le possesseur est un Datif pronominal et le Npc est un objet direct : *Je lui ai pris le bras* ; *Le vin lui tourne la tête* ; *Un garçon lui tirait les oreilles.*
2. Le possesseur est un Datif pronominal et le Npc est le sujet de la phrase : *La tête lui tourne* ; *Le cœur lui battait* ; *Les oreilles lui bourdonnent* ; *Les doigts lui démangent constamment.*
3. Le possesseur est un Datif pronominal et le Npc est un complément circonstanciel : *Je lui ai mis un enfant dans les bras.* ; *Le vent me souffle au visage.* ; *La neige leur tombait sur la tête.*

Partant de cette typologie, nous nous proposons d'analyser, dans une perspective comparative, deux structures spécifiques pour le Npc analysé (fr. *cou, gorge* / roum. *gât*) :

1. le Npc est un complément d'objet direct (COD) et le possesseur est au Datif possessif ;
2. le Npc est un complément prépositionnel ou circonstanciel et le possesseur se trouve dans l'un des trois cas : Datif pronominal, Génitif nominal, Accusatif pronominal.

3.1. Le Npc est un complément d'objet direct (COD) et le possesseur est au Datif possessif

Pour le cas où le possesseur est au Datif possessif et le Npc est un objet direct (COD), nous avons identifié trois constructions syntaxiques :

1. Datif possessif (pronom personnel) + V + Npc (COD) : *Il lui a serré le cou.*
2. Datif possessif (pronom réfléchi) + V + Npc (COD) : *Il s'est fracturé le cou.*
3. Datif possessif (pronom personnel/ pronom réfléchi) + V + Npc (COD) : *On lui a coupé la gorge. Il s'est coupé la gorge.*

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La distinction entre ces trois classes de verbes repose sur la nature active ou pronominale du verbe : la première classe inclut les verbes dont le Datif possessif est un clitique personnel, dans la deuxième classe le Datif possessif est un pronom réfléchi et la troisième classe inclut les verbes à double statut : actif et pronominal et, par conséquent, le Datif possessif est exprimé par un pronom personnel ou réfléchi.

3.1.1. Datif possessif (pronom personnel) + V + Npc (COD)

Le verbe figurant dans cette structure est le verbe *serrer* (*serrer le cou à qqn.*) avec le sens de « tenir ou maintenir étroitement en exerçant une pression » :

(1) Après cette humiliation, la jeune femme s'est retrouvée la tête enfoncée dans un sac poubelle alors que son père *lui* serrait le cou. (*CL*)

Dans l'exemple (1), le possesseur est exprimé par un pronom personnel clitique au Datif possessif, antéposé au verbe. Si le possesseur est présent dans la phrase sous forme nominale, il est rejeté en fin de phrase, ayant la fonction de complément du Npc au Génitif :

(2) Il serre le cou *de sa compagne*.

Par le changement de la fonction syntaxique du constituant qui le désigne, du Datif possessif exprimé par un pronom clitique antéposé au verbe (1) au Génitif nominal subordonné au Npc (2), le possesseur perd de « son degré d'implication » selon l'échelle établie par Lamiroy:

« L'accusatif indique le plus haut degré d'implication, le génitif le degré le plus bas. Le datif, autrement dit, occupe une position intermédiaire. [...]. Avec le datif, les deux éléments sont conjointement en jeu : la partie et le tout sont affectés par le procès. » (Lamiroy 2001 : 5).

En roumain, il a y un changement dans la distribution des cas : le Datif possessif devient le complément d'objet direct du verbe à l'Accusatif et le Npc passe en fonction de complément prépositionnel dans une construction de type *a strânge pe cineva de* gât [serrer qqn. par le cou][10] :

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[10] Convention d'écriture : entre [...] nous avons donné la traduction littérale en français et entre (...) l'équivalent en français.

(3) Jucătorul Păulişanei, Flavius Suciu *l*-a strâns de gât *pe arbitrul Burza*
şi a lovit-o pe Mihoc. (*CL*)
[*Le* ACC a serré de cou *arbitre-le Burza*]
Fr. Le joueur de Păulişana, Flavius Suciu, a serré le cou *de l'arbitre Burza* et a frappé Mihoc.

La fonction syntaxique du Npc en tant que complément prépositionnel le place dans une position hiérarchique inférieure par rapport au possesseur qui, grâce à sa fonction de COD, représente la cible de l'action et exprime le plus haut degré d'implication.

En plus, la langue roumaine s'individualise par la double présence du possesseur, sous forme pronominale et nominale, soit en antéposition ou en postposition par rapport au verbe :

> Dans le cas d'un Accusatif possessif, la double marque est nécessairement réalisée par un nom ou un pronom non clitique à l'accusatif, caractérisés sémantiquement par le trait [+ Animé] et précédé de *sur* : *L*-a tăiat la gât *pe vecin / pe el / pe acela*. [*Le* ACC a coupé *à* cou *sur voisin/ sur lui / sur celui-là*] Fr. Il a coupé *le voisin* au cou. / Il *l'*a coupé au cou. / Il a coupé *celui-là* au cou. */ Pe vecin / pe el / pe acela l*-a tăiat la gât. [*Sur voisin / sur lui / sur celui-là l*e ACC a coupé *à* cou] Fr. C'est *le voisin / lui/ celui-là* qu'il a coupé au cou.[11] (GALR II 2008: 401-403) (notre traduction)

Sauf la double marque du possesseur pronominal et nominal à l'Accusatif, la langue roumaine ajoute un autre trait distinctif : la présence de la préposition *pe* 'sur' devant les noms [+Animé] désignant le possesseur : Roum. *L*-a tăiat la gât *pe vecin.* [*Le* ACC a coupé *à* cou *sur voisin.*] Fr. Il a coupé le cou *du voisin*.

3.1.2   Datif possessif (pronom réfléchi) + V + Npc (COD)

Les deux verbes pronominaux qui distribuent le Npc en fonction de COD expriment des mouvements faits par une action involontaire sur le cou : *se coincer le cou* (« se bloquer, s'immobiliser ») et *se fracturer le cou* « casser en forçant, par un choc ou un coup violent ».

L'analyse comparative français-roumain a fait relever deux cas de figures :

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[11] „În cazul unui acuzativ posesiv, dubla marcare se produce obligatoriu printr-un substantiv sau pronume nonclitic în acuzativ, caracterizate semantic prin trăsătura [+ Animat] şi precedate de *pe*: *L*-a tăiat la gât *pe vecin / pe el / pe acela. / Pe vecin / pe el / pe acela l*-a tăiat la gât." (GALR II 2008: 401-403).

- des structures syntaxiques similaires dans les deux langues : fr. *se fracturer le cou* / roum. *a-şi fractura gâtul*:

(4) Son garçon *s'est fracturé le cou* après un plongeon dans une piscine. (*CL*)

(5) O femeie *şi-a fracturat gâtul* după ce a strănutat. (http://stirileprotv.ro)
[Une femme *se* DAT *est fracturé cou-le*]
Fr. Une femme *s'est fracturé le cou* après avoir éternué.

- des structures syntaxiques différentes : fr. *se coincer le cou* (V pronominal réfléchi) / roum. *a i se înțepeni gâtul* (V non pronominal):

(6) Selon les enquêteurs la fillette s'est amusée à faire tourner la balançoire comme le font tous les enfants, mais elle *s'est coincé le cou* et a été étranglée. (*CL*)

(7) *Mi-a înțepenit gâtul*, urât de tot. *(https://www.tpu.ro/)*
[*Me* DAT *a coincé cou-le*]
Fr. J'ai attrapé un sacré torticolis.

Comme on peut le constater, dans l'exemple (7), le verbe distribue le Npc en fonction de sujet et le possesseur au Datif possessif. En plus, le roumain enregistre une autre construction verbale associant, tout comme en français, un verbe pronominal réfléchi et un deuxième pronom en Datif possessif :

(8) M-am trezit de dimineata OK, n-am avut nimic până pe la vreo 10, şi pe la 10, […], *mi s-a înțepenit gâtul* pe partea stângă. *(Forum 7 pitici)*
[*Me* DAT *s'est coincé cou-le*]
Fr. Je me suis réveillé ce matin sans problème, je n'ai rien eu jusqu'à environ 10 heures, et vers 10 heures, [...], *le cou s'est coincé* du côté gauche.

En conclusion, le possesseur est doublement marqué en roumain par la présence du Datif possessif auprès d'un verbe pronominal réfléchi : *Mi* s-a înțepenit gâtul. [*Me* DAT *s'est coincé cou-le*] Fr. J'ai attrapé un sacré torticolis.

3.1.3. Datif possessif (pronom personnel/ pronom réfléchi) + V + Npc (COD)

Dans cette section, notre analyse porte sur les verbes pouvant apparaître à la voix active ou pronominale dans les deux types de structures ci-dessous :

1. Fr.: On *lui a coupé la gorge* avec un couteau. (*couper la gorge à qqn.*)/ Roum. *I*-au *tăiat gâtul* cu un cuțit.
2. Fr. Il *s'est coupé la gorge* avec un couteau. (se *couper la gorge*) / Roum. : *Şi-a tăiat gâtul* cu un cuțit.

Dans les deux cas, il s'agit de prédicats transitifs à trois arguments : sujet, complément d'objet direct (COD), complément d'objet indirect (COI). Si le Npc garde la même fonction de COD dans les deux structures, de même que le COI qui remplit la fonction de Datif possessif, le sujet subit des modifications dans le passage d'une structure à l'autre : dans (1) le sujet est l'agent de l'action, tandis que dans (2) il est à la fois l'agent et le patient de l'action pronominale.

Les verbes faisant partie de cette classe, à double valence, active et pronominale, sont les suivants : fr. *briser le cou à qqn.*, se *briser le cou /* roum. *a rupe gâtul cuiva, a-şi rupe gâtul*; fr. *casser le cou à qqn.*, se *casser le cou /* roum. *a rupe gâtul cuiva*, *a-şi rupe gâtul*; fr. *couper le cou, la gorge à qqn.*, se *couper le cou, la gorge /* roum. *a tăia gâtul cuiva*, *a-şi tăia gâtul*; fr. *rompre le cou à qqn.*, se *rompre le cou /* roum. *a rupe gâtul cuiva*, *a-şi rupe gâtul*; fr. *tordre le cou à qqn.*, se *tordre le cou /* roum. a *suci gâtul cuiva*, *a-şi suci gâtul*. Pour le roumain, on observe la présence de trois verbes par rapport à cinq verbes français, ce qui nous conduit à la constatation que trois verbes français (*briser, casser* et *rompre*) ont comme équivalents un seul verbe roumain *a rupe* (fr. *rompre*).

Nous commencerons notre analyse par le verbe fr. *couper /*roum. a *tăia* qui apparaît dans la construction *couper le cou, la gorge à qqn. /* roum. *a tăia gâtul cuiva* avec un Datif possessif pronominal (9) ou nominal (10), gardant son sens propre[12] de « tuer qqn. » :

    (9) Pépi ne craint pas qu'*on lui coupe la gorge* car il vit ici depuis tout petit. (*CL*)
    (10) En 1553 encore, Henri Aldegraver, élève d'Albert Dürer, prit encore pour sujet d'une de ses gravures : le comte Archambault, qui *coupe la gorge à un de ses neveux* […] (leparisien.fr)

En roumain, si le possesseur pronominal se trouve au Datif possessif, la structure est la même qu'en français ; au cas où le possesseur est de nature nominale, il est exprimé deux fois : il est anticipé par le Datif pronominal et repris par le Datif nominal correspondant (11):

    (11) Acesta a luat un cuţit şi a început să-l agite prin aer, apoi *i-a tăiat gâtul victimei*. (https://a1.ro//news/extern/)
               [*lui* DAT a coupé *cou-le à victime-la* GEN.]
               Fr. Il a pris un couteau et a commencé à l'agiter dans l'air, puis il *a coupé le cou de la victime*.

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[12] Le sens figuré apparaît dans des expressions avec d'autres Npc comme : *couper les jambes* « accabler de fatigue », *couper la face* « provoquer une sensation analogue à celle d'une coupure » (*Des névralgies qui lui coupaient en deux la face), couper la voix* « empêcher, gêner la respiration » (TLFi).

On observe, dans ce dernier exemple, que le complément possessif est exprimé à la fois par un Datif clitique et un Datif nominal :

> Fréquemment exprimé par des clitiques de pronoms réfléchis et personnels au Datif, au début d'un texte écrit ou parlé, le complément possessif peut être doublement exprimé par un nom ou un pronom Datif non clitique (qui apporte la référence) et un pronom personnel en tant que clitique anaphorique : *Lui Mihai i-a tăiat gâtul.* [Le Mihai DAT lui DAT a coupé gorge-la] / Fr. Il a coupé la gorge de Michel ; *Lui i-a tăiat gâtul.* [Lui DAT lui DAT a coupé gorge-la] / Fr. C'est à lui qu'il a coupé la gorge. / *I-a tăiat gâtul lui Mihai / vecinului.* [Lui DAT a coupé gorge-la le Mihai GEN / voisin-le GEN] / Fr. Il a coupé la gorge *de Michel / de son voisin.* »[13] (GALR II 2008, 470-471) (notre traduction)

À part cette construction où le possesseur est doublement marqué, le roumain connaît une autre construction spécifique pour le verbe *a tăia* '*couper*', illustrée dans l'exemple (12) :

> (12) Am înțeles că i-a sărit flexul din mână și *l-a tăiat la gât.* (*CL*)
> [*Le* ACC a coupé à gorge] /
> Fr. Je comprends que le coupeur de bois lui a sauté de la main et *lui a coupé la gorge.*

Sur le modèle du verbe *serrer* (Roum. *L*-a strâns de gât. [*Le* ACC a serré de cou] / Fr. Il *lui* a serré le cou.), le verbe *couper* accepte aussi un pronom en Accusatif et renvoie le Npc en fonction de complément prépositionnel. Cependant, ce qui distingue les deux verbes *a strânge* (fr. *serrer*) et *a tăia* (fr. *couper*) est le fait que le dernier accepte deux types de constructions, avec le Datif (11) et avec l'Accusatif possessif (12).

La structure réfléchie *se couper la gorge* opère, en français, une sélection au niveau du Npc par le choix du lexème *gorge* pour suggérer l'image de se donner la mort par le fait de s'ouvrir la gorge. Cette fois-ci, la personne est directement affectée car le sujet se superpose à l'objet indirect :

> (13) Il fut alors témoin d'un hideux spectacle : ce malheureux *s'était coupé la gorge* avec un rasoir, et tout son sang s'était mêlé à l'eau de la baignoire. (*CL*)

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[13] „Frecvent exprimat prin clitice de pronume reflexive și personale în dativ, la începutul unui text scris sau vorbit, complementul posesiv poate fi dublu exprimat printr-un substantiv sau pronume nonclitic în dativ (care aduce referința) și clitic anaforic de pronume personal : *Lui Mihai i-a tăiat gâtul* ; *Lui i-a tăiat gâtul.* / *I-a tăiat gâtul lui Mihai / vecinului.*"

En roumain, la structure réfléchie du verbe *couper* accepte l'emploi du Npc en tant que COD (14) ou comme circonstant de lieu (15) :

   (14)   Un bărbat *şi-a tăiat gâtul* cu o lamă de cuţit pe o stradă din Cluj-Napoca (https://adevarul.ro/locale/cluj-napoca)
   [Un homme *se DAT est coupé gorge-la*]
   Fr. Un homme *s'est tranché la gorge* avec une lame de couteau dans une rue de Cluj-Napoca.

   (15)   Marius David, alias Gore, *s-a tăiat la gât* cu un cuţit. (*CL*)
   [*se ACC est coupé à gorge*]
   Fr. Marius David, alias Gore, *s'est tranché la gorge* avec un couteau.

Suivent quatre verbes français qui apparaissent dans le même type de constructions (forme active et pronominale) : *(se) briser le cou* (« casser par un choc ou un coup violent »), *(se) casser le cou* (« se blesser, généralement à la suite d'une chute »), *(se) tordre le cou* (« tourner le cou fortement ou avec effort ») et *(se) rompre le cou* (« se blesser, généralement à la suite d'une chute »)[14]. En même temps, il faut ajouter que, par rapport au verbe *couper* qui a uniquement des sens propres, ces quatre verbes acquièrent aussi des emplois figurés, suggérant d'habitude l'échec ou l'élimination d'une personne.

   Avec leurs sens propres de « subir un choc ou un coup violent au cou », tous les quatre verbes intègrent la structure *Datif possessif (pronom personnel / pronom réfléchi) +V + Npc* (COD) :

   (16)   Malheureusement, Angel la rattrape et *lui brise le cou*. (uf.free.fr.txt, collected on 22/10/2007)
   (17)   L'horrible blessure qui paralyse un joueur *lui casse le cou* et lui brise sa carrière.
   (18)   Theresa est tombée en bas des escaliers et *s'est cassé le cou* lorsqu'elle avait seulement six ans. (*CL*)
   (19)   Les filles faillirent *se rompre le cou* en descendant l'escalier (BRILLAT-SAV., Physiol. goût, 1825, p. 363) (TLFi)

À partir du sens primaire de « tuer » (*tordre le cou à un oiseau, une volaille*, TLFi), le verbe *tordre* acquiert le même sens dans l'expression familière *tordre le cou à qqn.* (20) ou celui de « tourner le cou fortement ou avec effort » (21, 22) :

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[14] Le verbe *rompre* a aussi le sens de « rompre le cou d'un cheval, l'obliger à plier l'encolure à droite et à gauche pour la rendre flexible, afin que l'animal obéisse aisément aux deux mains » (http://littre. reverso.net/).

(20) Si ce sale morpion vient encore m'emmerder, je *lui tords le cou.*
(Beauvoir, *Mandarins*, 1954, p. 453, apud TLFi).

(21) L'homme, de forte corpulence et de teint foncé, *s'est* vraisemblablement *tordu le cou* au moment où il s'est jeté pour se suicider. (*CL*)

(22) Antoine avait la tête presque dans le gilet de son père, il *se tordait le cou* pour suivre les yeux de Jasmin qui accompagnaient la voiture.
(AYMÉ, Jument, 1933, p. 130, apud TLFi)

Au-delà des sens propres, les quatre verbes enregistrent aussi des sens figurés. Dans les expressions analysées, les verbes *casser* et *briser* peuvent acquérir le sens de « briser la carrière de quelqu'un » (23) ou celui d'« échouer » (24) :

(23) Je serai venu dans ce pays pour *casser le cou à sa fortune* !
(STENDHAL, La Chartreuse de Parme, 1839, p. 219). (TLFi)

(24) (Au fig.) Tant que je serai vivante, tu *ne te casseras pas le cou* par un sot mariage (BALZAC, Ursule Mirouët, 1841, p. 95). (TLFi)

Le verbe *rompre* prend aussi le sens figuré de « faire perdre ses espérances de fortune, d'avancement » (TLFi) dans la construction « *se rompre le cou* par sa mauvaise conduite, par son imprudence » (leparisien.fr).

Quant au verbe *tordre*, il peut signifier, par sens métaphorique, l'idée de « faire arrêter, éliminer » (25-27) :

(25) Je veux *tordre le cou* à certaines rumeurs. (*CL*)

(26) Avant de vous relater cette expérience, nous tenons à *tordre le cou* à certains préjugés tenaces. (*CL*)

(27) À ce titre, je voulais également *tordre le cou* à une image répandue en France selon laquelle la nourriture américaine serait indigeste. (*CL*)

Il est donc évident que les verbes *casser*, *tordre* et *rompre* ont dérivé des sens figurés, par métaphore, soit à la forme active (*tordre le cou aux rumeurs*), ou active et pronominale (*casser le cou à la fortune de qqn., se casser le cou, rompre le cou aux chances, se rompre le cou par sa mauvaise conduite*).

En roumain, les trois verbes identifiés dans ces constructions sont : *a rupe* (fr. *rompre*), *a frânge* et *a suci* (fr. *tordre*) qui s'intègrent dans la même structure syntaxique : *Datif possessif (pronom personnel/ pronom réfléchi) + V + Npc* (COD) :

(28) *I-a rupt gâtul* cu o lovitură de karate și apoi s-a lăudat că l-a ucis.
(https://evz.ro)
Fr. Il *lui a rompu le cou* avec un coup de karaté et s'est ensuite vanté de l'avoir tué.

(29) Impactul extrem de violent i-a crăpat capul şi *i-a frânt gâtul*.
(Libertatea.ro)
Fr. L'impact extrêmement violent lui a fait craquer la tête et *lui a
tordu le cou*.

(30) Un bărbat *şi-a rupt gâtul* şi a murit pe loc când sărea peste
turnichete la metrou, în New York. (https://www.libertatea.ro)/
Fr. Un homme *s'est rompu le cou* et il est mort sur le coup en sautant
par-dessus des tourniquets dans le métro de New York.

Mais le Datif pronominal peut accepter en roumain, auprès du même verbe, la
présence d'un nominal co-référent en position postverbale, la possession étant
doublement marquée :

(31) Ca într-o scenă horror, asasinul (...) *i*-a sucit gâtul *nepoatei* ca la
porumbel. *(CL)* [*lui* DAT a tordu le cou-le *nièce-la* GEN]
Fr. Comme dans une scène d'horreur, le meurtrier (...) *a tordu le cou
de la nièce*.

Avec un sens métaphorique, la locution verbale *a-şi rupe gâtul* (fr. se rompre le
cou) signifie, comme en français, « échouer » :

(32) Titi Blondu *şi-a „rupt gâtul"* în afaceri cu Marcel Toader
(https://gazetanoua.ro/)
Fr. Titi Blondu *„s'est rompu le cou"* en faisant des affaires avec Marcel
Toader.

3.2. Le Npc est un complément circonstanciel et le possesseur se trouve dans l'un des trois cas : Datif pronominal, Génitif nominal, Accusatif pronominal

Si le Npc est un complément circonstanciel, le possesseur se trouve, en
français, dans l'un des trois cas : Datif possessif, Génitif et Accusatif possessif.
Il est évident que le constituant qui désigne le possesseur jouit d'une mobilité
beaucoup plus grande si le Npc a la fonction de complément circonstanciel par
rapport au COD, qui le distribue uniquement au Datif possessif.

3.2.1. Datif possessif (pronom personnel) +V+ Npc (Circonstant de lieu)

Dans les structures avec le Datif possessif et le Npc comme circonstant
de lieu, nous avons identifié le verbe fr. *sauter à la gorge / au collet / au cou de
qqn. /* roum. *a-i sări cuiva la gât*. Dans ce cas, le Npc établit une relation différente
avec son possesseur, en fonction de la forme pronominale ou nominale qui le

désigne : dans (33) le possesseur nominal se manifeste en tant que complément du Npc au Génitif (*la gorge des adversaires*) tandis que, sous forme pronominale, il passe devant le verbe en tant que Datif possessif (34) :

(33) Quand on se sent supérieurs, nous *sautons de suite à la gorge de nos adversaires*, surtout à domicile. (*CL*)

(34) « Si on *me* saute à la gorge, je ne me laisse pas faire » (www.ouest-france.fr/bretagne/)

Le verbe accepte aussi une forme pronominale (« se sauter dessus, se battre »), pour exprimer l'agressivité manifestée ou non de manière concrète :

(35) Parfois [des ouvriers] *se sautent à la gorge* pour une affaire d'apéritif ou de femme (FARGUE, Piéton Paris, 1939, p. 23, *CNTRL*).

(36) William et Harry *se sont sautés à la gorge* (https://actu. orange.fr/)

En outre, le verbe *sauter* se combine avec les deux Npc analysés (*cou* et *gorge*) avec des acceptions différentes. En effet, *sauter à la gorge* a le sens de « menacer qqn. » (37), tandis que le *cou*, représentant l'extériorité, exprime l'affectivité, *sauter au cou* signifiant «se précipiter pour l'embrasser » (TLFi) (38) :

(37) Alors, avant de *sauter à la gorge de Google* pour la moindre nouvelle fonctionnalité, arrêtez d'abord Microsoft et après vous pourrez râler sur Google. (*CL*)

(38) *Candide et Cacambo sautèrent au cou de Sa Majesté, qui les reçut avec toute la grâce imaginable. (Voltaire, Candide, ou L'optimiste)*

Pourtant, la construction *sauter au cou* peut aussi exprimer une agressivité conduisant même à la mort :

(39) *Il lui a sauté au cou* et l'a étranglé. (*CL*)

En roumain, la construction verbale *a sări la gâtul cuiva* (fr. *sauter au cou de qqn.*) a les mêmes acceptions, de menace et d'affection, mais elle s'individualise, par rapport au français, par son moule syntaxique, comme le prouve l'exemple suivant :

(40) Şumudică *i-a sărit la gât lui Mihai Stoica* şi a dezvăluit ce s-a întâmplat la FCSB înaintea meciului cu Lazio. (https://www. digisport.ro/) [*lui* DAT a sauté *à* cou *le Mihai Stoica* DAT]
Fr. Şumudică *a sauté à la gorge de Mihai Stoica* et a révélé ce qui s'est passé au FCSB avant le match contre la Lazio.

En plus, nous avons constaté que la langue roumaine utilise trois prépositions devant le Npc : *la gât* (fr. « à gorge »), *în gât* (fr. « dans gorge ») et *de gât* (fr. « de gorge ») sans changer le sens de la construction :

(41) „Însă priviți cum i-au sărit *în gât*, ca pe arcuri, toți paznicii din oficiu ai moralității publice." (https://www.libertatea.ro/)
[*lui* DAT ont sauté *dans gorge*]
Fr. Mais regardez comment tous les gardiens de la moralité publique, comme sur les ressorts, lui ont sauté *à la gorge*.

(42) La inaugurarea mai multor blocuri, primarului R. M. *i-a sărit un puşti de gât*. [*lui* DAT *a sauté* un enfant *de gorge*]
Fr. Lors de l'inauguration de plusieurs bâtiments, un enfant *a sauté à la gorge* du maire R.M.

En bref, pour la langue roumaine, nous avons retenu deux constructions verbales avec le verbe *a sări*:

- une construction similaire à celle employée en français: (1) El *i*-a sărit la gât. / Fr. Il *lui* a sauté au cou. (2) El a sărit la gâtul *vecinului.* / Fr. Il a sauté au cou *du voisin*.

- une construction différente où le possesseur est doublement marqué par un pronom personnel et par un nom au Datif : *El i-a sărit la gât lui Mihai Stoica.* [*Lui* DAT a sauté à cou *le Mihai Stoica* DAT] / Fr. Il a sauté *au cou de Mihai Stoica.*

3.2.2. Accusatif (pronom réfléchi) + V + Npc (Circonstant de lieu) + Génitif (possesseur du Npc)

Dans la construction verbale *se jeter au cou de qqn.*, le verbe pronominal *se jeter* assigne au Npc la fonction de complément circonstanciel, tandis que le possesseur devient le complément du Npc exprimé, cette fois-ci, par un nominal au Génitif. Le clitique qui précède le verbe est un pronom réfléchi à l'Accusatif:

(43) Furieux, *il s'est jeté au cou de l'un des membres* du personnel pénitentiaire. (www.sudouest.fr)

En même temps, le possesseur peut revêtir la forme d'un adjectif possessif :

(44) La femme vêtue dans un costume traditionnel *s'est jetée à mon cou* pour me couvrir de baisers. (*CL*)

Comme on peut le constater, le verbe n'a pas le même sens dans les deux derniers exemples : dans (43), le verbe *se jeter* (*au cou*) a le sens de « entourer de ses bras le cou de qqn. pour le menacer » et, dans (44), il signifie « s'élancer vers lui pour lui témoigner son affection, pour l'embrasser » (TLFi).

La langue roumaine présente la même construction syntaxique pour le verbe *a se arunca* (fr. *se jeter*) qui accepte une double préposition devant le Npc : roum. a *se arunca de gâtul cuiva* [se jeter de cou-le qqn. GEN], roum. a *se arunca la gâtul cuiva* [se jeter au cou de qqn.] :

> (45) El *s-a aruncat de gâtul* fratelui său Beniamin şi a plâns*. (CL)
> [Il *se* ACC *est jeté de cou-le frère-le* GEN *son* Benjamin]
> Fr. Il s'est jeté au cou de son frère Benjamin, et a pleuré.
> (46) Atunci Raguel *s-a aruncat la gâtul lui* şi l-a sărutat şi a plâns.
> (https://www.bibliaortodoxa.ro/carte.php?id=81&cap=7).
> [*se* ACC *est jetée à cou-le* GEN *son* et l'a embrassé et a pleuré]
> Fr. Alors Raguel *s'est jetée à son cou*, l'a embrassé et a pleuré.

En plus, le roumain présente une construction verbale spécifique qui place le possesseur au Datif possessif dans l'ordre suivant : *Datif possessif + Accusatif (pronom réfléchi) +V+ Npc (Circonstant de lieu)* :

> (47) *Mi s-a aruncat de gât.* (Panait Istrati)
> *[Me DAT se ACC est jetée de cou]*
> *Fr. Elle s'est jetée à mon cou.*
> (48) Deodată ea *mi s-a aruncat de gât*, m-a acoperit de sărutări fierbinţi
> […] (*Prin gulagul valah,* Vasile Scutăreanu)
> *[Elle me DAT se ACC est jetée de cou]*
> *Fr. Tout d'un coup, elle s'est jetée à mon cou, m'a couvert de baisers chauds […].*

3.2.3. Accusatif possessif (pronom personnel / pronom réfléchi) +V + Npc (Circonstant de lieu)

Le verbe *blesser* fait partie d'une construction verbale qui distribue le Npc en fonction de circonstant de lieu et le possesseur (pronom personnel ou réfléchi) à l'Accusatif possessif : fr. *blesser qqn. au cou* (49), *se blesser au cou* (51) / roum. *a răni pe cineva la gât* (50)*, a se răni la gât* (52) :

> (49) L'automobiliste de 67 ans circulait sur une nationale d'Ille-et-Vilaine, entre Rennes et Nantes lorsqu'une balle *l'a touché au cou*, samedi 30 octobre. (www.francetvinfo.fr)

(50) Un jaf a avut loc ieri la o societate comercială din municipiul Buzău, unde o persoană a amenințat-o pe casieriță cu un cuțit și *a rănit-o la gât* [...]. (*CL*) [a blessée *la* ACC à cou]
Fr. Un vol a eu lieu hier dans une société commerciale de Buzău, où une personne a menacé la caissière avec un couteau et *l'a blessée au cou* [...].

(51) Le plongeur québécois Alexandre Despatie, qui *s'est blessé au cou*, est contraint de renoncer à des compétitions. (*CL*)

(52) Justin Bieber a primit îngrijiri medicale, după ce a căzut pe scări și *s-a rănit la gât*. (https://ziare.com/) [se ACC *est blessé* à *cou*]
Fr. Justin Bieber a reçu des soins médicaux après être tombé dans l'escalier et il *s'est blessé au cou* (...).

Comme on peut le constater, les constructions verbales construites avec un clitique (pronom personnel et pronom réflechi) à l'Accusatif sont similaires dans les deux langues. Au contraire, la présence d'un nominal à l'Accusatif sépare les deux langues, car la langue roumaine présente un double marquage du possesseur : Accusatif possessif (pronom personnel + nominal) + V + Npc (circonstant de lieu), comme dans l'exemple : *L*-a rănit *pe criminal* la gât [*le* ACC *a blessé sur criminel* à cou] Fr. Il a blessé *le criminel* au cou.

4. En guise de conclusion

Notre analyse a mis en évidence les similitudes et, surtout, les différences dans l'expression de la possession inaliénable dans les constructions verbales avec les Npc dans les deux langues analysées.

Du côté des similitudes, on constate l'existence de deux formes casuelles pour exprimer la possession inaliénable mettant en relation le Npc et son possesseur : (1) Datif possessif (le possesseur est désigné par un Datif possessif et le Npc est un complément d'objet direct) et (2) Accusatif possessif (le possesseur est un Accusatif possessif et le Npc est un complément circonstanciel).

Mais la langue roumaine manifeste toute une série de traits spécifiques qui la différencie de la langue française dans la construction de la relation de possession inaliénable :

1. Le Datif possessif établit une relation de type partie-tout avec les Npc [+possession inaliénable] (*I*-a rupt *gâtul.* [*lui* DAT a rompu *cou-le*] Fr. Il *lui* a rompu *le cou.*), mais aussi avec les noms [+possession aliénable] (*I-a* rupt *cămașa* [*lui* DAT a rompu *chemise-la*] Fr. Il a déchiré *sa chemise*). Par conséquent, en roumain, le Datif possessif exprime aussi bien la

possession inaliénable qu'aliénable, tandis que le français restreint l'emploi du Datif possessif pour les Npc, c'est-à-dire les noms [+possession inaliénable].

2. Le possesseur est doublement exprimé en roumain dans deux cas :
    (a) le Datif possessif clitique peut être doublé par un Datif nominal à fonction de complément possessif : *I*-a tăiat gâtul *vecinului.* [*Lui* DAT a coupé cou-le voisin-le GEN] Fr. Il a coupé le cou *du voisin* ; la langue française exclut la reprise du Datif clitique par le nominal qui, lorsqu'il est exprimé dans la phrase, remplace le pronom clitique : Il *lui* a coupé la gorge. ; Il a coupé la gorge *du voisin*.
    (b) l'Accusatif possessif est marqué à la fois par un pronom clitique et par un nominal postverbal : *L*-a tăiat la gât *pe vecin.* [*Le* ACC a coupé à cou *sur voisin*] Fr. Il a coupé le cou *du voisin*.; on remarque aussi la présence de la préposition *pe* 'sur' devant le nominal postverbal.

3. La distribution syntaxique différente des Npc dans les deux langues :
    (a) Le Npc à fonction de COD devient en roumain le sujet de la phrase ; c'est le cas du verbe *a înțepeni* (fr. *coincer*) : I-a înțepenit *gâtul*. [*Lui* DAT a coincé *cou-le*] Fr. Il s'est coincé *le cou*. ; en plus, ce verbe se construit aussi avec un pronom réfléchi au Datif : *I s*-a înțepenit *gâtul.* [*Lui* DAT *s*'est coincé *cou-le*] Fr. Il s'est coincé *le cou.*
    (b) Le Npc à fonction de COD peut aussi avoir en roumain la fonction de complément circonstanciel auprès du même verbe : (1) I-a tăiat *gâtul*. [*Lui* DAT a coupé *gorge-la*] Fr. Il lui a coupé *la gorge.* ; (2) L-a tăiat *la gât*. [*Le* ACC a coupé *à gorge*] Fr. Il lui a coupé *la gorge*.

En fin de compte, notre analyse vient étayer la thèse lancée par Van Peteghem (2017 : 462) dans l'analyse du marquage de l'expérienceur dans quatre langues romanes (français, espagnol, italien, roumain) que, pour l'expression de la possession inaliénable dans les constructions verbales avec les Npc en français et en roumain, « le roumain occupe une position à part au sein des langues romanes ».

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Corpus

Adevărul - https://adevarul.ro/locale/cluj-napoca
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LA PAROLA "PROGRESSO": C'È VITA OLTRE LA MORTE?
C'È VITA OLTRE LA GUERRA?

Edoardo GIORGI[1]

ABSTRACT. *The Word "Progress":* Is There Life Beyond Death? Is There Life Beyond War? This article's purpose is to analyze as thoroughly as possible one of the most interesting dramas of the well-known French-Romanian dramatist Matei Vişniec. This work is based on some of the most horrible events that happened during and after the Yugoslavian wars and it narrates a global experience – on many semantic levels and utilizing hermeneutical instruments – throughout the story of a single family, making, in the process, stand out in a clearer way the rich relations between the living and the phantasmatic category of the "living-dead" that continues to communicate with the former. I've operated, to shed a light on those phenomena, an analysis based on some anthropological studies that take in exam the violence's dynamics, but also, of course, I've used many auxiliary studies published in Italy and France, that analyze more in detail the drama in question. But the peculiarity of my study is to apply some of the anthropological aspects of war and to collocate this work in the context in which it belongs, demonstrating also how the dramatist has done some thorough research before composing the drama.

***Keywords:** drama, Yugoslavian wars, physical dispossession, "wild capitalism"*

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REZUMAT. *Cuvântul „progres":* **Există viaţa după moarte? Există viaţa după război?** Scopul acestui articol este de a analiza în profunzime una dintre cele mai interesante piese ale cunoscutului dramaturg franco-român, Matei Vişniec. Demersul critic porneşte de la unele dintre cele mai tragice evenimente care au avut loc în timpul războaielor balcanice din anii '90 ai secolului trecut şi oferă o interpretare completă, pe mai multe paliere de semnificaţie, folosind instrumente de lucru proprii mai multor direcţii hermeneutice, cu privire la o experienţă limită filtrată prin povestea unei familii, cu implicaţii bogate semantic asupra relaţiei dintre personaje vii şi o categorie fantasmatică de morţi-vii, care continuă să comunice cu primele menţionate. Pentru a pune în lumină aceste fenomene, am întreprins o analiză bazată pe unele studii antropologice care abordează la nivel teoretic dinamica violenţei, comentând apoi în detaliu drama, după o atentă evaluare critică a unui corpus de literatură auxiliară (recenzii, studii), publicată în Italia şi Franţa. Originalitatea perspectivei pe care o propun constă în aplicarea unor chei de lectură şi aspecte specifice antropologiei culturale, utile înţelegerii mecanismelor războiului, cu scopul de a plasa opera în contextul căruia îi aparţine, documentând în acelaşi timp modul în care dramaturgul însuşi a întreprins cercetări ample în vederea compunerii acestei piese.

Cuvinte-cheie: dramă, războaie balcanice, deposedare fizică, „capitalism sălbatic"

Nel teatro di Matei Vişniec, in special modo quello degli anni Novanta, la guerra assume un'importanza da non sottovalutare: infatti il tema bellico viene ripreso, dopo *Personne n'a le droit de traîner sans armes sur un champ de bataille* (1992) e *Du sexe de la femme comme champ de bataille dans la guerre en Bosnie* (1996), in *Le mot "progrès" dans la bouche de ma mère sonnait terriblement faux*, scritta da Vişniec nel 2005 su sollecitazione del Teatro Nazionale di Craiova nel contesto del progetto "Teatro d'Europa, specchio delle popolazioni profughe" e pubblicata nel 2007 dalla casa editrice Lansman.

In quest'opera – vincitrice del *Prix coup de cœur de la presse* Avignone Off 2009 – si intrecciano varie linee di definizione del teatro visniechiano, come il rapporto tra vivi e morti reso impossibile dall'intrinseca incompatibilità tra questi (che riprende *Caii la fereastră*), ma anche altri nuovi termini legati alle problematiche odierne, tra le quali spicca in questa pièce anche il tema della tratta della prostituzione che dall'Europa orientale si dirige verso i paesi dell'Occidente europeo; cade così, nell'opera di Vişniec, il velo di Maya dei paesi democratici, i quali contengono – insieme alle innegabili luci – anche la mercificazione del sé in questo senso carnale (e in altri sensi). Riguardo i punti salienti del dramma, Claire Néel scrive:

> Come nelle stravaganti tragedie di Shakespeare, i morti cercano di far ridere i vivi, le streghe dicono che "tutta la terra è una tomba", i vicini avidi, pronti a vendere tutto, spiano ogni minima sofferenza... [...]. I corpi non si trovano da nessuna parte, i fantasmi vagano, i padri scavano con la pala (e talvolta la bottiglia) buchi nella terra dei ricordi... Intanto "a Parigi" città delle luci, la sorella, fuggita, subendo gli orrori della prostituzione e la contrattazione delle mafie, sarà costretta a tornare... In realtà è molto meno oscuro di quanto sembri...[2] (Néel 2009)

Ancora, nel dépliant della compagnia Paradoxe(s) si nota giustamente come Vişniec affronti il tema guerresco in modo non nozionistico ma crudo e potente:

> Matei Vişniec è sia un autore che un giornalista. Come giornalista, parla del mondo e della sua brutalità. Questo pezzo è nato dalla lettura dei dispacci AFP. Ma come drammaturgo, sa come portarci oltre questa violenza [...] dal particolare che tocca l'universale. Ci mostra persone che vivono su una fossa comune a due ore di aereo da Parigi, disossando con acidità nel passare i discorsi dei guerrafondai e dei profittatori della disperazione. Il comico è alla fine dell'orrore [...]. L'emozione non passa mai attraverso un dipinto compiacente della sofferenza. Al contrario, la scelta di denunciare l'orrore attraverso le risate è al centro di una scrittura che non scende a compromessi.[3] (Dalem 2013)

L'opera, che racconta la storia di una famiglia durante le guerre balcaniche degli anni '90, sviluppa – attraverso immagini e metafore piuttosto che mediante le azioni drammatiche – le dinamiche del conflitto iugoslavo ma anche, in scala ridotta (secondo la cifra personale visniechiana del narrare il totale attraverso il particolare), il dramma di una famiglia che non accetta la morte del figlio Vibko.

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[2] Comme dans les tragédies fantasques de Shakespeare, les morts tentent de faire rire les vivants, les sorcières disent que "toute la terre est une tombe", les voisins avides, prêts à tout vendre, épient la moindre souffrance... [...]. Les corps sont introuvables, les fantômes errent, les pères creusent avec la pelle (et parfois la bouteille) des trous dans la terre des mémoires... Pendant ce temps "à Paris" ville des lumières, la sœur, qui a fui, subissant les affres de la prostitution et le marchandage des mafias, sera obligée de revenir... En fait c'est beaucoup moins sombre qu'il n'y paraît... (Traduzione mia)

[3] Matéi Vişniec est à la fois auteur et journaliste. Journaliste, il parle du monde et de sa brutalité. Cette pièce est d'ailleurs née de la lecture de dépêches AFP. Mais auteur de théâtre, il sait nous emmener au-delà de cette violence [...] par le particulier qu'il touche l'universel. Il nous montre des gens vivre sur un charnier à deux heures d'avion de Paris, désossant au passage avec acidité les discours des va-t-en-guerre et des profiteurs de désespoir. Le comique est au bout de l'horreur [...]. L'émotion ne passe jamais par une peinture complaisante de la souffrance. Au contraire, le choix de dénoncer l'horreur par le rire est au cœur d'une écriture qui ne transige pas. (Traduzione mia)

Questi, benché defunto, continua a manifestarsi – dapprima senza essere percepito – ai suoi genitori, e trattiene su di sé tutte le caratteristiche di un vivente, evitando quindi di diventare uno spettro folklorico in senso romeno, ovvero uno *strigoi mort*, capace di trasformarsi in bestia e bere il sangue dei vivi. In questo dramma – e in altri, come *L'histoire du communisme* – appaiono quindi alcuni temi, fondamentalmente legati alla storia contemporanea, che appartengono sicuramente al teatro di narrazione, volto al recupero "astorico" nato in seno alla drammaturgia italiana negli anni '60 e poi successivamente propagatosi anche in Francia (David 2015, 112).

Questa pièce presenta un insieme di personaggi che Giuseppa Salidu (Salidu 2009, 12) definisce a ben donde come "corale" e il dramma racconta verità scomode come le tratte mafiose della prostituzione dall'Europa dell'Est, con centro nevralgico nell'Arizona Market di Brčko in Bosnia, il capitalismo selvaggio, il fenomeno dei "desaparecidos" iugoslavi e l'insostenibile limbo delle loro madri. Qui, come nota Salidu:

> l'elemento testuale s'intreccia alla progettualità registica. Vişniec descrive in ampie didascalie articolate sequenze di azioni, che richiamano la dimensione tragica e catartica del teatro. Da un lato, l'autore rievoca con i mezzi della "scrittura scenica" sedimentazioni magiche e arcaiche dell'inconscio collettivo; dall'altro, sviluppa un parlato alla portata di tutti, che affronta in termini intenzionalmente espliciti e volgari i contemporanei miti del sesso, del potere, del mercato, della paura. Un'intera scena viene dedicata alle donne che sacrificano la camicia dei propri defunti. (Salidu 2009, 12)

Una messa in scena di rilievo è sicuramente quella ad opera di Henri Dalem al Théâtre de Lucioles di Avignone dal 6 al 28 luglio 2013, nel contesto del Festival Off. Lui stesso, nel dépliant (vedasi Dalem 2013) della compagnia Paradoxe(s), racconta di come abbia letto *Le mot "progrés"* poco prima di aver messo in scena *La guerra* di Goldoni, riscontrando una coincidenza tematica tra le due – in quanto la pièce visniechiana parla dei fatti che si svolgono dopo l'armistizio succeduto alla guerra iugoslava, mentre quella goldoniana di quelli precedenti all'armistizio di un'indefinita guerra settecentesca – ma anche lo stesso modo in cui soltanto il teatro può proporre un'esperienza allo spettatore; l'esperienza del ritorno a una casa distrutta, il dolore di una famiglia che non riesce a trovare il corpo del figlio scomparso. Per trasporre teatralmente questi sentimenti Dalem si è reso conto di non poter affidare agli attori dei sentimenti così estremi; coloro che piangono un morto scomparso indossano quindi delle maschere integrali (ricordando la performance del teatro classico) che fissa totalmente una sola espressione. Questo, secondo lui, porta a interiorizzare,

somatizzare, l'interpretazione piuttosto che espletarla nei gesti teatrali. Attraverso la contraffazione del corpo e della voce gli attori divengono un forte veicolo emozionale, potenziato anche dalle luci laterali e dalla scenografia spoglia che li pone in una sorta di limbo sospeso tra il dolore e la speranza.

Il sostrato del dramma

A questa introduzione segue un'azione di approfondimento del sostrato antropologico del dramma, che si delinea nella polveriera balcanica che era la Iugoslavia negli anni '90. Analizzerò quindi le cause scatenanti e i risultati del conflitto, nettamente percepibili all'interno dell'andamento della pièce.

È utile parlare innanzitutto della "costituzionalità" della violenza; Hayden, nel suo saggio *Comunità immaginate e vittime reali: autodeterminazione e pulizia etnica in Iugoslavia*, si interessa anche

> delle costituzioni delle repubbliche succedute allo Stato della Iugoslavia, per mostrare come esse rappresentino un'espressione istituzionalizzata delle ideologie nazionaliste e aspirino alla costruzione di Stati-nazione omogenei in territori eterogenei [...]. La Croazia, ad esempio, è definita costituzionalmente come "lo Stato-nazione del popolo croato" (Costituzione della Repubblica Croata, 1990, preambolo) e parallelamente la Slovenia si definisce come lo Stato sovrano del popolo sloveno. In questi casi il riferimento a: "Noi, il popolo" ha un significato molto diverso rispetto a quello solitamente diffuso nell'attuale mentalità americana. (Hayden 2006, 149)

Questa premessa giuridica ha portato, nel contesto che si sta analizzando, a una uniformazione comunitaria/distruzione dell'Altro: questa si attua tramite assimilazione forzata, espulsione o revisione dei confini. La violenza viene, purtroppo, preferita laddove l'assimilazione di diverse culture è più intricata e non è possibile operare una "epurazione" con metodi non violenti.

È utile inoltre far notare come la ormai ex-Iugoslavia, per quanto riguarda il periodo che va dalla sua formazione all'inizio della guerra (1945-1991) era uno Stato multiculturale senza una preponderante maggioranza etnica, anche se composto da repubbliche che, in linea di massima, erano formate da una maggioranza culturale (ovviamente, i serbi in Serbia, i croati in Croazia). L'eccezione era quella che sarebbe diventata, proprio per l'assenza di maggioranze etniche, la terra più dilaniata dal conflitto: la Bosnia ed Erzegovina. Questa, secondo i dati che propone Hayden e riportati nella Tabella 1, presentava una realtà a dir poco variegata. Basti pensare, per converso, che la Slovenia comprendeva nel 1981 il 90,5% di sloveni e l'87,6% nel 1991 (vedasi Hayden 2006, 153).

Tabella 1: Dati forniti originariamente in Petrović 1992, p. 4.

Bosnia ed Erzegovina (1981)		(1991)
Musulmani	39,5%	43,7%
Serbi	32%	31,4%
Croati	18,4%	17,3%
"Iugoslavi"	7,9%	5,5%
Altri	2,2%	2,1%

Proporre questi dati (utili a dare una percezione dell'eterogeneità etnica della Iugoslavia) può sembrare però poco in linea con le idee di Matei Vişniec, che giustamente vede il rischio di assumerli come informazioni fredde, numeriche, asettiche. Voglio quindi sottolineare che dietro a queste percentuali si nascondono persone; perciò, mi auguro che il lettore veda volti invece che numeri.

Con le libere elezioni nel 1990, la Lega dei comunisti crolla, e le nuove repubbliche autonome assumono i tratti del più classico nazionalismo. La politica presupponeva un'incomunicabilità fra i vari popoli iugoslavi, e rinnegava così l'idea di uno Stato comune degli slavi meridionali propugnata dal comunismo. Hayden nota quindi giustamente che

la configurazione spaziale della guerra e la sua terribile ferocia sono dovute al fatto che in alcune regioni i vari popoli iugoslavi non solo coesistevano, ma erano sempre più strettamente intrecciati. In una situazione politica che traeva ad assunto l'incompatibilità, questi territori misti apparivano anomali e minacciosi, in quanto confutazioni viventi delle ideologie nazionaliste. (Hayden 2006, 155-156)

Nonostante l'alta concentrazione territoriale delle varie etnie all'interno della Iugoslavia, si assiste nel decennio precedente alla guerra a un movimento generale: l'eterogeneità etnica era in aumento, mentre in diminuzione era l'omogeneità, con l'eccezione della Serbia, della Vojvodina e del Kosovo. Parallelamente all'aumento della differenziazione etnica si assiste, nello stesso periodo, a un aumento dei matrimoni misti (come quello che univa presumibilmente sulla scena Ida e Stanko, il quale in guerra – forse per motivi nazionalistici – si ritrova nella fazione opposta a quella del cognato Vibko) soprattutto, come è normale, nelle zone a più alta compenetrazione di culture (le grandi città, la Vojvodina, la Bosnia-Erzegovina e certe zone croate con componenti serbe). Ulteriore indizio di eterogeneità era la preferenza, soprattutto fra i giovani, a identificarsi, nei

sondaggi degli anni '80, come "iugoslavi"; la concentrazione di questi era perlopiù nelle grandi città e nelle regioni più miste. Le identità nazionali erano ancora sentite in maniera molto forte, ma, come nota Hayden, «nei primi anni Ottanta l'identità nazionale non stava al primo posto negli interessi della gente» (Hayden 2006, 158). Con lo sviluppo, dal 1990, dei nazionalismi, si assiste a un crollo anche drastico dell'identità comune iugoslava (– 41,3% sull'intero territorio) rispetto alle singole identità etniche, anche se rimangono relativamente ampie nelle zone miste della Croazia e nella Bosnia-Erzegovina. Il calo è dovuto al clima pesantemente nazionalista che si respirava in quegli anni, e quindi alla paura di essere aggrediti o pesantemente limitati sul lavoro e nella proprietà privata.

L'autodeterminazione nazionale ha quindi legittimato l'uniformazione anche attraverso la guerra, l'espulsione (come avviene nella scena 2, mostrando il ritorno dei rifugiati), le violenze volte all'annientamento fisico dell'Altro (come le fosse comuni, tema centrale del dramma). Dal 1995 il processo di espulsione di popolazione indesiderata si è velocizzato ed è stato attuato su larga scala da tutti i protagonisti del conflitto.

Un'analisi scena per scena dell'opera

In questa sezione discuterò più direttamente del dramma visniechiano, per analizzarlo scena per scena. La narrazione si ambienta presumibilmente, come nota Néel, negli anni 1995-1998, tre anni dopo gli inizi della maggior parte delle guerre iugoslave[4] (vedasi Néel 2009).

Dopo un preambolo (scene 1 e 2) che infrange – insieme alle scene parigine – i principî aristotelici di unità di tempo, luogo e azione, e in cui vengono mostrate una scena di battaglia e il ritorno dopo la guerra dei profughi, comincia la vera peripezia, una *quête* di due anziani per le ossa del figlio ucciso in guerra. Durante questa ricerca in una "geografia del disastro"[5] verranno alla luce, oltre agli orrori della guerra, anche quelli del neonato capitalismo balcanico, rappresentato da Yrvan, il vicino – che Vişniec non nominerà mai nelle denominazioni delle battute col suo nome proprio ma attraverso la sua funzione (il Vicino) come a simboleggiare il suo spossessamento da parte del capitalismo più sfrenato (che è, effettivamente, diventato il "nuovo vicino" balcanico) – e da Ida, sorella di Vibko e vittima delle tratte sessuali coordinate dalla mafia e seguite alla guerra.

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[4] Che finiscono ufficialmente nel 2001.

[5] Così la peripezia viene definita da Dalem stesso nel dépliant Matei Visniec, *Le mot "progrés" sur la bouche de ma mére sonnait terriblement faux*, Compagnie lauréate du prix du Club de la Presse Avignon Off 2012: Paradoxe(s).

In questa pièce troviamo delle ritualità epiche che riguardano le azioni e che appaiono idealmente coerenti con le teorie del "teatro della morte" di Tadeusz Kantor (espresse molto chiaramente nella sua pièce *Umarla Kłasa*); come spiega Lehmann:

> C'è qui una ricerca di uno "stato di non recitazione" e di una struttura della trama non continua, ma invece scene ripetutamente condensate espressionisticamente, combinate con una forma quasi ritualistica di evocare il passato: "Questo processo significa smembrare le strutture logiche della trama, costruire scene, non per riferimento testuale, ma per riferimento alle associazioni innescate da esse".[6] (Lehmann 2006, 71)
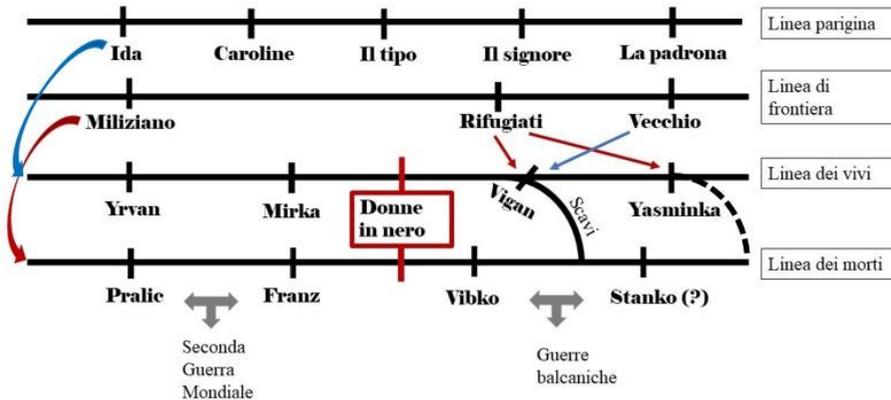
Fig. 1: *Rapporto lineare dei personaggi della pièce. Copyright: Edoardo Giorgi.*

Altri rituali, che ricordano le tragedie classiche, sono le lamentazioni funebri – legate a doppio filo con i riti ancestrali e il silenzio ipertrofico (come nota David 2015, 111) – che hanno una funzione liturgica, e altri gesti che ricordano le madri luttuose delle rivisitazioni del teatro dell'assurdo. Nella cornice simbolica cerimoniale rientrano anche oggetti come ossa umane, camicie, stivali ecc., la cui attribuzione a una persona specifica è impossibile. Questi sono il simbolo di una ritualità rovesciata, non officiata per il bene del morto, di una pratica volta a stimolare un senso di accettazione della perdita dei propri cari:

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[6] There is a search here for a 'state of non-acting' and non-continuous plot structure, but instead repeatedly expressionistically condensed scenes, combined with a quasi-ritualistic form of conjuring up the past: 'This process means dismembering logical plot structures, building up scenes, not by textual reference, but by reference to associations triggered by them'. (Traduzione mia. Recentemente è stata pubblicata la traduzione italiana ad opera di S. Antinori per Cuepress, Bologna 2017.)

di fatto però diventa un vero e proprio commercio, visto che questi "officianti" si fanno ben pagare per dare "consolazione" ai vivi; tutto questo è il simbolo del mutamento cinico della storia dei Balcani, dove il comunismo viene intercambiato con un capitalismo estremista. Nelle stesse scene in cui avviene questo, il dialogo viene abbandonato a favore del monologo e del coro: quest'ultimo permette di accomunare le *matres dolorosæ* (voglio chiamarle così) in una collettività di comunione.

Il lutto e il dolore sono in questa pièce legati all'assenza, resa corporea sulla scena attraverso le sedie vuote (e per me anche attraverso il piatto che si rompe); come nota infatti Emilia David:

> Il riferimento esplicito al topos di Eugène Ionesco, secondo cui le sedie rappresentano all'interno della poetica del teatro dell'assurdo l'incomunicabilità, sottolinea in modo ancora più marcato l'ambivalenza di una situazione assurda e tragica. L'assenza di terrore metafisico in quest'opera indica la distanza (critica) e il superamento compiuto da Vişniec, parallelamente all'attuale drammaturgia, di fronte ai paradigmi del teatro dell'assurdo che, grazie alla spiccata inclinazione verso il grottesco, appare convertito in una commedia dell'assurdo, condannata alla totale perdita di significato.[7] (David 2015, 111)

Attraverso l'immaginario scenico ioneschiano gli oggetti del mondo esterno, quotidiano, sono dirimenti agli stati d'animo dei personaggi. La logica estetica di questa trovata scenica risponde alla simultaneità drammatica; le sedie vuote simboleggiano l'assenza delle persone essenziali alla vita dei protagonisti. Questo rieccheggia il gioco della presenza-assenza dei morti, che risulta comune ad altri drammaturghi francesi come Patrick Kermann (*La mastication des morts*, 1999), che riprende le forme oratorie del teatro tragico greco. Come nota infatti David, i gesti candidi di Vibko sono improvvisamente inframezzati da "momenti liturgici", siano questi lamenti luttuosi o gesti rituali, che portano il teatro dell'assurdo a flettersi verso la tragedia classica. Si è assistito negli ultimi anni a un ritorno, all'interno del teatro postdrammatico[8], a un tragico corale che

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[7] La référence explicite au topos d'Eugène Ionesco, selon lequel les chaises représentent à l'intérieur de la poétique du théâtre de l'absurde l'incommunicabilité, souligne de façon encore plus marquée l'ambivalence d'une situation absurde et tragique. L'absence de la terreur métaphysique dans cette œuvre indique la distance (critique) et le dépassement accompli par Visniec, parallèlement à la dramaturgie actuelle, face aux paradigmes du théâtre de l'absurde qui, grâce au penchant particulièrement marqué vers le grotesque, apparaît converti en comédie de l'absurde, vouée à la perte totale du sens. (Traduzione mia)

[8] Con Jean-Luc Lagarce in *J'étais dans ma maison et j'attendais que la pluie vienne*, 1994 e Olivier Py in *Requiem pour Srebrenica*, 1999

permette a un singolo personaggio di agire in modo collettivo, parlando per le comunità a cui appartiene (David 2020, 260-261).

Un altro fattore interessante, che mi sembra che nessuno studioso abbia ancora notato, è la denominazione scenica dei personaggi, che nell'immagine soprastante (Fig. 1) ho deciso di inserire con il loro nome proprio (quando possibile). La denominazione che Vişniec sceglie non corrisponde al mio criterio: Yrvan viene chiamato nelle denominazioni di battuta "il nuovo vicino", Vibko "il figlio", Ida "la figlia" o "la ragazza" (solo a Parigi) ecc. Mi sembra quindi che, almeno nel ruolo scenico, ciascun personaggio sia stilizzato – e sicuramente universalizzato – nella sua funzione, diventando quasi un personaggio oggettivato che si distanzia però dal suo prototipo del *Théâtre décomposé* per il semplice fatto di possedere una sua umanità, una sua tensione sentimentale e morale (tranne casi come Yrvan, Mirka "la vecchia pazza", e la maggioranza della "linea parigina").

Nella scena 1 assistiamo a un interessantissimo svolgimento di quella che possiamo definire una dissociazione tra parole e gesti: i protagonisti sono Vibko – fratello di Ida e figlio di Vigan e Yasminka – e Stanko, suo cognato. I due uomini si trovano su due opposti schieramenti di guerra (ricordo al lettore che, tristemente, durante le guerre balcaniche molte famiglie plurietniche si smembrarono e massacrarono) divisi da una "terra di nessuno". Attraverso questo scenario di morte i due si scambiano crudamente offese reciproche urlate da una trincea all'altra ma in realtà sembrano intavolare un discorso assolutamente normale: sotto il velame ostile Vibko chiede a Stanko se sia ancora vivo, gli chiede se ha ancora cibo e se sua sorella Ida abbia partorito; Stanko gli risponde che la donna ha appena dato alla luce il piccolo quella notte e che lo chiameranno Vibko, «come lo stronzo che ormai è morto» (David 2012, 224). Dopo altri scambi di offese pesanti, Vibko passa da una trincea all'altra un pacco con dello zucchero, del latte in polvere per Ida, e un pacchetto di sigarette per Stanko. Sapremo poi che Vibko verrà ucciso e gettato in una fossa comune durante la guerra; presumibilmente, anche Stanko e il piccolo Vibko rimarranno vittime del conflitto, perché Ida sarà costretta ad andare a Parigi da sola. Alla fine della scena, da una parte e dall'altra del fronte, una armonica comincia a suonare; come si vedrà, il suo suono sarà importantissimo nell'economia della pièce.

Nella scena 2 si svolge il ritorno dei rifugiati e il loro passaggio attraverso la frontiera. Davanti a loro il miliziano intavola un infervorato quanto fanatico discorso sulla sacralità della frontiera dovuta al suo battesimo nel sangue degli "eroi della patria". È probabile che in questo gruppo di rifugiati si trovino anche Vigan e Yasminka, che nella scena successiva ritorneranno alla loro casa, ormai mezza distrutta.

La scena 3 vede il ritorno di Vibko, ormai fantasma, al focolare familiare. Il ragazzo saluta i genitori, ma ovviamente non viene sentito, a simboleggiare l'incomunicabilità tra il mondo dei vivi e quello dei defunti. Vibko identifica

temporalmente, per quanto possibile, la data della sua morte, avvenuta tre anni prima. Come ultima frase della scena, il giovane tenta di consolare i genitori, dando loro una sorta di speranza per il futuro vedendoli così inchiodati al passato: «E la casa non è bruciata completamente, ne usciremo» (David 2012, 227).

Nella scena 4, Vibko si lamenta quasi infantilmente con il padre del silenzio della madre e del fatto che lei non riesca a piangere per colpa di un blocco emotivo (che pare sbloccarsi nel tentativo di contatto con il figlio nella scena 8). Da quanto veniamo a sapere, il padre parla al giovane quando è nel cortile o nella foresta, ma questo sembrerebbe essere solo il suo modo di affrontare il lutto e non una forma di comunicazione diretta col ragazzo, che tuttavia avverrà più avanti in modo particolarissimo.

Nella scena 5 si assiste alla prima "azione" di Yasminka: la richiesta al marito di andare al bar per fare o rinsaldare amicizie al fine di scoprire dove sia il corpo del figlio. È così determinata a oliare gli ingranaggi del paese da non preoccuparsi se Vigan debba spendere un patrimonio in "bicchierini offerti in amicizia"; dovessero mancare i soldi basterebbe vendere un pezzo di giardino. Ritorna ancora in questa scena la musica dell'armonica, che attraverso tutta la pièce agirà come psicopompo per le anime dei sotterrati (nel caso della scena 6, il cane del figlio che continua a urlare dal pozzo fino a che non viene tirato fuori alla scena 10).

Nella scena 7 appare colui che incarna il capitalismo selvaggio che ha invaso i Balcani dopo la fine del comunismo: il nuovo vicino, Yrvan, pieno di buone parole e cattive intenzioni. Tenta infatti, dopo un breve discorso sull'orrore del conflitto appena finito, di vendere pezzi di ricambio di automobile, o addirittura benzina, a Vigan.

Nella scena 8 i due coniugi cominciano a entrare gradualmente in contatto con il regno dei morti: ogni notte sentono infatti il cane di Vibko che «abbaia dalle viscere della terra» (David 2012, 231). Nella stessa scena ritorna ancora il suono negromantico dell'armonica, che preannuncia un nuovo contatto spiritico. Riguardo al rapporto tra vivi e morti in questa pièce, è di particolare rilievo l'osservazione di Guccini:

> Anche qui, come nei *Cavalli alla finestra*, i rapporti fra i morti e i vivi vengono a tradursi in coabitazioni sceniche che oggettivano un *prius* essenziale del teatro: le sue funzioni di luogo ritualizzato dove ciò che è esistito si intreccia all'esistente. Piccolo e imprevedibile "giorno dei morti", il teatro di Vişniec innerva ad azioni, tempi e luoghi, non tanto il bisogno della rimembranza, oggetto piuttosto dell'espressione lirica, né la celebrazione del distacco, cui attende la ritualità socializzata della religione, né il panegirico del morto, compito delle forme epiche, quanto il gesto affettivo e simbolicamente eversivo del richiamo in vita. (Guccini 2018, 12-13)

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Continuando, lo studioso nota ancora che

> Mentre le culture popolari stabiliscono, nei riguardi dei morti, relazioni che prevedono rituali di difesa e mantenimento nei rispettivi mondi, Vişniec attiva liberamente la paradossale compresenza di morti e vivi. Poiché i morti convocati dalla sua drammaturgia sono spesso letterati e drammaturghi, mi sembra fondato supporre che il modello di morto, al quale fa riferimento, sia l'autore, la cui voce continua a parlare attraverso gli scritti, e che, convocato in scena, non fa che esplicitare una presenza comunque intrecciata al vivere di chi legge. (Guccini 2018, 13)

Alla scena 10 ricompare imperterrito il nuovo vicino e le sue vendite moleste di praticamente ogni cosa possibile e immaginabile, anche, e stavolta lanciando l'esca in modo subdolo, delle ossa umane ritrovate nella foresta con uno stivale e un pezzo di cintura, messe in una borsa che lascia all'anziano. Nella scena successiva Vigan e Yasminka parlano della possibile identità delle ossa, ma la moglie è sicurissima che non siano di Vibko (infatti sono di Pralic, un partigiano di Tito morto nel '41). Incita quindi il marito a scavare buche nella foresta, a qualsiasi costo, anche a quello di sembrare un folle. Questa situazione assurda, il mischiarsi del mondo dei vivi con quello dei morti, viene risolta fino a questo punto attraverso l'incomunicabilità fra i rispettivi abitanti, ma quando Vigan si mette a scavare per ritrovare le ossa del figlio si assiste a una vera e propria catabasi e alla creazione di un portale tra due mondi che permette di sentire, vedere e perfino, alla fine, toccare indirettamente i morti. Significativi sono infatti gli arrivederci corrisposti della scena 12 – dopo che Vigan ha trovato il cadavere del cane di Vibko nel pozzo – e nella scena 24, quando dopo aver trovato le ossa del ragazzo il padre addirittura offre da bere a Kokai, il miliziano morto che è lì insieme a Vibko. Dopo l'opera di scavo che riporta alla luce il cane del ragazzo, sembra che l'intero sottosuolo sia ora in fermento, che tenti anch'esso di ritornare all'aria aperta, come fa notare liricamente e inquietantemente Vibko:

> IL FIGLIO: […] Guardate come è bello fuori… La primavera è arrivata prima quest'anno… I ciliegi sono già in fiore… La foresta è più verde che mai… E la terra è morbida, imbevuta d'acqua fresca… È la stagione buona per scavare dei buchi… infatti la terra si apre da sola e sputa senza sosta ossa e stivali, scudi ed elmetti… Noi andiamo a fare un giro vicino alla radura, pare che tutta una pattuglia di tedeschi stia tornando in superficie… Ecco, vieni Pralic, andiamo a divertirci con i *Crucchi*. (David 2012, 238)

In questa battuta appare anche una visione interessante: ora che sono morti, soldati di diverse nazioni possono essere amici e divertirsi insieme.

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti sosteneva controversamente, nel suo *Manifesto del Futurismo*, che la guerra fosse l'unica igiene del mondo; mi sembra qui invece che l'igiene sia nella foscoliana "fatal quïete" dopo il conflitto.

La scena 13 è tutta impregnata di una poesia e di una potenza liturgiche che rimandano al teatro greco: appaiono, per la prima e unica volta all'interno del dramma, le *matres dolorosæ*, personaggi situati in un limbo di attesa che le rende delle autentiche morte (nell'animo) che vivono (nel corpo). Queste, mentre Yasminka lava alcune camicie, sotterrano in alcune carriole delle camicie macchiate di sangue, appartenenti ai loro cari. La scena si svolge accompagnata dal canto delle prefiche e ogni donna indossa una maschera addolorata, proprio come nel teatro classico. Alla fine, le donne in nero vanno via, «in un certo qual modo felici» (David 2012, 239). La madre di Vibko intona dopo questa scena, che si svolge sotto i suoi occhi, una vera poesia prosastica che nella sua funzione di grido di dolore sembra ricordare vagamente quella di Dorra, personaggio visniechiano di *Du sexe de la femme*. Con questo canto la donna esprime la necessità, imprescindibile per una madre, di sapere che in una tomba c'è effettivamente suo figlio e non qualcun altro. Tuttavia, nelle fosse comuni le ossa si mischiano le une alle altre: la donna racconta così di come sua cugina Vera sia riuscita a trovare un barlume di pace seppellendo la camicia di suo figlio, per lei inconfondibile, invece del corpo. Mentre finisce di raccontare, compare ancora alla fine il suono di un'armonica.

La scena 14 vede un dialogo, sicuramente reso possibile dalla catabasi del padre attivata dagli scavi, tra Vibko e Vigan, il quale tenta di trovare le ossa del figlio. Il giovane risponde alle implorazioni del padre, volte a ritrovare il suo corpo, ammettendo di non ricordarsi nulla, che purtroppo quando si muore succede questo, ma che sa di aver camminato molto prima della sua morte: «Tutta la mia memoria è passata nei miei stivali. È pazzesco come li senta pesanti gli stivali» (David 2012, 241).

A ogni colpo di pala, in questa "osteostratigrafia" del territorio si va a finire in altre fosse comuni di altri conflitti; a questo punto, come tornano alla luce le ossa dei morti, così tornano i loro spettri, felici di poter raggiungere finalmente le proprie case. L'intimità della vicenda personale di Vigan e Yasminka assume sicuramente anche una valenza politica ed etica: «non avremmo seppellito un po' in fretta una parte dell'identità europea nel sottosuolo dei Balcani?»[9] (Dalem 2013).

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[9] N'aurions-nous pas enterré un peu vite une part de l'identité européenne dans le sous-sol des Balkans? (Traduzione mia)

Fig. 2: *Osteostratigrafia del territorio della pièce (scena 14). Copyright: Edoardo Giorgi.*

Più a fondo si scava più gli strati diventano confusi, ma tutti i morti stanno bene in quella terra, descritta da Vibko in termini molto sereni e poetici:

> IL FIGLIO: […] una terra calda, morbida, malleabile, non troppo pesante… E poi, le stagioni sono ben distinte, è facile contare il tempo. In inverno c'è molta neve e arriva il gelo, è proprio un piacere. Questo amplifica i suoni, si sentono i rami scricchiolare… Le piogge della primavera puliscono tutto in profondità, le gocce d'acqua penetrano fino alle nostre ossa, respiriamo… L'estate è molto calda, ma c'è sempre la brezza… Quanto agli autunni, sono lunghi e di una dolcezza infinita… (David 2012, 242)

Nella scena 15 assistiamo a una delle più commoventi manifestazioni, insieme alle esternazioni della scena 8, della madre di Vibko, la quale si rivolge direttamente a suo figlio morto senza però riuscire ad ottenere risposta, a differenza di suo marito che attraverso gli scavi sembra avvicinarsi sempre di più, fisicamente – certo – ma anche spiritualmente, ai morti. L'armonica che suona ci fa capire però che il figlio non ha abbandonato la madre, ma è lì con lei anche se invisibile (infatti Vibko è comunque in scena).

Vișniec utilizza e adatta al meglio le lezioni cechoviane e dell'assurdo alla situazione geopolitica di quel determinato contesto storico: la "resistenza culturale" si incarna nel mélange tra i "morti vivi" e i "vivi morti" simbolo dello sconquasso della violenza umana, che si proietta anche in un linguaggio volgare e in un'attitudine violenta, come nel caso (scena 16) del magnaccia (chiamato dall'autore "il tipo"), ma al contempo anche nel silenzio di Ida:

> IL TIPO: Senti, Ida, passerò di nuovo da qui tra un'ora. Se ti vedo ancora qui sei fottuta! [...]
> (*La ragazza guarda di nuovo nel vuoto. Poi, dopo qualche secondo, si mette a cantare a voce bassa. È una canzone che viene da lontano e le cui parole sono incomprensibili*).
> Ma cazzo smettila... Senti, se credi che con la tua cazzo di canzone mi strapperai il cuore... Merda, smettila! [...] La tua canzone puoi ficcartela nel culo, mi senti? [...] Chiudi il becco e fuori dai coglioni, basta... Porca vacca di merda! (David 2012, 245)

Lo stesso tipo di linguaggio viene utilizzato anche da un cliente:

> IL SIGNORE: Senti, bambola, non parli nessuna lingua? Mostrami la tua lingua... La tua lingua, voglio vedere la tua lingua... Mi piacciono tanto i pompini del Kosovo. Più il paese di origine è nella merda, più i pompini, qui, sono buoni... Qualche anno fa, erano i pompini della Bosnia ad essere i migliori [...]. Allora, non sei della Bosnia? Sei del Caucaso forse? [...] Sei venuta dal Caucaso? [...] Vendi pompini caucasici? Eh? Ma rispondi quando ti parlo, bella fighetta...
> *A voce bassa, la ragazza comincia a cantare una canzone in quella stessa lingua, difficilmente riconoscibile. Preso dal panico, il signore indietreggia, si guarda intorno a sé, e sparisce.* (David 2012, 245-246)

È interessante notare come il canto della ragazza metta in fuga questi personaggi a dir poco disgustosi, che vengono terrorizzati e allontanati da questa musica che agisce quasi come un esorcismo.

Il motivo del viaggio di Ida verso Parigi è da ricercarsi nel cambio di politica balcanico oltre che nella povertà causata dalle martorianti guerre di quegli anni che crearono un diffuso racket di prostituzione. Questo partiva, nel mondo reale, dall'Arizona Market con tratte che dall'Europa dell'Est vanno verso ovest e di cui rimane vittima, sulla scena, la sorella di Vibko, che si prostituisce – dopo che la guerra le ha portato via il figlio appena nato e suo marito Stanko – nelle ombre della *ville lumière*. Lo spaccato della storia di Ida ci mostra un altro lato della guerra, quello della degradazione del corpo ad opera della povertà, quello degli strip-club, delle lap-dance e del kitsch, che Vişniec affatto banalmente descrive.

Nella stessa scena appare poi il travestito, anche lui caratterizzato da un linguaggio molto sboccato ma che presenta una indubbia dolcezza caratteriale: offre una sigaretta a Ida e si mette a parlare con lei; ancora, la ragazza canta, ma lui non scappa, si rilassa e passa da bere a Ida.

Nella scena 17 appare Mirka, la vecchia pazza, che sorprende Vigan a scavare buche nel bosco e si lamenta con lui del fatto che qualcuno sta rovesciando delle ossa davanti alla sua porta e a quelle di altri. Razionalmente,

non si rende conto che le ossa stanno uscendo da sole sotto l'input del primo scavo di Vigan. La fredda coerenza della vecchia appare con chiarezza quando il padre le dice di voler trovare Vibko per seppellirlo:

> LA VECCHIA PAZZA: Deve essere già sotto terra. Siete tutti pazzi! A cosa serve dissotterrare i morti per sotterrarli di nuovo quando sono già sotto terra? [...] Lascia in pace mio figlio, mi senti? Lasciali in pace tutti e due. A cosa serve adesso separare le loro ossa? Tutte le ossa si sono mescolate. Ora è così. Smetti di devastare la foresta. Perché volere una tomba? Tutta la terra è una tomba. (David 2012, 249)

Ma se la vecchia pazza è così "razionale" – o meglio, economicisticamente edonistica – perché viene definita pazza da Vişniec? Se ci volessimo porre come lettori iperrealisti e raziocinanti dovremmo per forza notare che non c'è un solo personaggio (vivo) che non sia in qualche suo modo particolare un folle. Ma dobbiamo riconoscere che la situazione stessa in cui si svolge la vicenda è puramente assurda, e allo stesso tempo terribilmente reale e documentata; la vecchia Mirka è pazza, secondo me, proprio per un motivo: non è solo il fatto di credere paranoicamente che delle persone gettino ossa nel suo giardino, mentre in realtà stanno affiorando da sole, ma sono anche la sua mancanza di empatia e il suo egoismo che la caratterizzano come una vera e propria psicopatica. Un esempio di ciò è questa sua battuta, rivolta a Vigan:

> LA VECCHIA PAZZA: E perché allora tutte le notti mi butti delle ossa nel cortile? Tutti quelli che passano vicino a casa mia mi gettano delle ossa marce sotto le finestre... Ne ho trovat[e] perfino sul tetto... Il mio cortile non è una pattumiera! Io non ho ucciso nessuno. Anche a me hanno ucciso un figlio. O forse credi sia stato mio figlio a uccidere tuo figlio. È questo che credi? [...] (David 2012, 249)

Ho detto poco sopra che la vecchia pazza è economicisticamente edonistica; questo suo tratto è definito nella discussione che intavola, sempre con Vigan, alla scena 23, quando si scopre che è in combutta con il vicino Yrvan per guadagnare soldi con la tratta di resti umani usati per comporre un corpo da seppellire, nonostante poco prima avesse intimato al padre di lasciar stare le ossa dei morti (David 2012, 262-264).

Negli scavi Vigan trova un elmetto e degli occhiali da motociclista: questo scatenerà la seconda visita dall'aldilà (alla scena 18) di un amico di suo figlio, il soldato tedesco Franz, annunciata dall'ormai onnipresente suono dell'armonica. La differenza linguistica tra Franz e Vibko non è un ostacolo, i due riescono a intendersi reciprocamente nonostante i due idiomi diversi: è, ancora una volta,

il simbolo di un'uguaglianza umana possibile, ma purtroppo attuabile solo nel regno dei morti. Altro fatto importantissimo, in questa scena per la prima volta la madre, insieme al padre, riesce a sentire Vibko, portando piatti e posate quando lui glieli chiede. Sembrerebbe proprio che, dopo che le ossa dei morti se ne vanno a zonzo per il paese attraverso un'anabasi collettiva, anche lei stia sprofondando come il marito negli abissi della morte riuscendo a toccare quella linea che separa i vivi dai defunti.

Nella scena 19 le tre unità aristoteliche vengono di nuovo disattese riportando in scena le traversie di Ida. In questo luogo testuale si scopre che il pappone è un mafioso italiano, fatto che sottolinea come la mafia sia presente dovunque ci sia un possibile guadagno, senza guardare in faccia alla miseria e alla guerra. La provenienza del personaggio è chiara perché nel testo originale francese alcune parole, evidenziate in corsivo, sono in italiano e vengono fatti dei riferimenti all'Italia. La padrona dello strip-club e il magnaccia trattano per il passaggio di proprietà dell'infelice Ida, e lo fanno mediante "baratto" con sigarette di contrabbando, che, come lascia intendere Vişniec nel testo, sono una valuta comune e conveniente nella malavita.

La scena 20 ci riporta subito nei Balcani, dove Vibko "induce" sua madre a dire la parola "satellite" e facendole intavolare un discorso con Vigan dicendogli che con i satelliti si è riusciti a trovare molte fosse comuni. Per il ragazzo quella parola sulla bocca di sua madre non può che risultare anormale, come gli sembrava falsa anche la parola "progresso" quando Yasminka chiedeva alle riunioni scolastiche se il figlio avesse fatto qualche progresso: la parola "satellite" sulla bocca di una madre, ci dice Vibko, non può essere normale, secondo me soprattutto perché si tratta di usare il referente semantico per trovare il corpo del proprio figlio.

La scena 21 vede di nuovo i pessimi tentativi di Yrvan di vendere qualcosa a Vigan, sempre mediante un lungo preambolo per sembrare meno attaccato al denaro. Esternando tutta la sua pietà per il padre che continua a scavare e accusando Yasminka di stupidità perché giustamente non riconosce come proprio figlio quelle ossa che lui aveva così "cortesemente" portato. Quelle stesse ossa che, riconsegnate dal vecchio, vengono "rimesse in attesa" dal vicino, che mostra a quel punto, per pura "pietà", «diversi ripiani sui quali sono disposti crani e ossa umane. Si ha la vaga impressione di essere in un reparto di supermercato che vende scheletri» (David 2012, 258). Addirittura, questo folle negozio presenta un reparto cuoio, dove sono le scarpe, le cinture e i giubbotti dei morti. Yrvan propone quindi a Vigan i suoi prezzi e lo informa della possibilità di ordinare uno "scheletro componibile" per duemila dollari. D'altronde, secondo le sue stranianti parole:

> IL NUOVO VICINO: [...] è assurdo come la gente sia cogliona... Adottare un bambino per dare un senso alla propria vita, questo sembra loro normale, ma adottare un cadavere è uno scandalo... Stronzi di merda! [...] Ce ne sono alcuni che vanno sino in Cina per adottare un bambino, spendono una fortuna. Ma un cadavere di duemila dollari, a questi sembra caro e pure illegale! (David 2012, 259)

La scena 22 vede un nuovo spostamento di prospettiva, ritornando sulla "linea parigina", dove la padrona caccia via Ida perché non vuole offrire il suo servizio ai neri. Questo per la maitresse non è affatto accettabile, perché «siamo in Europa cazzo! E qui non siamo razzisti! L'Europa è questo! Qui, lo succhi a tutti! Qui, non facciamo capricci» (David 2012, 261). Questa forma di tolleranza estremamente caustica, paradossale e al limite dell'*humour noir* – o *bleu*, è una distinzione indifferente nel caso specifico –, che ovviamente rispetta la cifra del teatro di Vişniec, mi sembra decisamente molto poco lusinghiera nei confronti dell'Europa e della democrazia stessa.

La scena 23 vede, dopo la contrattazione parigina della scena 19, Vigan e Mirka – che si rivela essere in combutta con Yrvan – mercanteggiare sul prezzo di uno scheletro intero, come ho più sopra accennato. Il padre fa sicuramente questo per tentare di dare pace alla moglie, ma la trattativa non andrà a buon fine per colpa (o grazie, vedendo lo sviluppo successivo) all'avidità della donna, a cui «non [...] piace contrattare sulle disgrazie delle persone» (David 2012, 264).

Nella scena 24 Vigan sta scavando proprio sulla linea di frontiera, e il miliziano Kokai (lo stesso della scena 2) tenta di fermarlo ma senza essere ascoltato, perché anche lui è morto due giorni prima saltando su una mina che lui stesso stava piazzando. In questa scena il contatto con i morti raggiunge l'apice, permettendo un contatto fisico, anche se indiretto: il passaggio di una bottiglia di slivoviz[10] dal padre (Vigan è un vivo) a Kokai (un morto che non dovrebbe essere in grado di toccare oggetti fisici), che a sua volta la passa allo spettro-Vibko, diventato suo amico, che la ripassa a Vigan. Alla fine, il vecchio trova, in uno zaino nero e umido, il corpo del figlio, e chiama Yasminka che arriva di corsa e finalmente, dopo tutto quel tempo, riesce a piangere. In quel mentre Ida arriva con una valigia, mentre suo fratello suona l'armonica che il padre gli ha passato.

Il doppio finale della pièce propone un duplice sovvertimento: al silenzio ipertrofico di Vigan e di Yasminka di fronte alle domande quasi logorroiche del figlio, con cui questo "uroborico"[11] dramma inizia, corrisponde il silenzio finale

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[10] Un'acquavite di prugne tipica dei Balcani e soprattutto della Serbia.

[11] Il neologismo è un mélange dell'uroboro – simbolo del ciclo eterno – e del corrosivo e tossico acido borico, così come tossico e corrosivo è il dramma di Vişniec, che inizia e finisce nel silenzio dei genitori.

che i genitori oppongono alla figlia Ida, tornata da Parigi. La ragazza viene ignorata e rinnegata da loro proprio per la "vergogna" della prostituzione, anche se attuata con tutte le migliori intenzioni. Per quanto riguarda la scena 25-bis, giustamente Emilia David nota come Ida, dopo essere tornata da Parigi, si trovi di fronte un muro fatto di silenzio

> con cui i genitori invariabilmente "rispondono" alle domande del figlio, con cui *Le mot "progrès"* si apre e chiude simmetricamente, [e] corrisponde, nel secondo finale, al trattamento silenzioso che riservano a Ida, che rinnegano dopo lo sfortunato episodio di prostituzione a Parigi.[12] (David 2020, 261)

Come nota ancora la studiosa, Matei Vişniec utilizza un topos ioneschiano estremamente interessante, ovvero le sedie vuote:

> Frequente in tutto il testo, questo tipo di muta riserva è intertestualmente eloquente, [...] in quanto allude in modo trasparente alle sedie ioneschiane. Topos per eccellenza di non comunicatività, le sedie sono qui schierate per accentuare ancora più enfaticamente l'ambivalenza di una situazione tragica e assurda. Ma anche qui Vişniec è attento a sgonfiare parte del terrore metafisico così emblematico nella letteratura dell'assurdo e, così facendo, a mantenere una distanza critica dal suo modello.[13] (David 2020, 261)

Conclusioni

In questo articolo, in cui si è analizzata l'opera di Vişniec *Le mot "progrès" dans la bouche de ma mère sonnait terriblement faux*, ho voluto sondare, dapprima in una prospettiva antropologica e poi focalizzandomi sul testo, due delle tante modalità di negazione personale applicate nelle guerre balcaniche e che sono protagoniste di questa pièce del drammaturgo: la tratta della prostituzione e,

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[12] With which the parents invariably "answer" the son's questions, with which *Le mot "progrès"* symmetrically opens and closes, [and] corresponds, in the second ending, to the silent treatment they reserve for Ida, whom they disown after the unfortunate prostitution episode in Paris. (Traduzione mia)

[13] Frequent throughout the text, this kind of mute reserve is intertextually eloquent, [...] in that it transparently alludes to the Ionescian chairs. A topos par excellence of uncommunicativeness, the chairs are deployed here to accentuate even more emphatically the ambivalence of a tragic and absurd situation. But here, too, Vişniec is careful to deflate some of the metaphysical terror so emblematic of the literature of the absurd and, in so doing, to maintain a critical distance from his model. (Traduzione mia)

soprattutto, la tragedia delle fosse comuni, le quali rendono quasi impossibile – senza una costosa analisi del DNA – un qualsiasi riconoscimento delle spoglie dell'ucciso.

Ho perciò fatto notare, aiutandomi anche con gli studi citati, come le fosse comuni conducano a due fattori significativi: in primo luogo il rispetto per il morto viene annullato e inoltre si calpesta, al contempo, la dignità del vivo, che non riesce a trovare pace senza un corpo su cui piangere.

Attraverso una breve descrizione del sostrato testuale inerente alla narrazione drammatica, e poi attraverso un'analisi scenica puntuale, si riesce a notare chiaramente come il teatro postdrammatico di Matei Vişniec sia sì nato dal filone dell'Assurdo (per averne conferma basti assistere alla pièce intitolata *Caii la fereastră*), ma che abbia assunto nel tempo dei connotati sociali di denuncia sempre meno velati: posso quindi osare dire che il suo teatro, al momento, è diventato un teatro dell'assurdo-quotidiano, dell'assurdo-reale.

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NOTA AGGIORNATA SU
UNE FEMME M'APPARUT… DI RENÉE VIVIEN

Patrizia LO VERDE[1]

ABSTRACT. *An Updated Note on* **Une Femme m'apparut…** *di Renée Vivien.* The author reapproaches her pioneering reading of Renée Vivien's 1904 novel *Une Femme m'apparut…*, updating it in the light of the most recent theoretical-critical studies on the autobiographical novel as a hybrid genre between fact and fiction.

Keywords: autobiographical novel, hybrid genre, fiction, fact and fiction, transposition

REZUMAT. *O nota actualizată despre* **Une Femme m'apparut…** *de Renée* **Vivien.** Autoarea repropune interpretarea sa de pionierat asupra romanului lui Renée Vivien *Une Femme m'apparut…*, publicat în 1904, cu actualizări prin prisma celor mai recente studii teoretice şi critice despre romanul autobiografic ca gen hibrid poziţionat la interfaţa dintre factualitate şi ficţiune.

Cuvinte-cheie: roman autobiografic, gen hibrid, ficţiune, factualitate şi ficţiune, transpunere

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A Maria Teresa Puleio e a Maria Gabriella Adamo

Non sembrerà azzardato, ritornare oggi sulla nostra pioneristica lettura del romanzo *Une Femme m'apparut…* di Renée Vivien[2], e non al solo fine di verificarne gli esiti, ma soprattutto per valutarne gli sviluppi alla luce delle nuove riflessioni teorico-critiche intorno alla problematicità strutturale dei generi referenziali e al loro fragile statuto; proprio oggi, dopo che le ormai trascorse celebrazioni per il centenario della morte hanno grosso modo ratificato dell'autrice angloamericana la tradizionale *silhouette* tra maledettismo e ribellione, tanto più oggi, che l'autrice sembrerebbe assurta alla fissità d'icona e la sua opera fatta oggetto di numerose riedizioni, traduzioni, corsi di studio e perfino di una diffusa editorializzazione mediatica attraverso l'uso di blog interamente o parzialmente dedicati[3].

Richiamandoci fin da subito, sia pur riassuntivamente, a quanto già avevamo rilevato, non possiamo innanzitutto non riscontrare come ancora oggi il testo del 1904 di Renée Vivien, preso entro le maglie di certi schematismi illusori della *confession*, schiacciato dunque aprioristicamente sul solo versante referenziale, o preso in esame per il suo carattere testimoniale di *roman à clés*[4],

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[2] Nel 2004 è uscita a nostra cura un'edizione integrale, presentata ed annotata, del romanzo vivieniano, pubblicato nella sua prima versione originale a Parigi il 27 febbraio del 1904 dall'editore Alphonse Lemerre. Si confronti il nostro ulteriore studio uscito in occasione del centenario della morte di Renée Vivien (2009, 119-127). A nostra conoscenza l'edizione da noi curata è la prima a riproporre nella sua integralità il romanzo del 1904, conservandone, secondo criteri di fedeltà all'originale, anche il ricco apparato peritestuale (dedica ornata da due violette; due hors-textes: riproduzioni del San Giovanni Battista di Leonardo da Vinci e di *Notre-Dame des Fièvres* del pittore simbolista Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer; 22 partiture musicali). Come già segnalato da Claude Bac (2015), l'edizione di riferimento, quella del 1977 di Régine Deforges con prefazione di Yves Florenne, presenta delle differenze non solo nell'ammodernamento dei segni d'interpunzione ma anche delle soppressioni di singole parole, interi sintagmi, frasi e perfino di qualche paragrafo, per contro si riscontrano piccole varianti e aggiunzioni.

[3] Al di là della diffusione mediatica e delle numerose riedizioni delle opere vivieniane nel corso di questi ultimi decenni, la quantità degli studi, il cui approccio resta quasi esclusivamente biografico o tematico, è relativamente modesta. Rarissime le monografie consacrate a questa virtuosa dell'alessandrino e della strofa saffica, e altrettanto rare le analisi stilistiche, poetiche o formali. Per uno studio solido dei ritmi e dei metri, il lavoro del 1930 di Yves-Gérard Le Dantec (sebbene datato in certi suoi *a priori*) rimane ancora oggi il testo di riferimento per le ricerche in questo campo. Si rileva anche, ultimamente, oltre ad un incremento di tesi dedicate all'autrice, un aumento di lavori riconducibili ai *gender studies*. Non possiamo però non ricordare, che la riscoperta di Renée Vivien si deve all'attento lavoro certosino di Jean-Paul Goujon, che a partire dalla fine degli anni Settanta del Novecento ha riportato alla luce molti dei documenti inediti e delle opere della poetessa, ricostruendone il percorso estetico-esistenziale.

[4] *Cfr.* in particolare l'articolo di Marie Perrin che, pur avvertendo che il romanzo « est bien plus que cela » (1999, 65), ne riassume la vicenda biografica e ne fornisce le chiavi, peraltro già da tempo decriptate, tra gli altri, da Salomon Reinach e Jean-Paul Goujon.

resti incagliato in una prospettiva euristica desueta marcatamente inoperante[5], sia pure perfettamente in linea con l'interpretazione vulgata, essenzialmente purista e diremmo censoria, che considera il romanzo quasi estraneo all'arte autentica delle tante raccolte poetiche e ne rileva l'importanza ai soli fini documentali[6].

Breve romanzo autobiografico, dall'intreccio assai scarno, ma fortemente avviluppato in un reticolo di simboli e di figure allegoriche, *Une Femme m'apparut...*, nelle sue due differenti versioni apparse per l'editore Lemerre rispettivamente nel 1904 e nel 1905, più che una semplice *confession* sembra illuminare a tratti l'itinerario estetico vivieniano, ripresentandone e anticipandone temi e forme. Catalogato tra i classici di una letteratura epigonale femminile, accanto a *Idylle saphique* di Liane de Pougy, *Ladies Almanack* di Djuna Barnes o *The Well of Loneliness* di Radclyffe Hall, il testo di Renée Vivien, per l'importanza accordata al vissuto personale, al moto interiore, alle figure di una storia minore e favolosa, potrebbe figurare in quel filone autobiografico di «"romanzo storico" femminile, romanzo [...] di avvenimenti "interni" che corrono paralleli agli avvenimenti certificati negli annali», impressionisticamente radiografato da Elisabetta Rasy (1978, 75). E nondimeno come racconto di sé, racconto «dell'"interno"» (73), *Une Femme m'apparut...* non si lascia meno interpretare sul versante della *fictionnalité*.

Senza dubbio, ci si potrà ancora accostare a *Une Femme m'apparut...* sotto la spinta di un certo gusto antiquario per *l'objet d'époque* o anche solo attratti dall'interesse per l'*écriture féminine*[7], di cui il romanzo costituisce un raffinato esempio *ante-litteram*, ma né l'artificio della scrittura, né l'esilità della

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[5] Sull'interpretazione dei romanzi a chiave non possiamo che concordare con Jean-Benoît Puech quando osserva che « l'essentiel est dans la métamorphose que l'entrée dans une fiction fait subir à la réalité, ou, si l'on préfère, dans les procédures de cryptage, des jeux onomastiques aux métaphores filées. Que les sources soient des "vies minuscules" ou de petites et grandes célébrités, c'est *fermer* le livre que s'en tenir aux clés » (1999, 145).

[6] Dalla classica posizione di Yves-Gerard Le Dantec che, pure intuendone alcuni tratti salienti, condannava « sans hésitation les proses de Renée Vivien, comme non seulement inférieures à ses poèmes, mais presque sans intérêt dans l'analyse de son génie » (1930, 21), allo sprezzante disinteresse di un Hubert Juin (1972) o alla postura più pragmatica di un Yves Florenne (1977), fino al taglio eminentemente biografico-fattuale di Jean-Paul Goujon (1984) interessato, comprensibilmente, dal suo punto di vista di biografo, a ricostruirne una attenta genesi. Tralasciando di menzionare letture impressionistiche dal dubbio retrogusto psicologizzante, purtroppo ancora di grande attualità, ci limitiamo a segnalare una certa confusione terminologica che etichetta il testo vivieniano ora come "autobiografia" ora come "autofiction".

[7] Precisiamo che la nozione di *écriture féminine*, oltre che di difficile applicazione, ci sembra piuttosto debole. Su questa problematicità discriminante i generi sessuali e letterari, non possiamo che essere d'accordo con Julia Kristeva quando osserva che « l'écriture ignore le sexe et déplace sa différence dans la discrétion de la langue et des significations, forcément idéologiques et historiques, pour en faire des nœuds du désir » (1977, 30).

materia sentimentale, così satura di tutti i languori e le estasi decadenti, così polemica nella sua strenua difesa dell'amore saffico, sembrano oggi argomento sufficiente a rilevare una sua eventuale attualizzazione.

Trattandosi di un testo spurio, e anzi ostensivamente eterogeneo, da annoverare, come vedremo più avanti, sotto la voce *transposition*, *Une Femme m'apparut...*, nella sua precipua morfologia, presenta molti dei tratti distintivi di quel sottogenere ibrido a maggiore gradiente di letterarietà quale il romanzo autobiografico. Pertanto il romanzo, che pure non evita le insidie del tipico autobiografismo femminile, ma con un forte taglio « ultra féministe » (Vivien 1905, *lettre* 200 a Charles-Brun), andrà considerato nella sua *mixité* o mescidanza tra *fait* e *fiction*. Senza di ciò, il rischio sarà sempre quello di fermarsi al puro dettato biografico, senza rinunciare cioè, come già rilevato nei nostri studi precedenti, alla tentazione di ridurre il testo al solo resoconto romanzato della burrascosa liaison con Natalie Clifford Barney, o ai rapidi schizzi e alle caustiche caricature dei frequentatori del salotto dell'*Amazone*, condannando così l'opera alla fissità di una identità *générique* a ben guardare assai instabile. Così, se i personaggi ritagliati dalla realtà – Violet Shillito, i Mardrus o la poetessa Olive Custance – appaiono come figurine di carta dall'esistenza tutta discorsiva, insieme di frammenti simbolici inseriti in un articolato sistema, è perché al facile automatismo referenziale Renée Vivien frammette il potente filtro letterario e non certo senza una studiata e sarcastica ironia.

Ma prima ancora di verificare gli indizi generici del nostro romanzo, ci sembra più che mai opportuno, e non solo per maggiore chiarezza, richiamarci all'attualità degli studi sui generi ibridi e, in specie, a quelle recentissime formulazioni teorico-critiche che mettendo finalmente ordine nella babele terminologica della *littérature de soi* hanno avanzato nuove importanti interrogazioni su di un loro eventuale carattere precipuo, un "proprio" (Simonet-Tenant 2007) che Dorrit Cohn rinveniva e, anzi, ribadiva per la *fiction*, in linea con una concezione rigorosamente ristretta del sistema dei generi e degli indizi interni di finzionalità elaborata negli anni Cinquanta da Käte Hamburger.

In un'ottica purista conforme ad una poetica di derivazione aristotelica, riaggiustata su un sistema bipartito (*fictionnel* o *mimétique* e *lyrique*), Hamburger appronta una rigorosa descrizione linguistica della letteratura narrativa ristretta però alla sola *mimesis* finzionale e cioè al solo racconto eterodiegetico, il romanzo in terza persona con accesso diretto alla soggettività dei personaggi: la finzione, dunque, come enunciazione che non reca traccia della sua origine[8]. Questo

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8 Per Catherine Boré, nella prospettiva teorica di Hamburger, la finzione non è, a rigore, « imitation feinte », imitazione « d'un discours sérieux », quantomeno nei racconti in terza persona che non richiedono la presenza di un narratore, essendo costruiti interamente attraverso i « Je-Origine » fittivi dei personaggi (2011, 14).

consolidamento di una « frontière infranchissable qui sépare la narration fictionnelle de l'énoncé de réalité » (trad. fr. 1986, 208), ossia da quell'atto di linguaggio autentico di un «je-origine» reale e determinato, lascia transitare nel limbo del non letterario le altre forme di racconto omodiegetico, i romanzi in prima persona non più ascrivibili – dal punto di vista squisitamente linguistico di Käte Hamburger – al registro della finzione, ma a quello della *feintise*, di una simulazione cioè indistinguibile da un'autobiografia autentica[9].

A conferma di questa visione "internalista" del letterario, in prospettiva aggiornata si segnala, come già accennato sopra, per il rigore e l'altrettanta forza assertiva di una criteriologia narratologica interna, la postura teorica di Dorrit Cohn (1999), intesa a riconsegnare, contro certe 'storture' decostruzioniste post-moderne, piena autonomia e specificità al racconto di finzione, richiamato nella sua forma "pura" ad artefatto esclusivamente narrativo, i cui marcatori specifici, gli indicatori indiscutibili della finzionalità (*signposts of fictionality*), non sarebbero né intenzionali né contrattuali, ma anzitutto prioritariamente testuali, indipendenti dunque da una inaccessibile *intentio auctoris* o da una lettura estetica *a posteriori*; né esisterebbero per la narratologa americana testi ibridi, testi dallo statuto ambiguo che ad una attenta lettura non rendano ancora più sensibile, più evidente, la frattura tra finzione e non finzione.

Tenute presenti le coordinate teoriche entro cui si colloca la finzione narrativa (e per eccellenza il romanzo), va nondimeno precisato il carattere intrinsecamente *costitutivo* che essa assume nei confronti dell'artisticità nei termini, per così dire correttivi, del Gérard Genette di *Fiction et Diction*, ossia del teorico dell'estetica di una *littérarité seconde*, versato nella distinzione di due grandi modi o regimi, per cui, in estrema sintesi, i testi finzionali godrebbero di una « littérarité constitutive », sarebbero cioè costitutivamente letterari, essendo la *fiction* per sua natura profondamente intransitiva « par vacance thématique ou opacité rhématique » (2004, 115), un vettore automatico di letterarietà[10] in

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9 Va rilevato che i concetti di "soggettività" ed "oggettività", generalmente impiegati per marcare il grado di implicazione-coinvolgimento del narratore nel racconto, restano del tutto inoperanti nella narrazione finzionale descritta da Hamburger, così come la stessa nozione di narratore da applicarsi, invece, ai soli racconti in prima persona ascrivibili all'orbita del « Je-Origine » di un narratore reale o fittivo: « Même le plus petit degré de fictionnalisation, là où la qualité de Je-Origine des personnages fictifs est le moins concrétisée, traduit une échappée hors de l'énoncé de réalité ; il "déréalise" aussitôt le narrateur pour faire de lui une fonction ; à la place d'une relation bi-polaire, il se crée un rapport fonctionnel entre l'acte de narration et ce qui est narré, rapport auquel les concepts d'objectif et de subjectif ne sont plus applicables » (136).

10 Nei termini esatti di Genette: « une œuvre (verbale) de fiction est presque inévitablement reçue comme littéraire, indépendamment de tout jugement de valeur, peut-être parce que l'attitude de lecture qu'elle postule (la fameuse "suspension volontaire de l'incrédulité") est une attitude esthétique, au sens kantien, de "désintéressement" relatif à l'égard du monde réel » (88).

opposizione ai cosiddetti testi *fattuali*, testi in prosa non-finzionali, il cui valore estetico è invece sottomesso ad un giudizio, ovvero all'apprezzamento dei lettori, donde il carattere precario, « conditionnel », del loro statuto letterario[11].

E pur tuttavia, al vaglio delle pratiche reali, soggette a interazioni, scambi reciproci e contaminazioni, la separazione tra *récit factuel* e *récit fictionnel* resta comunque, per lo stesso Genette, una configurazione non propriamente soddisfacente, come peraltro una pratica narratologica tradizionale ristretta al solo racconto di finzione, che ne ipostatizza ancora una volta il modello[12].

Senza poter, evidentemente, qui rendere conto della storicità della nozione di *fiction*, né delle sue variazioni o riconfigurazioni a seconda dei diversi paradigmi epistemologici, estetici e culturali, basti ricordare come nelle sue varie e articolate declinazioni novecentesche – da quelle "immanentiste", al dogma post-strutturalista dell'opera chiusa ed autonoma, fondata su un'estetica dell'autotelismo e dell'intransitività o, ancora, a quelle radicalmente "separatiste", tassonomiche, e per converso "integrazioniste" o infine "condizionaliste" – essa sia divenuta il centro delle preoccupazioni teoriche moderne e come, per contro, i testi referenziali/fattuali siano rimasti di fatto destituiti se non di ogni potere quantomeno di ogni attrattiva euristica.

Tolti pochi ed importanti lavori, tra cui gli ormai classici studi sull'autobiografia di Philippe Lejeune, che con inusitato rigore ne fissava a partire dagli anni Settanta i caratteri precipui (identità onomastica, contratto, contenuto, tecniche narrative), i generi fattuali, in assenza di adeguati strumenti teorici, come insieme di testi assai eterogenei riuniti sotto un'unica etichetta generica oppositiva e valoriale per difetto, sono rimasti ai margini del discorso critico. Bisognerà pure aggiungere che in questi ultimi decenni ad una teoria fortemente deficitaria si assomma, come opportunamente riscontrato da Jean-Louis Jeannelle, un certo « désordre » terminologico, in specie per le *écritures de soi*, « comme si l'approche extrêmement technique et rigoureuse des spécialistes de poétique et de narratologie des années 1970-1980 était devenue

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[11] La poesia si colloca, come la prosa non finzionale, nel regime della *diction*, ma è costitutivamente letteraria.

[12] Ricordando che non esistono criteri validi a discernere radicalmente la finzione dalla non-finzione, Genette invitava a riconsiderare la fluttuazione dei generi in funzione della loro evoluzione, ammettendo anche la sua parte di responsabilità nell'istituzione « de ce qu'il faut bien appeler une *narratologie restreinte* » (142). Al riguardo, resta rilevante anche la posizione sull'importanza del lettore: « pour moi, la littérarité d'un texte non-fictionnel ou non-poétique […] ne dépend pas essentiellement de l'intention de son auteur, mais bien de l'attention de son lecteur. Ce qui rend l'écriture "transitive" ou "intransitive" n'est rien d'autre que la manière dont la traverse ou s'y arrête le regard d'un lecteur » (236).

obsolète, et qu'il importait désormais plus d'assouplir les critères d'identification des textes que d'établir des classements systématiques » (2007, 27)[13].

L'evidente rischio di un impoverimento ermeneutico denunciato da Jeannelle, attiene caratterialmente ai generi ibridi e, nella fattispecie che qui ci interessa, al desueto romanzo autobiografico rinverdito, anzi, rianimato attraverso la celebre 'invenzione' doubrovskyana dell'*autofiction*, a dire il vero, forma ossimorica fondata su un patto autoriale ambiguo più che conio di un genere letterario nuovo o originale, se non, forse, nella intelligente mediatizzazione di una sapiente mistura d'ingredienti finzionali, con un sovrappiù teorico e psicoanalitico del *récit de soi* riattualizzato, questo sì, nel suo immaginario più che nella sua morfologia, in linea, del resto, con la crisi postmoderna del soggetto novecentesco e la progressiva destrutturazione – in specie post-strutturalista e poi decostruzionista – delle dinamiche interne al genere autobiografico canonico, senza però che ciò ne venga ad esautorare lo statuto generico.

Nonostante la *querelle* sia ancora oggi d'attualità, la pratica dell'*autofiction*, in ragione dei suoi tratti distintivi e del suo statuto ibrido, che andava a riempire la nota casella cieca della tipologia di Philippe Lejeune, è da interpretarsi *stricto sensu* come « un cas ordinaire d'un système poétique plus large » (Jeannelle 2007, 27), in sostanza un sottogenere ammodernato dell'autobiografia e di forme spurie sospese tra polo finzionale e polo referenziale quali il vecchio romanzo autobiografico[14]. Pur contravvenendo, dunque, all'assiomatica purezza e fissità

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[13] In un precedente articolo sui generi fattuali, in continuità con i concetti genettiani ma in prospettiva diacronica, Jeannelle rilevava già l'urgenza di studiare tali scritti nella loro distintività: « Les textes factuels soulèvent bien d'autres questions que celle de leurs frontières narratologiques et poétiques […]. Ils mettent en œuvre différentes manières de "factualiser", c'est-à-dire de certifier la réalité selon qu'ils portent sur une opération de savoir, la transmission d'une information, l'élaboration d'un récit ou le développement d'une argumentation par exemple. Il n'est en quelque sorte question que de les lire selon leurs modalités de production et de réception et de cesser de les cantonner au rôle de contrepoint théorique de la fiction » (2004, 294).
https://www.cairn.info/revue-poetique-2004-3-page-279.htm

[14] La nozione di *autofiction* si fonda su due criteri essenziali: l'identità onomastica tra l'autore, il narratore e il personaggio principale (tratto che la distingue chiaramente dal romanzo autobiografico) e il patto finzionale indicato di sovente con la menzione « roman » sulla copertina. Bisognerà però ricordare che successivamente alla prima formulazione, quella fondativa di *Fils* come « fiction d'événements et de faits strictement réels » (Gallimard, 1977, *prière d'insérer*), Serge Doubrovsky ha proposto, nei tanti epitesti della sua opera, diverse e non sempre congruenti ridefinizioni. Tra le più recenti, particolarmente significativa è quella relativa all'importanza distintiva dell'identità onomastica e alla natura ossimorica del racconto autofinzionale: « Cette écriture autoromanesque repose, évidemment, sur une contradiction centrale, puisque l'étude classique de Philippe Lejeune sur *Le pacte autobiographique* (1975) oppose le pacte autobiographique ("Je soussigné", "copie conforme") au pacte romanesque (histoire de personnages fictifs). L'autofiction est donc une sorte d'oxymore théorique, de paradoxe fondamental, qui situe le texte dans l'entre-deux ou l'interface de deux catégories textuelles opposées » (Baudelle, Nardout-Lafarge 2011, 135-136). Sui caratteri precipui dell'autofinzione, si veda in particolare l'ampio studio di Philippe Gasparini, 2008.

delle forme, la portata infrattiva dell'*autofiction* resterebbe pur sempre entro quei territori o nelle loro strette vicinanze formali, con però un inevitabile riadattamento postmoderno in netta antitesi con certe attese del genere canonico, dalla linearità alla retrospezione, fino all'imperativo della verosimiglianza o alla trasparenza del linguaggio[15].

Di certo non è irrilevante, come dimostra Philippe Gasparini nel suo notevole lavoro sul romanzo autobiografico, primo per importanza nell'inventariarne le procedure e rintracciarne la storia, se la voga dell'*autofiction* e la conseguente lessicalizzazione del neologismo, abbiano finito per obliterare, « au prix d'une dérive sémantique », il suo diretto ascendente, l'altro più antico e già discreditato sottogenere frontaliero, « comme si la nouveauté du signifiant occultait l'ancienneté du signifié, comme si sa modernité bloquait notre mémoire littéraire » (2004, 310).

Tralasciando l'infortunio in cui sembrerebbe essere incorso il romanzo autobiografico, caduto progressivamente e fin dalle sue origini in una sorta di vuoto epistemico temporaneamente colmato dal capriccio dell'alea ricettiva, di grande attualità resta la sua specifica configurazione generica, altrettanto distante e distinta sia dal racconto finzionale che da quello autobiografico, configurazione originale basata su una strategia volutamente ambivalente che, in deroga al principio di non-contraddizione, lascerebbe coabitare o « coexister », come osserva Gasparini, i due « codes antagonistes ». Fondandosi dunque su una negoziazione inconclusa o sospesa tra i due patti, ovvero su una strategia autoriale consapevolmente calcolata, intenzionale, che si muove – diremmo – tra l'uno e l'altro/né l'uno né l'altro, o tra diniego e affermazione, si comprende allora la fragilità di un tale statuto generico che non può che definirsi necessariamente *a posteriori*; « un double affichage » tale da richiedere, nella proposta di Gasparini, più che « une lecture alternée, qui serait épuisante […], une double lecture simultanée » (13), attività certo fallibile ma che nella « interaction de la mémoire du texte et de la mémoire du lecteur […] va produire du sens » (347).

Ora se richiamare all'uno o all'altro polo un genere transfrontaliero quale il romanzo autobiografico, caso esemplare, per Yves Baudelle, di « transfert du non-fictif dans la fiction » ovvero di una « transposition du vécu dans le roman », equivale ad una evidente normalizzazione della sua carica infrattiva, per converso è la sua stessa natura ibrida a configurarsi come una intollerabile deroga a quella poetica essenzialista[16] « qui se refuse à penser l'hybridité du

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[15] Su questi punti salienti si veda J.-L. Jeannelle 2013, 221-230. https://www.cairn.info/revue-etudes-2013-9-page-221.htm

[16] Ricordiamo che dalla prospettiva "separatista" di Dorrit Cohn, tesa a discernere radicalmente la finzione dalla non-finzione e, quindi, ad escludere categoricamente l'ibridità del romanzo autobiografico, « les récits à la première personne ne sont en général ni écrits ni lus, comme des demi-autobiographies ou des demi-romans ; ils sont proposés et reçus soit comme l'un soit

roman [...] l'hybridité ontologique de toute fiction, à cheval entre deux mondes » (2003, 8-9). In ragione, dunque, della sua statutaria ibridità, la pertinenza teorica e la legittimità di una tale nozione, sono da stabilirsi per Baudelle sul doppio piano della genesi e della ricezione, evitando però d'incorrere nell'errore assai frequente « de tenir la vie de l'auteur pour la vérité de la fiction » o, in quello più metodologico, « de tenter [...] de reconstituer le puzzle réel dont les fragments ont été dispersés et entremêlés dans la fiction » (19-20).

Dalla doppia lettura simultanea (Gasparini) alla lettura alternata (*cfr.* Schmitt 2007) o, ancora, alla lettura-inchiesta (il "lettore-detective" di Baudelle), i nuovi approcci pragmatici al romanzo autobiografico, finalmente ridefinito nella sua costituzionale ambivalenza generica, nelle sue strutturali tensioni e frizioni, rinviano alla discrezionalità del lettore, chiamato a cooperare attivamente al testo, a rispondere a pieno alle sollecitazioni delle sue strutture testuali e alla costruzione del senso (*v.* il richiamo al processo semiosico di Umberto Eco in Gasparini 11; 347).

Se concordiamo con Gasparini che nel romanzo autobiografico la rappresentazione o ricreazione di sé resta una struttura necessariamente sospesa tra la dimensione finzionale e quella referenziale, più che alla tradizionale comparazione con l'ordine extra-testuale dei fatti, più che agli indizi di veridicità e di identità su cui spesso la critica si è arenata, è nel confronto con il testo stesso ovvero, come scrive lo studioso, nell'analisi dei suoi dispositivi retorici, che troviamo un criterio rilevante di classificazione e di valutazione del suo statuto generico:

> Ce genre regroupe à mon avis tous les récits qui programment une double réception, à la fois fictionnelle et autobiographique, quelle que soit la proportion de l'une et de l'autre. Dans cette optique, le degré de véridicité des textes importe peu. C'est la richesse rhétorique des procédés de double affichage qui devient, à l'intérieur de cette classe de récits, un critère de classement et d'appréciation. (14)

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comme l'autre, même lorsque on ne les prend pas pour ce qu'ils étaient censés être » (60). Altrettanto decisa, anche se ricca di sfumature, è la cosiddetta corrente *panfictionnaliste* ben rappresentata dall'autore *telquelien* Philippe Forest, per il quale « dès lors qu'elle se dit ou s'écrit, la réalité prend forcément l'apparence d'une fable, la forme d'une fiction de sorte que la vie elle-même est un roman que seul le roman est en mesure d'exprimer, de faire pleinement exister » (2020 : 25). A tratti finemente provocatorio, il pensiero di Forest muove in effetti più da una posizione poetica che poetologica, coniugando un moderno formalismo antimimetico ad una ricerca personale post-moderna che esula da rigide categorie estetiche.

Ora, fin dai suoi 'dintorni', dalle sue soglie[17], fin dal suo singolare dispositivo prefativo che inclina vertiginosamente verso la *fiction*, il racconto vivieniano, affidato ad una narratrice autodiegetica anonima che rimemora il suo sofferto itinerario estetico-sentimentale e nel motivo dell'incontro con un *alter* speculare (la novella Beatrice del titolo) trova il suo motore primario, mostra chiaramente la sua perturbante natura ibrida che non solo rinuncia alla canonica omonimia, ma ne contesta pure lo stesso ambizioso assunto teleologico, prediligendo alla tradizionale retrospezione secondo un ordine lineare degli eventi, un ordine di tipo analogico-tematico, dal ritmo a tratti cadenzato secondo i cascami di uno stile simbolista-decadente; un ordine che se altera il tradizionale carattere sineddotico dell'autobiografia, tralasciando intere porzioni di vissuto, a favore di dettagli apparentemente infimi ma densamente simbolici, diluisce o disperde la narrazione in continue digressioni e variazioni, sovente sotto forma di lunghi dialoghi.

Posto idealmente sotto le insegne del doppio e dell'androgino, il romanzo più che sottomettersi al regime apodittico dell'autobiografico (il 'necessariamente vero' kantiano[18]) ne perverte metodicamente il dettato in un'ambigua eccentricità generica e nella sua ciclica partitura ripetitoria che richiama la geometria perfetta del cerchio, simbolo di unità e di totalità, ripete a livello formale il suo tema principale, quello cioè di un'ideale completezza nell'equilibrio-fusione con un doppio speculare femminile.

L'attrazione dell'ibrido investe strutturalmente, tematicamente e linguisticamente il romanzo e se, da una prospettiva storica, la generosa contaminazione tra i generi (con l'inserzione nel tessuto testuale di poesie, *poèmes en prose*, lacerti di lettere, auto/citazioni) rientra in quel generale processo di destrutturazione e di modernizzazione delle strutture del racconto, non rende meno evidente la sua statutaria ambivalenza che interviene ad alterare i già fragili tratti morfologici del testo autobiografico. Una *mixité*, diremmo, che sembra farsi principio ordinatore prima ancora che principio estetico, e fin dall'area peritestuale che i vari epitesti, in specie la corrispondenza, confermano come scelta prioritaria dell'autrice, scelta innanzitutto marcata dall'indicazione generica « roman » nella lista *du même auteur*.

La ricca area peritestuale attinge anche ad altre sostanze semiotiche, da quella eminentemente visiva, iconica delle illustrazioni a quella, in posizione interstiziale, delle ventidue partiture musicali in apertura di ciascun capitolo, la

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[17] Com'è noto, in *Seuils* (1987), Genette prendendo in esame il *paratesto* di un'opera letteraria, e studiandone i meccanismi scrittori e retorici, lo distingue in *peritesto* ed *epitesto*; d'ora in poi tutti i termini e i concetti relativi a quest'area s'intendono tratti da questo studio.

[18] Il concetto è preso in prestito da un interessante studio di Mounir Laouyen (1999) sul patto autoriale ambiguo degli scritti autobiografici non tradizionali.

cui funzione di « marqueurs d'articulation »[19] ci sembra risiedere, più che nel suo potere meramente evocativo, in una sorta di *mise en suspens* e al contempo di rilancio del narrato. Al ritmo prosastico risponde allora l'altra scrittura, l'altra respirazione, come una pulsazione liminare che si arresta e si spegne dove l'altra inizia e interviene. Se questa proliferazione di soglie, in luogo di un bianco, intervenendo a regolare lo spazio inaugurale del testo, anticipa sul miraggio analogico, sul gusto profondo per una sintesi delle arti, per un'arte totale, non meno rilevante resta il suo effetto strategico-pragmatico: tanto *limen*/soglie tanto *limes*/frontiere, cominciamento-apertura e a un tempo passaggio-transizione tra codici, sistemi e generi differenti.

Più che l'effetto seduttivo della copertina dai toni azzurrati del pittore simbolista Lévy-Dhurmer, più che l'immagine del San Giovanni Battista di Leonardo da Vinci, posta giusto avanti il titolo, traduzione letterale del celeberrimo emistichio del canto XXX del Purgatorio e, perfino, più che l'inusuale *préface actoriale fictive* firmata San Giovanni[20], è nella sua articolata composita unità, nella concertazione di tutti i suoi elementi, che il peritesto vivieniano mostra tutta la forza illocutoria e la capacità *jussive* del suo messaggio: non tanto o non solo effetto di un'accattivante ridondanza decorativa, quanto primissima sfida lanciata alle capacità ermeneutiche dei lettori. Concertazione certo armoniosa, ma che innesca fin da subito un gioco di effetti auto/riflessivi, tanto più perturbante in specie ed *in primis* tra il titolo tematico-prolettico e l'illustrazione vinciana: una sorta di *trouble* che l'enunciato *titulaire* annunciando l'evento perturbante dell'apparizione affida ad un effetto d'*ajout* – i puntini di sospensione come indizi di un'assenza da riempire, di una « incomplétude impossible mais imaginairement repérable » (Orlandi 2002, 74) – ma anche enigma di una imminente epifania di cui il San Giovanni Battista di Leonardo si fa in qualche modo l'*ersatz* plastico. Se, così, l'effetto di annuncio si trova ad essere reduplicato dall'illustrazione, è in virtù della sua forza di mostrazione che l'Annunciatore biblico si offre come momento visivo, inaugurale e indiziale della venuta; tanto più che esibita in questo spazio intermediario, « souvent à éclipses » (Genette, 12), l'immagine

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[19] I concetti e alcune immagini sono imprestiti tratti dal bel saggio *L'Écriture de soi* di Louis Marin (1999, 102).

[20] Lo scritto prefativo, con valore di *exemplum*, funziona a pieno regime solo come *ajout*, ovvero come corpo subordinato al romanzo, di cui anticipa i due grandi *noyaux* tematici, l'amore e l'amicizia indissolubilmente legati al motivo topico della morte. E se la tipografia imprime sulla pagina la forma singolare di questi versetti in caratteri corsivi e in brevi sequenze, ora lapidarie ora dai toni quasi sibillini, la struttura cadenzata, retta da una regolazione ritmica quasi comparabile ad uno schema metrico e che riposa su effetti di parallelismo per riprese anaforiche ed opposizioni binarie (*bonheur/désespoir; modération/excès ; sommeil/réveil*, ecc.), annuncia già la specularità del romanzo che ridonda da un capo all'altro di risonanze ed echi, *leitmotiv*, compresi i ritorni di frammenti paratestuali.

vinciana collocata al posto del ritratto dell'autore si rivela essere, alla lettura, « le portrait, ou plutôt l'âme même » (*Une Femme m'apparut*..., 1904, 40) di uno degli attanti più emblematici del racconto vivieniano, la poetessa San Giovanni, che pur essendo quasi estranea al dipanarsi delle vicende, con le sue apparizioni e i suoi racconti metadiegetici che ne contengono e ne riassumono *en abyme* i momenti chiave, ci guida nella storia e ci indica come guardarla, facendoci penetrare nell'oscuro funzionamento dell'azione.

Se Gayle Rubin aveva definito San Giovanni come «the core of Vivien's identity which remained intact from the devastation of her unhappy passion» (1976, xiii), sicuramente la disseminazione dei tanti tratti autobiografici su questo personaggio, che con la sua inguaribile *verve palimpsestueuse* intreccia le fila di tanti racconti esemplari e autocitandosi ripete temi, motivi, frammenti testuali di opere di Renée Vivien, più che una copia esatta della figura autoriale, ne fa una proiezione immaginaria, insieme a quella sua controparte negletta di poetessa mancata inscenata dalla narratrice-protagonista.

Dunque, più che restituire un'immagine autentica, una «autorappresenta-zione effettiva», per dirla con Battistini (1990, 147), il "je" autobiografico spezzato o, per meglio dire, raddoppiato (narratrice/San Giovanni), resta pur sempre, «en los términos de su semántica, de su ser lenguaje construido, especialmente su narratividad y el orden seleccionador que la memoria introduce» (Yvancos 2006, 43), una costruzione eminentemente discorsiva, una costruzione che sottoposta al filtro della trasposizione letteraria distilla un'altra immagine per così dire riveduta e corretta che tramuta lo specchio autobiografico in un gioco di riflessi.

La retrospezione amorosa assume allora la configurazione di un itinerario circolare, di una sorta di circumnavigazione senza fine intorno all'incontro con una chimera femminile, una Beatrice *duplex* significativamente scissa in due figure chiasmatiche, l'una riflesso rovesciato dell'altra. Stretta tra le maglie del mito, la vicenda amorosa si discioglie in un tempo ciclico, in un ritmico e simbolico alternarsi delle stagioni e delle ore del giorno che corrode dall'interno il fragilissimo impianto realistico e nella sua partitura ripetitiva, che altro non è se non ricerca di un doppio speculare, si avvita su se stessa ad eufemizzare, nel finale aperto, il sogno impossibile.

L'assunzione della forma dialogica, di un sovrabbondante tempo mimetico, drammatizza fortemente la narrazione; e i personaggi chiusi nell'eco delle loro parole, in un sistema di corrispondenze e opposizioni, perdono il tutto tondo della figura realista a favore di una accentuazione delle valenze simboliche e metaforiche: funzioni del discorso intorno all'amore, ciascuno, a suo modo, paradigma di una nostalgia dell'interezza. Ma se parlare d'amore è enunciare il già raccontato, è dire di tutti i discorsi, da quello pagano a quello cristiano, nel

fitto gioco di citazioni intertestuali e intratestuali non sarà da leggersi una pura adesione alle pratiche discorsive dell'epoca, ma piuttosto una lucida e a tratti ironica disamina di un'ideologia d'amore che dal pensiero platonico all'amor cortese, dall'androginia al preraffaellismo, nella sua inadeguatezza a dire l'*alter* si è sempre costruita sulla rimozione del soggetto femminile come soggetto desiderante e della parola.

Se in *Une Femme m'apparut...*, come del resto nella maggior parte dei romanzi simbolisti (*cfr.* Modenesi 1993), l'*histoire* si è immancabilmente ridotta, se cioè l'articolazione diegetica si è fortemente impoverita a livello dei suoi nuclei primari in favore di una proliferazione di quelli secondari utili al solo *récit*, allontanandosi così vertiginosamente dalla ben oliata concatenazione logico-causale dell'intrigo tradizionale, dal rigoroso ordine logico-temporale, per un ordine come dicevamo di tipo analogico-associativo, è ugualmente lo stesso imperativo di *complétude* e *lisibilité* del racconto classico, ovvero « la nécessité d'énoncer la *fin* de toute action » (Barthes 1970, 54) che il testo vivieniano trasgredisce.

Nessuno scioglimento dunque. Il romanzo si spegne nella sospensiva, coi puntini di reticenza dell'« Adieu... et au revoir... » (270).

Non resta allora che tentare di mettere in moto questa "macchina pigra", senza dimenticare che è nell'*entre-deux* che Renée Vivien ce ne ha affidato le chiavi.

A chiusura del nostro contributo vorremmo però richiamare una scoperta che facciamo al momento in cui licenziamo questo nuovo articolo e che è per noi di grande rilevanza, quella per così dire ricca di promesse dell'eminente studioso Gerald Prince, che nel romanzo vivieniano individua, definendolo come elemento "notevole", un « annonce technique du *Sphinx* (1986) d'Anne Garréta » (2002, 28).

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O MARCADOR DISCURSIVO *DESDE LOGO* COMO "OPERADOR DE CONCRETIZAÇÃO E EXEMPLIFICAÇÃO"

Ana Paula LOUREIRO[1]

ABSTRACT. *Discourse Marker* **Desde Logo** *as a "Concretization and Exemplification Operator".* This study analyses the use of discourse marker *desde logo* in Contemporary European Portuguese as an example marker (EM), sharing semantic-discursive properties and contexts with other items, such as "por exemplo", "concretamente", "sobretudo", "principalmente", etc. Exemplification is a very frequent and important operation in discourse, involving typically the relationship between two main elements, the exemplifying one and the general one ("general element", EM "exemplifying element"). Example markers are also frequently combined with each other and with other discourse strategies, reinforcing or specifying the pragmatic meaning. On the other hand, there are fuzzy borders between exemplification and other pragmatic functions, like reformulation, information ordering or some epistemic values. Based on the analysis of a contemporary corpus, the first results show that (i) *desde logo* can be used in the same typical contexts as other EM, (ii) *desde logo* has more similarities with EM like "sobretudo", "principalmente" and "antes de mais nada" and (iii) due to conflict with other discursive functions, *desde logo* has some contextual constraints.

Keywords: "desde logo", discourse markers, example markers, Contemporary European Portuguese, written discourse

REZUMAT. *Marcatorul discursiv* desde logo *ca "operator de concretizare şi exemplificare".* Acest studiu analizează folosirea marcatorului discursiv *desde logo* în portugheza europeană contemporană ca marcator de exemplificare, ce are proprietăţi şi contexte comune cu alte structuri, precum „por exemplo",

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„concretamente", „sobretudo", „principalmente" etc. Exemplificarea este o operațiune discursivă foarte frecventă și importantă, ce implică relația dintre două elemente principale, cel exemplificat și cel general („element general", „element exemplificat"). Marcatorii de exemplificare se combină frecvent între ei, dar și cu alte strategii discursive, pentru a întări sau specifica sensul pragmatic. Pe de altă parte, granițele între exemplificare și alte funcții pragmatice, precum reformularea, ordonarea informației sau valori epistemice sunt neclare. În urma analizei corpusului de limbă portugheză contemporană, rezultatele arată că: (i) *desde logo* poate fi folosit în aceleași contexte tipica ca alți marcatori de exemplificare, (ii) *desde logo* prezintă mai multe asemănări cu marcatori de exemplificare precum "sobretudo", "principalmente" și "antes de mais nada" și (iii) din cauza conflictului cu alte funcții discursive, *desde logo* prezintă constrângeri contextuale.

Cuvinte-cheie: *"desde logo", marcatori discursivi, marcatori de exemplificare, portugheză europeană contemporană, discurs scris*

1. Introdução

O marcador discursivo *Desde Logo* (DL), em Português Europeu Contemporâneo, pode ser usado para introduzir um segmento (S2) que, dando continuidade (é coorientado) a um segmento anterior (S1), representa uma entidade ou situação que é um exemplo concreto da entidade ou situação, genérica, expressa nesse primeiro segmento: "S1 (entidade genérica/plural)$_i$, [DL] S2 (entidade concreta / particular)$_{i-a}$". Sejam os seguintes enunciados[2]:

(1) Se os títulos viessem a ser todos liquidados, o sistema financeiro português [S1 = entidade genérica], DESDE LOGO [≈*por exemplo*] o do crédito agrícola [S2 = entidade concreta], sofreria um rombo de consequências imprevisíveis.

(2) A estrutura da programação desta 22ª edição do festival mantém as características essenciais de anos anteriores [S1 = entidade genérica], DESDE LOGO [≈*por exemplo*] a exigência de estreia absoluta em Portugal dos filmes da selecção oficial [S2 = entidade concreta].

Em cada um destes exemplos, a realidade concreta representada em S2 (ex.1, "o [sistema financeiro] *do crédito agrícola*" e, ex.2, "*a exigência de estreia absoluta em Portugal dos filmes da selecção oficial*") deve ser interpretada como

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[2] Exemplos extraídos do *corpus* CETEMPúblico.

sendo parte do que é genericamente descrito em S1 ("(todo)o sistema financeiro português" e "(todas) as características essenciais de anos anteriores", respetivamente), ficando implícito que a proposição genérica de que S1 faz parte (ex.1, "o sistema financeiro português sofreria um rombo de consequências imprevisíveis"; ex.2, "a estrutura da programação desta 22ª edição do festival mantém as características essenciais de anos anteriores") é também verdadeira para as entidades específicas em S2: "*o [sistema financeiro] do crédito agrícola* sofreria um rombo de consequências imprevisíveis" (ex.1) e "a estrutura da programação desta 22ª edição do festival mantém *a exigência de estreia absoluta em Portugal dos filmes da selecção oficial*" (ex.2). Dada a natureza (apenas) "exemplar" de S2, ficam também implicitadas outras proposições específicas, aplicadas a outras entidades singulares (ex.1, "sistemas financeiros de outras instituições" e, ex.2, "outras caraterísticas das edições anteriores do festival").

Desde logo pode, assim, ser incluído na classe dos "operadores de concretização" ("operadores de concreción"*, Martín Zorraquino e Portolés Lázaro 1999[3]; González Diáz 2013; Rodríguez Muñoz e Ruiz Domínguez 2016) - «Los operadores de concreción presentan el miembro del discurso que los incluye como una concreción o ejemplo de una expresión más general (Martín Zorraquino e Portolés Lázaro 1999, 4142) -, também chamados, noutros trabalhos, "marcadores textuais de exemplificação" (Fernández Bernárdez 1994-1995) ou "operadores de concreción o especificación" (Rodríguez Muñoz e Ruiz Domínguez 2016)[4]. Adotaremos, neste estudo, a designação composta "operador(es) de concretização e exemplificação" (OCE)[5].

Desta classe de MD fazem parte itens tão variados como, entre outros, *por exemplo, sobretudo, principalmente, especialmente, em especial, em particular, antes de mais (nada), acima de tudo, em concreto, concretamente, como, entre outros,* muitos deles substituíveis[6] por DL e vice-versa[7].

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[3] O grupo dos *operadores de concreción* constitui uma das subdivisões dos *operadores argumentativos*, sendo a outra os *operadores de refuerzo argumentativo* (Martín Zorraquino e Portolés Lázaro 1999, 4139 ss.)

[4] Cf. também Plan curricular del Instituto Cervantes -
https://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca_ele/plan_curricular

[5] Cf. também o termo "Example Markers" em Rodríguez Abruñeiras 2020.

[6] Uma consulta rápida de dicionários de referência do PEC permite ver as relações de sinonímia usadas na descrição das aceções de alguns destes termos, com destaque para o subgrupo *especialmente-principalmente-sobretudo* e também *particularmente,* apresentados como sinónimos uns dos outros*. DL fica fora da equação; "por exemplo" também não é referido.

[7] Para o espanhol, ao contrário do português, há vários estudos sobre usos particulares de marcadores de concretização (cf. Fernández Bernárdez 1994-1995; Fuentes Rodríguez 2010; González Diáz 2013; Rodríguez Muñoz e Ruiz Domínguez 2016; Rodríguez Abruñeiras 2020, entre outros).

Considerem-se os seguintes outros exemplos[8]:

(3) As autoridades paquistanesas criticam a Índia pelos seus planos de desenvolver mísseis balísticos [S1], SOBRETUDO [≈por exemplo / DL] o Agni, que tem um alcance de 2500 quilómetros, e o Prithvi, de médio alcance [S2].

(4) Foram anos difíceis - as incertezas [S1] eram grandes, ESPECIALMENTE [≈por exemplo / DL] a de conseguir sobreviver à acção repressiva da censura e da PIDE [S2].

(5) Os «reservatórios» do vírus da hepatite B são os indivíduos infectados [S1], EM PARTICULAR [≈por exemplo / DL] as pessoas que não tem qualquer sintoma de terem a infecção [S2].

(6) É que muitos dos direitos consagrados na União Soviética [S1] não são respeitados, POR EXEMPLO [≈DL] o direito a greves políticas e a manifestações [S2].

Esta função genérica (de "concretização", "exemplificação"), pela diversidade de itens (e seus valores específicos), mas também pelos contextos em que estes se integram, engloba, como facilmente se percebe, uma grande variedade de subvalores e operações discursivas. Ao valor básico de existência e inclusão (apresentação da entidade em S2 e sua relação com a entidade em S1) juntam-se outros valores, relacionados ora (i) com a função referencial e informativa de S2 relativamente a S1, ora (ii) com o grau de extensão do exemplo (singular ou plural, podendo mesmo iniciar uma estrutura enumerativa, ainda que parcial) e (iii) com o grau de evidência ou de saliência da entidade selecionada (trata-se muitas vezes do exemplo mais importante ou mais evidente), bem como (iv) com a força pragmática e argumentativa pretendida (é frequente um efeito de reforço argumentativo da asserção anterior, funcionando muitas vezes como "intensificador"[9], mas também efeitos no plano da cooperação intersubjetiva, apelando a conhecimentos comuns[10]). Os marcadores que se incluem neste

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[8] Exemplos extraídos do *corpus* CETEMPúblico.
[9] Cf. Acín 2008, num estudo sobre "Los marcadores es más, más aún y máxime". Alguns dos exemplos analisados para o MD do espanhol "*máxime*" são muito semelhantes a contextos de DL (ou outros MD) em português.
[10] Cf. Rodríguez Abruñeiras (2020, 616): «EMs are connectors used to introduce examples. They may appear in three different kinds of constructions, namely exemplification, argumentation and selection.»

grupo apresentam distribuições distintas em função destas variáveis, da sua frequência, contextos e combinatórias preferenciais. Neste quadro, atribui-se frequentemente a "por exemplo" uma função mais neutra e menos marcada, tornando-se um dos OCE mais frequentes (González Diaz 2013). No polo oposto, é possível, por outro lado, atribuir a itens como "sobretudo", "especialmente" (e Desde Logo), entre outros, funções mais marcadas e contextualmente mais restritas na construção da exemplificação.

Por outro lado, importa delimitar, dentro do possível, estas operações relativamente a outros movimentos. Assim, os OCE confinam distintivamente com duas outras funções, em contextos formais idênticos: por um lado, a "concretização exaustiva" (explicitação) de S1 em S2 (S2 = S1) - cf. Fernández-Bernardes (1994-1995, 106): «Para que exista tal valor [de "exemplificação"] es una condición indispensable que se trate de una enumeración no exhaustiva.»; e, por outro, a adição de novos temas. Esta distinção justifica a necessidade da presença do MD, reduzindo o seu grau de omissibilidade, como veremos.

É objetivo deste estudo dar conta de uma primeira aproximação ao MD DL como operador de concretização e exemplificação. Enquanto marcador, DL está ainda em processo de gramaticalização e cumpre outras funções pragmáticas, ajustando-se a diferentes contextos. Por outro lado, DL(MD) convive sincronicamente com usos da locução como adjunto temporal, conservando a sua função de origem[11]. Há uma distribuição contextual associada à distinção entre o uso de *Desde Logo* como MD e como adjunto (na proximidade ao verbo, por exemplo)[12] e distribuições contextuais distintas também para as diferentes funções como MD. Há, por outro lado, no entanto, contextos comuns, que se traduzem em situações de ambiguidade, como veremos, e que podem constituir restrições a alguns usos de DL como OCE.

Começaremos pela apresentação da locução *Desde Logo*, quer na sua função de adjunto temporal, quer como MD. Sistematizaremos, num segundo momento, as caraterísticas de comportamento dos OCE e contextos de uso, procurando evidenciar a pertença de DL a este grupo, em particular a sua aproximação a um determinado subconjunto de itens, assim como eventuais restrições de uso, relacionadas com as outras funções ou valores que pode assumir na frase ou no discurso. Para a descrição e anotação dos exemplos, foram considerados os seguintes parâmetros de descrição: estrutura interna (S1 e S2); posição de S1; posição do OCE; extensão e natureza da referência em

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[11] Ao contrário da forma homónima do espanhol (*desde luego*), que perdeu o valor de "imediatez", tendo passado a assumir exclusivamente funções como MD (cf. Martín Zorraquino 2011).

[12] Sobre a importância de fatores como a posição e a unidade em que se integram para a caraterização dos MD, ver Briz e Pons Bordería 2010.

S1 e S2; combinações habituais com conjunções ("e" e "mas"); combinações de OCE; aspetos e estratégias da marcação da base epistémica para a escolha do exemplo.

O estudo tem por base dados fornecidos por diferentes *corpora* do PEC. Para este primeiro estudo, são consideradas sobretudo ocorrências extraídas do *corpus* CETEMPúblico, complementadas, sempre que necessário, com dados do Corpus de Português NOW (News on Web)[13]. Por uma questão de simplificação, serão assinalados apenas os exemplos com origem neste último *corpus*.

2. *Desde Logo*: adjunto temporal e MD

A locução adverbial *Desde Logo* é usada, em PEC, com duas funções distintas: (i) por um lado, conserva a sua função de origem, funcionando como adjunto com valor temporal, no plano da frase e dos conteúdos descritivos; (ii) por outro, e na sequência de um processo de gramaticalização inferencial, assume valores de ordem instrucional, no plano do discurso, funcionando como marcador discursivo. Coexistem e convivem, assim, em sincronia as duas valências desta locução[14], apesar de, na maior parte dos dicionários de referência, ficarem contempladas apenas aceções dos usos como adjunto temporal: *Desde Logo* apresenta-se, assim, normalmente, como sinónimo de "A partir desse mesmo momento ou instante", "logo" (Academia), "a partir desse momento, desde esse instante" (Houaiss), "desde aquele momento" (Infopédia), "sem demora" (Priberam). No Dicionário da Academia, no entanto, refere-se ainda o seu uso com o valor de "Em primeiro lugar, antes de mais nada. = primeiramente" (Academia).

Enquanto adjunto com valor temporal, *Desde Logo* ocorre na proximidade do verbo, destacando-se, por exemplo, o seu uso em contexto de perífrase verbal com os verbos auxiliares *começar* ("começar DL a + infinitivo") e *ficar* ("ficar DL + particípio passado"), indicando que a situação que marca se seguiu imediatamente a uma situação anterior:

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[13] No sentido de agilizar a recuperação da informação, listam-se aqui as siglas e abreviaturas usadas ao longo do trabalho, bem como a sua explicação: PEC (Português Europeu Contemporâneo); MD (marcador discursivo); DL (marcador discursivo *desde logo*); OCE (operador de concretização e exemplificação); S1 (segmento 1); S2 (segmento 2); F (frase); SN (sintagma nominal); SP (sintagma preposicional); SAdj (sintagma adjetival); CD (complemento direto); COBL (complemento oblíquo); compl de Nome (complemento de Nome); pos. final (posição final).

[14] Cf.: «Em virtude da mudança histórica e da sua alta frequência nos textos, escritos ou orais, alguns advérbios passam a funcionar – concomitantemente com o seu uso canónico – como conectores discursivos, ou seja, adquirem uma função subsidiária de ligação de enunciados (…) ao mesmo tempo que, nesse uso, perdem o seu significado primitivo, podendo adquirir outros (…)» (Raposo 2013, 1572)

(7) O utilizador tem, assim, a hipótese de visualizar um possível resultado, podendo começar DESDE LOGO ["logo/imediatamente após ter visualizado o resultado"] a criar novos temas.

(8) Nos minutos iniciais da partida, as regras do jogo ficaram DESDE LOGO ["logo nesse momento", "logo a partir desse momento"] definidas.

Enquanto MD, por outro lado, *Desde Logo* parece ficar disponível para, em função de condições contextuais (tipo de verbo, posição, e a presença ou ausência de elementos para referência deítica) assumir valores e funções tão distintos como "ordenador do discurso"[15] (DL = "em primeiro lugar"), "operador de concretização e exemplificação" (DL = "por exemplo") ou ainda valores associadas ao plano epistémico (DL = "seguramente")[16]. Estas funções exemplificam-se nas seguintes ocorrências:

(9) Há vários fatores que justificam que o principal mercado para as exportações de calçado seja a Europa. DESDE LOGO a proximidade, *depois* a própria União Europeia [...] e, *finalmente*, o facto de a Europa ser vista como um mercado com poder de compra [...]. (NOW)

(10) Digamos, DESDE LOGO, que tem lugar ainda incerto na evolução da obra de Rubem Fonseca.

(1) o sistema financeiro português, DESDE LOGO o do crédito agrícola, sofreria um rombo de consequências imprevisíveis.

(11) O produtor [...] subiu ao palco do Estúdio 13 e explicou a estratégia da Minimal Movies Holland, a produtora do filme (e o nome é DESDE LOGO todo um programa).

Não raras vezes, *Desde Logo* apresenta um comportamento ambíguo, oscilando entre a interpretação como adjunto ou como MD ou entre distintas funções como MD, como veremos mais adiante.

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[15] Sobre os MD ordenadores, ver, entre outros, Lopes e Carrilho 2013.

[16] À forma homónima do Espanhol (*desde luego*) é atribuída uma função no plano epistémico (*evidencial*) – cf. Portolés 1998; Martín Zorraquino e Portolés Lázaro 1999; Santos Río 2003; Martín Zorraquino 2005.

3. Operadores de concretização e exemplificação: caraterização

3.1. OCE: presença e omissão

Uma caraterística central comum a todos estes itens é o facto de a sua presença no enunciado não ser normalmente dispensável (Fernández Bernardes 1994-1995), sob pena de se alterar a progressão temático-informativa e de S2 passar a representar ora uma simples adição (com introdução de novo tema), ora uma explicitação (neste caso, sobrepondo-se referencialmente a S1). O grau de omissibilidade destes MD é, assim, e ao contrário do que acontece com outros MD, muito baixo. Sejam os exemplos:

(3) As autoridades paquistanesas criticam a Índia pelos seus planos de desenvolver mísseis balísticos, SOBRETUDO o Agni, que tem um alcance de 2500 quilómetros, e o Prithvi, de médio alcance.

(3a) As autoridades paquistanesas criticam a Índia pelos seus planos de desenvolver mísseis balísticos, **[Ø]** o Agni [...] e o Prithvi [...].

(12) Foi necessário reabilitar o edifício dos Jardins da Parada, DESDE LOGO o local escolhido para o museu.

(12a) Foi necessário reabilitar o edifício dos Jardins da Parada, **[Ø]** o local escolhido para o museu.

(13) Ao requerer que seja instaurado procedimento criminal contra a Quercus, a Câmara afirma que há indícios claros de outros crimes, DESDE LOGO a instigação pública a um crime e a ameaça com prática de um crime.

(13a) [...] afirma que há indícios claros de outros crimes, **[Ø]** a instigação pública a um crime e a ameaça com prática de um crime.

Na ausência de melhor contexto, S2 no ex.12a pode ser interpretado como um novo SN coordenado ao anterior, ocupando ambos o espaço de CD do verbo *reabilitar* ("reabilitar o edifício dos Jardins da Parada [e] o local escolhido para o museu"). Por outro lado, nos ex.s 3a e 13a, os novos segmentos adequam-se a uma leitura explicativa ou reformulação: "os mísseis balísticos" referem-se ao "Agni" e ao "Prithvi" e "os indícios claros de outros crimes" correspondem concretamente "à instigação pública a um crime e à ameaça com prática de um crime". Nestes dois casos, seria possível a introdução de um MD de reformulação (*a saber, isto é*).

3.2. OCE. Perfil das estruturas: forma, função e posição (S1, S2 e MD)

Como referimos, S1 e S2 correspondem tipicamente a sintagmas e ocorrem habitualmente em posições contíguas ("S1, S2"). Nos casos em que S1 é um constituinte não final de frase, é frequente S2 surgir como estrutura parentética, encaixada, por exemplo entre sujeito e predicado (cf. ex.1), podendo, em alternativa, ser colocado no final da frase, já distante de S1 (ex.4 e ex.22).

Do ponto de vista estrutural e funcional, S1 pode ser um qualquer constituinte da frase, argumento ou adjunto, do verbo ou de outro elemento da estrutura hierárquica. S2 apresenta-se normalmente sob a forma de um sintagma nominal, independentemente da estrutura do antecedente que exemplifica (cf. ex.14, ex.16 e ex.17).

Relativamente à posição do MD em S2, a posição mais frequente é o início do segmento (ex.1, ex.2, ex.3, ex.4, ex.5, ex.14), podendo, com mais ou menos restrições, ocorrer no final[17], como é o caso dos exemplos ex.15 a ex.22. Apresentam-se, de seguida, os exemplos, com a anotação das caraterísticas referidas:

(1) [...] o sistema financeiro português [S1 = SN, sujeito], DESDE LOGO o do crédito agrícola [S2 = SN, pós-S1], sofreria um rombo de consequências imprevisíveis.

(2) [...] mantém as características essenciais de anos anteriores [S1 = SN, CD], DESDE LOGO a exigência de estreia absoluta em Portugal dos filmes da selecção oficial [S2 = SN, pós-S1].

(3) [...] planos de desenvolver mísseis balísticos [S1 = CD de oração subordinada], SOBRETUDO o Agni, que tem um alcance de 2500 quilómetros, e o Prithvi, de médio alcance [S2 = SN, pós-S1].

(4) [...] as incertezas [S1 = SN, sujeito] eram grandes, ESPECIALMENTE a de conseguir sobreviver à acção repressiva da censura e da PIDE [S2 = SN, pós-F].

(5) Os «reservatórios» do vírus da hepatite B são os indivíduos infectados [S1 = SN, predicativo do sujeito], EM PARTICULAR as pessoas que não têm qualquer sintoma de terem a infecção [S2 = SN, pós-S1].

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[17] Fazendo uma pesquisa no *corpus* (CETEMPúblico) pelas ocorrências destes MD em posição final (após pausa – vírgula - e antes de ponto final), observamos um grande número de registos com "por exemplo", observamos que "sobretudo" e "em particular" são também frequentes, mas que não há casos de DL e que outros MD são também raros nesta posição.

(14) [...] diferentes intervenções em edifícios municipais de interesse público [S1 = SP, compl de N], DESDE LOGO o Edifício Chiado [S2 = SN, pós-S1].

(15) «Tomar o pulso»: e como o pulso não está bem, toma-se outra coisa qualquer [S1 = SN, CD], um destes malditos cafés de companhia aérea, POR EXEMPLO [S2 = SN, pós-S1] [MD – pos. final].

(16) As tardes da programação são preenchidas com música [S1 = SP]: pop, «rock» e jazz, SOBRETUDO [S2 = SN, pós-S1] [MD – pos. final].

(17) A oferta e a procura concentram-se nos grandes centros [S1 = COBL] - Lisboa e Porto, SOBRETUDO [S2 = SN, pós-S1] [MD – pos. final].

(18) «A minha vida modificou-se, passei a ter um círculo de amigos do coração não portugueses [S1 = SAdj] – franceses e espanhóis, PRINCIPALMENTE [S2 = SAdj, pós-S1] [MD – pos. final].

(19) Mais do que cultura e solidariedade social, falou-se de regionalização e de futebol [S1 = SP, COBL]; do FC Porto, EM PARTICULAR [S2 = SP, pós-S1] [MD – pos. final].

(20) Para este sucesso contribuíram as boas ligações estabelecidas em praças internacionais [S1 = SP, COBL], Londres e Suíça, EM ESPECIAL [S2 = SN, pós-S1] [MD – pos. final].

(21) O país convidado de honra é a Itália, que traz a Angoulême os seus maiores expoentes da actualidade [S1 = SN, CD]: Hugo Pratt, o famoso criador de Corto Maltese, ANTES DE MAIS [S2 = SN, pós-S1] [MD – pos. final].

(22) Lolitas, o romantismo oitocentista [S1 = SN, sujeito] inventou-as às dezenas, o nosso Camilo Castelo Branco, INCLUSIVE [S2 = SN, pós-F] [MD – pos. final].

3.3. OCE: combinatórias entre MD

É caraterístico destes OCE poderem coocorrer entre si, combinando-se em sequências contíguas (coordenados ou não pela conjunção copulativa) ou descontínuas (neste caso, distribuindo-se pelas posições inicial e final do segmento). Estas combinações de MD servem ora como reforço (redundante) do valor

pretendido, ora acrescentando matizes da exemplificação (Fernández Bernardes 1994-1995)*.* A associação de "como" e "por exemplo" ("como, por exemplo" ou "como… por exemplo") é uma das possibilidades mais frequentemente registadas. Alguns outros exemplos de combinações de MD encontrados nos *corpora* consultados, envolvendo ou não DL, são os seguintes: "desde logo, e principalmente"; "desde logo e em particular"; "desde logo, por exemplo"; "desde logo e acima de tudo", sobretudo principalmente"; concretamente, por exemplo"*.* É notória a tendência para a combinação redundante de MD neste grupo dos OCE, havendo até casos em que se combinam três marcadores (ex.28). Sejam alguns exemplos:

(23) De facto, não basta classificar, e bem, o simulacro de democracia vigente na Madeira de «défice democrático» e depois não actuar em conformidade, SOBRETUDO PRINCIPALMENTE porque, de há muito, a perversão democrática é uma realidade quotidiana na região da Madeira.

(24) Isto significa CONCRETAMENTE, POR EXEMPLO, que pode o PS ser o partido mais votado […].

(25) Seria bom que os líderes partidários pró-referendo fossem mais claros expondo razões objectivas, COMO POR EXEMPLO as de foro constitucional, ético ou consuetudinário.

(26) No entanto, a urina apresenta muitos inconvenientes**,** DESDE LOGO a facilidade com que é adulterável, através da diluição em água, POR EXEMPLO.

(27) Todos os nossos programas tiveram de fazer o seu caminho. DESDE LOGO, POR EXEMPLO, o regime de arrendamento acessível esteve um ano em o parlamento […]. (NOW)

(28) […] assim como entrevistas com jovens timorenses, opiniões críticas de conhecidas figuras, COMO, POR EXEMPLO o Professor George Aditjondro, ENTRE OUTROS […].

Tratando-se de um movimento muito frequente no discurso, é possível encontrar também situações em que se sucedem, de modo encaixado, diferentes segmentos de exemplificação, associados aos respetivos MD. Considere-se o ex.26, em que o MD "por exemplo" tanto pode funcionar como complemento e reforço de DL, colocando-se no final de S2 (S2 = *"*a facilidade com que é adulterável, através da diluição em água"*)*, como ser o OCE de um segundo S2 *"*através da diluição em água", que passaria a concretizar e exemplificar o segmento anterior (*"*a facilidade com que é adulterável").

É necessário um estudo sobre as combinatórias mais frequentes, respetivos valores e ordem dos MD na sequência.

3.4. OCE: extensão do "exemplo" – exemplificação e explicitação

A extensão do exemplo apresentado em S2 relativamente a S1 é muito variável, dependendo também do âmbito referencial de S1 (cf. ex.29, 2 exemplos para "19 temas"), podendo incluir apenas uma das entidades previstas em S1 (cf. ex.1, ex.6) ou várias (duas ou mais), desde que não se esgote a enumeração (cf. ex.3, ex.31, ex.32, ex.33). Seja o ex.29:

> (29) Em três dias, serão analisados 19 temas, DESDE LOGO a política de promoção de interesses e de protecção dos direitos dos consumidores, e a Lei-Quadro da defesa do Consumidor.

Há também casos em que, por falta de contexto, não fica clara a extensão dos exemplos, podendo mesmo tratar-se de uma explicitação. É o caso particular de alguns usos de "concretamente" ou de outros OCE (DL, por exemplo), como pode ver-se nos exemplos que se seguem:

> (30) Nós podemos actuar na Tailândia, mas não podemos controlar os países vizinhos, CONCRETAMENTE o Laos e a Birmânia [...].

> (31) [...] «moeda única europeia» - uma moeda que, na verdade, não será única nem europeia, uma vez que muitos países europeus, DESDE LOGO a Suíça, todos os países de Leste e muitos do Sul não farão parte do «clube».

> (32) [...]os interlocutores principais do Governo socialista têm sido os parceiros sociais de comportamento mais institucional, DESDE LOGO a CIP e a UGT, e, no campo partidário, o PP.

Uma estratégia comum na combinação de MD é o uso de expressões complementares do tipo "entre outros". A presença desta expressão no segmento apresenta duas leituras possíveis: (i) ora serve para explicitar, de forma redundante, aquilo que fica implícito no segmento (isto é, indicando que se trata apenas de exemplos, ficando excluídos todos os outros membros do conjunto expresso em S1); (ii) ora indica que do exemplo, e também apenas como exemplo, poderiam fazer parte outras entidades, reduzindo, complementarmente, a força da escolha. Seja novamente o ex.28, onde a presença de "entre outros" pode

remeter para todas as restantes "conhecidas figuras" mencionadas em S1 ou apenas para outras figuras que, à semelhança do "Professor George Aditjondro [S2]", poderiam ter sido destacadas.

Uma variante desta expressão ("entre muitos outros") pode servir para sublinhar a extensão do exemplo relativamente a S1 – cf. ex.33:

(33) Pode ainda jogar contra os maiores jogadores do mundo, COMO Júlio Jimenez (Espanha) ou Robert Garett (EUA), ENTRE MUITOS OUTROS.

É possível também que na sequência de S2, mas já num novo segmento, se explicitem os restantes elementos do conjunto. O novo segmento ocorre normalmente introduzido por um conector de valor aditivo – são frequentes expressões como "mas também", "como também", "assim como" (ex.34, ex.35), "além de" (ex.37) -, mas pode aparecer simplesmente justaposto ou coordenado à sequência interior (ex.36):

(34) Costa Lobo apontou várias «boas razões» para se viver na Alta, DESDE LOGO [1] a sua localização, [2] o sossego que ainda é possível ter no interior dos quarteirões, «onde abundam quintais e jardins suspensos que é preciso preservar», *assim como* [3] o convívio com a juventude que a frequenta e [4] o sentido de comunidade que ainda existe.

(35) A Câmara [...] propõe-se fazer uma operação urbanística de recuperação dos espaços exteriores, DESDE LOGO [1] a repavimentação e, nalguns casos, [2] a regularização dos pavimentos das ruas, *assim como* [3] a melhoria das drenagens de águas pluviais e da iluminação das vias.

(36) Mas é no campo da cultura que mais novidades se anunciam, DESDE LOGO [1] a «refundação» da Imprensa da Universidade e [2] a próxima constituição da Fundação Cultural para a Universidade de Coimbra, [3] *e* a criação de um forum de reflexão [...]».

(37) Chamkhani disse que a progressão dos taliban criou ameaças «diversas», POR EXEMPLO [1] o afluxo de refugiados, [2] o aumento do tráfico de droga e [3] a insegurança na zona fronteiriça, *além da* [4] «presença no Afeganistão de alguns grupos terroristas anti-iranianos».

Mais uma vez, é sempre possível que esta adição seja interpretada como sendo parte do S2, isto é, parte dos exemplos e não como o que resta de S1 depois da seleção exemplar contida em S2. Assim, as novas realidades (por exemplo, no ex.34, "o convívio com a juventude que a frequenta" e "o sentido de

comunidade que ainda existe" ou, no ex.37, "a presença no Afeganistão de alguns grupos terroristas anti-iranianos") podem ser interpretadas ora como correspondendo à explicitação dos restantes elementos previstos em S1 (resultando da sequência, vista como um todo, a explicitação de todas as "boas razões", de todas "as ameaças") ora como sendo parte da enumeração de exemplos introduzida pelo OCE (DL / "por exemplo").

Importa ter em consideração que alguns dos OCE podem assumir também função de explicitação – *concretamente* é o exemplo mais típico, mas também *nomeadamente*. No (ex.38), fica explícita essa interpretação pela relação numérica entre o que fica dito em S1 e o conjunto das entidades enumeradas em S2:

> (38) O IPE [...] deveria concentrar-se em três áreas de actividade, CONCRETAMENTE [1] o ambiente, [2] o capital de risco e [3] os recursos hídricos.

Parece ser ainda propriedade de todas estas estruturas uma certa indefinição não só da relação (extensão) entre S1 e S2, mas também da própria constituição de S1, podendo o segmento marcado (S2) indicar que o exemplo é o único que se conhece e neste caso assumir um valor restritivo, próximo de expressões como "pelo menos".

3.5. OCE: combinação com E e MAS ("e DL S2")

Os OCE combinam-se frequentemente com as conjunções copulativas "e" e "mas" ("e/mas MD S2"), com destaque para OCE do tipo "sobretudo" (2202 casos no *corpus*), "em particular" (562), "principalmente" (415), "em especial" (189) e "acima de tudo" (124)[18]. O MD "por exemplo" apresenta um número muito baixo de ocorrências para estes contextos. Considerem-se os seguintes exemplos:

> (39) [...] já pouco cinema se vê, a percepção (*e* DESDE LOGO a do tempo e do espaço, elementos fulcrais da arte cinematográfica) sendo de todo diferente na televisão e no vídeo.

> (40) Os sintomas - *e* SOBRETUDO a indiferença extrema, o «autismo», que deu o nome à doença - costumam tornar-se menos marcados com a idade.

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[18] Estes valores correspondem às ocorrências listadas para uma pesquisa global da estrutura "[vírgula] E/MAS + MD" (ex.: "..., e DL...") no *corpus* CETEMPúblico.

(41) De facto, os 90 minutos foram demasiado aborrecidos para os espectadores, já que ambas as equipas, *e* PRINCIPALMENTE a flaviense, estiveram mal.

3.6. OCE: tipos de sequências. "S1, [MD] S2" & outras

Uma das construções mais típicas em que ocorrem os MD OCE é a estrutura aqui em destaque: "S1 (entidade genérica/plural)$_i$, [DL] S2 (entidade concreta / particular)$_{i-a}$", correspondendo S1 e S2 habitualmente a sintagmas. No entanto, o uso destes MD, sinalizando que o segmento em que ocorrem é um exemplo de uma referência genérica, é possível em sequências em que S1 não fica expresso ou ganha contornos mais difusos e S2 ocupa posição de constituinte (e não de expansão de constituinte). Exemplificamos essas estruturas nos enunciados que se seguem (ex.42 a ex.44):

(42) Pela consulta da brochura fica-se a saber, POR EXEMPLO o custo-hora de um operário industrial em qualquer um de 26 países europeus ou descobre-se que Portugal tem o nível de produtividade per capita mais baixo da Europa.

(43) Sobre a notoriedade conseguida, 63% dos expositores assinalaram uma boa divulgação, SOBRETUDO na televisão e nos jornais.

(44) «Amor Eterno» talvez seja dos objectos mais bizarros do seu cinema, DESDE LOGO porque é um confronto com um género «morto» há muito, o Musical.

Nestes exemplos, o OCE introduz um constituinte novo, assumindo o segmento obrigatoriamente a forma adequada ao espaço sintático que ocupa (de CD, no ex.42, de adjunto de nome, no ex.43, ou de adjunto adverbial, no ex.44). A presença do marcador deixa subentender a existência de outros elementos elegíveis para o mesmo espaço sintático ("fica-se a saber outras coisas", "a divulgação ocorreu noutros suportes ou meios", "os objetos são bizarros por outras razões", respetivamente).

É particularmente interessante o contexto exemplificado no ex.44, em que o OCE introduz uma oração que explicita uma circunstância (exemplo) da situação expressa na oração anterior. Destacam-se os casos das orações causais de *porque* ou *por* ("OCE porque/por"), mas também temporais ("OCE quando") ou condicionais ("OCE se"). Para as combinações com as conjunções *porque* e

quando, evidenciam-se, mais uma vez, os OCE *sobretudo* (porque – 535 casos/ quando -1057), *principalmente* (118 / 233), *especialmente* (62 / 162) e também DL (porque – 94)[19]:

> (45) Todos nós o fazemos, legitimamente, DESDE LOGO *quando* […] escrevemos longos textos sobre acontecimentos (ou países) que nunca tivemos ocasião de observar.

> (46) De qualquer das formas, ainda há duas etapas nos Pirenéus e tudo pode acontecer, SOBRETUDO *se* fizer calor no alto.

> (47) A ingestão de alimentos atrasa, por sua vez, o esvaziamento gástrico, PRINCIPALMENTE *se* forem quentes, ácidos, espessos ou com elevado teor de proteínas, gorduras, sal ou açúcar.

> (48) Macedo vai mais longe no desenvolvimento destas diferenças entre a velocidade e os ralis, SOBRETUDO *quando* se fala de pisos de terra.

3.6.1. Desde logo: restrições e ambiguidades

A ocorrência de DL (mas também de outros OCE, como "antes de mais nada") introduzindo um novo constituinte pode apresentar algumas restrições, relacionadas com a colocação do MD na proximidade do verbo ou outros contextos híbridos. Nestes contextos, é possível ativar-se, por exemplo, o valor temporal da locução, ficando anulado o sentido exemplar da descrição (marcas prosódicas ou gráficas, de pontuação, serão importantes nestes casos). A questão central passa pela colocação do MD em posições que admitem marcação ao segmento da esquerda e, em alternativa, marcação ao segmento da direita. Seja novamente o (ex.42), nas leituras (ex.42a) e (ex42b), e os casos (ex.49) e (ex.50) e respetivas interpretações (ex.49a, ex.49b, ex.50a e ex.50b):

> (42a) […] fica-se a saber DESDE LOGO ["imediatamente", "logo"] // o custo-hora de um operário industrial em qualquer um de 26 países europeus […].

> (42b) […] fica-se a saber // DESDE LOGO ["por exemplo", "entre outras coisas"] o custo-hora de um operário industrial em qualquer um de 26 países europeus […].

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[19] Dados do *corpus* CETEMPúblico.

(49) Olhei-a, interessado e curioso. Impressionou-me, DESDE LOGO**,** o carácter espiritual da sua beleza. (NOW)

(49a) Impressionou-me DESDE LOGO ["logo nesse momento", "logo"] // o carácter espiritual da sua beleza. (NOW)

(49b) Impressionou-me // DESDE LOGO ["antes de mais nada", "por exemplo", "sobretudo", "entre outras coisas"] o carácter espiritual da sua beleza. (NOW)

(50) António Sequeira considerou a visita « original e emocionante» […]. Uma visita inédita, DESDE LOGO, porque Carlo Milani estabelece «o elo de ligação entre as várias corporações da Europa». (NOW)

(50a) António Sequeira considerou a visita « original e emocionante» […]. Uma visita inédita, DESDE LOGO, // porque Carlo Milani estabelece «o elo de ligação entre as várias corporações da Europa». (NOW)

(50b) António Sequeira considerou a visita « original e emocionante» […]. Uma visita inédita, // DESDE LOGO, porque Carlo Milani estabelece «o elo de ligação entre as várias corporações da Europa». (NOW)

Nos contextos transcritos, o MD pode ter como segmento alvo o sintagma à esquerda ("fica-se DL a saber", "impressionou-me DL" e "[é] DL uma visita inédita") ou o segmento à direita ("DL o custo-hora…", "DL o caráter espiritual…" e "DL porque Carlo Milani…"). Neste segundo caso, DL pode ser um OCE. No caso concreto de (ex.50), e tendo em conta o contexto anterior mais alargado ("considerou a visita original e emocionante"), DL pode servir, na primeira leitura, para concretizar e exemplificar a "originalidade" e "emoção" associadas à visita ("concretamente o seu caráter inédito").

3.6.2. OCE: outras estruturas

Outros contextos e funções devem ainda ser considerados no conjunto dos usos destes MD. Por um lado, é também típico o seu uso no final de uma enumeração que se apresenta como pretendendo ser exaustiva. Destacam-se aqui os usos de OCE do tipo "por exemplo" e "entre outros". Sejam os exemplos:

(51) O agrupamento austríaco interpreta obras de Hans Luders, Orlando di Lasso, Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Katchaturian e Wurthner, ENTRE OUTROS.

Parece ficar claro que o MD tem a função de interromper a enumeração, que passa assim a constituir uma "exemplificação" de um conjunto mais alargado. DL apresenta algumas restrições neste tipo de contextos.

Num outro tipo de contexto, um pouco distinto, e que afeta sobretudo MD do tipo "sobretudo", "principalmente", "desde logo", os OCE servem para introduzir e assinalar o último membro de uma sequência enumerativa (exaustiva ou não). Esta operação é possível com OCE do tipo "sobretudo", "principalmente", "DL", mas já não com os OCE "por exemplo" ou "concretamente".

3.7. OCE - o exemplo mais relevante

O exemplo selecionado para S2 é tendencialmente o mais importante ou relevante, de acordo com critérios vários, mais ou menos claros ou difusos, de ordem mais ou menos objetiva ou (inter)subjetiva. A justificação para a escolha, a sua base epistémica, é muitas vezes, aliás, explicitada no contexto, ora no próprio segmento, ora em comentários a ele associados. Outros comentários ou elementos servem, por outro lado, para reforçar a validade da escolha.

Antes de mais, o caráter exemplar da escolha poderá estar relacionado com o grau informativo associado a S2. Este grau será inversamente proporcional ao grau de definição referencial de S1: S2 é menos informativo se S1 é, do ponto de vista referencial, perfeitamente identificável (ex.: S1 = "todos os países da Europa" para um S2 do tipo "por exemplo, Portugal"); pelo contrário, será mais informativo um S2 ("por exemplo, Timor-Leste") que se siga a um S1 como "todos os países de que eu gosto". Paralelamente, será também mais provável a emergência, no primeiro caso, de outros valores e funções pragmáticas, configurando uma escolha mais marcada, com MD também mais específicos. Sejam os exemplos:

(52) Somos licenciados; já o éramos no primeiro dia que leccionámos; mais não era exigido […]; nalguns casos até, muito menos foi exigido, POR EXEMPLO o 5º ano liceal – se não acreditam, confirmem.

(22) Lolitas, o romantismo oitocentista inventou-as às dezenas, o nosso Camilo Castelo Branco, INCLUSIVE.

(53) O presidente do Centro Pompidou […] considerou que a Ásia, EM PARTICULAR o Japão, constituem uma prioridade para a política cultural do seu museu.

A relação de pertença e inclusão de S2 relativamente à referência global de S1 é do conhecimento comum no ex.53, mas não necessariamente nos ex.52 e ex.22, pelo que o grau de informação associado ao S2 será maior nestas últimas frases do que na primeira. Pelo contrário, a emergência do exemplo em (ex.53) responde a um valor acrescido de "particularização" (o Japão constitui "uma prioridade maior").

Fica, por outro lado, muitas vezes explicitada no contexto a base epistémica para a escolha do exemplo em S2. Indiretamente, estratégias de reforço do tipo "o próprio" deixam também subentender uma maior evidência do exemplo face a outros, como pode ver-se nos exemplos (segmentos assinalados):

(54) Para colmatar as perdas, Icahn optou por vender rotas**,** DESDE LOGO *a principal*, Nova Iorque-Londres [...].

(55) Para isso, estão previstas ou em curso diferentes intervenções em edifícios municipais de interesse público, DESDE LOGO o Edifício Chiado, *ontem mostrado aos jornalistas*.

(56) [...] o PÚBLICO questionou Frexes a propósito de alguns projectos culturais da cidade, DESDE LOGO a organização do núcleo museológico da Universidade de Coimbra, *cuja importância foi já reconhecida pela Unesco*.

(57) Mas há mais questões por resolver, DESDE LOGO a das habilitações para a docência, *que implica uma sistematização e definição claras dos vários níveis do Ensino Superior*.

(58) O vinho é muito bom, PRINCIPALMENTE o vinho do Porto *que achamos muito doce*.

(59) Que tentei minimizar com a ajuda de muitos amigos, mas EM PARTICULAR *e mais decisivamente* de dois a quem aqui agradecer.

(60) Os gráficos de «General Chaos» estão longe de ser espectaculares, embora os personagens sejam engraçados, PRINCIPALMENTE *o próprio* Chaos, *um «Rambo» com muito mais estômago do que músculos*.

(61) As restantes instituições da região – e DESDE LOGO os Hospitais Universitários de Coimbra, *que estarão no topo da estrutura* – entrarão progressivamente «em linha» [...].

4. Considerações finais

Propusemo-nos apresentar os resultados, ainda preliminares, de um estudo que pretende identificar e descrever perfis de comportamento da locução *Desde Logo* (PEC) como MD. A locução Desde Logo apresenta-se, em sincronia, com duplo estatuto, de adjunto temporal e de marcador discursivo. Enquanto MD, e ao contrário do que acontece com a forma homónima do Espanhol, o processo de gramaticalização está ainda em curso, pelo que se observa um comportamento discursivo complexo, muito dependente de condições contextuais, veiculando muitas vezes valores ambíguos ou híbridos, de difícil interpretação. Uma função parece ser, para já, estável, a de "operador de concretização e exemplificação", como pudemos comprovar. Outros estudos e testes são, no entanto, necessários, no sentido de aferir outros valores em formação para DL e de sistematizar comportamentos e perfis do grupo dos OCE.

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TRANSLATION SOLUTIONS FOR DEALING WITH AMBIGUITY IN *ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND*

Mădălina Elena MANDICI[1]

ABSTRACT. *Translation solutions for dealing with ambiguity in* Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. This paper shows how different types of ambiguity embedded in the matrix of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (the 1993 edition) are dealt with in two prestigious Romanian translations – Frida Papadache's *Peripeţiile Alisei în Ţara Minunilor* (1976) and Antoaneta Ralian's *Alice în Ţara Minunilor* (2007) – as a tribute to the international appeal of *Alice*. My focal aim is to present a comparative analysis of the methods employed in translating Carroll's equivocal lexical items, which make it increasingly difficult to match grammatical categories with function. This paper also aims at describing disambiguation techniques applied primarily in determining if the two translators managed to reinforce the original textual leeway at their disposal in the pure spirit of Carroll. My analysis relies heavily on Dirk Delabastita's translation strategies as precautionary measures to cope with Carroll's specialized type of literary discourse. The findings submitted by this paper are consistent with the idea that translating Carroll's craft unavoidably entails a partial loss of meaning, brought about by the yawning gap between the intended message and interpretation, which can result in either overtranslation

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or undertranslation. The extensive use of double-entendre in the source-text cannot be recoded entirely in the target language, despite the translators' excellent command of English.

Keywords: Carrollian humor; *ambiguity*; *translation solutions*; *disambiguation techniques*; *textual challenges*

REZUMAT. *Soluții de traducere a ambiguității din* Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. Acest articol arată că modul în care diferitele tipuri de ambiguitate încadrate în matricea textuală a lui Lewis Carroll în *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (ediția din 1993) sunt tratate în două traduceri românești de vază – *Peripețiile Alisei în Țara Minunilor* (1976), tradusă de Frida Papadache, și *Alice în Țara Minunilor* (2007), tradusă de Antoaneta Ralian – aduce un omagiu notorietății internaționale de care se bucură *Alice*. Scopul acestui articol este să prezinte o analiză comparativă a metodelor alese în traducerea termenilor echivoci care împiedică formarea corespondenței formă-funcție. Un alt obiectiv rezidă în descrierea tehnicilor de dezambiguizare aplicate pentru a determina în ce măsură traducătoarele au împrumutat, în manieră carrolliană, atmosfera lingvistică a textului-sursă, având în vedere strategiile de traducere propuse de Dirk Delabastita ca măsuri de precauție în explorarea discursului specializat al lui Carroll. Constatările acestei lucrări arată că încercarea de a-l traduce pe Carroll inevitabil implică omisiuni lexicale cauzate de distanța mare dintre mesajul scriptic livrat de autor și interpretarea ulterioară. Aceasta duce, în cele din urmă, fie la supratraducere, fie la subtraducere. Folosirea deasă a calamburului în textul-sursă nu poate fi oglindită integral în textul-țintă, în ciuda nivelului excelent de limbă engleză deținut de cele două traducătoare.

Termeni-cheie: umor carrollian; *ambiguitate*; *soluții de traducere*; *tehnici de dezambiguizare*; *provocări textuale*

Introduction

Fantasy literature – with its well-known elements of wonder, alternate worlds and enchanting characters – has always had so broad an appeal to both children and adults alike that it should come as no surprise that humor, adventure and paradox had been a source of marvel even for Neanderthal Man, centuries before Lewis Carroll, J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Lucy M. Boston, Alan Garner and Philippa Pearce (to only mention a few) came in the public eye. In between primitive, myth-making fantasying and modern-day retellings of the past and scientific renderings of a technologically-advanced future, one can identify Charles Lutwidge Dogdson (known to the general reading public as

Lewis Carroll[2]), a mathematician and logician who wholeheartedly abandoned himself to a world full to the brim with unconventional linguistic rules applied to familiar syntactic structures. When Tolkien created his stories populated by dwarves and elves, fantasy as a distinctive literary genre was unquestionably past its infancy and already made available to the layman, in the nineteenth-century, via Lewis Carroll and the bulk of his fiction, which reaches outside its merits as an enigmatic realm with specific rules and references to include a brilliant insight into the nature of linguistic meaning.

The paradox of Carroll's linguistic games of ambiguity constitutes one of the many delicately uncanny effects produced on the reader by the fantastic elements of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Alice's world takes on, in addition to its more obvious narrative features and explicit goals, the characteristics of a game of make-believe, whose mere hints and connotative minutiae reveal a complex interrelationship between meaning and form. Ambiguity is, after all, a deep-rooted feature of any natural language standardized through long processes, specifically fostered by English, a synthetic system of communication which has lost most of its inflectional endings. Language, by virtue of its internal potential to give birth to ambiguity, of its (sometimes) irrational conventions of usage, is an exquisite vehicle for creating playful situations through ingenuity, witty grammar and the speech habits of individual native speakers.

The link between form and meaning is almost never straightforward in English. The complexity of the relationship between the two as illustrated by Carroll's literary works has long been the focus of scholars interested in this literary man's constant preoccupation with verbal jokes, puns, and ambiguous statements. Robert D. Sutherland's book, *Language and Lewis Carroll* (1970), admired as pioneering by other experts in the field, makes further distinctions between the author's use of language as a vehicle for play and communication, as well as between his use of names as indexical signs and definitions as precautionary measures for clearing up ambiguity, touching on the fact that sounds (form) might be largely different from sense (import) in a given context and underlining the sovereignty of words in conditioning individuals' behavior and affairs. Central to Sutherland's book is the notion that although "[l]anguage is man's servant", man "cannot take for granted that it will always do his

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[2] The author's name is a word-order game involving back translation (Charles Lutwidge > Carolus Ludovicus > Carroll Lewis), as David Crystal notes in *Carrolludicity* (1998). Carroll continuously teaches his readers that keeping the ludic function of language centre stage is important in bringing people into rapport with each other or in simply helping them break the ice. The artistry of his linguistic insights relies on many areas of interest, such as coining "portmanteau" (blend) words, syllogisms, and imparting to lexical gibberish an illusory meaning using familiar structural patterns, as in *Jabberwocky*, a poem famous among linguists for its morphosyntactic value.

bidding" (228). Failures in communication do arise and are the rich source of humor, as Carroll's fiction, meant to amuse and entertain, as well as to educate and inform, demonstrates. Most of these aspects will be taken up and elaborated upon in the next sections.

Carroll's *Wonderland* peels layer upon layer of the commonsensical assumptions about the transparency of language. As a result, another confessed study aim refers to disambiguation techniques that are most likely to be used in the resolution of language ambivalence. My goal is to observe not only the author's brilliant insight into the nature of meaning, with the kaleidoscope of games and effects that it produces, but also his exploitation of certain types of ambiguity possessed by words and phrases and how such equivocal items have been translated from English into Romanian. That Alice's enigmatic world has its specific laws and references, always resulting in humorous and even nonsensical situations, goes without saying. In my approach, I start from the premise that the stimulating value of the Romanian text(s) under (ambiguous) scrutiny calls for contrastive research.

This paper is structured into two main parts: one focusing on ambiguity as a natural part of language challenging the reader's ingenuity by proposing an intratextual puzzle and another one attempting to investigate the specific problems occurring in the translation of ambiguous language in Lewis Carroll's narrative prose. The last section provides examples discussing the position of the translator faced with the challenge of deciding how to tackle the multiplicity of meanings derived from deliberate equivocation. It would be counterintuitive to deny the fact that ambiguity – lexical, categorial, syntactic and referential – can puzzle the translator, especially since language varies greatly across different countries.

To the best of one's knowledge, the translator's emphasis on and alertness to the details of the text do manage to come to grips with the sheer rareness and yet cleverly placement of ambiguities in a text that needs to be rendered in another language. Beginning with Warren Weaver's *Alice in Many Tongues* (1964), work in this area has focused on the extent to which "the translation into language X" manages to "capture and convey those aspects of the original [parodied verse, puns, manufactured or nonsense words, jokes which involve logic and twists of meaning] which seem important to us" (77). Lewis Carroll has been translated into multiple languages, including Thai and Swahili, as thoroughly illustrated by Weaver's 1964 checklist. It has also been tackled by various translators sharing the same native tongue, as Peter Rickard's 1975 study, *Alice in France or Can Lewis Carroll Be Translated?* suggests. The most recent reseacher interested in *Alice* translations, Viatcheslav Vetrov, in *The Linguistic Picture of the World. Alice's Adventures in Many Languages* (2021), works with six target languages – Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Russian –

and argues that "no language imposes on its speakers something like a national interpretation of a literary work, that is, a reading of a text or even of some details in it that would be shared by the whole of the respective language community" (12) and celebrates each translation under discussion as "products of [the translators'] individual ability of linguistic seeing" (13).

Types of ambiguity

In this section I will take a preliminary look at four types of ambiguity which are likely to create problems – whether serious or risible – of translatability and give way to supplementary meanings reaching outside the nitty-gritty of ordinary communication systems. Different languages present distinct meaning-form distributions which become notoriously ambiguous on several levels. Whenever bilinguals are faced with the burdensome task of translating ambivalent terms, the resultant potential humour must bounce back and forth between the writer of fiction and the translator. The latter must find a common meeting ground for different languages – either by dropping original meanings or recreating them in an ingenious fashion.

Lexical ambiguity, also known as word sense ambiguity, occurs when a word able to acquire more than one meaning in conventional usage appears in a verbal context that does not disambiguate its intended sense. A word such as *bank*, for instance, has distinct meanings allotted to it, including *financial institution* and *edge of a river*. A sentence such as "I was able to deposit cash at another bank" is not problematic at all, as everyone can speculate on the intended meaning. More difficult and clearly not up-for-the-grabs is "The farmer worked by the bank, while his wife worked closer to home", where contextual evidence is not enough to disentangle the ambiguity. Similarly, *oxygen* has one meaning allocated to it by convention and is not equivocal; but a word like *iron*, having different potential meanings that enable the reader to make a choice, can undoubtedly be called equivocal. Rejected from this generalization are jargon words – all the specialized terms found in various technical fields such as mathematics, biology, physics, and law. In order to reduce an ambiguous utterance to a single, precise meaning, one has to detect disambiguation techniques able to resolve it. Among the most commonly used safeguards against lexical ambiguity, mention should be made of contextual evidence, prosodic features, paralinguistic elements and knowledge of the world. Oftentimes "high-level inference[s]" (Hirst 1987, 79) are required to reduce an ambiguous utterance to a single sene, as in "The lawyer stopped at the *bar* for a drink." (78), where *bar* could mean a place where alcoholic drinks are served or the physical bar of a courtroom. A reader can consider *bar* equivocal only up

to the point where the noun *drink* is mentioned. The appeareance of the NP [a drink] is sufficient to clarify the intended meaning of *bar*. Through the further association between *bar* and its surrounding context, the senses become "mutually disambiguating" (79).

The second type, categorial ambiguity, can be considered, in its turn, as inexact and problematic as the first in any natural language. Some linguists deem it a syntactic type of ambiguity, since it arises when different parts of speech are associated with the same lexeme. Others read it as lexical ambiguity, since it draws on the multiple meanings of a single word. Common cases of categorial ambiguity arise, for example, in drawing the line between a present participle and an adjective. "They were entertaining guests" can be represented as either "They were [entertaining guests]", where the adjective *entertaining* functions as a modifier (a dependent element) of the head-noun *guests*; or as "They [were entertaining] guests, where *entertaining* functions as a present participle and *were* as a helping verb, both being part of the verb phrase [*were entertaining*] (Kess and Nishimitsu 1989, 16). In "The thing that bothered Bill was crouching under the table," (Hurford and Heasley, 122), the *–ing* form of *crouching* can be treated as either a gerund or a present participle, each offering a different reading of the sentence. The ambiguity of the sentence is intensified by the vagueness carried by the noun phrase *the thing*. The sentence is ambiguous between "It was the fact that he had to crouch under the table that bothered Bill" and "The creature that bothered Bill was crouching under the table".

Structural or syntactic ambiguity, the third type, occurs when a sentence can be analyzed as conforming to more than one structural pattern. Struggling to find a proper definition for this linguistic phenomenon, Dallin D. Oaks (2010) states that a sentence is structurally ambiguous when "it can yield more than one syntactic interpretation" or when "it implies more than one syntactic relationship between constituents within a structure" (2010, 15). Structural ambiguities may occur when one lexical item is taken to stand for two parts of speech (for example, it is unclear whether *tie* is a noun or a verb) or when the grammatical role a constituent is assigned in an utterance is two-fold (for example, in *I bought her flowers*, *her* is ambiguous between an indirect object interpretation and a determiner interpretation). Thomas Wasow, in his *Postverbal Behaviour* (2002) argues for the "prosodic cues" which readers pick up on in sentences like: "We send faculty lists." (96). The verb's ability to function either as a monotransitive or as a ditransitive verb determines the sentence's ambiguity. The two interpretations are: [We send][the faculty lists] and [We send][the faculty][lists]. In the former, *faculty lists* is a compound in which the stress falls on the first word, that is, the first syllable of the word *faculty* carries more prosodic prominence than any other syllable in the compound. In the latter, the

stress is on the word *lists*. Kess and Nishimitsu (1989), however, maintain that it would be putting the cart before the horse to rely wholly on prosodic cues for syntactic function identification, as "word stress and the length of pause between segments" (21) are out of step with sentences displaying deep structure ambiguity. Complying with the principles of "Local Attachment" (p. 18) and "Minimal Attachment" (p. 39) is suggested instead. Minimal attachment is, at its heart, a simplicity preference: incoming material is attached to the phrase marker under construction, using the fewest nodes possible in a tree diagram representation. Thus, "The woman saw the man with the telescope" is first parsed as "[The woman][saw][the man][with the telescope]", not as "[The woman][saw][the man with the telescope]". The sentence is then further checked against pragmatic, semantic or thematic biases. According to local attachment, incoming material "should be incorporated into the clause or phrase currently being processed" (Harley 2014, 296). In "Since Jay always jogs a mile this seems a short distance to him", [a mile] is incorporated into the dependent clause starting with *since*. The reading time would be longer for a "Since Jay always jogs, a mile seems a short distance for him" (296), which is not consistent with the inclusiveness preference. The choice between the two types of syntactic preference (simplicity/ inclusiveness) is arbitrary in different languages.

Referential ambiguity, the fourth type, arises when it is unclear what is being referred to by a particular lexical item. It is based on what is commonly known in semantics as deixis. John Lyons defines deixis as "the location and identification of persons, objects, events, processes and activities being talked about, or referred to, in relation to the spatiotemporal context" (Lyons 1978, 637). Referential ambiguity is essentially based on person deixis, as it occurs when one lexical item has more than one potential referent. Sentences containing third person pronouns used anaphorically or cataphorically are very likely to display referential ambiguity. It is also particularly difficult to appoint reference correctly to third person pronouns, such as *he*, *she*, *they* or *it*. In "My mother wants to have the dog's tail operated on again, and if it doesn't heal this time, she'll have to be put away" (Rozakis 2003, 90), the antecedent of the pronoun *she* is ambiguous. It could refer to both *my mother* and *the dog*, though referring back anaphorically to a possessive noun that functions as a determiner for another noun is downright ungrammatical. Referential ambiguity, thus, is often the result of inattentive, careless use of language. The comic effects it produces are seldom the result of deliberate intentions. When the ambiguity does occur intentionally, the purpose is the exploitation of humorous resources put forward by language to give people the liberty of making endless assumptions as to which referent is meant by the speaker or writer of fiction and non-fiction.

Translation solutions for dealing with ambiguity

A popular claim in the literature – however tricky its accuracy - is that a great translation should not be dealt with on a word-for-word basis. It should be read, instead, like a target-language (henceforth TL) creation. Anyone who has ever tried to translate English wordplay into Romanian will know that this is no easy task. Far from building a thoretical straw man, my suggestion is that, despite the translators' English-language proficiency, cultural references and ambiguous items may well involve them in incessantly occuring explanatory notes and present obvious difficulties which do not fit neatly into any translation strategy. Ambiguity, without question, travels badly, and TL readers rarely react with a laugh.

To shed light on possible strategies for preserving the translational afterlife of *Alice's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (the 1993 edition published by Wordsworth Classics) and assess the way words are grafted into a new linguistic and cultural context that, in its turn, acquires additional meaning, one has to consider Dirk Delabastita's systematic classification of wordplay translation techniques. In *Translating Puns. Possibilities and Retraints*, he lists eight possible methods of rendering source-language (henceforth SL) puns into the TL: (1) the pun-to-pun method (the source-text[3] pun is virtually replaced by a different or similar target-language pun); (2) the pun-to-non-pun method (the pun is converted into a non-punning phrase to save at least one of the intended senses of the wordplay); (3) the pun-to-related-rhetorical device method (the pun is rendered by some wordplay-related rhetorical device such as repetition, alliteration, rhyme, irony and poetic metaphor); (4) the pun-to-zero-pun method (the pun is omitted altogether); (5) the pun ST = pun TT method (the translator reproduces the ST pun without actually translating it); (6) the non-pun-to-pun method (a pun is placed in a spot where the original text has no ambivalent item to make up for ambiguities and shades of meaning lost elsewhere); (7) the zero-to-pun method (new potentially ambiguous material is added to the TT, again, as a compensatory device); and, finally, (8) editorial techniques (which involve adding explanatory footnotes or endnotes to the main text) (1997, 149) .

The subsequent sections strive to demonstrate that wordplay has been marginalized and sometimes disqualified in language studies, specialists of language too often hovering or oscillating between deeming it purposeless or worthy of serious investigation. It has been stored away in categories such as poetic licence, speech pathology and the like. To shed light on the relative obscurity of a text is, according to Kathleen Davis, to attach "a signature" (1997, 39) to a

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[3] Henceforth, source-text (original version) will be abbreviated as ST, while target-text (translated version) will be abbreviated as TT.

particular language. Dealing with ambiguity in translation makes possible the encounter between two languages that challenge and confirm each other's identity. Wordplay and ambiguity, however, function as signature only when they are read with another language in mind. Only "a counter signature" attests the identity of the "original signature" (1997, 40). Languages cannot replicate one another to reproduce semantic, phonetic, formal and contextual aspects of the source; otherwise, there would be only one signature. Thus, the original text functions as a creditor to the target text (the debtor). The translator's leeway is very much restricted by the fluid, plural and associative character of lexical items. It is technically impossible to pin down and control multiple meanings when grappling with ambiguity as a translator downright hostile to polysemiotic cocktails. Many words that easily jump word class boundaries will fiercely spring to the eye or ear, not leaving a shadow of doubt as to their textual pertinence or intentional nature. Others will prove to be thorny issues for translators, as in the case of Carroll's wordplay, which can easily become a form of punishment (pun intended).

Textual challenges in the translation of Carroll's *Wonderland*

According to David Crystal in his *Carrolludicity*, Carroll's language play is his contribution to "the ludic function of language" (1998, 1). Bending and breaking the rules for humoristic purposes operates at all the levels of language in Carroll's fiction. The narrative framework of Carroll's *Wonderland* is centered upon a very smart and well-mannered child who repeatedly asks questions and is sore about the retorts coming from birds, animals, flowers, fabulous creatures, animate playing-cards and animate chess-pieces undergoing magical transformations of size and shape – the recipe is ready-made for a narrative of comic adventures. Yet the book is far from being merely a novel of comic adventures written exclusively for children. Side by side with the persistent claim of a children's book, a certain adult interest in Carroll has led to an increasing tendency to take the author very seriously, to demand more accurate and refined translations. The paradox, according to Peter Rickard, is that "[the author] is untranslatable", yet "everywhere he has been translated" (1975, 45). Thus, getting lost in the brilliance of imperfect transpositions can prove efficient for translators who become linguistically aware of subtle semantic features in their own language, unfamiliar to them until faced with the intricacies of intercultural communication.

It is obvious that there will be problems at every page when trying to render Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* into Romanian. Many of the problems have little to do with the author's whimsical use of language phenomena, concerning purely routine difficulties which would arise in any translational situation. English, in its striking peculiarity, allows Carroll to employ a rich load

of verbal wit and humorously exploit grammatical categories with their fuzzy edges and contextual shifts via lexical, morphological and semantic processes . This is why the most difficult part of translating Carroll is his wordplay. The translators will be lucky enough if they manage to preserve even a shadow of it, let alone the substance of ambiguity as a linguistic device. I will just mention at this point some commonplace difficulties that are likey to occur in any translation from English into Romanian, because this is not the place to rehearse the essential differences between the two language systems.

One such difficulty lies in the incongruity between English and Romanian insofar as the use of the 2nd person personal pronoun is concerned. In Modern English, the form of address "you" is universal in addressing either a single person or more people. Romanian uses, for this purpose, "tu" and "voi". In addition, Romanian also uses the more polite "dumneata" for the singular and "dumneavoastră" for both singular and plural due to a fragile web of social conventions. The translator has to decide, for example, how Alice, a child, is supposed to address the other characters in the book when she meets them. The use of singular personal pronouns as plural is driven by social purposes that decide the dichotomy between inferior versus superior, acquaintance versus stranger. In English, the Subject position must, in most cases[4], be filled by a formal constituent, be it a phrase or an entire clause, while in Romanian, the Subject is very often ommitted. Verb inflectional endings, however, show the difference between familiar and polite address, therefore the translator is faced with the task of deciding which form of address should be used by the characters.

The difference in assigning gender in the two languages creates a further difficulty. While English has no grammatical gender in the strict sense of the word, the compulsory and inescapable gender of Romanian nouns may generate translation problems when animals are endowed with [+human] semantic features. Likewise, English nouns and adjectives are not inflected for gender. Romanian, in contrast, as a highly analytical language, distinguishes between masculine, feminine and neuter gender. One has to take into account the case of the Caterpillar, who smokes a hookah and talks to Alice like a masculine don. The masculine attributes Carroll assigned to the Caterpillar stand in stark contrast to the Romanian *omidă*, which is a feminine noun. The Romanian translators of *Alice* have to resort to skillful contrivances to preserve the gender qualifications of Carroll's Caterpillar, referring to it as *domnul Omidă*.

Another comparatively minor translation hurdle is brought about by prescriptively bad grammar or non-standard language use. For example, the Griphon specializes in the double negative: "(…) they never executes nobody,

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4 Nominal clauses patterning with a non-finite verb are much more condensed, for instance, usually occurring without an expressed subject. The reader must, therefore, recover left-out information by attending to other syntactic cues. Imperatives also occur without a subject.

you know" and "he hasn't got no sorrow, you know". Although a single semantic negation may be expressed by two negative grammatical elements in Romanian, Frida Papadache has chosen to ignore the Griphon's second remark: "nu-i mâhnită defel, dacă vrei să știi" (1976, 108), but she managed to maintain the first one: "de executat nu se execută nici o execuție, dacă vrei să știi" (108). By way of contrast, Antoaneta Ralian gives proper credit to both of them, and the translation goes: "[n]imeni nu e executat niciodată, știi?" and "nu are nici o suferință" (2007, 78).

Dreams, nightmares and awakenings are also transposable – there is surely much of it that can be translated into Romanian. Likewise, Romanian fairy-tales contain magical transformations and talking animals. The conflicting dialogues (a series of communication-attempts which more often than not fail to deliver their intended sense) and the characters themselves can also prove difficult to translate, in that they are essentially Carrollian features. The personification of cards and chess-pieces can also be rendered into Romanian. However, in transposing the characters into the Romanian context, unavoidable semantic loss occurs.

Lexical ambiguity

A type of ambiguity which is possible only in a speech context is that produced by homophones, words that sound the same but share a distinct form. Such items tend to deceive one's ear, but not one's eye, for they have different forms when represented in writing. In *Wonderland*, one can observe Carroll's use of homophonic ambiguity particularly well in several examples of admirable resourcefulness. One such example occurs when the Mouse is about to deliver to the public his personal history.

> "'Mine is a long and a sad tale!' said the Mouse, turning to Alice, and sighing.
> 'It *is* a long tail, certainly,' said Alice, looking down with wonder at the
> Mouse's tail; 'but why do you call it sad?'" (36)

The fragment faces translators with a pun based on the perfect homophony of the nouns *tale* and *tail*. Despite the fact that both English and Romanian are extremely rich in homophones and punning, it is most often improbable for a pun to coincide in two linguistic contexts in terms of morphology, syntax and semantics taken together. This instance of ambiguity is inevitably more difficult to render in the TL. The Mouse's preamble is indicated typographycally and memorably in the source-text in the shape of an ever diminishing tail, which humorously exploits graphology to produce amusing effects. Translators resort to different solutions in order to preserve the lexical ambiguity found in the

original at least partially. Translator A went for a non-punning translation that saved both senses of the wordplay:

> „- Mi-ați făgăduit că îmi spuneți povestea dumneavoastră [...]
> - E lungă și e tristă! Zise Șoarecele, încolăcindu-și coada spre Alisa și oftînd.
> - Lungă e într-adevăr – zise Alisa, măsurînd din ochi, cu mirare, coada Șoarecelui – dar de ce spuneți că e tristă?" (p.40)

The translator failed to preserve the original play on words into Romanian, but she managed, instead, to add explanatory information to the semantic load of the original passage, cleverly bridging the gap between *tale* (*poveste*) and *tail* (*coadă*). A back-translation[5] of the Romanian version reads: "It is long and sad! Said the Mouse, curling his tail towards Alice and sighing." She used Delabastita's second solution, that of rendering a pun by a non-punning translation that saved both senses of the wordplay.

Conversely, Translator B concocted a more daring reworking. Certainly, there was some loss of point, notably over *sad*, but there was much ingenuity for such a difficult passage:

> "- Povestea mea e lungă și tristă ca o corvoadă, a oftat Șoarecele.
> - E lungă ca o coadă, a răspuns Alice, privind cu uimire la coada Șoarecelui, dar de ce spui că e tristă?" (p.28)

The second translator also added some extra-text in the form of a simile, *ca o corvoadă* (*like a burden*), purposefully creating a similar ambiguous effect in the TL. Such a stylistic device provided freshness and emphasized the original intended meaning, reverberating Delabastita's third strategy (replacing the pun with some wordplay-related rhetorical device). Actually, Translator B managed to come up with two parallel structures based on rhyming similes, thus establishing a smooth and whimsical path between *poveste* and *coadă*.

It was difficult enough for Alice to understand the Mouse's words, but Carroll went on to say that it was because Alice was looking at the Mouse's tail and thinking about it that the Mouse's story itself seemed to pursue the bends and curves of his tail. Puzzled by the Mouse's calling his tail *sad*, Alice misunderstands the word *tale*, and it affects her view of his story: as he proceeds, he visualizes his tale as a winding story displayed in a tail-like fashion. Looked under the magnifying glass of humorous wordplay, neither translation is tenable, though both are equally necessary.

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[5] It is a procedure mainly used in the context of machine translation. Back-translation or literal retranslation is analogous to a reversed mathematical operation: a translated text is retranslated back into the ST to test its veracity.

In *The Lobster-Quadrille,* lexical ambiguity is triggered by the homophony between *porpoise* and *purpose.* The target text (TT) pun can replace the contrasting meanings of the ST by substituting new words belonging to distinct semantic fields. Translator B, thus, replaces the pun on *porpoises* to come up with another one on *delfini* (*dolphins*), using Delabastita's pun-to-target-laguage-pun method:

> " 'Of course not,' said the Mock Turtle: 'why, if a fish came to me, and told me he was going on a journey, I should say "With what porpoise?"'
> 'Don't you mean "purpose"?' said Alice." (102)

Translator A, however, chooses to render a solution whereby TT meanings belong to completely different semantic fields:

> "-Păi cum! Zise Falsa Broască Țestoasă. Dacă ar veni la mine un pește și mi-ar spune că pleacă în călătorie, întîi și întîi l-aș întreba: "Cu ce purcel?"
> -Poate vrei să zici: cu ce țel? stărui Alisa." (119)

Translator A turns to rhyme, while Translator B replicates the pun in the source text (ST) via a TT pun, providing *delfin* for *porpoise* (although the latter means *specie de mamifer cetaceu, asemănător cu delfinul*) and inserting, concomitently, its paronym, namely *destin* (*destiny*). The effect created by this pun – similar to the one generated by the ST – is a delight, showing real imagination and invention.

Categorial ambiguity

After the tail-shaped poem episode, the conversation between Alice and the Mouse brings forth another homophonic pun. After a moment, the Mouse snaps off precipitatingly while accusing Alice of being cloth-eared. To mollify him, she says:

> "'I beg your pardon,' said Alice very humbly: 'you had got to the fifth bend, I think?'
> 'I had *not*!' cried the Mouse, sharply and very angrily.
> 'A knot!' said Alice, always ready to make herself useful, and looking anxiously about her.
> 'Oh, do let me help to undo it!'" (37)

Alice's misunderstanding does not become apparent to the Mouse; as far as he can tell, she is on the receiving end of the message. Carroll treats the matter jestingly, even if it dwells on a communication failure running its course without either party ever becoming consciously aware of the misinterpretation.

Tempers flare and, subsequently, communication breaks down completely: from his point of view, Alice is uttering pure nonsense when she says 'let me help to undo it!'. This time, the homophonic pun is based on the categorial ambiguity of the common noun *knot* and the negative particle *not*. Homophony once again takes advantage of Alice's deceiving ear.

Translator A brings forth a very crafty strategy to preserve the pun into Romanian, giving the Romanian Alice her chance:

> "-Iertați-mă, răspunse Alisa foarte smerită. Ați ajuns la al cincilea cot, nu-i așa?
> -Ce cot! țipă Șoarecele mînios. Dacă n-asculți! Iar s-o-nnod?
> -Un nod? zise Alisa, privind îngrijorată spre codița Șoarecelui. Și cum era ea totdeauna gata să sară în ajutor, adăugă: Să vă ajut să-l deznodați; vă rog, arătați-mi unde e!" (42)

By adding some extra-text, the translator does depart a little from the ST, but the outcome reveals that she managed to create the same homophonic pun as the one in the original (the rare pun S.T= pun T.T. strategy), by creatively playing on the homophony of the contracted form of the verb *a înnoda* (*to knot*) and the noun *nod* (*knot*). By way of contrast, translator B's version lends itself to a less fortunate flash of inspiration:

> "-Te rog să mă scuzi, a răspuns Alice, umilă. Coada ți-a ajuns la cea de-a cincea buclă, nu-i așa?
> -Fals! a strigat Șoarecele cu asprime și mânie. Mi se pune un nod în gât.
> -Un nod! A sărit Alice, care era întotdeauna gata să-i ajute pe ceilalți. O, lasă-mă pe mine să ți-l dezleg." (30)

Translator B adopts the same solution – adding extra-text to the Romanian version to create a homophonic pun on the noun *nod* (*knot*) – in using a Romanian idiom (*a apărea / a ți se pune un nod în gât*) that bears little semantic association to the context of the ST (thus, using a pun-to-target-language-pun). Her version, in a literal transposition, would become 'Wrong! shouted the Mouse angrily and harshly. I have a lump in my throat.' As a result, translator A took a shortcut to the Romanian play on words.

The Mock Turtle's Story chapter is certainly the richest in ambiguity and unquestionably among the most challenging the translators. The repetition of the same word with a shift of meaning suddenly changes the semantic flow of the sentence:

> "'Of course it is', said the Duchess, who seemed ready to agree to everything that Alice said; 'there's a large mustard-mine near here. And the moral of that is – "The more there is of mine, the less there is of yours."'" (91)

In English, categorial ambiguity involves a word-class shift from noun to pronoun. The Romanian language system, however, provides translators with a similar homophonic double. The noun *mină* (*mine*) is used in the plural. The Romanian translator no longer resorts to any imaginative artifice, given that, fortunately and purely coincidentally, the same pun can be used to good advantage in the two languages (both translators make use of the fifth translation strategy proposed by Delabastita, the pun S.T. = pun T.T.):

A. "Sînt pe-aici, pe-aproape, nişte mine mari de muştar. Şi morala acestui lucru este: 'Cît e mai mult la mine, e mai puţin la tine!'" (103)
B. "... pe-aici, prin apropiere, sunt câteva mari mine de muştar. Şi morala acestui lucru e: cu cât e mai mult la mine, cu atât e mai puţin la tine." (75)

The next instance of ambiguity is based on mere soundplay:

"'The master was an old Turtle – we used to call him Tortoise – '
'Why did you call him Tortoise, if he wasn't one?' asked Alice.
'We called him Tortoise because he taught us.'" (95)

Here, the sound association between *Tortoise* and *taught us* is highly unlikely to be grasped by any non-British reader, namely because it is a play on the typically British pronunciation of *tortoise*, where the [r] sound is silent. Such an example could also be deemed as cultural ambiguity, given its peculiar specificity. Both translator A and Translator B prove surprising sophistication and sensitivity to Carroll's linguistic insights in resourcefully rendering the intended import of the ST, simultaneously using language as a vehicle for play. Translator A's version resembles the source-text, where the fertile inventor of wordplay, Carroll, challenged the play on sounds to produce humorous effects:

"-Profesoara era o bătrînă Broască Ţestoasă. Îi ziceam Privighetoarea.
-Dar de ce îi ziceaţi aşa? Că doar nu era Privighetoare! întrebă Alisa.
-Îi ziceam Privighetoare, fiindcă ne era Supraveghetoare!" (109)

Romanian lacks a different noun that designates the same family of reptiles, thus the translator changes the name of the old Turtle to make it partially homophonous to a name that designates a person in charge of pupils: *privighetoare* (*nightingale*) and *supraveghetoare* (*superintendent*). Translator A cleverly manages to reformulate the initial soundplay to create amusing effects, using the pun-to-target-language-pun strategy. Here, Carroll illustrates the connotative function of names explicitly. Throughout the book, he involves proper names to denote individuals who are called by them. Translator B manages to be just as creative, if not more:

"-Profesorul nostru era un broscoi vârstnic – noi îi spuneam Carapace...
-De ce-i spuneaţi Carapace din moment ce nu avea carapace? a întrebat Alice.

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> -Îi spuneam Carapace pentru că era o carapacitate și ne învăța o mulțime de lucruri..." (79)

As seen above, Translator B calls upon the same family of reptiles, choosing the name *Carapace* (translated as *Shell*) to refer to the old Turtle and using both the pun-to-non-pun method and the non-pun-to-pun one). To compensate for the inherent loss of transferential meaning the *Tortoise* and *taught us* pair entails, Translator B creates a portmanteau word, a blend between *carapace* (*shell*) and *capacitate* (*competence*, *capability*).

Syntactic ambiguity

Syntactic ambiguity delivering humorous effects to readers is not found to a great extent in Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, but there are, of course, some challenging examples which generate clever wordplay and surprising incongruities, as shown in the following passage,:

> "'But they were *in* the well,' Alice said to the Dormouse, not choosing to notice this last remark.
> 'Of course they were,' said the Dormouse; '– well in.'" (77)

The word *well* is in the first occurrence a noun and in the second an adverb. The syntactic function of the first is Object of the preposition "in", while the syntactic function of the second is that of an Adverbial. Both have a syntactic function: the first (realized by a preposition) at phrase level , the second (realized by a prepositional adverb) at clause level. The meaning corresponding to the first utterance is *deep into the well*, while that corresponding to the second is *very deep inside*.

Translator A creatively substitutes the wordplay with a paronymic pair, to compensate for the impossibility to create another syntactic ambiguity with the help of the same lexical item. The quintessential feature of the paronymic pair is the sound-play that the two structures produce (the pun-to-target-language-pun method):

> "-Da' n-ai spus că erau înăuntru, în fîntînă?
> [...]
> -Am spus că erau în fîntîna de *melasă* – și, către ceilalți: Vedeți, nu mă *lasă*!"
> (87)

Translator B, on the other hand, provides an explanatory translation, offering redundant information (*interior-interiorizate*) that may sound a little forced (the pun-to-non-pun method):

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"-Dar ele erau înăuntru, *în* fântână, a observat Alice, fără să țină seama de ultima remarcă a Hârciogului.
-Bineînțeles că erau în interior – interiorizate." (64)

Referential ambiguity

One comes across an interesting instance of referential ambiguity in *Wonderland* when the Mouse is reciting his history (the *driest* thing he knows) to dry out the group of animals after they swim in the pool of tears:

"'I proceed. "Edwin and Morcar, the earls of Mercia and Northumbria, declared for him: and even Stigand, the patriotic archbishop of Canterbury, found it advisable—"'
'Found *what*?' said the Duck.
'Found *it*,' the Mouse replied rather crossly: 'of course you know what "it" means.'
'I know what "it" means well enough, when *I* find a thing,' said the Duck: 'it's generally a frog or a worm. The question is, what did the archbishop find?'" (p.32)

Normally, in such dialogues, the two actors involved comprehend one another. These linguistic mechanisms (lexical, categorial, syntactic and so on), in fact, lead the exchanges to the lack of communication. The dummy pronoun *it* is merely a formal element needed to produce a grammatical sentence in a Subject-Verbal-Direct Object-Object Complement structural pattern. The Duck fails to notice that *found it advisable* is simply the elliptical form of *found* and its object, the relative clause *[that] it [was] advisable*. As a result, he mistakenly considers *it* in its referential sense (as referring to some object left unspecified) and demands that he discover its intended meaning. *It* may be interpreted as referring cataphorically to the non-finite clause *to go with Edgar Atheling*, but it can also be interpreted as an anaphoric pronoun, referring back to the antecedent *declared for him*. The double valence (anaphoric and cataphoric) of the pronoun *it* makes the passage one of the most resourceful examples of equivocal meaning in the entire book. The Mouse knows exactly that *it* is a pronoun referring to the non-finite phrase *to go with Edgar Atheling* functioning as extraposed object. The informational motivation for the pronoun *it* anticipating a full-fledged verb phrase functioning as notional object is end-weight: a quite long and complex string of words (*to go with Edgar Atheling*) is placed in a sentence-final position to make the overall construction easier to process, with sentence elements placed in the order given to new. In fact, it is common practice to move focal constituents (subjects, objects) towards the end of sentences.

One must not forget that the *Alice* books are governed by initiation into idiosyncratic grammatical rules and linguistic processes manipulated by the creatures living in Wonderland which no translator could create from scratch. It is no wonder, then, that the Mouse acts as if the Duck knew what he was about to say, although the phrase had not been uttered yet. The ambiguity of *it* provides Carroll's readers with one of the most enchanting samples of nonsense in *Wonderland*. In fact, in Carroll's *Wonderland*, pronouns acquire a ludic function and become invested with many roles established by grammatical categories such as gender, number and case. Carroll, consciously aware of this property of pronouns to be equivocal, enables one clause variant to be selected over another.

Difficulties arise when translators do their utmost to assert the ambivalent nature of pronouns in Romanian, which is not cut out for exploiting such linguistic features. Nonetheless, both translators resort to creative solutions to render Carroll's point, instead of abandoning the referential ambiguity altogether.

> A. Edwin şi Morcar, conţii provinciilor Mercia şi Normandia, se declarară de partea lui; patriotul arhiepiscop de Cantebury găsi de cuviinţă…"
>
> - *Ce* zici că găsi?" întrerupse Raţa.
> - Găsi de cuviinţă – răspunse Şoarecele cam supărat. Doar ştiţi cu toţii ce înseamnă 'a găsi de cuviinţă'.
> - Eu ştiu ce înseamnă a g*ăsi*. Cînd găsesc *eu* ceva – zise Raţa – înseamnă de obicei o broască sau o rîmă. Da, e vorba, arhiepiscopul ce-a găsit? (36)
>
> B. - […] Edwin şi Morcar, conţii de Mercia şi Northumberland, s-au declarat de partea lui, până şi Stigand, patriotul Arhiepiscop de Cantebury, a găsit de cuviinţă…
> - *Ce* a găsit? a întrebat raţa.
> - A găsit, a repezit-o Şoarecele enervat, fără îndoială, cunoşti acest cuvânt. Ştiu foarte bine ce înseamnă când găsesc *eu* ceva, a replicat raţa; în general găsesc o broscuţă sau o râmă. Întrebarea este, însă, ce a găsit Arhiepiscopul? (26)

The translation strategy they adopt is based on the substitution of the original pun (derived from the referential ambiguity of the pronoun *it*) by an idiomatic pun-to-target-language-pun constructiom, playing with a two-fold reading of the verb *a găsi* (*to find*): the idiomatic interpretation, as part of the phrase *a găsi de cuviinţă* (*to think it right or fit*), but also the literal interpretation of *find*. The Romanian versions seem to have felicitously duplicated the ludic dimension of the rules governing regular conversational discourse. The passage extracted is a perfect illustration of pragmatic play (one of the levels encompassed by Carroll's language play) which goes beyond the charm of classical word games.

Conclusions

The analysis of the two Romanian versions of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* shows that the translation of ambiguous lexical items is not impossible. Every language has a high degree of idiomacy that is only accessible to recognition. One should not lose sight, however, of the valuable role that ambiguity has in stimulating the ludic function of any language (other than English). Dealing with such a slippery phenomenon makes possible the encounter between English and Romanian, two languages that must constantly confirm each other's identity. The English user embarking on the translation of wordplay from English into Romanian must, therefore, possess an active and wide-ranging mind, as well as extraordinary skill and knowledge of both languages in order to puzzle Romanian readers of *Alice* with intratextual linguistic games exploiting the potential of Romanian phonology, grammar and lexis as a basis for humor.

I have tried to select, from the numerous Carrollian deviations from standard usage, the most relevant examples of linguistic ambiguity which Frida Papadache, in *Peripețiile Alisei în Țara Minunilor* (1976), and Antoaneta Ralian, in *Alice în Țara Minunilor* (2007), either tackled (to hold fast to the humor, unexpected meanings and paradoxical wisdom of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*) or evaded altogether. The global conclusion I could draw after having reviewed the two translated versions is that both can be described metaphorically by the image of the Romanian reader, who settles – albeit not deliberately – for a piece of the "cake" rather than for the whole one. No other full-scale translated version of *Alice*, however, has managed to transpose analogous phonological, grammatical and lexical wordplay games into the target language, since preserving the delicious charm of Carroll's linguistically-derived ambiguity whole is virtually impossible. Some, however, have managed to capture the spirit of the English original.

More concretely, I have confirmed my hypothesis that ambiguity derived from homophony is a translation challenge even for experienced translators. Even skillful ones fail to attain the same effect in the target-language. Most of the examples I have analyzed in my paper can be considered untranslatable (defined as not capable of being put into another form, style or language) but, as I have shown, seasoned translators do find appropriate solutions that at least achieve an effective foreignization of wordplay in the target-text in order to cut across linguistic and cultural differences.

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"ISCREVU ESTA CARTA SO PARA BOSEMESE SABER": A DEIXIS SOCIAL EM CARTAS ROMENAS E PORTUGUESAS DA GRANDE GUERRA

Veronica MANOLE[1]

ABSTRACT. *"I am writing this letter only for you to know": Social Deixis in Romanian and Portuguese Letters from the Great War.* This paper analyses the use of address forms in letters from World War I written by Romanian and Portuguese soldiers, with the objective of comparing the discursive configuration of the interlocutive distance (Carreira 1997) in the two languages. The analysis, based on online and printed corpus reveals systematic similarities between the two languages concerning nominal address forms: the frequent use of intensity markers (possessives, qualificative adjectives, vocatives, diminutives) to express affection towards the recipients. There are differences concerning the use of pronominal address forms. Parent-son relationships are asymmetrically constructed in both cultures, which is reflected by the use of intermediary pronouns *você* and *dumneata*, but in husband-wife correspondence only the pronoun *tu* is used in Portuguese, while in Romanian letters both *tu* and *dumneata* appear. In the correspondence between friends and colleagues there are some differences: the pronoun *tu* is used exclusively in Portuguese, while in Romanian there is an alternation between *tu* and *dumneata.* Overall, this study shows that interlocutive distance was higher in Romanian than in Portuguese at the beginning of the 20th century.

Keywords: Portuguese Address Forms; Romanian Address Forms; Epistolary Writing; War Letters; World War I

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REZUMAT. *"Scriu scrisoarea aceasta numai ca să ştii": deixisul social în scrisori româneşti şi portugheze din Marele Război.* Articolul analizează folosirea formelor de adresare în scrisori din Primul Război Mondial redactate de soldaţi români şi portughezi, cu scopul de a compara configurarea discursivă a distanţei interlocutive (Carreira 1997) în cele două limbi. Analiza bazată pe corpusuri online şi tipărite arată asemănări sistematice între cele două limbi în ce priveşte formele nominale de adresare: folosirea frecventă a mărcilor de intensitate (posesive, adjective calificative, forme vocative, diminutive) pentru exprimarea afecţiunii faţă de destinatari. Sunt însă diferenţe în folosirea formelor pronominale de adresare. Relaţiile dintre părinţi şi fii sunt construite asimetric în ambele culturi, ceea ce se reflectă în folosirea pronumelor intermediare *você* şi *dumneata.* Însă în corespondenţa dintre soţi, este folosit doar pronumele *tu* în portugheză, în timp ce în română se folosesc pronumele *tu* şi *dumneata.* În corespondenţa dintre prieteni sau colegi sunt diferenţe: doar pronumele *tu* este folosit în portugheză, în timp ce în română este o alternanţă între *tu* şi *dumneata.* Ca o concluzie generală, acest studiu arată că distanţa interlocutivă era mai mare în română decât în portugheză la începulul secolulul XX.

Cuvinte-cheie*: forme de adresare în portugheză; forme de adresare în română, scriere epistolară; scrisori de război; Primul Război Mondial*

Introdução

"A guerra para acabar com todas as guerras" começou no verão de 1914 com uma onda de otimismo e entusiasmo. Reis, imperadores, altas patentes militares e soldados dos grandes impérios europeus estavam convictos de que a guerra iria acabar até ao Natal, cada parte apostando na derrota fácil e rápida do adversário. Porém, apesar do entusiasmo quase geral, a Grande Guerra não acabou com todas as guerras. Até esteve na origem de uma segunda conflagração mundial, duas décadas mais tarde, mostrando o enorme e monstruoso potencial mortífero do ser humano. Com o advento das inovações tecnológicas[2], a Grande Guerra terminou com números arrepiantes de vítimas: cerca de 20 milhões de mortes (soldados e civis) e mais 20 milhões de feridos, "gueules cassées"[3] por toda a Europa, vítimas das demoradas batalhas nas trincheiras. Portugal viveu nesta guerra o seu segundo Alcácer Quibir.[4] A Roménia, apesar das inúmeras vítimas, saiu vencedora e conseguiu duplicar o seu teritório.[5]

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[2] A Primeira Guerra Mundual foi um conflito bélico que começou a cavalo e acabou de avião; o gás foi usado pela primeira vez para matar milhares de pessoas de uma só vez.

[3] Foi assim que o coronel francês Yves-Emile Picot designou os soldados e os veteranos da Primeira Guerra Mundial com os rostos permanentemente desfigurados.

[4] Trata-se da batalha de Lys, em que cerca de 7000 portugueses perderam a vida.

[5] Em 1918, a Transilvânia e a Bucovina (antigas províncias do império austro-húngaro) e a Besserábia (que entre 1812 e 1918 tinha sido anexada pelo Império Tzarista), juntaram-se ao Reino Romeno.

Esses são factos que podem ser encontrados habitualmente em manuais de História e em tratados especializados. Porém, essas obras contam uma história porventura incompleta, que nem sempre inclui as experiências dos milhões de seres humanos que viveram nas trincheiras, amaram, sofreram, perderam amigos e familiares, morreram e viram os outros morrer e que, em casos felizes, sobreviveram e voltaram para casa no fim da guerra. A correspondência e os jornais dos combatentes podem preencher esta lacuna e mostram como foi viver a Grande Guerra enquanto simples combatente.

As cartas que os soldados mandaram para as suas famílias, namoradas, amigos, etc. descrevem a vida quotidiana nas trincheiras, para além das estatísticas oficiais, dos nomes de generais, dos imperadores e das estratégias geopolíticas. Ao lermos cartas escritas por combatentes na Primeira Guerra Mundial, podemos descobrir não só a escabrosidade e a miséria das trincheiras, a convivência com o absurdo e a arbitrariedade da morte, mas também a expressão da delicadeza humana nas suas manifestações mais comoventes. Nesses textos encontramos palavras de amor, de amizade, de solidariedade entre camaradas presos em campos de concentração, palavras que pretendem animar os familiares que estão longe, palavras que expressam esperança e empatia.

Aliás, foi uma dupla razão que nos levou a analisar cartas da Grande Guerra para este trabalho. A primeira foi uma curiosidade intelectual e humana de tentar descobrir como é que a guerra foi vivida, contada e escrita por combatentes anónimos que não aparecem nos livros de História, mas que, de facto, fizeram a história. E, num segundo momento, foi a curiosidade de linguista que nos levou a analisar como a língua era usada em contextos autênticos – mais concretamente as formas de tratamento (doravante FT) – para construir a dinâmica de relações sociais entre os combatentes e os seus destinatários, em circunstâncias históricas tão complicadas.

Historiadores, sociólogos e linguistas já se debruçaram sobre este tipo de correspondência ao longo do tempo. Mencionamos apenas alguns dos títulos que nos chamaram a atenção e aos quais tivemos acesso. Housiel (2014) faz uma análise muito detalhada de cartas de combatentes franceses, baseada num *corpus* muito abrangente, de quase oito mil cartas, ao passo que Roynette (2010) e Roynette *et alii* (2017) se questionam sobre a relação entre a oralidade e a escrita nas cartas de soldados franceses e sobre o uso das mesmas na análise de sociolinguística histórica. Lyons (2003) debruça-se sobre as "práticas da escrita" dos soldados franceses.

Florian (2018) escreve um breve "elogio dos nomes desconhecidos" do exército romeno no prefácio do livro *Scrisori de pe front*. Faur (2018) questiona-se sobre os valores éticos e morais da correspondência dos soldados romenos da Grande Guerra, Bichicean & Mardale (2020) fazem uma contextualização muito

pormenorizada de postais que passaram pelo crivo da censura, Pop (2018) analisa um conjunto de trinta cartas inéditas, enviadas pelo soldado Iacob Matei à sua família. Babeu (2014) e Albert (2014) analisam cartas inéditas de soldados oriundos da região Banat. O volume *Viaţa pe front în scrieri personale*, organizado por Negru (2019) contém uma série de textos epistolares escritos por soldados romenos.

Quanto à correspondência enviada pelos soldados do Corpo Expedicionário Português (C.E.P), mencionamos os volumes de Marques (2016), onde se pode encontrar um subcapítulo sobre as cartas dos soldados, e de Oliveira (2017), que contém correspondência censurada. Meneses (2000) analisa a correspondência do C.E.P. censurada pelo temível Serviço de Censura Postal, Rodrigues (2015) debruça-se sobre o bilhete postal, ao passo que Moura (2013) redigiu um breve texto sobre as "madrinhas de guerra".[6]

Na secção seguinte faremos uma descrição dos corpora analisados, de forma a identificar tanto as suas caraterísticas, como as possíveis limitações da análise que propomos.

2. *Corpus*

Neste artigo analisamos um *corpus* de 76 cartas portuguesas escritas por expedicionários do C.E.P., transcritas no âmbito do projeto *FLY Cartas esquecidas – Forgotten Letters (1900-1974)*, coordenado por Rita Marquilhas, e disponíveis em linha.[7] O *corpus* romeno contém 49 cartas, publicadas no volume *Scrisori de pe front (Cartas da frente)*, organizado pela investigadora Mirela Florian e publicado pela editora Martor de Bucareste.

Em ambos os *corpora* as cartas têm caraterísticas bastante diversas. Em primeiro lugar, há diferenças consideráveis no que diz respeito às dimensões. Em ambos os *corpora* há postais, com textos bastante reduzidos, e cartas mais longas que podem chegar até seis ou sete páginas. A maioria das cartas tem autores masculinos, que escrevem para destinatários variados: familiares mais próximos (pais, irmãos, esposas, filhos, primos, sogros, cunhados), amigos (soldados que estão presos ou que lutam em outras frentes da guerra), namoradas e vizinhos.

Do ponto de vista discursivo-textual, usando a classificação proposta por Adam (2017), identificámos várias tipologias[8]. Algumas das cartas têm

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[6] As madrinhas da guerra eram mulheres que correspondiam com soldados durante a Grande Guerra, para os apoiar moralmente. Em Portugal, as madrinhas da guerra foram criadas pela associação "Assistência das Portuguesas às Vítimas da Guerra".

[7] http://fly.clul.ul.pt/index.php?page=showLetterGM

[8] Marques (2016: 243) identifica as seguintes categorias de conteúdos nas cartas que analisa: as referências ao quotidiano da guerra, a formulação de pedidos, a prestação de informações, a manifestação de queixas, a expressão do amor.

uma dimensão narrativa predominante, em que os remetentes contam vários acontecimentos das trincheiras; outras são mais descritivas e contêm descrições de paisagens, hábitos e costumes dos países em que se encontra o autor da carta; há também cartas explicativas, em que os remetentes dão instruções sobre questões burocráticas ou domésticas (os procedimentos administrativos necessários para a família solicitar o apoio do Estado; como trabalhar a terra, etc.). Por fim, há cartas maioritariamente argumentativas, em que os soldados tentam justificar as razões pelas quais pedem dinheiro à família, não conseguem obter licença para visitar os familiares, etc.

No corpus romeno encontrámos cartas em versos, que lembram a tradição folclórica.[9] Salientamos também que há cartas com vários destinatários (sobretudo membros da mesma família), em que os soldados aproveitavam para redigir um texto mais complexo, cada parágrafo tendo um destinatário específico. De modo geral, podemos dizer que a família é o destinatário privilegiado nas cartas da guerra, seguindo-se os amigos, as namoradas e as madrinhas da guerra.

Algumas das cartas são ditadas a escrevedores profissionais, pois uma parte significativa dos soldados romenos e portugueses era analfabeta. Segundo Marques (2016: 242), "a grande falta de instrução, no seio do C.E.P., constituiu um significativo obstáculo à prática da leitura e da escrita em campanha".

> Armata română era formată mai ales din ţărani, adică oameni care, în marea lor majoritate, fie abia ştiau să se iscălească şi să descifreze câteva litere, fie erau complet neştiutori de carte. (Florian 2018: 21)
> [O exército romeno era formado sobretudo de camponeses que, na sua grande maioria, mal sabia fazer uma rubrica ou decifrar algumas letras ou era completamente analfabeta. *Nossa tradução*]

Sobretudo no corpus romeno são bastante frequentes as cartas com destinatários múltiplos (pais, irmã, mulher, vizinhos e/ou amigos), que viviam na mesma localidade, o que mostra como estava organizada a vida social na Roménia no início do século 20. A família era bastante numerosa, os seus membros viviam perto uns dos outros ou na mesma casa e as relações mais próximas eram construídas com os vizinhos.

Um tema comum em ambos os *corpora* é a censura postal, que limitava a liberdade de expressão dos soldados e que por vezes até destruía as cartas:

> não posso mandarte dijer nada daqui devido à çençura// não me asino porque pode apreender a carta i é um pirgo por isso já sabes que é minha por a letra teu homem (FLY2079)

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[9] Ver também Cepraga (2020), que trata a edição filológica de cartas versificadas escritas por soldados romenos durante a Grande Guerra.

No caso do corpus português optou-se por uma "Transcrição quasi paleográfica, normalizando-se apenas a fronteira de palavra e suprimindo se os sinais de mudança de linha para facilitar operações de busca automática." (http://fly.clul.ul.pt/index.php?page=normas). Quanto ao *corpus* romeno, Mirela Florian (2018: 24), a organizadora do volume *Scrisori de pe front* que transcreveu as cartas, afirma:

> Am optat pentru a face cunoscute forme vechi de scriere, stadii diferite de trecere de la oralitate la limba literară şi de însuşire a scrierii, cu aparente greşeli sau ceea ce ni se pare nouă greşeli astăzi, tocmai pentru a respecta statutul lor de mărturii, pentru farmecul şi personalitatea imprimate de fiecare dată de autorii lor, pentru a releva formele limbii române în funcţie de regiuni şi de educaţie în acea epocă.
>
> [Optei por dar a conhecer formas antigas de escrita, etapas diferentes de passagem da oralidade à língua literária e da aquisição da escrita, com erros aparentes ou que nós consideramos erros hoje em dia, justamente para respeitar o seu estatuto de testemunho, para mostrar o charme e a personalidade expressas cada vez pelos autores, para desvendar as formas da língua romena em função das regiões e do nível da educação na época. *Nossa tradução*]

Aliás, destacamos o facto de que a grafia dos exemplos analisados neste trabalho é a utilizada pelos organizadores dos dois *corpora*.

Antes da análise dos exemplos identificados nos dois *corpora* epistolares, fazemos na secção seguinte uma sucinta apresentação dos sistemas de tratamento em romeno e em português europeu e uma descrição do quadro teórico que nos permite analisar a configuração da deixis social neste *corpus* de textos epistolares.

3. Quadro teórico

Enquanto mecanismos linguísticos de expressão da deixis social (Levinson 1983: 89-94), as formas de tratamento ocupam um lugar privilegiado nas análises linguísticas, sobretudo nas de índole pragmática, sociolinguística ou discursiva. As abordagens constrastivas, como é o caso deste trabalho, conseguem desvendar mecanismos de construção de si e sobretudo do(s) outro(s) em culturas e em línguas diferentes. No que diz respeito ao romeno e ao português europeu, a abordagem comparativa sincrónica tem revelado tanto convergências, mas também divergências (Manole 2012). As análises diacrónicas têm sido escassas (Merlan 2011), ficando ainda por explorar as circunstâncias nas quais dois dos sistemas de tratamento mais complexos das línguas românicas, nomeadamente o do português europeu e o do romeno, têm evoluído ao longo dos séculos.

Uma classificação morfológica das FT, proposta por Cintra (1972/1986) para o português europeu, revela que nesta língua existem formas *pronominais*, *nominais* e *verbais*. A classificação pragmático-discursiva, proposta por Carreira (1997) também para o português europeu, distingue entre as FT *elocutivas*, para a designação de si, *alocutivas*, para a designação do interlocutor ou dos interlocutores, e *delocutivas*, para a designação de terceiros.

Aplicando as duas classificações ao romeno, observamos que as mesmas categorias existem também nesta língua românica (FT nominais, pronominais, verbais; FT elocutivas, alocutivas, delocutivas), havendo diferenças no que diz respeito às FT propriamente ditas. Em português europeu destacam-se os pronomes *tu* e *você*[10] para a comunicação com um interlocutor, ao passo que no romeno existem três pronomes: *tu*, *dumneata* (*dumitale* para genitivo e dativo) e *dumneavoastră.* Para o tratamento dado a dois ou mais interlocutores, o português europeu padrão usa o pronome *vocês*, ao passo que no romeno se usa o pronome *voi.* Em romeno há um inventário bastante rico de pronomes de tratamento delocutivo: *el/ea*, *dânsul/dânsa*, *dumnealui/dumneaei*, *dumneasa* para um terceiro e *ei/ele, dânșii/dânsele*, *dumnealor* para vários terceiros. Em português há formas pronominais delocutivas de tratamento (*ele*, *ela*, *eles*, *elas*).

Quanto ao tratamento nominal, a classificação mais recente da autoria de Nascimento (2020, 2720-2730) propõe oito categorias de formas nominais (FN) para o português europeu: FN de convivência de caráter geral: *senhor(a), senhores(as)*, FN que designam parentesco: *pai*, *mãe*, *avô*, *avó*, etc., FN com nome próprio precedido ou não de artigo, FN que designam profissão, cargo, posto, função ou título, FN de maior formalidade, como *Vossa Excelência*, *Vossa Majestade*, *Vossa Alteza*, *Magnífico Reitor*, FN informais e populares: *tipo*, *gajo*, FN de afeto: *querido(a)*, diminutivos, *papá*, *mamã*, *vovó*, etc. e as FN injuriosas. As mesmas categorias podem ser identificadas em romeno, mas, evidentemente, com inventários próprios desta língua e as respetivas formas vocativas[11]: FN de convivência de caráter geral: *domn/doamnă, domni/doamne*, FN que designam parentesco: *tată*, *mamă*, *bunic*, *bunică*, etc., FN com nome próprio, FN que designam profissão, cargo, posto, função ou título, FN de maior formalidade, como *Excelenţa (Voastră)*, *Maiestatea Voastră*, FN informais e populares: *şef*, *şefă*, etc., FN de afeto: *drag, dragă*, diminutivos, *tati*, *mami*, *buni*, etc. e as FN injuriosas. Salientamos que em romeno existe o tratamento inverso[12] (como em italiano[13])

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[10] *O senhor* é de facto um tratamento nominal, considerado por Cintra (1972/1986: 13) "o mais pronominalizado de todos".

[11] Em romeno, os nomes têm desinências específicas para o caso vocativo (ver, por exemplo, as formas nominativas *Maria*, *Ioana* e as formas vocativas *Marie*, *Ioane*).

[12] Ver, por exemplo, Renzi (1968) e Beyrer (1979).

[13] Uma descrição mais detalhada pode ser encontrada em Sgroi (2008).

que pressupõe um uso especial das FN que designam os graus de parentesco (*tată*, *mamă*, *bunic*, *bunică*, etc.). Para expressar a sua afetividade, uma mãe pode usar o apelativo *mamă* [mãe] para se dirigir ao filho, um pai o apelativo *tată* [pai] na comunicação direta com o filho, uma avó pode tratar o neto por *bunică* [avó], etc.

Quanto ao tratamento verbal, ambas as línguas empregam a 2ª pessoa do singular para o tratamento informal (*falas português*, *vorbești română*), ao passo que para o tratamento formal o português prefere a 3ª pessoa do singular (*fala português*) e o romeno a 2ª pessoa do plural (*vorbiți română*). No caso do tratamento para mais interlocutores, o português padrão usa a 3ª forma do plural (*falam português*) e o romeno a 2ª pessoa do plural (*vorbiți română*) tanto para as relações informais, como para as que veiculam um determinado grau de formalidade ou de cortesia.

Vejamos na secção seguinte as FT identificadas nos *corpora* referidos.

4. Análise dos exemplos

Esta análise tem um duplo objetivo. Por um lado, interessa-nos a estrutura do inventário das FT identificadas nos dois *corpora* e, por outro lado, pretendemos descortinar os papéis das FT na construção das relações sociais entre rementente e destinatário. Num primeiro momento, fizemos uma classificação das FT em função do(s) destinatário(s) das cartas e identificámos três categorias principais: membros da família (diferentes graus de parentesco), namorados ou namoradas, amigos e/ou colegas. Esta classificação permite-nos observar a construção das relações sociais através do uso da linguagem, identificando o seu posicionamento no eixo familiaridade/distância (Carreira 1997: 68-73), em diferentes aspetos: intimidade, afetividade, deferência, cortesia, etc.

Para uma identificação mais fácil das ocorrências, cada exemplo português será seguido pelo código que a carta tem no *corpus* do projeto *FLY Cartas esquecidas – Forgotten Letters (1900-1974)*, ao passo que cada exemplo romeno tem um código assignado por nós, que corresponde à abreviação do título do livro *Scrisori de pe front* (SF) e o número da página (por exemplo, SF12, SF67, etc.).

4.1. Tratamento para pais

A primeira categoria de formas de tratamento analisadas são as que os remetentes empregam na correspondência com os pais. Em ambos os *corpora* observa-se que as FT prevalentes são as nominais e que têm estruturas semelhantes: nomes de parentesco (*tată și mamă* SF92), nome de parentesco precedido de

adjetivo possessivo (*Minha mãe* FLY2205), nome de parentesco precedido de adjetivo possessivo e adjetivo qualificativo (*Minha bôa mãe* FLY2084; *Meu bom e queridu pai* FLY2088; *Minha querida mãe* FLY2093, FLY2213, FLY2390; *Meu querido pae* FLY2076; *Iubită me dulce mamă* SF54; *Dulce măicuţă şi dulce soră* SF64; *Iubitul me tată* SF88); estruturas nominais mais complexas, compostas por nomes de parentesco precedidos por adjetivo possessivo, adjetivo qualificativo e seguidos pela estrutura genitival "do coração" (*Meus queridos pães do coração* FLY2099), que intensifica a expressão da afetividade. No *corpus* português destaca-se o uso de formas nominais diminutivas (*meu querido Paezinho* FLY2102; *Maisinha* FLY2423), ao passo que no *corpus* romeno aparecem formas adjetivais substantivadas (*Dulci mei* SF70). Identificamos também um uso único de uma forma de tratamento em francês, usada por um soldado português que na altura se encontrava em França (*Ma chere Maman*, FLY2212). As formas nominais podem ser empregues tanto em contextos claramente alocutivos (*Maisinha, Tendo hoje possibiidade* FLY2423), como em contextos delocutivos (*sei que a maisinha tem sido roubada, não tenho eu a sorte de ahi volta* FLY2423; *não sei se a maesinha o conhece* FLY2423).

As formas pronominais de tratamento usadas em ambos os *corpora* expressam um determinado grau de deferência (*lhe* FLY2423: *como já lhe disse*; *bosemese* FLY2088: *iscrevu esta carta so para bosemese saber*; *dumneata* SF66: *dumneata eşti slabă şi fără putere*; *dumne vostre*: *cred că dumnea vostre de aiceie nu-mi scrieţi*, *al dumnelor vostre fiu* SF92), que mostra a dinâmica assimétrica nas relações pais-filhos no início do século 20.

As tipologias das formas de tratamento identificadas relacionam-se com uma evidente intenção de expressar o afeto: os adjetivos possessivos, os adjetivos qualificativos do campo semântico da afetividade e os diminutivos. O grau de intimidade expresso pelas formas nominais de tratamento combina-se com a deferência filial, expressa através das formas pronominais (*lhe*, *bosemece*, *dumneata*), o que indica a configuração de uma relação assimétrica entre pais e filhos em ambas as línguas.

4.2. Tratamento para irmãos

No caso do tratamento para irmãos e irmãs, destacam-se as seguintes formas nominais de tratamento: nome de parentesco precedido por adjetivo possessivo e adjetivo qualificativo: *Meu cerido Mão* (FLY2079); *Meu bom mano* (FLY2085); *Meu querido mano* (FLY2157); *Meu querido mano e compadre* (FLY2207); *Minha querida mana* (FLY2459); *iubită soră; iubite frate; dulcele meu frate* (SF54); *Iubiţi mei fraţi; iubiţi mei dulci fraţi* (SF56); *dulce soră, dragă soră* (SF68); *doriţi mei fraţi* (SF74); *iubitu meu frate* (SF80). Observamos que

em português são bastante frequentes as formas trucadas *mão*, *mano* e *mana*, típicas do registo familiar, que indicam uma relação de intimidade e sem formalidade. Outras modalidades de tratamento nominal presentes em ambos os *corpora* são: nome de parentesco precedido por adjetivo possessivo, adjetivo qualificativo e seguido pelo nome próprio: *Meu querido mano N* (FLY2158); *Iubitul meu frate Mitru.* No *corpus* romeno as formas de tratamento podem integrar também estruturas superlativas, como *prea mult dorite*: *Amicul meu frate, prea mult dorite frate* (SF88); *Prea mult dorite frate* (SF90), que expressam uma maior intensidade na expressão da afetividade. Outra forma de tratamento identificada no *corpus* português consiste no uso do nome de parentesco e outro substantivo que designa uma relação social: *Mano e amigo* (FLY2389) e que expressa a relação próxima, afetiva entre os dois irmãos. No *corpus* romeno, a forma vocativa do nome próprio sem determinante é também utilizada (*Titino* SF44).

As formas pronominais de tratamento situam-se igualmente na área da intimidade: no *corpus* português é prevalente o uso de *tu* (*Muito estimo que tu ao receberes d'esta minha carta*, FLY2157), ao passo que no *corpus* romeno aparecem tanto o pronome *tu* (*Şi te rog frate dragă, scrie-mi* [...] *că am dor de tine* SF80; *te rog frăţioare Iftimi că dacă mi-i scrie apoi, să scrii şi despre ea, că poate ţie ţi-o scris* SF86), como o pronome *dumneata* (*mă închin cu sănătate cătră dumneata, iubitu meu frate*; *Frate dragă, află că am primit cartea dumitale* SF82). Aliás, tanto nas cartas portuguesas como nas cartas romenas, para o tratamento dado aos irmãos e às irmãs nota-se a preferência pelo pronome *tu*, usado em relações simétricas, o que distingue esta categoria da anterior, em que as relações pais-filhos são configuradas sobretudo de forma assimétrica.

4.3. Tratamento para esposos e/ou namorados

As cartas enviadas à mulher ou à namorada[14] e as respetivas respostas ocupam um lugar de destaque em cada *corpus*. Redigidos como textos individuais ou, no caso do *corpus* romeno, também como fragmentos incluídos em cartas coletivas enviadas a toda a família, estes trechos testemunham as formas como se configuravam as relações entre sexos no início do século XX. As formas nominais de tratamento identificadas podem ser classificadas em três categorias: nome de parentesco precedido e/ou seguido (ou não) por adjetivo qualificativo e/ou por adjetivo possessivo (*Querida Esposa* FLY2081; *Minha querida mulher, mulher* FLY2098; *Querida mulher* FLY2214; *minha querida e adorada mulherzinha* FLY2380; *Iubita mea soţie* SF48; *Scumpa mea soţie* SF50; *soţie dragă* SF92; *Iubită nevastă,*

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[14] No caso dos soldados portugueses, por vezes é difícil distinguir se o destinatário é uma namorada ou uma madrinha de guerra.

dragă nevastă SF94; *Multudorite soațe* SF108; *Soțioara mea dorită* SF52); nome carinhoso precedido por adjetivo qualificativo ou por adjetivo possessivo (*Meu querido amôr* FLY2079; *Meu quirido amor* FLY2151; *Meu qurido amor* FLY2152; *meu Curido amor* FLY2162; *Puiule* SF46); nome próprio precedido (ou seguido) por adjetivo qualificativo e/ou adjetivo possessivo (*Minha adorada [N]* FLY2380; *Dulcea mea Fulvia, Fulvio scumpă* SF28; *Aristiță* SF38; *Dragă Marițo* SF50; *Emil dragă* SF98); adjetivo qualificativo precedido por adjetivo possessivo (*Draga mea* SF42; *Dragul meu* SF98). No *corpus* português identificámos uma forma de tratamento em francês: *Demoiselle [N]* (FLY2212).

As formas pronominais predominantes são *tu* no *corpus* português (*Querida Esposa, Aproveito mais esta occasião para te dar nuticias minhas* FLY2081; *mulher eu te mando dezer aonde è que eu tenho estado* FLY2098; *meu quirido amor tu tambam mandavas diser que me não tinhas escrito* FLY2151), ao passo que no *corpus* romeno identificámos usos tanto de *tu* (*Draga mea Fulvia* [...] *Trăiesc zi și noapate de vorbă cu tine.* SF28; *Aristiță, Am primit carte poștală de la tine* SF38; *pe tine draga mea te îmbrățișez* SF50), como de *dumneata* (*Prea mult dorită soție Onița, vei ști despre a dumitale soț* SF94; *mă închin de sănătate la dumneata, soțiorul meu cel bun, că tare mă doar inima de pe dumneata* SF96; *eu, a ta soție* [...] *îți facu de cunoscut* [...] *că mă aflu bine sănătoasă, asemenea ți-o poftesc și dumitale* SF108).

Observa-se em ambos os *corpora* o emprego frequente de adjetivos qualificativos do campo semântico da afetividade (*querido*, *querida*, *drag*, *dragă*, *iubite, iubită*), por vezes em estruturas superlativas (*multudorite*; *prea mult dorită*), o que corrobora o grau de intimidade da relação entre esposos ou namorados. Os vocativos em cartas romenas (*Aristiță* SF30; *Fulvio* SF28; *Marițo* SF50) expressam a intenção do remetente de simular um espaço de interação oralizante, que apague as distâncias espaciais e temporais, criando assim a ilusão de um diálogo imediato. Em cartas portuguesas, o uso dos diminutivos (por exemplo, *mulherzinha* FLY2380) serve para expressar o afeto para com a esposa, típico de uma relação de intimidade.

4.4. Tratamento para familiares

Em ambos os *corpora*, há cartas que são enviadas a familiares que não se integram nas categorias acima referidas. Trata-se de primos, compadres e comadres, sogros, etc. A dinâmica dos tratamentos nestes contextos é também relevante para a configuração discursiva destas relações sociais.

No *corpus* português, há uma série de oito cartas que um soldado escreve a uma prima e em que o tratamento pronominal é hesitante, optando o remetente ora por *vós* (*Exma. Senhora, Com grande prazer recebi hoje o vosso*

presadissimo postal de 9 do corrente, que muito vos agradeço FLY2428; *Exma. Senhora Agradeço–vos o vosso postal de 13 do corrente* FLY2432), ora pelo tratamento formal no singular (*Exma. Senhora, Tive hoje o prazer de receber o seu presado postal de 21 do mês findo que muito lhe agradeço* FLY2426; *Exma. Senhora Ainda não posso dizer-lhe quando irei de licença* FLY2430) o que pode indicar uma reconfiguração da distância interlocutiva de uma carta a outra. Nestas cartas identificámos também uma variação no emprego das formas nominais de tratamento: *Mademoiselle [N]* (FLY2427); *Exma. Senhora* FLY2430, o que aponta para uma possível redução da distância interlocutiva entre os protagonistas. Por outro lado, é possível que estas hesitações sejam o resuldado da intervenção de diferentes escrevedores profissionais, que usavam as suas próprias estratégias estilísticas quando redigiam as cartas dos combatentes.

No *corpus* romeno, as cartas coletivas, enviadas a toda a família, começam por vezes com toda a lista dos destinatários, identificados individualmente para que possam integrar o espaço dialógico que o remetente quer criar: *Iubita mea soție şi scumpi mei copilaşi Ionel-Eugenia-Danilică- Marioara-Mitică şi Costică* SF48; *iubită me dulce mamă şi iubitul meu frate Mitru, iubită soră şi iubită tătăisă Terci, iubiți mei nepoți* SF54; *iubitul meu văr* SF62; *Iubita mea soție, doriți mei prunci socru şi soacră* SF92; *soție dragă şi doriți mei prunci şi doriți mei socru, soacră, tată şi mamă, fraţi şi surori* SF92. Os adjetivos avaliativos (*iubita*, *scumpi*, *doriți*, *dulce*, etc.) e os possessivos reforçam a expressão da afetividade e criam uma distância interlocutiva típica das relações próximas, de intimidade.

4.5. Tratamento para vizinhos, amigos, colegas

A última série de cartas analisadas contém uma categoria mais abrangente de destinatários, em que incluímos as relações sociais que se estabelecem fora da família: vizinhos, amigos, colegas, diversos camaradas, etc.

As formas nominais de tratamento podem variar em função da relação entre remetente e destinatário: expressão clara de amizade (*Amigo [N]* (FLY2368); *Meu bom amigo* (FLY2210); *Meu caro amigo* (FLY2103); *Meu Presado Amigo* (FLY2082), da camaradagem (*Caro colega [N]* FLY2207), da vizinhança e da amizade (*iubite pretine şi vecine* SF84; *pretine Ştefane* SF84).

Há também formas de tratamento que contêm o nome, um possessivo e um adjetivo qualificativo (*Meu caro [N]* FLY2086) e que não indicam o tipo de relação social entre remetente e destinatário.

No *corpus* português identificámos uma carta com uma forma de tratamento em inglês (*My dear [N]* FLY2369), ao passo que no *corpus* romeno encontrámos uma carta em que um soldado trata o seu amigo por uma alcunha (*Frate iepure* SF84 – a tradução literal seria *irmão coelho*), o que pode indicar

uma relação de amizade e camaradagem, em que os dois protagonistas usam alcunhas para expressar a adesão a um grupo ou para relembrar experiências comuns. Também no *corpus* romeno aparecem as formas vocativas (*iubite pretine și vecine* SF84; *pretine Ștefane* SF84).

No que diz respeito ao tratamento pronominal, tanto em português, como em romeno, observamos o uso quase exclusivo dos pronomes de máxima aproximação (*tu*: *îți poftesc și ție, frate Ștefane* SF84; *Bine că te-a scăpat Margules de cinematograful suteran* SF84).

Conclusões

Esta análise da correspondência da Grande Guerra permite-nos propor algumas conclusões sobre os usos das FT no início do século 20, que formulamos em termos de convergências e divergências.

No que diz respeito à estrutura do inventário das formas de tratamento, observa-se um grau elevado de convergência entre os dois *corpora*. Os combatentes portugueses e romenos da Grande Guerra tiveram como destinatários os familiares ou os amigos mais próximos. Esta opção traduz-se num inventário de formas nominais de tratamento bastante reduzido, que corresponde às relações sociais que os remetentes tinham com os seus destinatários: formas nominais que designam parentesco (*mãe*, *pai*, etc.), formas nominais com nome próprio (*Titino* SF44, *Aristiță* SF38), formas nominais informais (*frate iepure* SF84) e formas nominais de afeto (*queridos*, *iubiți*, formas diminutivais, como *mulherzinha* FLY2380 ou truncadas, como *mano*, *mana* FLY2459, FLY2457). Portanto, não identificámos nos dois *corpora* formas nominais de tratamento que designam profissões, títulos, cargos, formas de alta formalidade (como *Vossa Excelência*), uma vez que a correspondência de guerra tem um caráter pessoal e intimista.

No âmbito de cada categoria de FT analisadas, podemos observar, enquanto caraterística convergente, o emprego de mecanismos linguísticos de expressão da afetividade. A nível lexical, observamos o uso de intensificadores como: adjetivos possessivos (*meu curido amor* FLY2162; *amicul meu frate* SF88), adjetivos qualificativos que expresssam afeto (*Meus queridos pães do coração* FLY2099; *Dulce măicuță și dulce soră* SF64), advérbios de intensidade como *mult*, muito ou *prea* (*teiu mano muito amigo* FLY2158; *prea mult dorite frate* SF88). A nível morfológico, observamos em português ocorrências de formas diminutivas (*mulherzinha* FLY2380; *Paezinho* FLY2102) ou truncadas (*mano* FLY2459, *mão* FLY2079, *mana*, FLY2457). A nível sintático, destaca-se o uso das formas vocativas em romeno tanto para nomes próprios (*Aristiță* SF30; *Fulvio* SF28; *Marițo* SF50), como para nomes carinhosos (*Puiule* SF46) ou formas de tratamento que designam a relação social (*iubite pretine și vecine* SF84).

Se há pouca variedade de formas de tratamento, em contrapartida, podemos observar uma maior variedade de grafias. Por exemplo, os pronomes *você* e *vocês* e as suas formas oblíquas têm as grafias seguintes: *você* (*se você quer eu* FLY2207), *voce* (*Voce receba saudades d'este seu admirador* FLY2209), *voçes* (*Mandame dizer voçes vae de caminho* FLY2156) *vocês* (*eu já tinha mandado dizer para as familias de vocês todos* FLY2210) ou *vocez* (*quando Vocez ahi estavam no lindo arrál* FLY2390). O pronome *lhe* pode ser separado ou não por hífen (*pessolhe que me escreva apenas receba esta carta* FLY2176; *Tem este por fim incomoda-lo, pedir-lhe a subida fineza de nos remetter a correspondencia* FLY2207). A forma *vocemecê* tem duas grafias: *vocemecê* (*Para o Páe e vocemecê um muito apertado de seu filho amigo* FLY2213) e *bosemese* (*iscrevu esta carta so para bosemese saber* FLY2088). Nota-se um grau de divergência bastante elevado em relação à norma escrita, devido ao baixo nível de alfabetização.

No que diz respeito ao uso das formas de tratamento em função das relações sociais e do grau de aproximação/distância, observamos convergências entre o português e o romeno no caso do tratamento dado aos pais (pronome com valor intermédio de distância social) e aos irmãos (pronome com valor mínimo de distância social). Porém, no caso do tratamento dado aos esposos e aos colegas ou amigos, há divergências entre as duas línguas, o romeno permitindo o uso de *tu* e *dumneata*, ao passo que em português se observa o emprego exclusivo do pronome *tu.* Podemos afirmar que nas relações entre os esposos havia uma maior distância interlocutiva na sociedade romena do que na sociedade portuguesa, mas é importante relembrar o papel dos escrevedores profissionais na correspondência. É possível que em alguns textos epistolares as formas de tratamento sejam escolhidas por essas pessoas que escreviam os textos e não pelos remetentes propriamente ditos.

FT	PORTUGUÊS	ROMENO
pais	*você*	*dumneata*
irmãos	*tu*	*tu*
esposos namorados	*tu*	*tu* *dumneata*
outros familiares	*tu* *vós*	*tu* *dumneata*
colegas amigos	*tu*	*tu* *dumneata*

Figura 1. Formas pronominais de tratamento em cartas da Grande Guerra.

Em jeito de conclusão, deixamos um fragmento que descreve o contexto em que eram escritos os textos epistolares durante a Grande Guerra. Foi nessas circunstâncias, com o espectro da morte pairando sobre as trincheiras, que os

combatentes conseguiram encontrar tempo para transmitir o seu afeto aos seus familiares e amigos. Nessas folhas de papel, por vezes escritas por outros, por vezes censuradas, podemos desvendar ainda hoje, um século depois, a dinâmica das relações sociais e a maneira como a linguagem contribuiu para a sua construção no início do século 20.

> Peço-lhe mil desculpas de esta carta ir mal escrita e mail notada: são serviços feitos de nôite e á preça que de dia não á vagar. Já á mais de meia hora que estão a ralar comigo, dizendo o seguinte: apaga a luz que ahi vêem os áiroplanos : neste caso termino a minha carta: 10 minutos depoes chega me um ao pé e diz me: a igreja já está toda em terra, e nós temos que retirar. (FLY2083)

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Corpora

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LE PRONOM FRANÇAIS *ON*
DANS LA POÉSIE DE IULIA HAŞDEU.
COMPLEXITÉ RÉFÉRENTIELLE ET TRADUCTION

Iuliana-Anca MATEIU[1]

**ABSTRACT. *The French Pronoun ON in Iulia Haşdeu's Poetry. Referential
Complexity and Translation.*** In our paper, we intend to explain the frequency
of the French pronoun ON in the poetry of Iulia Haşdeu and the variety in
translating its constructions into Romanian through a comparative stylistic
analysis and an enunciative analysis of its occurrences and translations. Due to
its indetermination, ON can be used in a lot of contexts, or it can be suppressed
in those contexts where predication is more important than reference.

Keywords: *On*, *referential complexity*, *poetry*, *translation*, *enunciative analysis*

**REZUMAT. *Pronumele francez ON în poezia Iuliei Haşdeu. Complexitate
referenţială şi traducere.*** În cadrul articolului, ne propunem să explicăm
frecvenţa pronumelui francez ON în poezia Iuliei Haşdeu şi varietatea traducerilor
construcţiilor cu ON printr-o analiză stilistică comparativă şi o analiză enunţiativă
a ocurenţelor şi traducerilor sale. Datorită indeterminării, ON poate fi folosit într-
o mulţime de contexte sau poate fi suprimat în contextele în care predicaţia
contează mai mult decât referinţa.

Cuvinte-cheie: *On, complexitate referenţială, poezie, traducere, analiză enunţiativă*

Ayant remarqué la fréquence du pronom ON et la grande variété de
traductions de ses occurrences dans un volume bilingue de poésies de Iulia
Haşdeu (*Scrieri alese*, 1988), nous avons essayé d'y trouver une explication en

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procédant à une analyse stylistique contrastive des constructions de ON et de leurs traductions en roumain, ainsi qu'à une analyse discursive-énonciative des occurrences de ON.

La bibliographie que nous avons trouvée sur le sujet prouve que ON représente un objet d'étude fascinant pour les linguistes en vertu de sa complexité référentielle.

Si les grammaires et les études consacrées à ON lui reconnaissent les mêmes propriétés morphosyntaxiques, les difficultés apparaissent lorsqu'il s'agit d'encadrer ON dans une classe de pronoms et de décrire son fonctionnement référentiel.

1. Propriétés morphosyntaxiques de ON

Ainsi, ON présente les propriétés grammaticales suivantes :

a) C'est un pronom conjoint, une forme liée qui n'apparaît que dans le contexte immédiat d'un verbe conjugué.

b) Il provient du substantif latin en nominatif *homo*, ce qui explique deux de ses propriétés: ON réfère toujours à un animé ou à un groupe d'animés humains; « Ce pronom n'est employé que dans le rôle actanciel du sujet. » (Weinrich 1989, 78).

c) Du point de vue formel, ON se comporte en français moderne standard comme un pronom de la 3e personne du singulier, comme il ressort de l'accord de son verbe :

(1) *ON a* *toujours besoin d'un plus petit que soi.* (La Fontaine)

d) Comme *je*, *tu*, *nous* et *vous*, le pronom ON ne porte lui-même la marque ni du nombre ni du genre. Mais il est perméable au genre et au nombre du référent, comme le montrent les adjectifs attributs et les participes passé du verbe qui s'accordent avec le sujet ON au féminin ou/ et au pluriel (syllepse du genre et du nombre) :

(2) *Mes amies et moi, **ON** est parti**es les** derni**ères**.* (Riegel *et alii* 1994, 198)
(3) *ON* est *égaux*. (Nyrop 1916, 2)
(4) *ON* n'est pas *des esclaves*. (*ibidem*)

Dans un article de 1916, Kr. Nyrop signale aussi des cas où ON sujet est suivi d'un verbe au pluriel, à la 3e ou à la 1re personne :

(5) *ON sont* seuls. (Nyrop 1916, 3)
(6) *ON sommes* seuls. (*ibidem*)

En fait, ces constructions n'existent plus en français moderne que dans les patois et dans les dialectes et elles sont expliquées par le sens collectif du pronom ON et par le fait que ON renferme aussi le sujet qui parle.

2. Propriétés sémantico-référentielles

Classé tantôt avec *les pronoms personnels* (Charaudeau 1992, 127 ; Riegel *et alii* 1994, 197), puisqu'il peut fonctionner comme substitut de tous les autres pronoms personnels sujet conjoint (*je*, *tu*, *il*, *elle*, *nous*, *vous*, *ils*, *elles*) en rejetant leur référent dans l'anonymat, tantôt avec les *pronoms indéfinis* (Wilmet 2003, § 344 ; Grevisse & Goosse 1993, § 724) puisqu'il peut signifier « quelqu'un », « des gens » (emploi épisodique) ou bien «chacun», « n'importe qui », « tout le monde », « les gens » (emploi générique) ou bien comme *pronom personnel indéfini* (*Trésor de la langue française informatisée*) ou encore comme *pronom impersonnel* (Cabredo Hofherr 2008, 35 ; Creissels), ON s'avère un pronom assez paradoxal : particulièrement complexe du point de vue référentiel, il est cependant d'un maniement assez facile.

Dans un article de 2014, Frédéric Landragin & Noalig Tanguy soulignent la complexité référentielle de ON :

> « [...] il a ceci de particulier qu'il peut référer aussi bien à une personne précise qu'à un générique, à un collectif clairement identifiable qu'à un groupe de personnes à l'étendue et aux limites vagues; il peut inclure ou exclure le locuteur, renvoyer aussi bien aux interlocuteurs qu'à des tierces personnes.[...] ON est en quelque sorte la forme de référence qui correspond le mieux à la notion de "groupe flou", modélisation retenue [...] pour rendre compte des référents pluriels, à partir du moment où on ne sait pas exactement combien d'individus sont impliqués, à partir du moment où on est incapable de dire qui fait exactement partie du groupe de référents et qui n'en fait pas partie (Landragin, 2011). » (99)

D'ailleurs, selon les mêmes auteurs, « lors d'une interprétation immédiate, un lecteur ou interlocuteur ne cherche pas forcément à analyser dans les détails les possibilités référentielles – quel groupe de référents, avec quelles limites – de *on*, tout en détectant de manière immédiate quelles occurrences de *on* sont coréférentielles et lesquelles ne le sont pas »(Landragin, Tanguy 2014, 104).

Dans un article de 1984 sur *ON L'Illusionniste*, Françoise Atlani reconnaît l'hétérogénéité du fonctionnement discursif de ON et essaie en même temps de montrer que cette hétérogénéité révèle l'homogénéité du ON français. Tout en admettant que « [s]elon l'énoncé dans lequel il s'inscrit et le contexte dans lequel il est produit, il recevra des interprétations variables : sa forme ne désigne ni la

catégorie de la personne ni celle de la non-personne, mais elle peut être interprétée comme faisant partie aussi bien de l'une que de l'autre. » (16), Atlani conclut à propos de ON : « [...] *on*, parce qu'il est frontière entre la personne et la non-personne, est aussi frontière entre ce qui est identifiable, et donc nommable et ce qui ne l'est pas. » (26).

La variété des interprétations de ON se révèle surtout à travers la traduction.

3. ON et la traduction

En roumain, par exemple, le pronom ON n'a pas d'équivalent formel et les structures où il s'emploie peuvent se traduire de multiples façons, selon l'interprétation qu'en donne le traducteur.

Selon I. Baciu (1987), lorsqu'il désigne toute personne indéfinie, surtout dans des assertions à caractère générique, ON peut être traduit en roumain par : *omul*, *lumea*, *oricine*, un verbe pronominal impersonnel ou la 2ᵉ personne du singulier sans sujet *tu* exprimé. Lorsqu'il désigne une personne indéfinie, qui peut être identifiée ou même connue du locuteur, mais que celui-ci ne veut pas nommer de façon plus précise, ON est traduit en roumain par *cineva* ou par un verbe pronominal impersonnel.

E. Arjoca Ieremia (2011) identifie à son tour toute une série de traductions roumaines possibles de ON, parmi lesquelles :

a) la 1ʳᵉ personne du pluriel incluse dans la désinence du verbe ;

b) la 2ᵉ personne du singulier ou du pluriel incluse dans la désinence du verbe ;

c) un verbe de forme pronominale, employé à la 3ᵉ personne du singulier, impersonnel ou passif-impersonnel (le sujet semble indéterminé) ;

d) un verbe pronominal de sens passif à proprement parler (le sujet est sous-entendu) ;

e) le pronom indéfini *cineva* à fonction de sujet ;

f) un verbe de forme active, à la 3ᵉ personne du pluriel, avec sujet sous-entendu, que l'on peut inférer du contexte.

4. Traductions de ON dans un corpus poétique en roumain

Comme les traductions des occurrences de ON dans le volume bilingue *Scrieri alese* dépassent ces inventaires et que la même construction de ON est traduite de manières très variées, nous avons essayé de trouver une explication à cette variété par une double analyse : stylistique contrastive et discursive-énonciative.

Dans le corpus constitué de 36 poésies en français de Iulia Hașdeu et de leurs traductions en roumain, réunies par Crina Decusară-Bocșan dans le volume *Scrieri alese*, paru aux éditions Minerva (Bucarest, 1988), nous avons relevé 72 occurrences du pronom français ON.

5. Analyse stylistique contrastive

Dans une première étape, nous les avons groupées en fonction des constructions où ON apparaît, c'est-à-dire en fonction du verbe auquel il sert de sujet : de la classe lexicale à laquelle appartient le verbe, du temps auquel il est employé, de la diathèse, des compléments qu'il a, etc.

En comparant ces constructions avec leurs traductions en roumain, nous avons remarqué que :

I. **ON, sujet d'un verbe de sentiment** employé au présent générique (ou à l'imparfait d'habitude) et accompagné d'un circonstant temporel ou spatial, est traduit en roumain par :

a) **la 2e personne du singulier incluse dans la désinence du V** :

(7)
a. *Oh ! Se savoir aimée ! ô bonheur sans pareil !*
ON pleure *alors, oui, mais quelles douces larmes !* (*Être aimée*)
b. *Oh ! Să te simți iubită ! Nemărginiți fiori*
De bucurie ! ***Plângi****, amarul tău e lin !* (M. Pillat, *Să fii iubită !*)

b) **un verbe pronominal impersonnel** :

(8)
a. *Lorsqu'****ON aime*** *ainsi, l'on peut se croire au ciel* (*Pétrarque à Laure*)
b. *Când astfel* ***se iubește****, poți să te crezi în cer.*(V. A. Tăușan, *Petrarca, Laurei*)

c) **le pronom démonstratif semi-indépendant CEL complété d'une relative et équivalant à un nom défini sous-entendu** (cas d'étoffement) :

(9)
a. *D'une grandeur que sans cesse* ***ON admire*** (*Au lac de Genève*)
b. ***Simte-un fior***
La măreția-ți ***cel ce te colindă*** (M. Pillat, *Pe malul lacului Geneva*)

d) *această lume*, sujet récupéré d'une principale après réduction de sa relative (où ON était sujet d'un verbe de sentiment) à un adjectif de sentiment (cas d'allégement et de recatégorisation) :

(10)
a. *Un monde ingrat où l'ON te raille et te méprise* (*À une fée*)
b. *Această lume ingrată şi dispreţuitoare* (C. Decusară-Bocşan, *Unei zâne*).

e) **le pronom indéfini** *nimeni* **« personne »,** lorsqu'une phrase affirmative est traduite, par inversion, par une phrase négative :

(11)
a. *Mars qu'ON déteste et qu'ON maudit*(*Mars*)
b. *E luna ce nimeni nu o preţuieşte* (C. Decusară-Bocşan, *Martie*)

f) **Ø**, lorsque le verbe de sentiment a été traduit, par recatégorisation, par un nom de sentiment :

(12)
a. *Car c'est quand ON aime* (*Papillon*)
b. *Doar iubirea prinde* (C. Doicescu, *Fluturele*)

g) **Ø**, lorsque le verbe de sentiment dont il était le sujet est effacé au profit du verbe d'existence sous-entendu qu'il régit et qui prendra comme sujet l'ancien objet direct (cas de modulation grammaticale) :

(13)
a. *Et pour que l'ON ne désire*
Rien dans ce charmant décor [...] (*Aubade d'avril*)
b. *Ca nimic să nu lipsească*
În acest decor vrăjit (C. Decusară-Bocşan, *Zori de aprilie*)

h) **Ø**, lorsque la construction active est traduite par une construction passive où ON ne saurait fonctionner comme complément d'agent (modulation grammaticale) :

(14)
a. *ON t'aime, et tu perces les cœurs* (*Anacréontique*)
b. *Trimiţi săgeţi în inimi şi totuşi eşti iubit !* (V. A. Tăuşan, *Anacreontică*)

II. ON, sujet d'un verbe de perception régissant un *Accusativus cum infinitivo* est traduit par :

a) **la 1ʳᵉ personne du singulier incluse dans la désinence du verbe**, avec modulation par le remplacement de l'indicatif par le « conjunctiv » :

(15)
a. *Ah! que ne puis-je , ô lac, sur cette rive,*
*Où l'**ON entend** comme un tendre soupir[...]* (*Au lac de Genève*)
b. *O de-aş putea rămâne pe-al tău mal*
***S-aud** cum plânge apa jalea lin[...]* (M. Pillat, *Pe malul lacului Geneva*)

b) **la 2e personne du singulier (générique) incluse dans la désinence
du verbe**, avec allégement par l'effacement du verbe à l'infinitif :

(16)
a. ***ON voit** briller des pleurs [...]* (*Larmes d'enfance*)
b. ***Vezi** plânsuri sub pleoapa o clipă doar lăsată.*(V. A. Tăuşan, *Lacrămile
copilăriei*)

c) **Ø** avec un verbe pronominal passif de la 3e personne du pluriel (cas
d'allégement par l'effacement du verbe à l'infinitif et d'un groupe nominal):

(17)
a. ***ON voit** briller l'émail éclatant de ses dents* (*La Tzigane*)
b. *Sub ea **se văd** dinţii mici, albi, sclipitori.* (T. Demetrescu, *Ţiganca*)
(ou cas de modulation grammaticale par l'inversion du rapport de
détermination dans le groupe nominal à fonction d'objet direct) :

(18)
a. *Où l'**ON entend** le son argentin des écus...* (*Paris d'antant*)
b. *Unde **se-aud** monezi cu sunete-argintate.* (M. Pillat, *Parisul de-altădată*)

d) **un nom [+partie du corps] défini, en emploi générique** (cas de
modulation métonymique) :

(19)
a. *Ce Dieu [...]*
*Qui fit ce qu'**ON ne peut ni comprendre ni voir** (*Au bord de la mer*)
b. *[...] pe acest Dumnezeu[...]*
*Care făcu ce **ochiul** nu vede, nici **mintea** nu adună* (V. A. Tăuşan, *Pe malul
mării*)

(20)
a. *Hélas ! **ON ne voit plus** ces choses* (*Les Contes bleus*)
b. *Vai, aceste lucruri sunt **în tâmplă*** (V. A. Tăuşan, *Poveştile albastre*)

e) **un pronom de la 1re personne du singulier en Accusatif possessif
à fonction de sujet** d'un verbe en emploi métaphorique/ métonymique (modulation
grammaticale et métaphorique/ métonymique) :

(21)
a. *ON entendait* les cris des nocturnes chouettes (*Une Nuit*)
b. *Și glasul cucuvaei **mă** străpungea **în minte*** (C. Doicescu, *O noapte*)

f) **Ø**, lorsque le verbe de perception est remplacé par le verbe d'existence sous-entendu qu'il régit et son objet direct devient sujet qualifié par un adjectif provenu du verbe à l'infinitif (cas d'allégement et de recatégorisation) :

(22)
a. *L'amour blond et rose [...]*
***ON** le **voit** toujours sourire* (*Certain âge*)
b. *Ca o primăvară-n fire*
E amorul surâzând (V. A. Tăușan, *Anume vârstă*)

g) **Ø**, lorsque le verbe de perception est effacé et son objet direct redevient sujet qualifié par un adjectif provenu du verbe à l'infinitif (cas d'allégement et de recatégorisation) :

(23)
a. *Comme **ON voit** au grand soleil d'or*
Une rose sourire (*Berceuse roumaine*)
b. *Un trandafiraș*
vesel zâmbitor
l-al soarelui foc! (B.P. Hașdeu, *Cântecul de leagăn*)

h) **Ø**, lorsque le verbe de perception est effacé et son objet direct redevient sujet du verbe à l'infinitif (allégement et modulation grammaticale) :

(24)
a. *ON voit* se replier sa feuille (*La rose au vase*)
b. *Frunza, ce încă este verde,*
S-a strâns și ea și s-a chircit (V. A. Tăușan, *Trandafirul în vază*)

III. ON, sujet d'un verbe de dire à objet direct peut se traduire par :

a) **Ø** avec un verbe pronominal passif de la 3e personne du singulier suivi d'une subordonnée sujet :

(25)
a. *ON dit* qu'un cœur de femme est une étrange chose (*Perfide*)
b. *Se zice* că inima femeii e ceva ciudat (V. A. Tăușan, *Perfidă*)

b) **Ø** avec un verbe pronominal passif de la 3e personne du pluriel :

(26)
a. *Il est des maux qu'**ON ne peut pas écrire*** (*À ce papier*)
b. *Sunt rele care nu se scriu* (C. Doicescu, *Unei file*)

c) **Ø**, lorsque le syntagme verbal est remplacé par un nom apparenté sémantiquement (cas d'allégement et de recatégorisation) :

(27)
a. *C'est à tort qu'**ON le dit trompeur** comme la mer*(*Perfide*)
b. *Sub masca de surâsuri, e numai rană toată* (V. A. Tăuşan, *Perfidă*)

d) **Ø**, lorsque le verbe actif transitif est remplacé par sa forme passive sans complément d'agent (cas de modulation grammaticale) :

(28)
a. *ON me demande pourquoi j'aime*
Comme un enfant, les contes bleus [...] (*Les contes bleus*)
b. *Sunt întrebată pentru ce*
Iubesc ca un copil aceste
poveşti albastre [...] (V. A. Tăuşan, *Poveştile albastre*)

IV. ON, sujet d'un verbe modal comme *pouvoir* ou *vouloir* peut se traduire par :

a) **la 2ᵉ personne du singulier incluse dans la désinence du verbe** :

(29)
a. *ON peut y **croire** à l'innocence.* (*Les contes bleus*)
b. *Acolo **crezi** ce-i fără pată.* (V. A. Tăuşan, *Poveştile albastre*)

(30)
a. Dans notre siècle, où l'on n'a foi qu'au vice [...]
*Comment **veut-ON** que la vertu fleurisse ? (Le Bon vieux temps)*
b. *În veacul nostru, când doar în viciu e crezare,*
*Cum **vrei** virtutea să mai dea în floare ?*(V. A. Tăuşan, *Frumoasele vremuri vechi*)

b) **Ø**, lorsque le verbe de ON est remplacé par un participe passé à valeur adjectivale (cas de modulation métaphorique) :

(31)
a. *O cœur de femme!*
*Protée inexplicable et qu'**ON ne peut saisir** (La Femme)*
b. *O inimă tăcută![...]*
Protee ne-nţeleasă vrăjtă în tăceri (C. Doicescu, *Femeia*)

V. ON, sujet d'un verbe actif transitif direct est traduit par :

a) ***cineva* « quelqu'un »** à fonction de complément d'agent du verbe mis à la forme passive (cas de modulation grammaticale) :

(32)
a. *Un nom perdu, qu'**ON a dû** bien **pleurer***
Jadis [...] (*Le cimetière*)
b. *Pierdutul nume plâns **de cineva** demult.*(M. Pillat, *Ţintirimul*)

b) **Ø**, lorsque le verbe actif est employé à la forme passive (cas de modulation grammaticale) :

(33)
a. *Bien plus que l'eau dont **ON** l'**arrose*** (*La rose au vase*)
b. *Decât stropit mereu să fie* (V. A. Tăuşan, *Trandafirul în vază*)

c) **Ø**, lorsque l'objet indirect du verbe devient lui-même sujet (cas de modulation grammaticale) :

(34)
a. *Car c'est là qu'**ON m'apprit**, hélas ! [...]* (*À mon pays*)
b. *Unde eu am deprins pentru întâia dată* (C. Decusară-Bocşan, *Patriei mele*)

VI. ON, sujet d'un prédicat nominal est traduit par :

a) **la 1re personne du singulier** :

(35)
a. *Laissez-moi profiter du fugitif moment*
*Où par l'âge **ON est femme** et par le cœur, enfant.*(*Dédain*)
b. *A mea dulce nepăsare*, pentru ce să mi-o furaţi ?
*Când prin vârstă **sunt** femeie, iar prin inimă copilă*. (T. Demetrescu, *Dispreţul*)

b) **le « pronom indéfini *omul* »** (Schapira, 2002) :

(36)
a. *On s'en sert, **ON** en est complice ou spectateur* (*Dégoût*)
b. *Şi **omu**-i e complice până moare.* (C. Doicescu, *Dezgust*)

VII. ON, sujet d'un verbe à la diathèse factitive est traduit, par modulation grammaticale, par **Ø** lorsque l'objet direct du verbe à l'infinitif devient sujet de celui-ci :

(37)
a. *Ou l'**ON te fait brûler** dans la vive flambée* (*La Feuille*)
b. *Sau arzi mocnit în flacăra învăpăiată* (C. Doicescu, *Frunza*)

VIII. ON, sujet d'un verbe passif ou pronominal passif à complément d'agent est traduit, par modulation grammaticale, par **un pronom de la 1ʳᵉ personne du pluriel en Accusatif** (la construction passive est transformée en construction active) ou par **la 1ʳᵉ personne du pluriel incluse dans la désinence du verbe passif** :

(38)
a. *Chacun a des parfums dont **ON est enivré**, [...]*
*Et par ceux de l'automne **ON se sent pénétré**.* (*Printemps et automne*)
b. *Cele de primăvară **ne** îmbată : o orgie,*
*De cele ale toamnei **suntem** mereu **pătrunși*** (C. Doicescu, *Primăvara și toamna*)

IX. ON, **sujet d'un verbe copule à objet direct et attribut de l'objet direct** est traduit, par allégement, par **Ø** car l'objet direct devient sujet d'un nouveau verbe copule avec attribut du sujet :

(39)
a. *D'être née en des temps un peu trop raffinés*
*Où l'**ON trouve l'honneur et l'amour surannées*** (*Vers le passé*)
b. *Că m-am născut în vremuri trândăvite*
Când dragostea, onoarea par nume învechite. (M. Pillat, *Spre vremuri de demult*)

X. ON sujet d'un verbe de mouvement avec complément associatif se traduit, par modulation grammaticale, par **un pronom de la 3ᵉ personne du singulier objet direct** :

(40)
a. *Où l'enfant même, hélas! craindrait d'ajouter foi*
*À ces pays charmants qu'**ON parcourt** avec toi !* (*À une fée*)
b. *Unde chiar și copilul se teme să dea crezare*
*Că **l**-ai duce în țările de basm încântătoare.* (C. Decusară-Bocșan, *Unei zâne*)

À observer les contextes de ON, on remarque qu'il sert de sujet à des verbes de sentiment, de perception, de cognition ou à des verbes copulatifs qui sont à l'origine des verbes d'état, c'est-à-dire des verbes dont le sujet joue moins le rôle sémantique d'agent que celui de lieu de manifestation d'un état.

De plus, l'emploi des verbes au présent atemporel ou à l'imparfait d'habitude confère aux expériences présentées une portée universelle et à ON une référence maximale : ce sont des expériences (perceptions, sentiments,

impressions, attitudes) que *n'importe qui* peut vivre dans certaines conditions spatio-temporelles (au milieu de la nature, à un certain âge : pendant l'enfance, à une certaine époque : à l'époque de la chevalerie ou de la croyance aux contes bleus).

Les changements que ces constructions avec ON subissent lors de la traduction, surtout l'inexistence d'un sujet qui lui corresponde, mettent en avant le verbe au détriment du sujet (voir la transformation passive; la transformation du verbe en nom ou en adjectif qualificatif; la transformation d'une construction copulative où le sujet qualifie un objet direct au moyen d'un attribut en construction copulative où l'objet direct devient lui-même le sujet qualifié au moyen d'un attribut et la source de cette qualification n'est plus mentionnée ou la transformation d'une construction factitive en construction active, avec suppression du premier agent (ON)) et prouvent ainsi que ON est un sujet négligeable et que la référence compte moins que les prédications. Les circonstants temporels ou spatiaux, les caractéristiques qui particularisent le nom objet direct ou le sujet définissent les conditions de valabilité des prédications respectives.

Dans ces contextes, on considère, comme K. Jonasson (2006, 12-13), que: « [...] résoudre la référence n'est pas forcément une priorité absolue lors de l'interprétation de ON » car « [c]e sont les événements qui comptent avant tout et non les participants ». D'autant plus que les participants, quels qu'ils soient, vivraient la même chose dans les mêmes conditions.

6. Analyse discursive-énonciative

Pour comprendre les raisons de certains choix traductologiques, dans une seconde étape, nous avons considéré ces occurrences de ON dans un cotexte élargi et aussi dans le contexte du genre discursif où elles apparaissent, le genre poétique.

Malgré son indétermination ou peut-être en raison d'elle, ON s'adapte à plusieurs situations énonciatives, son interprétation et partant sa traduction étant influencées par les autres formes de référence personnelle, temporelle et/ ou spatiale (pronoms personnels, construction impersonnelle, noms, modes et temps verbaux).

Ainsi, par exemple, dans *Au lac de Genève*, les deux occurrences de ON correspondent à deux interprétations différentes, comme il ressort aussi des traductions différentes.

ON_1, sujet d'un verbe de sentiment au présent atemporel, assure le passage de l'impersonnel *il* au personnel *je*, d'une expérience sensorielle non attribuée à quelqu'un à un sentiment personnel (un souhait), en référant à un

groupe flou qui inclut le locuteur et qui se définit seulement par la propriété attribuée par la prédication : le groupe de ceux qui admirent la grandeur du lac. Aussi est-il traduit en roumain par un pronom démonstratif semi-indépendant au singulier, mais à référence générique et au verbe antéposé, car ce qui compte, c'est le sentiment et moins celui qui le ressent.

(41)
a. *Oh ! C'est alors qu'***il faut voir** *tes vagues superbes*
Scintiller, s'allumer, s'empourprer tour à tour. [...]
O bleu Léman, lac où le ciel se mire,[...]
D'une grandeur que sans cesse **ON₁ admire***[...]*
b. *[...]* **Simte-un fior**/ *La măreția-ți* **cel ce te colindă***.*

(42)
a. *Ah,* **que ne puis-je***, ô lac, sur cette rive*
*Où l'***ON₂ entend** *comme un tendre soupir,*
Comme un regret de ta vague plaintive
Vivre toujours, vivre heureuse et mourir !
Mais non. **Je dois te quitter** *lac que* **j'aime** *[...]*
b. *O de-aș putea rămâne pe-al tău mal*
S-aud *cum plânge apa jalea lin [...]* (M. Pillat, *Pe malul lacului Geneva*)

Au contraire, ON₂ est précédé et suivi du pronom personnel *je* associé à l'expression du désir de communion avec la nature, respectivement à des actions obéissant à d'autres impératifs que son désir. À cause de cette proximité, mais aussi du fait que ON₂ est le sujet d'un verbe de perception qui subit une modulation supplémentaire grâce au complément de comparaison et exprime ainsi plutôt une impression personnelle, ON₂ semble inclure dans sa référence un *je*, mais ne s'y résume pas. Son référent pourrait être quiconque assiste au spectacle. À l'aide de ON et du verbe au présent, une impression personnelle est généralisée pour lui donner plus de force et pour faire d'une expérience personnelle l'illustration d'un ordre du monde immuable. Le désir de communion avec la nature ne peut s'accomplir et cet échec personnel de *je* pourrait devenir représentatif d'une différence capitale qui sépare l'homme et la nature : l'homme est soumis au destin, la nature y échappe, étant la source de tout ce qui existe.

La traduction de ce ON₂ se fait par la 1ʳᵉ personne du singulier incluse dans la désinence du verbe, c'est-à-dire en réduisant la référence de ON à *je*, en même temps qu'on remplace l'indicatif par le « conjunctiv » exprimant le but, c'est-à-dire un fait désirable, non pas réel. La traductrice met l'accent sur la part de subjectivité de ON et construit une autre perspective, plus tranchée, sans cependant modifier le sens global du poème.

Dans *L'éventail*, le sujet ON alterne avec *nous* pour signifier une opposition entre deux attitudes spécifiques d'époques différentes : le respect de l'amour au temps des marquis et marquises, respectivement le mépris du même amour à l'époque présente.

L'opposition passé-présent s'appuie sur les antonymes *vénérer/ dédaigner*, sur les temps verbaux (imparfait/ présent), les adverbes de temps (*alors/ maintenant*), ainsi que sur les sujets ON vs. *nous*. Grâce au contexte, ON devient plus ou moins synonyme d'un *ils* indéfini, exclusif du locuteur, comme le montre aussi la traduction par la 3e personne du pluriel incluse dans la désinence du verbe :

(43)
a. *Mais **ON** le **vénérait** encore : c'était aimable.*
*Car maintenant, hélas ! tous, **nous** le **dédaignons**.*
b. *Dar îl ţineau la cinste: şi tot era mai bine [...]* (V. A. Tăuşan, *Evantaiul*)

Dans une autre poésie de la nature, célébrant le spectacle d'une matinée d'avril (*Aubade d'avril*), l'apostrophe qui précède le pronom ON influence son interprétation : elle convoque explicitement un allocutaire (*mignonne*) et introduit implicitement le locuteur, lesquels devraient partager une expérience rendue saillante par l'emploi de l'impératif, du présent et des adjectifs démonstratifs à valeur déictique.

Dans ce contexte, ON a une référence vague, mais il semble inclure le locuteur qui décrit le spectacle de la matinée et l'allocutaire que le premier convie. La référence vague de ON pourrait expliquer d'ailleurs sa suppression dans la traduction roumaine, où l'objet direct de son verbe, effacé lui aussi, devient sujet grammatical d'un verbe d'existence (sous-entendu en français) :

(44)
a. *Mignonne, ouvre ta fenêtre :*
*L'aube **apparaît** tout en pleurs.*

Vois, l'aurore rayonnante,
Dans cette douce saison,
Dépose ainsi qu'une amante
Ses larmes sur le gazon.

*Et pour que l'**ON** ne désire rien*
*Dans **ce** charmant décor [...]*
b. *[...] Ca nimic să nu lipsească*
În acest decor vrăjit[...] (Crina Decusară-Bocşan, *Zori de aprilie*)

Dans *Feuille verte de chêne*, le jeu des pronoms qui entourent ON permet de reconstituer sa référence. Le récit d'une expérience personnelle, une histoire d'amour malheureuse, où le *je* de la locutrice s'oppose à un *il* désignant l'amoureux éconduit, est suivi d'une généralisation de l'expérience par la définition de deux groupes : le groupe des femmes, désigné par un *nous*, en opposition avec le groupe des amoureux malheureux, car dédaignés des femmes, désigné par ON. Le passage de *je* à *nous* et la définition de *nous* s'appuie sur une apostrophe et sur une métonymie.

Le pronom ON est traduit en roumain par une 3ᵉ personne du singulier très vague incluse dans la désinence du verbe, alors que la référence au groupe des femmes est supprimée par l'effacement du mot *femme* et la traduction du pronom *nous* par un pronom de la 2e personne en datif possessif (*ți*), coréférentiel de l'apostrophe. De cette façon, la dimension universelle de l'expérience se perd, la poésie n'ayant plus qu'une dimension personnelle. La référence de ON est vague, de sorte qu'il n'a pas besoin d'un équivalent exact.

(45)
a. *O pauvre coeur de femme !*
ON *peut mourir à **nos** genoux*
*Sans qu'**ON nous** touche l'âme :*
Nous *aimons qui fuit loin de nous !*
Feuille verte de chêne !
*S'**il** revenait, **mon bel ami**,*
Je *rirais de sa peine.*
Je *pleure, car **il** est parti !*

b. *Biată inimă nătângă !*
*La picioare **poa'** să-ți moară*
*Sufletul fără **să**-ți **frângă** :*
Drag ți-e cel departe doară !
Foaie verde de stejar !
De se-ntoarce bade-al meu,
Am să râd de-al său amar.
De-o pleca, mi-e plânsul greu ! (M. Pillat, *Foaie verde de stejar*)

Dans *Larmes d'enfance*, le pronom ON associé à un verbe de perception au présent fait partie d'une comparaison qui n'est en fait qu'un prétexte pour une évocation nostalgique de l'enfance et de l'amour protecteur. La portée générique de cette comparaison résulte aussi de l'emploi d'un groupe nominal défini à valeur générique avec un verbe au présent atemporel.

La traduction de ON par la 2e personne du singulier générique reflète une interprétation de ON comme pronom indéfini à référence floue qui convient parfaitement aux contextes où la prédication compte plus que la référence.

(46)
a. *Comme au matin la fleur s'humecte de rosée*
Quand la riante aurore apparaît dans les cieux,
Ainsi sous leur paupière, un instant abaissée,
ON *voit briller des pleurs dans d'innocents yeux bleus.*
b. *[...]* ***Vezi*** *plânsuri sub pleoapa o clipă doar lăsată.* (V.A. Tăuşan, *Lacrămile copilăriei*)

Dans *La Feuille*, les premières occurrences de ON (ON$_1$ et ON$_2$) construisent avec les pronoms *tu (te, ton* sort) un clivage entre les humains et la nature, représentée par la feuille tombée.

Plus loin, ON est remplacé par *nous*, lequel se compare de nouveau à un *tu* identifié grâce à l'apostrophe, prétexte d'évoquer son sort et le sort des humains soumis au même principe de transformation.

Les occurrences ON$_3$ et ON$_4$ participent d'un contraste avec *moi* et réfèrent à un groupe dont la locutrice se détache, en raison d'une attitude différente vis-à-vis de la nature :

(47)
Pâle, sèche, ***ON₁ te*** *foule aux pieds,* ***feuille tombée****,*
*Ou l'****ON₂ te*** *fait brûler dans la vive flambée*
Que des enfants rieurs allument vers le soir.[...]

Pauvre feuille perdue *! Ah !* ***ton sort nous*** *retrace*
Notre *propre destin,* ***notre*** *propre disgrâce :*
Nous *naissons, sans savoir où Dieu nous jettera.[...]*

Pendant qu'autour de ***moi l'ON₃*** *rit et* ***l'ON₄*** *murmure,*
J'*entends les mille voix de la grande nature*
Et ce que Dieu me dit dans la plainte du vent.

Alors que dans la construction figée *on ne sait où* et dans les emplois vagues ON$_3$, ON$_4$ s'opposant à *je*, le pronom ON est traduit par une construction pronominale impersonnelle (*nu se ştie unde*, *se râde*, *se vorbeşte),* les deux autres occurrences de ON, dans une construction active à objet direct *(ON₁ te foule aux pieds*) et dans une construction factitive (*ON₂ te fait brûler*), n'ont pas

de correpondant dans la construction passive *eşti călcată în picioare* et dans la construction active *arzi mocnit*, dont le sujet est l'ancien objet direct du factitif. Cette suppression de ON s'explique par sa référence vague et l'importance de la prédication.

Dans *Le cimetière*, le pronom ON sujet d'une construction active est traduit par le pronom indéfini *cineva* à fonction de complément d'agent suivant un participe passé à valeur passive. Cette traduction s'explique par la référence indéfinie de ON utilisé dans la construction d'une hypothèse (voir le verbe *devoir*) :

(48)
a. *Un nom perdu, qu'**ON** a dû bien pleurer*
Jadis [...]
b. *Pierdutul nume plâns de cineva,*
Demult. (M. Pillat, *Ţintirimul*)

Dans le poème *Au bord de la mer*, l'apostrophe aux amis instaure une relation interlocutive permettant par la suite l'emploi des démonstratifs à valeur déictique (*cette* romance, *cette* voix, *cette* basse profonde, *ce* Dieu) et l'emploi d'un ON qui réfère aux humains en général tout en incluant le locuteur et l'allocutaire. Ce ON associé à deux verbes psychologiques (*comprendre* et *voir*) est remplacé en roumain, par modulation métonymique, par des noms désignant les parties du corps responsables des actions dénotées par les verbes : du référent humain de ON, le traducteur ne retient que des parties :

(49)
a. *[...] Ce Dieu, par qui le flot murmure [...]*
*Qui fit ce qu'**ON** ne peut ni comprendre ni voir [...]*
b. *[...] Pe acest Dumnezeu [...]*
*Care făcu ce **ochiul** nu vede, nici **mintea** nu adună* [...] (V. A. Tăuşan, *Pe malul mării*)

Le pronom ON apparaît parfois au beau milieu d'une description personnelle d'un coin de nature. Si *je* s'associe à l'imparfait, ON s'associe au présent générique, car le locuteur interrompt sa description ponctuelle pour formuler une remarque universelle qui permette le passage à une déclaration d'amour. Tout en ayant une valeur indéfinie, ON associé au numéral distributif *à deux* assure la transition d'un *je* solitaire et à un *je* engagé, même illusoirement, dans une relation avec un *tu*. La traduction en roumain de ces vers récupère ON par un pronom de la 1re personne du pluriel en accusatif suivi d'un sujet indéfini construit sur un numéral cardinal:

(50)
a. *Car la nature charme alors qu'**ON** peut à deux*
Sonder de ses beautés l'ineffable mystère ;
Mais sa grandeur effraye une âme solitaire,
Et je te souhaitais près de moi dans ces lieux [...] (*Le Grelot*)
b. *Natura **ne** încântă când doi pot ca să vază [...]* (T. Demetrescu, *Clopoțelul*)

Dans *Les contes bleus*, on compte cinq occurrences de ON dont l'interprétation dépend des autres pronoms du cotexte.

Ainsi, ON_1, ON_4 et ON_5, suivis de près du pronom personnel *me*, renvoient à un sujet vague qui exclut la locutrice, voire s'y oppose en vertu d'une « règle de schizophrénie partielle » (Claire Blanche-Benveniste 1988, 16) qui prévoit que : « quand un pronom complexe rencontre une autre personne, cette dernière ne peut pas être incluse dans le complexe.[...] »[2], ou plus spécifiquement : « [s]i *on* rencontre la personne *moi*, il ne peut la comporter dans sa composition interne ; cela exclut du même coup le *nous*, et *on* ne peut signifier que *eux* [...] »(22).

Non seulement *ON* exclut *je*, mais les deux sujets s'opposent puisqu'ils se voient attribuer des attitudes divergentes par les prédications qu'on leur associe : ON désigne des tiers (*eux*) qui ne croient pas aux contes bleus, voire qui raillent la locutrice (*je*) pour le fait de les chérir.

Dans la traduction roumaine, ON_1 est supprimé, car la construction active où il apparaissait est transformée en construction passive qui met l'accent sur le verbe (*sunt întrebată*). Le sens vague de ON favorise son effacement et la saillance du verbe.

ON_4 et ON_5 et leurs verbes presque synonymes sont transposés en roumain par un seul verbe à sujet de la troisième personne du pluriel inclus dans la désinence. Leur référence reste vague et exclut, comme en français, la personne du locuteur.

(51)
a. ON_1 *me demande pourquoi j'aime*
Comme un enfant, les contes bleus [...]
b. Sunt întrebată *pentru ce*
Iubesc ca un copil aceste
Povești albastre [...] (V. A. Tăușan, *Poveștile albastre*)

(52)
a. *Que l'**ON_4** me raille et qu'**ON_5** se moque*
b. *Ce-mi pasă dacă **râd** de mine [...]* (*ibidem*)

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[2] « Il s'agit de la rencontre, dans un même syntagme, entre les pronoms sujets et compléments construits par un même verbe [...] » (Claire Blanche-Benveniste 1988, 20).

Les deux occurrences intermédiaires de ON (ON$_2$ et ON$_3$) sont, par contre, inclusives de la personne de la locutrice, laquelle tout d'abord s'explique à la 1re personne en réponse à la provocation de ON$_1$, ensuite attribue son point de vue à tout un groupe, désigné premièrement par un *nous* indéfini suivi d'un verbe au présent générique et par la suite justement par ON$_2$:

(53)
a. *Car **je** prends un plaisir extrême*
À tous les récits fabuleux.

***J'**aime à croire aux lutins, aux fées [...]*
*Tout **pour moi** prend âme et parole,*
***Je** me forge un monde meilleur [...],*

C'est un monde de fantaisie [...]
C'est l'enfantine poésie
*Qui **nous** entr'ouvre un coin du ciel !*

Là, point de bien sans récompense.
Les mauvais y sont tous punis.
***ON$_2$** peut y croire à l'innocence.*
Les coeurs fidèles sont unis.

*Hélas ! **ON$_3$** ne voit plus ces choses*
Désormais qu'en rêvant ainsi.

Nous assure le passage vers deux ON, inclusifs de la locutrice, car leurs référents partagent sa croyance dans le monde de fantaisie des contes bleus et dans des valeurs comme l'innocence, la vertu, l'amour, la fidélité. ON$_2$ et ON$_3$ s'opposent à ON$_4$ et ON$_5$, c'est-à-dire à ceux qui, ne sachant pas rêver, considèrent comme invraisemblables les valeurs que ces contes promeuvent. Les référents de ON$_4$ et de ON$_5$ sont définis, d'un côté, par le contraste avec *je*, mais aussi avec ceux qui, comme *je*, croient aux contes, de l'autre côté, par les prédications des questions rhétoriques qui les précèdent (*Comment croire aux amours fidèles[...] ?*).

Malgré la proximité d'un pronom de la 1re personne du pluriel (*Ce cale-n ceruri **ne** despică*), ON$_2$ est traduit par la 2e personne du singulier incluse dans la désinence du verbe et ayant une valeur générique, car dans leur emploi générique les pronoms personnels se valent plus ou moins (*Acolo **crezi** ce-i fără pată*).

ON$_3$ est traduit par une modulation métonymique, car les référents du sujet ON sont réduits à une partie du corps siège de la pensée:

(53)
b. *[...] Vai, aste lucruri sunt **în tâmplă**,*
Doar cât visarea le înşiră. (V. A. Tăuşan, *Poveştile albastre*)

C'est la valeur générique et indéfinie de ON qui permet cette réduction métonymique.

Dans *Berceuse roumaine*, les trois occurrences du pronom ON font partie d'une description où ils s'associent à des verbes de perception : deux au présent générique, un au présent actuel. Dans ce contexte, le pronom ON acquiert lui-même une valeur générique, tout en incluant la locutrice qui évoque d'abord à la 1re personne (*je*) le moment du coucher de l'enfant :

(54)
a. *Je* *vois ta lèvre, ô mes amours [...]*
*Comme **ON** voit au grand soleil d'or*
Une rose sourire.

ON *sent des parfums attiédis*
Flotter dans les yeuses.

C'est l'heure [...]
*Où l'**ON** entend les vagues cris*
Des chouettes dans l'ombre.

L'emploi de ON permet à la locutrice de partager les sensations ressenties avec d'autres, un groupe flou auquel même le lecteur pourrait s'identifier. La référence vague de ON et la saillance des prédications justifient ici aussi l'absence de tout correspondant dans la traduction roumaine, où seuls les noms à fonction d'objet direct des verbes de perception trouvent un équivalent: l'un devient apposition:

(54)
b. *Un trandafiraş*
      vesel zâmbitor
            l-al soarelui foc ! (B. P. Haşdeu, *Cântecul de leagăn*)

un autre, sujet d'un ancien infinitif :

Colo-n stejăriş
      fâlfâie-n văzduh
            fragedul miros.

et le dernier, sujet d'un verbe ajouté pour étoffer la traduction :

> Și din când în când
>   Al bufniței glas
>   cobește ușor.

Dans une autre poésie, ON correspond à une tentative de réconciliation, lorsqu'il suit une antithèse *il vs. je*, où *il* est l'anaphore d'un groupe nominal défini à valeur générique (*l'enfant*). Après une étape où la locutrice exprime un constat sur un changement concernant tout un groupe (les enfants) et exprime ses sentiments vis-à-vis de cette situation (*j'en suis fâchée*, *je voudrais*), elle reprend l'idée sous une forme impersonnelle, en élargissant aussi le groupe auquel elle réfère par l'emploi du pronom ON à la place de *il* :

(55)
a. *Il faut bien qu'**ON** croie à cet âge,*
***ON** croit si rarement après !*(I. Hașdeu, *Encore les contes*)

En roumain, le pronom ON est traduit par la 3e personne du singulier qui se rapporte au nom *copilul*, autrement dit il subit un rétrécissement référentiel par rapport au français, tout comme plus loin le possessif *nos* est remplacé par la 3e personne du pluriel rendant plus évident le clivage *je / il(s)* :

(55)
b. *Căci dacă nu **va crede**-acum,*
***Va crede** apoi arareori.* (V. A. Tăușan, *Iarăși poveștile*).

7. Conclusions

L'analyse des différents emplois de ON dans le corpus poétique nous a permis de remarquer son instabilité référentielle (Hamelin 2018, 10), qui le rend apte à fonctionner dans beaucoup de contextes où la prédication doit être mise en avant (surtout des contextes génériques ou de comparaison).

Dans la poésie de Iulia Hașdeu, ON est très fréquent, car les évocations se construisent, pour la plupart, comme des descriptions ou récits d'expériences personnelles qui ne sont que le prétexte de réflexions à portée universelle. ON permet à l'auteur de varier les perspectives, de passer de l'impersonnel au personnel ou l'inverse en passant par « l'omnipersonnel » (Wilmet 2003, 291).

Son interprétation et sa traduction sont influencées par le cotexte (les autres expressions référentielles personnelles, temporelles ou spatiales, le sens, le mode, la diathèse, les déterminants du verbe), mais aussi par les caractéristiques de genre : certains types de contenus (l'épanchement de la sensibilité) transmis à travers une certaine forme (énonciation à la première personne, présentant certaines caractéristiques métriques, stylistiques). L'expression plus synthétique des idées dans la poésie, l'accent sur l'expressivité expliquent à leur tour les modifications des constructions de ON dans la traduction, allant jusqu'à l'absence d'un correspondant de ON dans le texte cible. Mais avant toute chose, c'est l'indétermination de ON qui lui vaut sa complexité référentielle, *i.e.* tant de possibilités d'emploi et d'interprétation et, par conséquent, de traduction, y compris par Ø, c'est-à-dire sa suppression sans que le sens en soit affecté.

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KOLONIALE FREMDHEITSERFAHRUNG UND BIKULTURELLE EHESCHLIESSUNGEN: ZUR KOLONIALEN AMBIVALENZ BEI JESCO VON PUTTKAMER UND PIERRE LOTI

Romuald Valentin NKOUDA SOPGUI[1]

ABSTRACT. *Colonial Experience of Strangeness and Bicultural Marriages: On Colonial Ambivalence in Jesco von Puttkamer and Pierre Loti.* The following article goes into the literary analysis of colonial strangeness and bicultural marriages through two colonial texts. Jesco von Puttkamer and Pierre Loti exemplify the subject of colonial strangeness from a travel experience. In their texts, colonial experience of foreignness focuses on excerpt of the colonists from their familiar surroundings with travel. The journey in the sign of colonization goes hand in hand with the perception of the foreign space and its inhabitants. Puttkamer's and Loti's main characters do not however abide by the colonial rule of radical distancing from the natives because they have romantic relationships with black women. In both cases, it is an ambivalent attitude of the colonial masters towards the non-European foreign region, which oscillates between positive and negative stereotypes. The depictions of mixed marriages are also characterized by ambivalence, because the black woman acts both as an object of fascination or desire and as a subject of racial power differences. These statements justify the thesis of colonial ambivalence, which is the subject of discussion here. The authors thus confirm the following results, which the article concludes with; namely, that the line between exotic strangeness and colonial stereotyping is difficult to draw. The analyzed narrative sequences also provide information that colonial intermarriage leads to mutual transformations. As an exchange of bodies, colonial marriages

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illustrate the interweaving of the colonial periphery and the European metropolis. To achieve the above goals, Whiteness and (post)colonial Studies provide theoretical foundations that make my investigation more plausible.

REZUMAT. *Experiența colonială de străinătate și căsătorii biculturale: despre ambivalența colonială la Jesco von Puttkamer și Pierre Loti.* Articolul următor intră în analiza literară a străinății coloniale și a căsătoriilor biculturale prin două texte coloniale. Jesco von Puttkamer și Pierre Loti exemplifică subiectul ciudățeniei coloniale dintr-o experiență de călătorie. În textele lor, experiența colonială a străinății se concentrează pe fragmente ale coloniștilor din mediul lor familiar cu călătoriile. Călătoria în semnul colonizării merge mână în mână cu percepția spațiului străin și a locuitorilor acestuia. Personajele principale ale lui Puttkamer și Loti nu respectă totuși regula colonială a distanței radicale de nativi, deoarece au relații romantice cu femei de culoare. În ambele cazuri, este o atitudine ambivalentă a stăpânilor coloniali față de regiunea străină non-europeană, care oscilează între stereotipuri pozitive și negative. Reprezentările căsătoriilor mixte sunt, de asemenea, caracterizate de ambivalență, deoarece femeia de culoare acționează atât ca obiect al fascinației sau al dorinței, cât și ca subiect al diferențelor de putere rasială. Aceste afirmații justifică teza ambivalenței coloniale, care face obiectul discuției aici. Autorii confirmă astfel următoarele rezultate, cu care articolul se încheie; și anume că linia dintre ciudățenia exotică și stereotipurile coloniale este greu de tras. Secvențele narative analizate oferă, de asemenea, informații că căsătoriile coloniale duce la transformări reciproce. Ca schimb de corpuri, căsătoriile coloniale ilustrează împletirea periferiei coloniale cu metropola europeană. Pentru a atinge obiectivele de mai sus, Albul și Studiile (post)coloniale oferă baze teoretice care fac investigația mea mai plauzibilă.

Einleitung

In seinem Buch *Die „Wilden" und die „Zivilisierten": Grundzüge einer Geistes- und Kulturgeschichte der europäisch-überseeischen Begegnung* (1976) systematisiert Urs Bitterli die verschiedenen Formen der europäisch-überseeischen Begegnung. Dabei unterscheidet er folgende Grundformen: Kulturbegegnung, Kulturberührung, Kulturzusammenstoß und Kulturverflechtung.

Ihm zufolge, wurde die Einstellung Europas zu außereuropäischen Völkern im
Kontext der europäisch-überseeischen Begegnung durch den Mythos des
„edlen Wilden" geprägt (Bitterli 1976, 373). In der zweiten Hälfte des 19.
Jahrhunderts trat Europa in ein Zeitalter der kolonialen Eroberungen ein, in
dessen Verlauf sich zunehmend engere Beziehungen zu Afrika und deren
Bewohnern herausbildeten. Der europäische Imperialismus auf dem afrikanischen
Kontinent war nicht nur ein Zeitalter kolonialer Herrschaft und Unterwerfung,
sondern auch eine Epoche kultureller Wahrnehmungsformen. Europäische
Kolonialgebiete in Afrika wurden somit zum experimentierten Feld kultureller
Fremdheit, wo es auch zu verschiedenartigen Beziehungsschließungen zwischen
Kolonisierten und Kolonisatoren kam. Jesco von Puttkamer und Pierre Loti
exemplifizieren, aus einer literarischen Reiseerfahrung, die Thematik der
kolonialen Fremdheit. Koloniale Fremdheitserfahrung ist bei diesen Autoren
ein Auszug des Kolonisten aus seiner vertrauten Umgebung mit Reise. Die Reise
im Zeichen der Kolonisation geht mit Entdeckung und Wahrnehmung des fremden
Raumes einher. Darüber hinaus zeigen Puttkamers und Lotis männliche Figuren
eine besondere Neigung zu „einheimischen" Frauen. Durch diese Figuren
interessieren sich Puttkamer und Loti für schwarz-weiße Liebe bzw. für
Mischehefrage. Damit bekunden beide Autoren die Frage des „*Going Native*", die
Christof Hamann und Magdalena Kißling zufolge, seit den europäischen
Entdeckungsreisen in der Literatur verhandelt wird, wobei diese in der Regel:
„[…] an die Verbindung zwischen einem weißen Mann und einer einheimischen
Frau geknüpft sind. Gerade die Kolonialliteratur diskutiert dieses
Geschlechterverhältnis oder allgemeiner: das Überschreiten der Grenzen einer
männlich konnotierten Zivilisation und einer weiblich konnotierten Wildnis
besonders intensiv" (Hamann und Kißling 2017, 151-152).

Ziel des vorliegenden Aufsatzes ist es, am Beispiel von zwei Kolonialtexten
belletristischer Prägung, nämlich Jesco von Puttkamers *Das Duallamädchen* (1908)
und Pierre Lotis *Le Roman d'un Spahi* (1881), auf die literarische Schilderung der
kolonialen Fremdheit und auf die bikulturelle Eheschließungen einzugehen. Als
Tertium Comparationis gilt, dass im Mittelpunkt beider Erzählungen, eine exotische
Haltung gegenüber den bereisten kolonialen Gebieten steht. Genauer gesprochen
handelt es sich um eine ambivalente, zwischen positiver und negativer
Stereotypisierung, Einstellung des Kolonisten zu dem außereuropäischen
fremden Raum. Die Darstellungen der Mischehen in beiden Texten sind auch
voller Ambivalenzen, weil die schwarze Frau sowohl zum Objekt der
Faszination bzw. der Begierde als auch zum Subjekt kolonialen Besitz wird. Der
Körper der schwarzen Frau steht am Kreuzpunkt von Liebesgeschichte und
Rassendiskurs. Diese Feststellungen begründen die These der kolonialen
Ambivalenz, von der es hier die Rede sein wird. Damit bestätigen Jesco von

Puttkamer und Pierre Loti folgende Ergebnisse, zu denen der Aufsatz abschließend kommt; nämlich, dass:

- die Grenze zwischen exotischer Fremdheit und kolonialer Stereotypisierung schwer zu trennen war;
- trotz der kolonialen Ideologie, die bikulturelle Eheschließungen als strenge Grenze zwischen den Menschenrassen sah, Mischehen im kolonialen Kontext zu gegenseitigen Aneignungen führten;
- europäische koloniale Machtansprüche nur begrenzt realisiert werden konnten, weil wo gezielt versucht, Herrschaft einzusetzen, sie den Beherrschten die Möglichkeit, die ihnen attestierte Inferiorität zu überwinden eröffnete;
- die europäisch-afrikanische Kolonialbegegnung nie einseitig, sondern wechselseitig war.

Diese Schlüsse werden anhand der erwähnten Texte gezeigt. Vorab stelle ich die Romane dar.

In Jesco von Puttkamers *Das Duallamädchen* kommt der Protagonist Sven Beckmanns, der neue Faktorleiter, gerade aus Deutschland nach Kamerun, um seinen verstorbenen Vorgänger zu ersetzen. Er stellt vor Ort fest, dass Kowa, der kamerunische Mitarbeiter der Faktorei, dessen Arbeit darin bestand, für die Faktorei Rohrprodukte bei den Bakwiri und Bali im kamerunischen Hinterland anzukaufen, das Kapital der Faktorei nach dem Tod seines Chefs veruntreut hat. Weil nach Drohungen Beckmanns der Schuldige Kowa das vergeudete Kapital der Faktorei nicht zurückbezahlen kann, lässt er seine Tochter Nyamya als Wirtschaftlerin bei Beckmanns einstellen. Durch ihren Lohn bezahlt Nyamya die Schulden ihres Vaters. Für den in Kamerun unerfahrenen deutschen Faktorleiter ist die Tochter Kowas gleichzeitig Mutter, Mitarbeiterin, Köchin und Freundin. Sie wird sogar zu seiner Frau. Hier setzen die inneren Konflikte bei Beckmanns ein. Als Deutscher verstößt er durch seine Heirat mit Nyamya gegen die Normen der kolonialen Ordnung, die weder Rassengleichheit duldet noch Rassenvermischung zulässt. Diese Mischehe und damit eingehenden Probleme führen dazu, dass Beckmann seine Arbeit verliert. Er will in seine Heimat zurück, um persönlich die Sache bei seinem hamburgischen Arbeitsgeber zu klären. Dies ist aber die Zeit der ewigen Trennung, weil seine schwarze Frau mit ihrer gemeinsamen Tochter ertrinkt, als sie versucht, mit einem Kanu am Bord des Dampfers zu gelangen.

Den historischen Hintergrund von Pierre Lotis *Le roman d'un spahi* bilden die Kämpfe zwischen den französischen kolonialen Soldaten „Spahis" und den rebellierten schwarzen Machthabern. Die Erzählzeit hier ist das

Zeitalter der „Troisième République Française" (1871-1914) und deren kolonialen Ideologie, die auf eine militärische und administrative Unterwerfung eroberter Gebiete abzielte, aber keine Mischung von französischen und afrikanischen Völkern duldete. Und genau hier setzt Lotis Erzählung ein, also beim Thema der Rassenmischung. Der Roman erzählt von den Liebeserlebnissen François Peyrals, einem französischen Soldaten im Schwarzafrika bzw. im Senegal. In einer Traurigkeit, seine Eltern und seine Verlobte Jeanne Méry verlassen zu haben, befreundet er sich mit Fatou Gaye, einer jungen schwarzen Afrikanerin. Letztere wird drei Jahrelang Freundin und Herrin des französischen Soldaten sein. Als die militärische Verwaltung den jungen „Spahi" nach Algier schicken will, nimmt er die Bitte eines Kameraden aus Algerien an, die Position zu wechseln, und entschließt sich, die zwei ihm verbleibenden Dienstjahre im Senegal zu verbringen. Er reist nach Guinea und nimmt Fatou Gaye mit. Nach drei Monaten kehren sie nach Saint-Louis zurück als Jean Peyral durch einen Brief die Nachricht erfährt, dass Jeanne Méry, seine Braut in den Cevennen, einen Gerichtsvollzieher heiraten wird. Gleichzeitig entdeckt er, dass Fatou Gaye die wertvolle Uhr, die sein Vater ihm geschenkt hat, verkauft hat, um sich Schmuck zu kaufen. Er vertreibt seine Herrin. Später findet Fatou-Gaye ihren Mann wieder und stellt ihm ihr gemeinsames Kind vor. Während einer Schlacht in der Wüste wird Jean Peyral getötet. Verzweifelt tötet Fatou-Gaye das Mischlingskind und dann begeht Selbstmord.

Jesco von Puttkamer[2] und Pierre Loti[3] allegorisieren durch die Geschichten Sven Beckmanns und Jean Peyrals, die Beziehungen zu Afrikanerinnen eingehen, die europäische Faszination für das Fremde. Diese Figuren ordnen sich in die Kategorie der „*Queer imperial*" ein. Der Begriff:

> […] refers to political and cultural ways of being in which Queer, Othered bodies represent erotically […] objects of domination. But more ways of being, the *Queer imperial* is also a person: a soldier, a colonialist […] of colonial fiction, for who contact with sexualities constitutes crucial aspects of conquest and empire-building. The Queer imperial relies on the racialized,

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[2] Jesco von Puttkamer, eigentlich Leo Constantin, war ein Berliner Publizist und Schriftsteller. Es gibt wenige Informationen über ihn. *Das Deutsche Literaturlexikon. Biographisch-bibliographisches Handbuch* von 1972 sagt nur, dass er 1858 in Berlin geboren und 1916 in Dresden gestorben ist. Er bricht die militärische Laufbahn ab und unternimmt Reisen nach Frankreich, Italien und der Schweiz. 1880 wird er Verleger in Dresden. Wahrscheinlich kannte er Kamerun nur aus Forschungsberichten.

[3] Pierre Loti, eigentlich, Louis Marie Julien Viaud (1850-1923) ist in der Literaturgeschichte Frankreichs für seine exotischen Romane und Kurzgeschichten bekannt. Seine Romane *Aziyadé* (1879), *Le mariage de Loti* (1880) und *Madame Chrysanthème* (1887) setzen sich aus unterschiedlichen Perspektiven mit der Darstellung des Fremden auseinander.

gendered and sexual mythologies about [colonized] populations to both justify socio-political inequalities and to deflect attention from the erotic obsessions of colonizing forces (Everret 2018, 2).

Die gewählten Romane lassen sich mit Weißsein- und (post)kolonialen Ansätzen untersuchen. Dementsprechend siedle ich Puttkamers und Lotis Diskurse im Schnittpunkt von kolonialen und patriarchalen Machtkonstruktionen an, wobei die Verbindung von Exotismus und Kolonialismus deutlich wird.

Nun gilt es zu sehen, wie sich dies konkret in den dargestellten Texten artikuliert werden. Im Folgenden wird erstens auf die Artikulationsform der Fremdheit in den Texten eingegangen. Es wird besonders hier von dem Exotismus als ästhetischer Diskurs und koloniale Wahrnehmungsform die Rede sein. Zweitens setzte ich mich mit der interkulturellen Liebe auseinander. Rasse und Geschlecht werden in Puttkamers und in Lotis Romanen fokussiert, wobei das Wort Geschlecht als Synonym für Rasse verwendet wird, wenn vom Geschlecht der schwarzen Frau die Rede ist. Der Rassenunterschied heizt das Begehren nach dem Anderen, die Lust auf das Fremde und das Exotische an. Die Topoi der Verfügbarkeit und Verführbarkeit sind der farbigen Frau inhärent, da sie als Sklavin sowie lieblicher Besitz des weißen Herrn ist. Weil das koloniale Herrschaftsbedürfnis, nach einer deutlichen Abgrenzung und Hierarchisierung von Kolonisierenden und Kolonisierten zu einer immer stärkeren Regulierung und Diskriminierung von Mischehen führte, wird abschließend die These der kolonialen Einseitigkeit missbilligt.

Exotismus als koloniale Fremdheit: die dichotomische Konstruktion des Anderen

Die Kolonialliteratur steht am Schnittpunkt zwischen Exotismus und Fremdheit. Victor Segalen hat in seinem *Essai sur l'exotisme: une esthétique du divers* (1976) eine umfangreiche Überlegung zum Begriff Exotismus geliefert. Dabei geht er vom „Präfix *Exo-* aus, das zunächst alles bezeichnet, was sich außerhalb unseres alltäglichen Bewusstseins befindet und nicht in unsere gewohnte Lebenswelt passt" (Segalen 1976, 24). Der französische Komparatist Jean-Marc Moura geht seinerseits einer ausführlichen Begriffsbestimmung nach und stellt die Artikulationsformen des Exotismus als literarische Schreibweise dar. In seinem Buch *Lire L'exotisme* schreibt er:

L'origine de l'exotisme est de toute lecture, le désir d'un ailleurs plus beau, plus chatoyant, plus étonnant que le réel. L'exotisme établit une distance par rapport au morne quotidien. D'une manière générale, l'exotisme revêt une ambivalence dans laquelle s'inscrivent à la fois le

positif et le négatif. S'il est rêverie du lointain, l'exotisme est aussi une
attitude mentale, système de représentation et écriture (Moura 1992, 25).

Jesco von Puttkamers *Das Duallamädchen*[4] und Pierre Lotis *Le Roman d'un
Spahi*[5] ordnen sich literaturgeschichtlich in die Kategorie des kolonialen
Exotismus ein. Es sind Texte, die von einer ständigen Suche nach dem ‚Ich'
zeugen, wobei das identitätssuchende ‚Ich' vor allem versucht, sich vor der
Gefahr des vorgestellten Anderen zu behaupten. In den beiden Romanen bedienen
sich die Autoren der auktorialen Erzählperspektive. Der Erzähler steht
außerhalb der Welt der Figuren und gestaltet ihre Rollen. Er ist allwissend und
allmächtig. Die Multifokalisation d.h. die Autorenperspektive zur Wahrnehmung
des fremden Raumes fokussiert auf die exogene Perspektive. Dabei ist der
Autor ein Fremder und hält den fiktionalisierten Raum für exotisch.

Im Roman von Jesco von Puttkamer wird durch Rückwendungen und
Exkurse des Erzählers das Dekorum des täglichen Berufs der Hauptfigur Sven
Beckmanns als Leiter der Hamburger Faktorei in Kamerun kenntlich gemacht.
In den ersten Zeilen des Romans wird der Leser über den Beginn des
Dienstauftrags der Hauptfigur informiert:

> „Dë, Massa! Warum gehst du weiter?" sagte der schlanke Duallajunge zu dem
> neuen Faktoreileiter, der erst seit einer Woche mit dem Woermanndampfer
> von Hamburg eingetroffen war und sich in der Ansiedlung noch nicht
> zurecht fand. „So sag' mir doch vorher Bescheid, Nbop, du schwarzer
> Teufel! Sonst laufe ich natürlich verkehrt", erwiderte Sven Beckmanns
> unwillig. (DDM: 5)

Sven Beckmanns wird als Laie vorgestellt, die bei seinem einheimischen
Mitarbeiter Erfahrung sammeln soll, wie man am besten in der Kolonie Handel
treibt. Der koloniale Kontext verbietet ihm jede Demut, weil er sich vor den
Einheimischen verschaffen muss. Dass der exotische fremde Raum multikulturell
ist, wird durch seine Sprachenvielfalt wiedergegeben. Diesbezüglich wimmelt die
Erzählung von Begriffen und Ausdrücken aus lokalen Sprachen, bzw. aus einer
deutsch-englischen Mischung, wenn es um das Reden kamerunischer Figuren
geht (DDM: 28). Englische Wörter tauchen ohne Erläuterungen in der Erzählung
auf (DDM: 30, 32, 36, 37). Jesco von Puttkammer nimmt in seiner Erzählung die
Vielfalt der Sprachen des Handlungsortes auf und setzt sie ins Verhältnis. Diese

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[4] Jesco, von Puttkamer. 1908. *Das Duallamädchen*, Leipzig, Müller-Mann'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung.
Im Folgenden DDM sigliert.

[5] Pierre, Loti. 1881. *Le roman d'un spahi*, Paris, Calman-Lévy. Im Folgenden LRS sigliert.

dichterische Fremdwahrnehmung des mehrsprachigen kamerunischen Fremdkulturraums zeigt:

> [...] wie die literarische Verarbeitung der Fremdwahrnehmung des Fremden widerspiegelt wird. Untersucht wird das Verhältnis zwischen der literarischen Verarbeitung der Mehrsprachigkeit und der Fremdwahrnehmung des Protagonisten im Sinne von abständiger Identifikation bzw. Teilidentifikation, im Sinne einer subtilen Verkapselung und Enigmatisation der Fremdkultur oder von admirativer Identifikation mit der Fremdkultur und letztendlich im Sinne von Fremdverständnis (Nantcha 2006, 82).

Mit der Schilderung von Menschen in Jesco von Puttkammers Roman landet der exotische Diskurs in die Welt der Stereotype. Hier operiert er mit einfachen Stereotypen. Seine Afrikaner haben immer wieder krauses Kopfhaar, starke Backenknochen, breite, übermäßig aufgeworfenen Lippen, blendend weiße Zähne (DDM: 4). Es zeichnet sich aber auch in der Wahrnehmung de(r)s Kameruner(s)in als „edle Wilde' eine positive Wertung ab. Die Bewohner des fremden Landes werden für ihr natürliches Aussehen, ihr einfaches Leben und für ihre primitiven Sitten und Gebräuche gelobt. Der Erzähler legt auch viel Wert auf die künstlerische Leistung der Tänzer und vor allem Tänzerinnen, die europäische Gäste begeistern. Nyamya zeigt bei dem Palmweinfest ihre Geschmeidigkeit beim Tanzen. Der Erzähler berichtet:

> Nun musste sie tanzen und wie tanzte sie; sie war eine ebenbürtige Partnerin des riesenstarken Balimannes. Die ganze Geschmeidigkeit ihres Körpers kam dabei zum Ausdruck. Bald warf sie den Nacken weit zurück, bald flog sie wirbelnd zu ihm hin, die Augen sprühten Flammen, ihr Mund öffnete sich und ließ die weißen Zähne hervorleuchten. Er wollte sie ergreifen, sie umschlingen, sie entwand sich ihm, dann schlossen sie sich urplötzlich eng zusammen. Alle wurden von dem wilden Tanz des Paares unwiderstehlich mitgerissen (DDM: 85).

Das exotische Vergnügen springt aus den Augen. Besonders geht es um eine positive Sinnesempfindung, die mit körperlichem und geistigem Wohlbehagen verbunden ist. Sven Beckmanns bietet in der Wahrnehmung des Duallamädchens eine reduktionistische Form:

> Als Sven Beckmanns in den Hof eintrat, hob das Mädchen langsam den Blick auf und schaute ihn neugierig an. Sein scharfes blaues Auge glitt rasch über ihre nackte Gestalt hinweg, sie fühlte dies instinktiv, sprang plötzlich schnell und geschmeidig wie eine Antilope auf und wurde

> unruhig. Sie war groß und etwas überschlank, aber dabei von edlen
> Formen, das Gesicht wäre fast regelmäßig zu nennen gewesen, wenn
> nicht die etwas zu breite Nase und die stark aufgeworfenen Lippen es
> wieder verdorben hätten. Das schmale Hüfttuch bedeckte ihren Körper
> kaum eine Handbreit und sie empfand, dass der feurige Glanz der hellen
> Augen des blonden Mannes voll auf ihr ruhte (DDM: 7-8)

Das typische afrikanische Frauenbild steht im Kontrast zum bürgerlichen
europäischen Frauenbild. Die Ursprünglichkeit des Duallamädchens, so Albert
Gouaffo:

> antwortet auf die Nostalgie des kulturmüden europäischen Erzählers
> dadurch, dass er in der Wahrnehmung des exotischen Anderen Kompensation
> für verlorene Teile seiner Identität findet. Dies geschieht durch die
> Gleichstellung von Schönheitsidealen: das scharfe blaue Auge des
> europäischen Mannes wird der nackten und schmeidigen Gestalt der
> exotischen Frau gegenübergestellt, der feurige Glanz des blonden
> Mannes den edlen Formen des Mädchens (Gouaffo 2007, 108).

Pierre Lotis *Le roman d'un spahi* thematisiert ebenfalls in einer gleichen Art, wie
Puttkamer, die koloniale Fremdheit. Der Text zählt zur französischen
Kolonialbelletristik mit afrikanischem Bezug, die sich mit dem Exotismus
auseinandersetzt. Als Mustertext der exotischen Literatur, Lotis Roman :

> […] prolonge le discours colonial avec sa vision dichotomique et avec
> l'autoréférentialité de l'Occident dans la représentation des Autres qu'il
> met en place. Il est également un écho du discours [colonial] par une
> forme d'ambiguïté et d'ambivalence qu'il introduit dans la relation avec
> cet autre qu'est l'Afrique pour le personnage principal du roman, et plus
> particulièrement, la femme noire (Mudimbe-Boyi 2006, 49-50).

Der Exotismus als Sehnsucht nach der Fremde verfährt bei Loti mit
Grenzziehungen. Zum einen wird die Identität des Eigenen in Frage gestellt und
kritisiert. Zum anderen wird die Fremde als Lösung für eigene Identitätsprobleme
betrachtet und idealisiert. Lotis Bild von Afrika erneuert und verfestigt europäische
Klischees und Stereotypen zu diesem Kontinent. Im Roman nimmt der Exotismus
als ästhetische Herangehensweise der Fremdheit unterschiedliche Formen. Es
wird zuerst in den Wortschatz durch die Verwendung von Wörtern aus der
lokalen Sprache eingeschrieben, um lokale Realitäten anzuzeigen, die im
kulturellen Kontext des westlichen Sprechers nicht existieren. Es geht meistens
um Wörter auf Französisch, aber mit einer veränderten Schreibweise, wie zum
Beispiel: *bamboula* (LRS: 84), *toubab* (LRS: 38), *tara* (LRS: 13), *kéou* (LRS: 17),

khâliss (LRS: 17), *keffir* (LRS: 37), *boubou* (LRS: 168), *soumare* (LRS: 76), *ngabou* (LRS: 164), *laobe* (LRS: 69), *kousskouss* (LRS: 78). Die erzählerische Technik hier ist die Verfremdung der Sprache. Durch diese lexikalischen Spiele verstärkt der Erzähler die Fremdheit des Textes und würzt somit das Exotische. In der Beschreibung des Landes und seiner Bewohner werden die Züge des Exotischen deutlicher. Der Blick des Erzählers entwirft eine zweideutige Sicht auf die Bewohner und erfasst die Landschaft in einer komplexeren Deutung. Der Erzähler beschreibt: „[...] d'immenses fourmilières humaines sur le rivage, des milliers et des milliers de cases, des huttes lilliputiennes aux toits pointus, où grouille une bizarre population nègre. [...] Ces piroguiers sont des grands hercules maigres, admirables de formes et de muscles, avec des faces de gorilles" (LRS: 10). Afrika ist zwar schön, attraktiv und faszinierend, aber schrecklich, erschreckend und abstoßend zugleich. Einerseits hat man die Beschreibung eines verfluchten Erdteils:

> Les grands marais fétides, les eaux stagnantes, saturées de miasmes de fièvre, gagnaient du terrain chaque jour ; une haute végétation herbacée couvrait maintenant ce pays de sable [...] Au- dessus des graminées couraient des nuées de libellules aux grandes ailes tachées de noir, - en même temps que des oiseaux dont le chant lui était inconnu s'appelaient plaintivement sous les hautes herbes... Et l'éternelle tristesse de la terre de Cham planait sur tout cela. [...] A ces heures crépusculaires, ces marais d'Afrique au printemps avaient une tristesse qu'on ne saurait exprimer avec des mots d'aucune langue humaine (LRS : 61).

Andererseits kommt es zu einer Bewunderung des Sonnenuntergangs: „Le ciel est d'un bleu vert, sombre, profond, étoilé à l'infini. La lune éclaire comme le plein jour, et dessine les objets avec une étonnante netteté, dans les teintes roses "(LRS: 51). Von einem Zustand der Natur aus, erweist sich die tropische Landschaft als wild, ungeordnet, üppig und anziehend:

> Mais tout cela était mouvementé, vivant, original à l'excès. Il y avait de la verdure, des forêts, des fleurs, des montagnes et des eaux vives, une grande splendeur terrible dans la nature. [...] jean regarde, et se sent vivre. Il ne regrette plus d'être venu maintenant : son imagination n'avait rien soupçonné de pareil. Plus tard, *au pays*, quand il sera de retour, il sera heureux d'avoir mis le pied dans cette région lointaine, et de s'en souvenir [...] un merveilleux pays aux paysages étranges (LRS : 121-122).

In Afrika ist die Hauptfigur auf der Suche nach dem eigenen Ursprung. Der fremde Raum ist ein Mikrokosmos, der alles in sich vereint. Es ist das Afrika im Kleinem mit „le soleil terne et rouge", „l'intense lumière tropicale", „l'air lourd",

„le sable infini", „l'excès de chaleur et de lumière". Das faszinierende Afrika wird als „merveilleux pays de chasse, de vertu et de forêts" (LRS: 181 und 125) beschrieben. Die tropische Landschaft befreit und entzündet die Phantasie. Das Fremde wird zum eigenen Land: „Jean parlait de „son désert", „son Sénégal", „son grand pays […] auquel il se sent retenu, enlacé" (LRS : 106). Ferner erscheint die idealisierte tropische Natur mit ihrer Kehrseite. Wegen der brennenden Sonne wird das Fremde als erdrückend empfunden. Die Sonne wird mit dem Feuer verglichen. Das Fremde ist ein „grand brasier de feu blanc pourvu d'un ciel gris violacé" (LRS: 125). Diese Kontrastierung deutet das tragische Ende der Hauptfigur voraus.

Die Einstellung zu der fremden Kultur und ihren Angehörigen ist besonders durch essentialistische Diskurse geprägt. Rassische bzw. sexuelle Stereotype kennzeichnen die Darstellungen von Afrikanern. Es wird beim Porträtieren der Afrikaner auf ihre Hautfarbe insistiert. Lotis AfrikanerInnen verkörpern einige der ethnischen Stereotype, denen der Europäer in seinen Vorstellungen vom Afrikaner folgt: „persévérance nègre" (LRS : 10), „âme noire", „sueur nègre" (LRS : 45), „gaîté nègre" (LRS : 60), „esplièg leries nègres" (LRS : 70), „printemps nègre" (LRS : 62), „sourire nègre" (LRS : 100), „leur coeur noir", „prière noire" (LRS : 109). Es wird in der vorliegenden Beschreibung von der Farbsymbolik Gebrauch gemacht denn alles wird metonymisch auf die schwarze Farbe reduziert. Die Sexualität der Schwarzen steht auch im Blickfeld des Erzählers. Er widmet der Schilderung von Tanzszenen umfangreiche Erzählsequenzen. Dabei wird die sexuelle Uneingeschränktheit der Afrikaner beim Tanzen akribisch beschrieben:

> — *Anamalis fobil* ! — hurlaient les *Griots* en frappant sur leur tam-tam, — l'œil enflammé, les muscles tendus, le torse ruisselant de sueur… Et tout le monde répétait en frappant des mains, avec frénésie : *Anamalis fobil* ! — *Anamalis fobil* !… *Anamalis fobil* ! les premiers mots, la dominante et le refrain d'un chant endiablé, ivre d'ardeur et de licence, — le chant des bamboulas du printemps !… *Anamalis fobil* ! hurlement de désir effréné, — de sève noire surchauffée au soleil et d'hystérie torride… alléluia d'amour nègre, hymne de séduction chanté aussi par la nature, par l'air, par la terre, par les plantes, par les parfums ! Aux bamboulas du printemps, les jeunes garçons se mêlaient aux jeunes filles qui venaient de prendre en grande pompe leur costume nubile, et, sur un rythme fou, sur des notes enragées, — ils chantaient tous, en dansant sur le sable : *Anamalis fobil* ! […] (LRS : 89).

Das Spannende bei diesem lokalen Tanz ist, dass sich Jean durch diese Naturhaftigkeit versetzen fühlt. Der Erzähler meint:

> Jean sentait que ce printemps nègre lui brûlait le sang, qu'il courait comme un poison dévorant dans ses veines… Le renouveau de toute cette vie l'énervait, lui, — parce que cette vie n'était pas la sienne : —

chez les hommes, le sang qui bouillonnait était noir ; chez les plantes, la sève qui montait était empoisonnée ; les fleurs avaient des parfums dangereux, et les bêtes étaient gonflées de venin… Chez lui aussi, la sève montait, la sève de ses vingt-deux ans […] (LRS : 89).

Diese Textstelle zeigt aus einer europäisch erzählerischen Perspektive wie, die Hauptfigur über eigene Wunschbilder und Phantasien reflektiert.

Aus den bisherigen Darlegungen ist zu entnehmen, dass die koloniale Fremdheitserfahrung im Zeichen des Exotismus zwischen Faszination und Ausgrenzung oszilliert. In den beiden Werken werden der tropische Raum und seine Bewohner als etwas Merkwürdiges und Ursprüngliches empfunden. Aber die Kehrseiten werden auch sichtbar. Die koloniale Welt wird somit in einer ästhetischen Idealisierung ins Positive und Negative unterzogen, kurz gleichzeitig *locus amoenus* und *locus terribilis.* Darüber hinaus, verwandeln interkulturelle Eheschließungen die Kolonie in Herrschaftsraum und Beziehungsgeflecht. Diesen Punkt möchte ich im Folgenden untersuchen.

Interkulturelle Eheschließungen im kolonialen Kontext: zwischen Machtanspruch und Gegenseitigkeit

Die europäisch-afrikanische Kolonialbegegnung, wie sie von Puttkamer und von Loti thematisiert wird, kreist um die Überkreuzung sexueller Differenzen. Dabei wird die farbige Frau aus europäischer Sicht zur exotischen Oberfläche, wo Begierde und Sexualität zusammen wirken. Dazu schreibt Daouda Mar:

Les écrivains coloniaux ont déjà une vision fantasmatique de la femme noire. Sur le plan sociologique, l'Africaine fait partie, pour ainsi dire, de la vie des coloniaux. Souvent, ceux-ci insistent sur les qualités corporelles de celle-là, nonobstant le fait que l'idéologie coloniale a tendance à refuser aux coloniaux des avantages quelconques. Chez l'écrivain colonial […] le personnage de la femme noire est d'une nature essentiellement érotique […] (Mar 2001, 443).

In Puttkamers und in Lotis Erzählungen liegen kolonialen Eheschließungen Macht- und Herrschaftsmechanismen zugrunde. In Anlehnung an die Weißsein Studies lassen sich in der Interaktion zwischen dem weißen Mann und der afrikanischen Frau Formen der Macht und Dominanz ablesen. Im Vordergrund beider Texte steht die Beschreibung der Schönheit afrikanischer Frauen. Da die beobachtenden Figuren ausschließlich männlich sind, ziehen sie nur solche weiblichen afrikanischen Figuren positiv in Betracht, die dem Schönheitsideal

europäischer Männer entsprechen. Dadurch werden die Präferenzen europäischer Figuren sichtbar.

Sven Beckmann hält Nyamya für die schönste aller Mädchen des Duala Stammes. Obwohl sie eine „magere Ziege" (DDM: 11) im Vergleich zu anderen Mädchen ist, wird Nyamya mit ihrer „primitiven" Natur Beckmanns Herz erobern. Ihre Bezeichnung als „wildes" Kind steigert sie widersprüchlich zum Weib ihres Herrn und später zu seiner Frau. Aus der Ehe wird eine Tochter geboren. Die Eheschließung bietet Beckmanns die Gelegenheit einen kolonialen Idyll im kamerunischen Hinterland zu genießen (DDM: 221). Wegen der Schönheit und der Liebe ‚verwildert' die Hauptfigur und wird zu einer Art „transfuge culturel"[6]. Gemäß den Landessitten bezahlt Sven Beckmanns den Kaufpreis und lässt die Ehe in der Kirche segnen (DDM: 232). Unausgesprochen der kulturellen Unterschiede betrachtet Beckmanns Nyamya als seine Frau. Als Helene, die weiße Krankenschwester, sie im europäischen Krankenhaus für unerwünscht hält, verteidigt er seine Frau und meint sie sei seine Frau und habe Recht bei ihm zu sein. Um ihre vermeintliche Unterlegenheit zu bewältigen, lässt Nyamya Beckmanns den Herrn spielen, aber unterstreicht die ungleiche Behandlung und das Verschleiern der Gegenseitigkeit zwischen ihr und ihrem Mann (DDM: 214). Die „Mimikry" (Bhabha 1984) kommt ins Spiel mit dem Ziel, die Brüchigkeit des kolonialen Diskurses zu zeigen. Sven Beckmanns und seine Frau stoßen sich aber auf die strengen Gesetze der deutschen kolonialen Ideologie, die weder interkulturelle Liebe noch Rassenmischung duldet. Die koloniale Ordnung, die durch das Konzept Rasse und die daraus resultierenden Hierarchien symbolisiert ist, droht in Folge dieser Beziehung zu zerbrechen. Die Kolonie ist erzählerisch als Reich des „Tropenkollers" (DDM: 7) dargestellt, in dem der europäische Kolonist versuchen muss, jeden „Begehren den Gedanken" (DDM: 23) zu unterdrücken. Es scheint als ob Beckmanns sich mit der Malaria infiziert, als er mit Nyamya, dem Duallamädchen schläft. Im Krankenhaus wird Beckmanns geklärt, dass die „Verschmelzung der Weißen mit Negern" (DDM: 157) der Kolonie schade, da die „Herrenmoral" unter der Mischehe leide. Rassenbewusstsein und Selbstlebensführung gelten als Kriterien der kolonialen Grenzziehung. Das Prinzip ist unwiderruflich: zwischen Kolonie und Metropole darf keine Versöhnung geben. Wer dieses Gesetz überschreitet verliert seine weiße Identität. Die Befürchtung ist die Entstehung einer Einheitsrasse, die jegliche Unterschiede zwischen den Menschen nivellieren könnte. Die

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[6] «Transfuge culturel» oder „kultureller Überläufer" verweist auf eine Akkulturation in umgekehrter Richtung. Damit bezeichnet János Riesz den Fall von europäischen Kolonisatoren, die von primitiven Kulturen verführt waren. Riesz zufolge ist, im Hinblick auf die historischen Bedingungen der Kolonisation und angesichts der damaligen Machtverhältnisse, die Akkulturation von Kolonisierten die Regel und die von Europäern an außereuropäische Kulturen die Ausnahme.

Anprangerung der Beziehung zwischen Kolonisatoren und Kolonisierten bestätigt das normativ regulierte Projekt der kolonialen Eheschließungen, das „verkafferte" Kolonisten ins Visier hat. Beckmanns, als „Rassenverschmutzter", wird nun mit „Abscheu gegen sich selbst" (DDM: 212) erfüllt. Die Liebesgeschichte endet tragisch, weil Nyamya und ihre Tochter in einem Fahrwasser ertrinken, als beide Deutschland erreichen wollen. Das Wasser figuriert hier als Metonymie der Grenze zwischen Kolonisatoren und Kolonisierten und als Fegefeuers, in dem die schwarze Frau für immer gereinigt wird, um die Busse ihrer Sünde zu bekommen: die Annäherung an die „reine" Rasse.

In Pierre Lotis *Le roman d'un spahi* insistiert der Erzähler auf die Schönheit Fatou-Gayes. Ihre physische Erscheinung entspricht den Zügen ihrer ethnischen Abstammung. Sie ist:

> Le type Khassonké dans toute sa pureté: une fine petite figure grecque, avec une peau lisse et noire comme de l'onyx poli, des dents d'une blancheur éclatante, une extrême mobilité des yeux, des larges prunelles de jais sans cesse en mouvement, roulant de droite et de gauche sur le fond d'une blancheur bleuâtre, entre les deux paupières noires (LRS : 64).

Der Wahrnehmungsmodus fokussiert auf somatische Eigenschaften der schwarzen Frau. Ihre Zähne funkeln und ihre Augen bewegen sich. Fatou-Gaye, so Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, fügt sich in den Erzählraum durch ihre Differenz ein: ihre Farbe, ihr Körper, ihr sinnliches Verhalten und ihre Primitivität betonnen ihren exotischen Charakter (Lüsebrink 1996, 59). Die koloniale Interaktion fußt auf den kolonialen Blick und die damit einhergehende Ambivalenz zwischen Beherrschen und Begehren. In einigen Erzählsequenzen scheint Fatou-Gaye die Liebesbeziehung zu kontrollieren. François-Peyral wird dann zu einem passiven und fügsamen Objekt und ist nicht mehr der Tatsache bewusst, dass sie „méchante, menteuse et noire" (LRS: 106) ist. Fatou-Gaye ist ihrer Schönheit bewusst und manipuliert Peyral damit. Verführerisch, aber durch ihre Erotik und ihre Sinnlichkeit gefährlich, ist sie als diejenige dargestellt, die den Widerstandswillen des Kolonialsoldaten vernichtet und ihn zu einer moralischen Erniedrigung führt. Der Spahi sieht in seiner Eheschließung mit der Afrikanerin eine „souillure" (LRS: 142), eine „perte de sa dignité d'homme blanc" (LRS: 142) und eine „profanation de lui-même" (LRS: 60). Die bikulturelle Eheschließung führt zu einer Umkehrung des kolonialen Machtverhältnisses. Aus der kolonialen Musterdialektik Herrscher vs. Beherrschte ergibt sich eine Konstellation, in der Peyral Opfer ist. Der Erzähler berichtet:

> Et aujourd'hui, il était l'amant de Fatou-Gaye, jeune fille noire de la race Khassonkée ; qui avait jeté sur lui je ne sais quelle séduction sensuelle et

> impure, je ne sais quel charme d'amulette [...] Lui s'abandonnait sans comprendre, comme à un charme perfide d'amulette. Il était sans force pour séparer d'elle. [...] Il se laissait maintenant conduire sans résistance où le menait son cœur troublé, indécis, dévoré par la séparation et l'exil (LRS: 21-72).

Der Spahi, vom „charrne d'amulette" Fatou-Gayes, „gonflée de sucs toxiques, remplie de voluptes malsaines, enfievrée" (LRS: 37), betört, vergisst die untadelige französische Braut und sogar seine Eltern. Um die koloniale Ordnung bzw. die koloniale Hierarchie wiederherzustellen, rekurriert François Peyral ständig auf die physische Gewalt. Die Züchtigung soll die schwarze Frau zum Respekt zwingen. Der kolonisierte und begierde Körper wird zur Oberfläche der Inszenierung kolonialer Überlegenheit. Die Peitsche gehört zur Peyrals beliebtesten Strafmethode:

> Il y avait fréquemment des scènes entre eux ; elle l'exaspérait quelque fois, à force de perversité et de malice. Alors il avait commencé à frapper à coups de cravache, pas bien fort au début, puis plus durement par la suite [...]. Il la jeta à genoux sur le plancher, dans une rage folle, et prit sa cravache [...] Pourtant, jamais encore elle n'avait vu Jean comme cela ; elle poussa un cri, elle eut peur ; — elle se mit à embrasser ses pieds: — Pardon, Tjean!... Pardon!... [...] Jean ne sentait pas sa force dans ces moments de fureur. Il avait de ces violences un peu sauvages des enfants qui ont grandi dans les bois. Il frappait rudement sur le dos nu de Fatou, marquant des raies d'où jaillissait le sang, et sa rage s'excitait en frappant (LRS: 181-183).

Mit dieser körperlichen Züchtigung perpetuiert der Spahi die koloniale Gesellschaftsordnung und leitet damit die Entgleisung jener Welt ein, in die er die Zivilisation bringen soll.

Die durchgeführten Untersuchungen zeigen deutlich, dass die koloniale Eheschließung in *Le roman d'un spahi* eine der wichtigsten Demonstrationsorte sowohl für die Politik der Körper als auch für kolonialistische Praktiken ist. Ein heterotopischer Ort in Anlehnung an Michel Foucault. Die Besetzung der schwarzen Frau ist also ein Projekt, dessen Vollkommenheit in der kolonialen Eroberung findet. Pierre Halen meint es pointierter:

> Il y a bien sûr dans l'érotisme exotique une dimension transgressive pour celui qui s'y aventure, mais il faudrait sans doute le lire aussi en termes de conquête masculine et, dans le cas de *Le roman d'un spahi* de conquête coloniale [...] le caractère transgressif des amours coloniales va de pair avec la domination [...] Dans ce dernier contexte, la possession de la femme exotique parachève en quelque sorte la conquête coloniale (Halen 1998, 451).

Abschließende Bemerkungen

Die Untersuchung hat gezeigt wie, aus unterschiedlichen Perspektiven, koloniale Fremdheit, im Zeichen des Exotismus, und Mischehe ihren Niederschlag in Puttkamers und in Lotis Erzählungen finden. Der Exotismus als Sympathie auf Distanz lässt sich als Meilenstein beider Texte erkennen. Er artikuliert sich in Form von Traum vom „echten Afrikaner" und dessen Umwelt. Aus der Analyse der Romane erfolgt, dass der Exotismus im kolonialen Kontext an großer Bedeutung gewinnt, weil er ein Wissenssystem über das Fremde projiziert. Als Umgang mit dem Fremden offenbart der Exotismus, wie sich im Laufe der Untersuchung gezeigt hat, seine Möglichkeiten und Grenzen. Die Rassenfrage, im Zeichen der Mischehe, findet in Jesco von Puttkamers und in Pierre Lotis Erzählungen besondere Resonanz. Jesco von Puttkamers Roman kann als ein exemplarischer deutscher Kolonialroman gelten, in dem die Mischehe gemäß den Regeln des kolonialistischen Diskurses angeprangert ist. Wie in einer Vielzahl vergleichbarer Degenerationsphantasien droht in Puttkamers Text die Machtposition des deutschen Kolonialherrn durch das eigene sexuelle Begehren nach dem Fremden unterminiert zu werden. Pierre Lotis Einstellung zur kolonialen Ideologie Frankreichs bleibt bis zum Ende der Erzählung einer zweideutigen Position verfangen. Christiane Chaulet-Achour verstärkt diesen Standpunkt, wie folgt:

> La position de Loti, à la fin du roman, reste contradictoire. On peut penser que l'argumentation déduite de la construction romanesque oriente le roman vers le courant de l'anticolonialisme de droite; l'Afrique est une mangeuse d'hommes jeunes et sains et cette dévoration appauvrit la France, la prive du meilleur de son potentiel humain. Mais, conjointement, le récit insiste tant sur l'infériorité de la race noire qu'il fait admettre la tutelle nécessaire de ces grands enfants par une race supérieure (Chaulet-Achour 2003, 236).

Die untersuchten Figurenkonstellationen und Erzählsequenzen beider Texte geben insgesamt Aufschlüsse darüber, dass die koloniale Mischehe zu gegenseitigen Verwandlungen führen. Als Austausch von Körpern, illustrieren koloniale Eheschließungen die Verwobenheit von kolonialer Peripherie und europäischer Metropole. Als Schlussergebnis erfolgt, dass jede Kulturbegegnung auch in äußerster Asymmetrie zur beiderseitigen Aneignung führt.

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INVISIBILIA 2
DA FOLENGO A RIZZONI: LINGUAGGIO CREATIVO E TRADUZIONE DI AUGUSTE LE BRETON

Antonino VELEZ[1]

ABSTRACT. *Invisibilia 2 - From Folengo to Rizzoni: creative language and the translation of Auguste Le Breton.* This study is dedicated to the work of Gianni Rizzoni who is one of the major translators of French detective stories in Italy and in particular of Sanantonio series created by Frédéric Dard. This article will deal with the translation of Auguste Le Breton's books and the creation of an Italian slang glossary by Rizzoni. This glossary allowed Rizzoni to better translate the French author's argot.

Keywords: Rizzoni, translation, argot, Auguste Le Breton, detective stories

REZUMAT. *Invisibilia 2 - De la Folengo la Rizzoni: limbajul creativ și traducerea lui Auguste Le Breton.* Acest studiu este dedicat operei lui Gianni Rizzoni, unul dintre principalii traducători de romane polițiste franceze în Italia, în special al seriei Sanantonio creată de Frédéric Dard. Acest articol își propune să studieze traducerea cărților lui Auguste Le Breton și glosarul de argou italian creat de către Rizzoni care i-a permis traducătorului să mai transpună cu mai multă acuratețe argoul autorului francez.

Cuvinte-cheie: Rizzoni, traducere, argou, Auguste Le Breton, romane polițiste

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Introduzione

Dopo il mio primo *Invisibilia*, dedicato a Gianfranco Orsi, questo secondo articolo [2] sui traduttori di gialli sarà consacrato a Gianni Rizzoni e alle sue traduzioni di Auguste Le Breton e *Les pégriots* nel 1977 (*Du rififi à Paname* e *Brigade anti-gangs* sono stati dati alle stampe nel 1965, mentre *Le clan des siciliens* nel 1967). A volte, interessanti scoperte sono frutto del caso. Una domenica mattina mi aggiravo fra i banchetti di un mercatino della mia città e sfogliando uno dei tanti libri che ero solito prendere fra le mani mi sono imbattuto in qualcosa di particolare che ha attirato la mia attenzione: una versione dal francese di Auguste Le Breton corredata in appendice da una "Breve guida al gergo della mala" arricchita da alcuni disegni (fig.1). La "guida" – presentata, in forma più ridotta, in *Brigata Anti-Gang*, di Auguste Le Breton, pubblicato da Giallo Mondadori nel 1969 – era a cura di Gianni Rizzoni e le illustrazioni di Umberto Spagnesi. Conoscevo già Rizzoni, di nome, per averne parlato con Gianfranco Orsi il quale me lo aveva segnalato come uno dei maggiori traduttori di gialli francesi e in particolare della serie *Sanantonio* creata da Frédéric Dard. Così, dopo averlo contattato telefonicamente, ne è nato un intenso scambio di corrispondenza elettronica durante la quale ho scoperto la ricchezza dei suoi interessi culturali che vanno ben al di là della mera opera di traghettatore di romanzi francesi in Italia. *De fil en aguille* Rizzoni mi ha messo in contatto con Jean-Marie Le Ray e Dominique Jeannerod e così sono venuto a conoscenza del loro apporto critico sulle versioni di *Sanantonio* in Italia e sul lavoro di Rizzoni (Le Ray, 2020; Jeannerod, 2020). Sulle traduzioni di Sanà in Italia e sul contributo di Rizzoni alla diffusione di quest'ultimo Le Ray e Jeannerod sono stati efficaci ed esaustivi e non posso che rimandare ai loro contributi, io, qui, mi concentrerò sulle versioni dei gialli di Auguste Le Breton da parte di Gianni Rizzoni, vero e proprio laboratorio di studio per lo sviluppo di una lingua creativa che in seguito utilizzerà anche per Dard e altri romanzi, sempre con una rilevante tessitura argotica, quali *La dérobade* di Jeanne Cordelier (prefazione di Dacia Maraini; sottotitolato in italiano da Bompiani nel 1978: *Vita e rabbia di una prostituta parigina*) e *I Santissimi* (*Les valseuses*) di Bertrand Blier, entrambi trasposti sul grande schermo con notevole successo.

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[2] Il titolo "Da Folengo a Rizzoni: linguaggio creativo e traduzione" è un riferimento a Teofilo Folengo, noto anche, fra i tanti pseudonimi, come Merlin Cocai, poeta italiano del XVI secolo conosciuto per avere inventato un latino maccheronico utilizzato nella sua opera *Merlini Cocaii macaronicon* o *Baldo.* L'accostamento che il giornalista Alfredo Barberis faceva fra il linguaggio di Frédéric Dard e il latino maccheronico del Folengo (in occasione della recensione pubblicata sul *Corriere della sera* il 28 maggio 1986 per la pubblicazione di *Champagne per tutti* nelle edizioni Rosa & Nero create dal Rizzoni l'anno prima) l'ho voluto fare mio per rendere omaggio alle invenzioni linguistiche operate da Rizzoni nelle sue traduzioni.
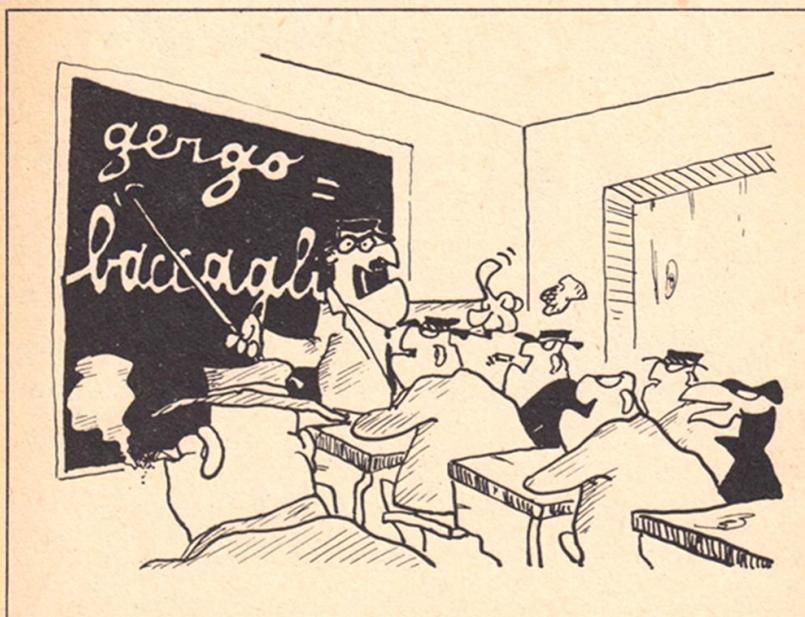
Fig.1. *Breve guida al gergo della mala*. Tratta da Auguste Le Breton, *Il clan dei siciliani,* Il giallo Mondadori 1097, serie nera, 8-2-1970 (traduzione di Gianni Rizzoni). ©Gianni Rizzoni

Gianni Rizzoni[3]

Giornalista, scrittore, dirigente di importanti case editrici, editore lui stesso e presidente della Libri Scheiwiller. Rizzoni ha creato e curato l'*Agenda Letteraria* e l'*Agenda Dante Alighieri*. Ha scritto numerosi volumi sul giallo–fra i quali citiamo *Il romanzo giallo*, insieme a Stefano Benvenuti per la Mondadori, pubblicato in varie edizioni anche all'estero (I edizione 1979) – e di divulgazione letteraria e artistica. Figlio di insegnanti, il francese per lui è sempre stato di casa avendolo appreso dalla madre e poi praticato nei suoi numerosi soggiorni in Francia nel corso dei quali ha anche conosciuto, fra i numerosi artisti, Jacques Brel e Leo Ferré. Rizzoni ha contribuito a sviluppare in Enrico Medail, considerato uno dei maggiori traduttori italiani di canzoni, la passione per la musica francese e per la traduzione dei grandi cantautori quali per l'appunto Leo Ferré. Appassionato di storia, di civiltà e di letteratura francese, dopo essersi laureato in Scienze politiche alla Cattolica di Milano, non poteva che diventare insegnante, presso il liceo internazionale della città meneghina, di lingua e letteratura francese. Rizzoni iniziava, allo stesso tempo, la sua collaborazione esterna con la Mondadori in qualità di revisore di traduzioni dal francese sotto la direzione del famoso Alberto Tedeschi. La padronanza dell'*argot*, e le sue approfondite conoscenze della letteratura d'oltralpe, come dimostrerà ugualmente con Frédéric Dard, gli permettono di affrontare con disinvoltura le sue prime versioni ufficiali, quelle, per l'appunto, di Auguste Le Breton. Sarà nel corso di queste traduzioni che Rizzoni creerà e svilupperà quella lingua che verrà, parzialmente, utilizzata in seguito, insieme a tutta una serie di neologismi ed espressioni appositamente creati, nelle versioni italiane di *Sanantonio*. Rizzoni, all'interno alla Mondadori, nella collana dedicata a *Sanantonio*, si occupa, altresì, della creazione dei titoli, delle redazioni di quarte di copertine, delle prefazioni, in stile sanantoniesco e finanche delle indicazioni da fornire al disegnatore sulla realizzazione della copertina. Nella casa editrice milanese, Rizzoni ha ricoperto incarichi culturali in qualità di curatore e autore della sezione italiana e francese de i "Giganti della Letteratura", una collana di libri illustrati pubblicata in coedizione con Francia, Spagna, Grecia, Giappone per la quale il Nostro ha scritto testi su Baudelaire, Edgar Allan Poe e Delacroix:

> Le jeune écrivain milanais Gianni Rizzoni, un ancien [...] "Sciences Po",
> passe pour être une encyclopédie vivante, et nous l'avons vu, ces

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[3] La maggior parte delle notizie qui trascritte sono una rielaborazione delle informazioni fornitemi dallo stesso autore via e-mail nel corso del 2021.

derniers temps, traiter avec un égal bonheur de l'affaire Dreyfus ou phénomène de Gaulle. (Fontvieille-Alquier 1975)

Direttore editoriale alla Fabbri e per Giorgio Mondadori, giornalista per *Panorama*, direttore generale delle Edizioni del *Sole 24 Ore*, autore di varie pubblicazioni, editore (case editrici Editoriale Erre, creata appositamente nel 1973 la cui esperienza si è chiusa nel 1983, e Rosa & Nero dal 1983 al 1986), per continuare la pubblicazione di *Sanantonio* che la Mondadori aveva deciso di abbandonare. Fra le numerose attività editoriali Rizzoni si è occupato anche di quello che oggi viene chiamato *scouting*, ha cioè "scovato" e suggerito autori stranieri da pubblicare in Italia (Gérard de Villiers, uno per tutti), facendo parte del comitato di lettura della Mondadori (insieme ad Alberto Tedeschi, inventore dei "gialli"). Rizzoni è un uomo di cultura a tutto tondo ed è questo suo bagaglio culturale, la sua curiosità di "umanista" che gli ha permesso di affrontare con naturalezza e superare le insidie, i tranelli e soprattutto i riferimenti alla cultura francese che soggiacevano nei testi volti in italiano:

> In sintesi, la conclusione è che senza i miei interessi culturali, la mia esperienza di professore di letteratura francese, lo studio dell'argot (grazie a Rififi), e una buona conoscenza dei grandi autori francesi di tutti i secoli (in particolare Rabelais!), non credo mi sarebbe stato possibile capire veramente Sanantonio e organizzarne la traduzione. C'è un romanzo, adesso non ricordo il titolo, nel quale Dard rivaleggia con Rabelais nell'elencare uno sterminato numero di verbi (riferimento: Rabelais, le mura di Parigi). Ora, se non hai letto *Gargantua e Pantagruele* non puoi né apprezzare il "gioco" letterario di Dard né avere l'idea di andare a documentarti sui "sacri testi" per cercare di rendere il ritmo in traduzione. Se sei un normale - anche bravo - traduttore professionista, non puoi permetterti, con le tariffe che gli editori (allora) riconoscevano, di dedicare tempo prezioso a consultare e leggere la traduzione - spettacolosa - di Frassineti…
> […] Se dovessi riassumere il lavoro di traduzione e di adattamento di Sanantonio direi che era il classico lavoro a quattro mani: Lazzari - ma anche gli altri traduttori - eseguivano una traduzione tutto sommato "grezza", se non capivano qualcosa lasciavano in bianco o segnavano con un punto interrogativo. Io rivedevo il tutto sia dal punto di vista "argotico", sia da quello gergale del "sanantoniese" italiano, linguaggio che avevo via via messo a punto. A volte riscrivevo alcuni paragrafi all'inseguimento delle assonanze "segrete" che nell'originale Dard amava creare, "ricalcando" alcuni celebri versi dei più grandi poeti francesi, quali Baudelaire, Racine, de Musset o brani, ad esempio, di Rabelais, cosa che giustamente un normale traduttore non era tenuto a cogliere.
> (E-mail del novembre 2021)

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Anche se ufficialmente traduttore di soli quindici romanzi di Sanantonio, Rizzoni, per sua stessa ammissione, è stato "revisore creativo" di molte altre traduzioni, fra le quali alcune fra quelle di Bruno Just Lazzari (numericamente il più prolifico traduttore di San-Antonio). Curatore della serie fin dai suoi esordi, dal 1979 in poi, sarà il direttore responsabile di tutta la collana. Come hanno ben messo in evidenza Jeannerod e Le Ray nei loro articoli egli è stato "il vero padre di Sanà in Italia, colui che lo ha diffuso animato da una passione straordinaria".

Instancabile divulgatore di cultura e appassionato di storia, oltre che di letteratura, francese, Rizzoni negli ultimi anni si è dedicato al caso Dreyfus pubblicando volumi (uno dei quali è ancora in corso d'opera) che gli hanno valso l'apprezzamento internazionale (la Société Internationale d'Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus) e un invito al Pantheon dal governo francese per la cerimonia ufficiale del centenario della morte di Zola. Rizzoni, inoltre, ha recentemente fornito un originale contributo per il bicentenario della morte del suo conterraneo Carlo Porta, in cui viene evocata la figura di Napoleone e la descrizione che il poeta meneghino ne fa nei suoi versi.

Auguste Le Breton

Auguste Le Breton *nom de plume* di Auguste Monfort, nato nel 1913 a Lesleven nella regione francese della Bretagna e morto a Parigi nel 1999, ha avuto una vita movimentata che ha dato spunto alla gran parte delle storie raccontate nei suoi romanzi. Come racconta Rizzoni nella prefazione alla trilogia pubblicata in un unico volume nel 1973 (Le Breton 1973, V-VII), che raccoglie le sue versioni italiane dell'autore francese, Auguste Monfort, orfano, abbandonato e cresciuto negli orfanotrofi e per strada è vissuto come un teppista di periferia fino al momento in cui, a 34 anni, nel 1946, non ha deciso di scrivere e descrivere le sue esperienze di vita e di pubblicarle. Dopo ben sette anni di tentativi con svariate case editrici viene dato alle stampe il suo primo romanzo. Sarà subito un enorme successo che lo porterà di lì a poco a debuttare anche sul grande schermo. Le note bio-bibliografiche che Rizzoni traccia di Le Breton sono molto accurate e rendono conto del trionfo mondiale riscosso da questo ex *voyou* di Belleville divenuto il romanziere della malavita. La ricetta di questa affermazione sta nel fatto, come riferisce ancora Rizzoni, che i suoi "gialli" non sono romanzi architettati a tavolino ma emanano dalla sua esperienza diretta, sono "autentiche tranches de vie" (Le Breton 1973, VIII), trasudano verità e dolore, oscenità e pudore:

> En ce qui me concerne, j'ai assimilé l'argot comme le boire et le manger, ainsi que les jeunes gens, bien je pense, assimilent le latin et l'anglais. C'est la raison pour laquelle je peux écrire que pas un mot de cette langue ne m'est étranger, même si j'en ai oublié ici. Et, ne tenant aucun fichier, je suis persuadé d'en avoir oublié beaucoup. (Le Breton 1960, 6)

Le Breton irrompe nella scena letteraria "gialla" proponendo una rappresentazione così vera ed efficace della vita criminale che la sua "langue verte" (Le Breton 1960) avrà influssi sulla parlata gergale dei suoi "ex colleghi" che lo leggeranno o più verosimilmente lo vedranno sul grande schermo. Così scriveva Daria Galateria su Repubblica in occasione della riproposta in edicola del primo volume pubblicato in Italia della serie "Rififi":

> Era il 1953; il «noir» francese scopriva una parola nuova, Rififi, e uno scrittore irresistibile, Auguste Le Breton, malavitoso (Rififi è riproposto da Repubblica nella traduzione di Romildo Basile). Resa di conti tra clan: una rapina miliardaria scatena la guerra con gli algerini in una Parigi trascorsa, ma pullulante di pupe e coriacei dal cuore tenero, e esilaranti scene d'ambiente: il funerale in chiesa di un criminale italiano e la gita a Londra del fuorilegge francese annoverandosi tra le più spassose della letteratura poliziesca. Prima ancora di approdare al cinema, e legarsi per sempre alle facce mitiche di Jean Gabin, Robert Hossein e Alain Delon (da *Du Rififi chez les hommes* di Jules Dassin, premiato a Cannes nel 1955, a *Il clan dei siciliani*, 1969) la letteratura di Auguste Le Breton importava nel «noir» l'argot, il linguaggio, della mala, e in modo così travolgente che i furfanti cominciarono a parlare come nei romanzi di Le Breton, e nei film, di cui scriveva i dialoghi [...](Galateria 2005)

Un linguaggio gergale tratto dalla realtà della malavita e innovativo al tempo stesso:

> J'ai introduit le « verlen » en littérature dans le *Rififi chez les hommes*, en 1954. « Verlen » avec un « e» comme «envers» et pas «verlan» avec un «a» comme ils l'écrivent tous… Le verlen, c'est nous qui l'avons créé avec Jeannot du Chapiteau, vers 1940-41, le grand Toulousain, et un tas d'autres. (Le Breton, 1985, 8; citato da Jean-Paul Colin nel 2006 in Larousse grand dictionnaire argot & français populaire, 36)

Auguste Le Breton non è un professionista della scrittura gialla, un classico scrittore di *Whodunit*, contrazione dall'inglese *who has done it*? (chi lo ha fatto?), egli è piuttosto un artigiano del *noir*, un istintivo che riesce a narrare, in modo a volte eroico, nostalgico e romantico (Rizzoni 1973), il *milieu* del suo tempo

non senza quella accuratezza della documentazione e della verosimiglianza che ricade nella tecnica del giallo classico (Wolfe 1983, 429).

"Breve guida al gergo della mala"

La maggior parte dei paesi possiedono un gergo criminale con funzione criptica (Berruto 2012) e dei gerghi come sottocodici tecnici, vere e proprie "lingue speciali" di mestieri, la cui esistenza è attestata fin dal Quattrocento. Il furbesco (Santiapichi 1992, 34; Ageno 1958) o lingua zerga si sviluppa in Italia e in particolare nel Veneto nel XVI secolo. Furbesco viene da forbire, pulire e per metafora "ripulire", il ladro che forbisce le tasche del malcapitato:

> [...] il gergo si pone come un'operazione sulla lingua, come un suo rifacimento in un atto che e insieme rifiuto e metaforizzazione. Proiettandosi in questa operazione demiurgica sul linguaggio (lingua o dialetto che fosse), i marginali davano prova di una ben maggiore creatività e scioltezza nei confronti della lingua che non il mondo contadino. Nel contempo si assicuravano una delle poche possibilità di estrinsecarsi a livello linguistico e identitario. (Lurati 1989, 7)

L'*argot* nasce come lingua segreta della criminalità (il famoso processo dei "Compagnons de la coquille" del 1455, vedi Guiraud 1966:11) per poi allargarsi fino a divenire *signum* sociale (Guiraud 1966). Oggi esistono diversi tipi di argot (caserme, scuola, spettacolo). Dal punto di vista sociolinguistico possiamo parlare di gergo tecnico o tecnoletto (Beccaria 1973; Berruto 1980; Balboni 2000, 11); quello specifico di Le Breton è "la langue spéciale de la pègre", cioè un gergo segreto di ladri e assassini:

> Toute langue possède une dimension argotique ; en effet, toute société humaine fonctionne avec des interdits, des tabous, entre autres, d'ordre social, politique, religieux, moral, qui sont véhiculés par la (ou les) forme(s) légitimée(s) de la langue. Comment peut-il être dès lors imaginé une société au sein de laquelle aucune personne, aucun groupe ne chercherait à se doter de moyens pour contourner ces interdits et ces tabous, ne serait-ce que par transgression langagière ? (Goudallier 2005, 5)

Come recita la nota alla prefazione dell'edizione del 1973 dello stesso Gianni Rizzoni:

> Data la loro impostazione argotica, i romanzi di Le Breton risultano abbastanza difficili da rendere in italiano. La difficoltà consiste non tanto nell'interpretazione del testo originale. [...] La vera difficoltà nasce

> quando si cerca di rendere nella nostra lingua il sapore e la particolare sintassi dell'argot. [...] la malavita italiana non ha mai elaborato un suo "linguaggio nazionale". Riposa in gran parte su dialetti regionali [...]. Tradurre un romanzo argotico presenta quindi la difficoltà di inserire in un tessuto sintattico italiano (sarebbe assurdo far parlare in napoletano o veneto i balordi di Belleville o di Marsiglia), alcuni isolati termini gergali. (Rizzoni 1973, X)

Individuato il problema, Rizzoni delinea la strategia che si pone come obiettivo, come orizzonte del traduttore (Berman 1999), nell'affrontare i testi argotici di Le Breton fin dal 1967, data della sua prima traduzione in Italia dello scrittore francese (fig.2). Tutto nasce, come racconta egli stesso (e-mail ricevuta nel novembre del 2021), dalla notizia che il Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione generale della Pubblica Sicurezza, aveva pubblicato un curioso volume fuori commercio intitolato *Gergo della Malavita*. Grazie alla Mondadori, il Nostro riuscì ad ottenerne una copia nella cui premessa vi era dichiarato: *La pubblicazione raccoglie, classificandoli e interpretandoli, i termini ed espressioni più comunemente in uso fra delinquenti, allo scopo di offrire un sussidio valido, sotto un esclusivo profilo didattico, a facilitare anche per questa via un più rapido ambientamento delle giovani guardie nel delicato ed impegnativo settore della polizia investigativa* (...). Una pubblicazione ad uso interno che ricorda il libro sull'argot dei criminali che fu stampato nell'Ottocento a seguito del processo, del 1455, sui *Compagnons de la coquille* da parte di un archivista del tribunale di Digione, Joseph Garnier (1842), in cui un Buscetta *ante litteram* (tal "Dimanche-le-Loup") rivelava l'organigramma dell'omonima organizzazione criminale ed elencava un vero e proprio glossario della malavita francese quattrocentesca.

Fig.2. *Rififi sulla Senna* ©Gianni Rizzoni

Il gergo è la lingua dei marginali (Sanga 1989; Lurati 1989) e soprattutto dei delinquenti, come l'*argot* francese, quantomeno all'inizio della sua storia (Guiraud 1966), una lingua piena di invenzioni e soprattutto metaforica perché deve esprimere ciò che è tabù, ciò che è vietato, che non si può dire apertamente:

> L'argot est un vocabulaire marqué par la nécessité de créer le mot pour l'interprétation populaire de la réalité que le lexique conventionnel ignore. Ainsi peut-on mieux comprendre la difficulté à traduire des mots ou expressions argotiques. (Mandelbaum-Reiner 1996, 88)

L'operazione di Rizzoni di pescare nel gergo della mala nazionale per tradurre Le Breton e in seguito Frédéric Dard e il suo *Sanantonio*, si inseriva in un contesto probabilmente maturo per accogliere questo tipo di linguaggio. L'Italia, e la Milano in particolare, della fine degli anni Sessanta avevano già scoperto questa varietà espressiva della malavita, dei furfanti ed emarginati grazie a Strehler (Ronfani 1986) che, alla fine degli anni Cinquanta (sotto l'influsso di Bertolt Brecht e della sua *Opera da tre soldi*), insieme a Fiorenzo Carpi, Dario Fo e Gino Negri, aveva proposto canzoni popolari celebri quali *Ma mi* (n realtà il testo della canzone, in dialetto milanese, si riferisce più plausibilmente a episodi legati alla Resistenza) o *Le Mantellate*, *Hanno ammazzato il Mario* (Caselli 2018), che furono affidate alla voce di un'allora giovanissima cantante esordiente, Ornella Vanoni, la quale si portò addosso l'etichetta di cantante della mala per lungo tempo. L'EP di esordio fu *Le canzoni della malavita*, "che comprendeva versioni italiane di *Saint Lazare* di Aristide Bruant, e *Jenny delle Spelonche*, tratta da L'opera da tre soldi di Bertolt Brecht e sul retro gli inediti *Senti come la vosa la sirena e Canto di carcerati calabresi*" (https://fardrock.wordpress.com/2017/06/26/le-canzoni-della-mala/ - ultima consultazione 15/11/2021).

"Il gergo della mala" come si chiamerà il piccolo glossario nell'edizione del 1973 (la versione della "Guida" contenuta ne *Il clan dei siciliani* di cui riporto la prima pagina nel presente articolo, fig. 1, del 1970, era corredata da divertenti disegni a cura di Umberto Spagnesi) conta nella predetta stampa oltre trecentocinquanta parole da "accavallato" (Rizzoni 1973, XIII), "uomo armato", a "zucca" (Rizzoni 1973, XIX), "tasca della giacca". Quanto al gergo Sanga afferma che:

> Per fare etimologia gergale [...] occorre rintracciare l'idea che ha dato origine al significato gergale, che è sempre figurato, e ricostruire la rete di relazioni e di solidarietà che è sottesa alle figure gergali, rete che rimanda alla cultura e all'ideologia dei gerganti, legati alla strada, alla piazza, alle attività commerciali marginali e illecite. Solo una conoscenza diretta dei gerganti e della loro cultura permette di comprendere i

> meccanismi che presiedono alle formazioni gergali. E pertanto si potrà giudicare della bontà di un'etimologia gergale non astrattamente, certo non foneticamente, ma in quanto l'etimo si accordi con il complesso ideologico che genera le figure gergali. (Sanga 1989, 17)

Le parole contenute nel dizionarietto non hanno una matrice comune ma provengono dai vari dialetti così come del resto riferiva il documento del Ministero dell'interno che dava conto di diverse realtà criminali locali dalla Lombardia alla Sicilia. Dal milanese "bauscia" (sbruffone senza credito), "ghisa" (vigile) al siciliano "astutari" o "stutari" (uccidere), "liccasapuni" (coltello affilato come una lama di rasoio; letteralmente "lecca sapone", è metafora, in siciliano, del rasoio del barbiere), "uomo di panza o di ficatu" (coraggioso). Rizzoni, con una trovata originale, arricchisce questo vocabolario di base tratto dalle carte dei vari istituti penali, inserendo calchi mutuati direttamente dall'argot francese ("bagnola" per auto, dal francese *bagnole*; "mecco", per uomo da *mec* e ne inventa la forma del femminile "mecca", per donna, inesistente in francese) e prestiti (*rififi* per regolamento di conti; *Paname* per Parigi; *flic* per poliziotto), quest'ultimi segnalati nel glossario con "fr." tra parentesi. La creazione neologica segue quella argotica con molte apocopi e risuffissazioni; "marasco" per maresciallo o raddoppiamento, "muccoso" per fazzoletto, "muccoloso" per naso; essendo "oso" (Zamboni 1986) uno dei suffissi più frequenti nei gerghi (Sanga 1989). Rizzoni, attraverso una ricerca glottologica sul gergo della mala italiana, ha cercato, con successo, di ricreare una atmosfera gergale, rendendo meno piatto possibile il testo italiano e creando una sensazione di esotismo e straniamento nel lettore italiano ("Si divertiva da matti il *pesta*, a pensare alla faccia che avrebbe fatto Paulo quando quel *loffio* sarebbe andato a reclamare l'aumento…"). (Le Breton 1973, 45). N.d.r. nella citazione il corsivo è di chi scrive. Un effetto sicuramente riuscito è unico nell'ambito della traduzione dal francese dell'*argot* che rimane tutt'oggi ineguagliato. Basti solo pensare alla prima traduzione italiana di Le Breton a cura di Romildo Basile (Le Breton 2005), una versione linguisticamente standardizzata che non rendeva conto della ricchezza del vocabolario dell'autore francese, in cui, a parte un tentativo, isolato, di riprodurre il *verlan* (Che cosa vengono a terefo i liange di custo a quest'ora? Basta che non fanno una tatare. Sarebbe il molco: non ho ancora dagnatogua neanche un dolso!", Le Breton 2005, 26), cioè una sorta di gergo con parole pronunciate al contrario, il massimo della spregiudicatezza verbale si limitava a un "chiudete il becco".

Gianni Rizzoni non è mai stato un traduttore a tempo pieno, un professionista che doveva guadagnarsi da vivere con questo mestiere ed ha operato senza vincoli di cronoprogrammi stringenti di consegna delle versioni. Anzi, guardando a ritroso il suo percorso nel mondo della cultura si può

affermare che la traduzione è stata solo una parte, nemmeno preponderante, della sua attività di scrittore, editore e uomo di cultura a tutto tondo. Non si può non menzionare l'edizione rilegata e illustrata dell'opera omnia di Agatha Christie curata da Rizzoni con commenti e riferimenti storici su tutti i romanzi della giallista britannica edito per i tipi de il Club degli Editori-Mondadori, 1991; le pubblicazioni del centenario di Sherlock Holmes (di Allen Eyles, tradotte e adattate dall'inglese da Rizzoni), *l' agenda La Sherlockiana* 1987 (in collaborazione con Gianfranco Orsi) che figura nelle maggiori biblioteche universitarie per la sua ricchezza ma soprattutto per i contributi di autori come Oreste Del Buono, Antonio Faeti, Simona Argentieri, Giulio Giorello, Roberto Pirani, oltre che per la pubblicazione di vari inediti in Italia, tra cui due brevi racconti di Conan Doyle. Infine, sempre per il centenario, la pubblicazione del romanzo *30 Duke Street*, la penultima avventura di Sherlock Holmes, dato alle stampe con lo pseudonimo John R. Watson. In un contesto storico-sociale, quello degli anni Sessanta e Settanta, in cui i traduttori letterari iniziavano a ritagliarsi un ruolo e uscivano dall'invisibilità e ai traduttori di romanzi gialli e *noir* non veniva nemmeno concesso l'onore di una nota in rivista o in un quotidiano, Rizzoni fece eccezione meritandosi già nel 1967(purtroppo, non è stato possibile ritrovare il riferimento bibliografico e mi sono dovuto basare sulle dichiarazioni di Rizzoni) una recensione di *Rififi sulla Senna* di Le Breton, con citazione dell'autore della versione italiana e dell'annesso glossario della mala, nella sezione culturale del *Corriere della Sera*, da parte di uno dei maggiori giornalisti dell'epoca, Alfredo Barberis, che tornerà a recensire Rizzoni nel 1986 (vedi nota 2 del presente articolo). Potendosi permettere tempi e modalità diverse di approccio alle traduzioni e grazie al suo notevole bagaglio linguistico (soprattutto la sua competenza dell'argot rara nei traduttori di quegli anni) e culturale, Rizzoni è stato un artigiano della traduzione, un creatore nel campo del giallo di una originale lingua "mescidata" (come viene oggi definita la lingua di un grande giallista contemporaneo Andrea Camilleri) che ha reso vivace e gradevole la lettura dei noir francesi ai nostri connazionali.

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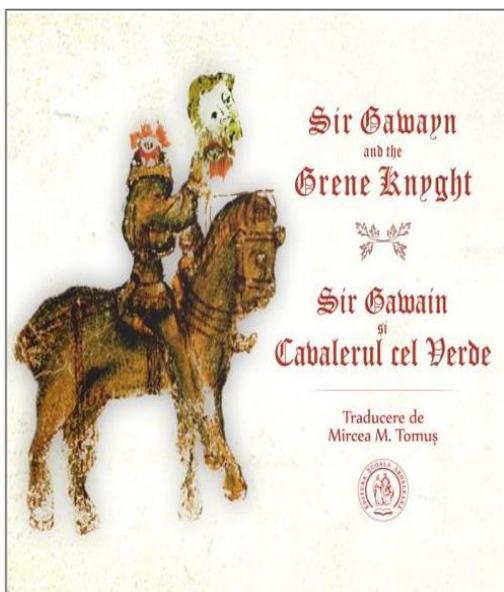
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* (Fig.1 - Fig.2) Immagini pubblicate con il consenso dell'autore.

BOOKS

***Sir Gawayn and the Greene Knyght / Sir Gawain şi Cavalerul cel Verde.*
Preface, translation and notes by Mircea M. Tomuş. Cluj-Napoca:
Şcoala Ardeleană, 2021, 352 p.**

The medieval romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* instantly gained unreserved scholarly admiration when it was first published, in a Middle English version, in 1839. Its editor, Sir Frederic Madden, a palaeographer from the British Museum, had been fascinated by the story contained in the "stern, stylish letters, like crusading chess pieces" falling into "orderly ranks along faintly ruled lines" (Simon Armitage, Introduction to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. A new verse translation*, translated by Simon Armitage, W. W. Norton & Company, 2007, p.10) of the now famous Cotton MS Nero A. x. manuscript and thought it worthwhile to make it available to the larger public. At that time, the anonymous manuscript had been patiently waiting in libraries for no less than five centuries. Composed towards the end of the fourteenth century, it was rather loosely put on paper in the next century by a scribe who also added 12 miniatures of a somewhat rudimentary nature that mark the division of the text into four poems (apart from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, three other religious narratives in verse: *Pearl*, *Patience* and *Purity/Cleanness*).

When rendering *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* into Modern English, translators have had many difficulties and have often taken slight liberties, particularly when they also tried to reproduce the prosody of the original, seeing in the poet's own occasional technical irregularities a justification in this respect. Such ordeals increase exponentially when the translator assumes the ambitious task of resurrecting the voice of the medieval poet in languages as different from Middle English as Romanian.

In 2021, Mircea M. Tomuș, a distinguished professor at Kirkwood Community College from Iowa, published his Romanian translation of *Sir Gawayn and the Grene Knyght* at the prestigious Școala Ardeleană Publishing House from Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The impressive graphical qualities of the book announce and sustain the exceptional quality of the translation itself, based as it is on the Middle English text and on Mary Boroff's exemplary Modern English version, generally acknowledged as one of the closest to the original. The previous Romanian prose version (*Sir Gawain și Cavalerul Verde*, translated by Dan P. Iliescu, Univers, 1982) cared nothing for the formal poetic aspects of the text, and reductively ignored its dialectal flavour for the sake of a rather literal transposition of the text in the target language. The new 2021 translation crafted by Mircea M. Tomuș manages to do what must have seemed impossible to others before – while ingeniously imitating the alliterative patterns of the original in a language that never knew this tradition, it also makes the poem appear to Romanian readers as it appeared to its medieval audiences: "conservative, yet courtly, wise and learned" (J.R.R. Tolkien, Introduction to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Pearl and Sir Orfeo*, translated by J.R.R. Tolkien, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975, p. 14).

In the well-balanced and informative preface he attaches to his translation, Tomuș modestly warns his Romanian readers that the alliterative style of the text might feel somewhat "artificial" (15) to them. Yet such readers can but feel amazed at the linguistic dexterity and creativity with which the translator arrives at a poetic discourse that brilliantly recreates the delightful peculiarities of his source. This is by no means the result of chance or luck, as professor Tomuș has an outstanding experience in terms of literary creation and translation. Before he emmigrated to the USA, where he now teaches rhetoric, poetics, medieval and modern literature, he assiduously published poetry, prose and literary criticism in important cultural journals from Romania. In America, he continued his work as a translator, having so far published English versions of some of the masterpieces of Romanian literature.

One of the challenges of translating *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* into Romanian comes from the fact that it is written in a dialect considerably different from Chaucer's, whose *Canterbury Tales* have found an impressive Romanian embodiment in Dan Duțescu's transposition from 1958. Thus, the task assumed by Mircea M. Tomuș was certainly rendered more difficult by the awareness that the Romanian language of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* should sound different not only from that of Levițchi's version of *Beowulf* (with its alliterative patterns and rather archaic vocabulary), but also, and primarily, from the Romanian of Duțescu's translation.

Without too many Romanian language models from the corresponding period at his disposal (there are few, if at all, extant documents of this sort in Romania), Tomuș must have often found himself as tested/tempted as the hero in the story while trying to maintain the perfect equilibrium within his own pentagram of translation virtues. Unlike Gawain, though, the Romanian translator finishes his project in undeniable triumph. The vocabulary, grammar, syntax, prosody and style of his translation minutely reconstruct the poetic identity of this most beloved medieval story in a language and culture that are quite far-removed from it.

The alternation of familiarity and strangeness that characterizes the original is mirrored in the Romanian translator's inspired combinations of words easily recognizable to today's readers, be they formal or informal, and dialectal terms whose forms and meanings are no longer in use (e.g. "citav" [well-made], "pohfală" [pride], "contăş" [jacket], "dugl
ş" [lazy]). Some of these obsolete terms and phrases are explained in the glossary carefully provided at the end of the volume, while others may sound more or less slightly familiar to readers coming from various regions of Romania (e.g. "amu" [here], "beutură" [drink], "înfăţoşare" [appearance], "becisnic" [weak], "slujeri" [retainers], "cânţuire" [song], "a găta" [to finish], "picere" [legs] etc.). On the whole, the translation seems to have a rather suitable Romanian northwestern sound most probably resulting from the translator's (justified) preference for the linguistic varieties of his own native Transylvanian area. At this point, we cannot help noticing the fateful parallelism between the *Gawain* poet's and the Romanian translator's geographical locations in their countries.

Such linguistic choices also play an important role in the recreation of the subtle streak of irony and humour that colour the unpredictable narrative of the hero's trials. The discursive strategies adopted by Mircea M. Tomuş fully enable the playful poetic voice from the source text to come through in all its playful ingenuity in the target language: „Gawain, grijeşte-acum // Să nu te prindă păcatul, // Că te-aşteapt-un drac de drum // După cum ţi-a fost datul!" (487-490). The temptation scenes from Bertilak's castle abound in manifestations of "the emotion which informs the conventional message – the humour, compassion, irony, dread, joy"

(John Gardner, Introduction and Commentary to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: in a modern English version*, translated by John Gardner, The University of Chicago Press, 2011, p. 12). Despite his thorough knowledge of courtly language and gestures, the noble knight is revealed as only too human in the end. While tormented by inner struggles and hesitations, he is no less capable of fully enjoying the presence of the beautiful princess in chamber: „O vede aşa de voioasă şi de-arătoasă în mândru-i veşmânt // Cu faţa-i frumoasă, fin colorată şi trupul fermecător, // Că sufletu-i e podidit de plăcere şi de desfătare. // Cu zâmbete-alese se încântă unul pe altul, tânjind, // Şi neţărmurita lor încântare între ei năboieşte // Cu bucurie. // Cu alint şi leru-i ler, // Unul pe altul iubitori se îmbie. // Primejdie mare-l paşte pe cavaler // Dacă nu l-o ocroti Sânta Mărie." (1760-1769)

The quotations above illustrate, at the same time, the uncompromising formal quality of the translated text, whose metrical patterns, alliterations and rhymes artfully echo those of the Middle English original. The stringency principle, whose importance a scholar like Leon Leviţchi never tired to emphasize, is thus scrupulously observed (the number of lines in the original perfectly equals the number of lines in the translation).

Such technical efforts, multiplied as they undoubtedly were by various semantic ambiguities, inevitably render the Romanian text somewhat less "formulaic" than the language whose fairy-tale "expectedness" (Marie Boroff, Introduction to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. A new verse translation*, translated by Marie Boroff, W. W. Norton & Company, 1967, p. xii) seems to characterize the Middle English poem. This turns out to be an advantage for the Romanian translator.

Fully aware of how the story derives its fundamental meaning through an interpenetration of realism and fantasy, Mircea M. Tomuş attentively distributes a number of morphological and syntactical recurrences in the text that direct the reader's attention towards some of its most significant paradigms. We find one such key term in the first description of the Green Knight when he daringly enters King Arthur's dinner hall. The Romanian noun "vedenie", which is the word selected by the translator to render the Middle English "syȝt" [*sight*] introduces a certain ontological ambiguity that reverberates throughout the story. It makes an intriguing synthesis between the English meanings of the term (which designates perceptual objects that are part of the real, however distressing or shocking) and the Romanian connotation of something coming from another order of existence. The subsequent chain of events and actions depends on this equivocation, assumed as such by the Arthurian knights. Their code of honour forbids them to question the intrusion of the miraculous into their courtly life and Gawain finds himself caught in the trap opening itself between reality and imagination. Thus, the story tantalizingly suggests that a courageous journey into the fictional is utterly essential for the revelation of the difficult truths of human condition.

We can only be grateful to Mircea M. Tomuş for having enabled the *Gawain* poet to charm us in a language he never dreamed he would speak so admirably.
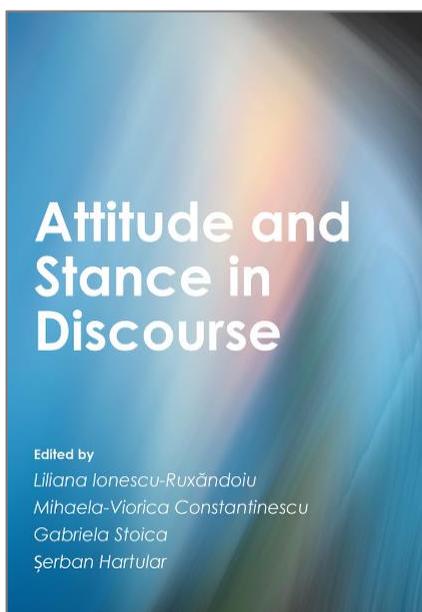
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BOOKS

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.**

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 Gâță, "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 Gâţă 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 Ghiţă in "The Last Christmas. Stancetaking in the Transcript of Ceauşescu's Political Trial" examines the performance of participants in the video showing the Ceauşescu trial. The author shows how these participants consistently exhibit a hybrid, hazy identity, hence the gaps between them and their nonalignment 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 at 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, pragmasemantic, 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 Gazzette)*, 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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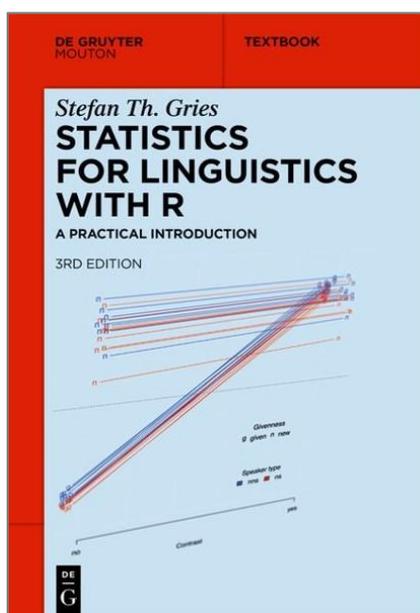*Email: anamaria.radu@ubbcluj.ro*

BOOKS

Stefan Th. Gries, *Statistics for Linguistics with R: A Practical Introduction*. Berlin/ Boston: Mouton de Gruyter, 2021, 495 p.

Having two previously published editions (2009 and 2013), the current edition (2021), *Statistics for Linguistics with R: A Practical Introduction*, revises and brings into discussion an updated part of the quantitative analysis methods adapted to linguistics and widely presented in their earlier versions. In order to shed light on the importance of statistics in linguistics, the author, Stefan Th. Gries, puts together some important background information that should be acquired by anyone interested in a quantitative type of research in the field of linguistics and languages. The author himself mentions that this particular book is different from other introductions in statistics because 'it has been written especially for linguists' (p. 1).

The textbook starts with an atypical, short, and informal *Introduction*, in which the author briefly justifies the need of a 3rd version of the book. He mentions the main reasons why he decided to work on a new edition, focusing, at the same time, on the major changes that he managed to bring in this latest version. Closely following the introduction, the *Table of Contents* presents the way in which the book is organised (chapters and subchapters). The total number of chapters is seven and they seem to have a logical sequence, starting with general fundamentals regarding statistics and going on with in-depth analyses and different approaches for specific linguistic data.

To start with, the first chapter is entitled *Some fundamentals of empirical research* and it focuses on creating a background for the reader when it comes to the quantitative type of research in linguistics, at the first glance, as the focus of the book is on linguistic data that can be statistically analysed. An important trait of this chapter is that the author discusses detailed information regarding the design that stays behind the models in quantitative studies. He presents clear methodology that should be followed in order to get relevant results or findings if

one approaches a quantitative method, focusing on some ways of organising the raw data before any type of analysis, for example, in a tabular format. Later on, the discussion continues with types of hypotheses in statistics and mathematics, correlating the methods used in these fields to the methods that can be addressed and adapted to linguistics as well. He talks about the importance of formulating the hypotheses accordingly in order to get a unified set of data and brings into discussion the difference between (i) non-directional or two-tailed hypotheses, (ii) directional or one-tailed hypotheses, and (iii) null hypotheses. Closely related, he mentions the use of variables as part of the method and differentiates between confounding and moderator variables. Putting together all these elements, they get us to the actual data collection and the crucial act of coding the information in a software in such a way we get the best comprehension of the methodology follow-ups. The end of the chapter focuses on how to address the data from a statistical point of view. It mentions the use of different techniques that evaluate the 'frequencies, distributions, averages/means, dispersions, or correlation coefficients' (p.29). In this part, the author also introduces some significance tests, emphasising p (probability) value which shows the significance limit. In the last few lines of the chapter, the author gives a short advice to his readers, talking about some inconsistencies that can occur when dealing with an empirical type of research.

The next chapter, *Fundamentals of R*, discusses the practical outcome of the software (*R Project for Statistical Computing*). It is a detailed description on how to install the software and all the particularities one should know before using it.

This chapter is a more technical one and tries to give a clear representation of the terminology needed in order to have a better understanding of the matter. It clarifies the meaning of some essential terms, such as *functions*, *arguments*, *vectors*, *factors* or *data frames*, and the way in which we can generate, load, save, and work with these concepts. The purpose is obviously to enhance readers' skills and abilities when it comes to using the software accordingly to the principles of statistical research as correlated to linguistic research.

Going on, the third chapter focuses on *Descriptive statistics* and the specific analysis that could be performed in this type of approach. The dichotomy presented consists of univariate descriptive statistics and bivariate descriptive statistics. The former, univariate descriptive statistics, includes the categorical, ordinal, numeric variables as well as standard errors and confidence intervals examples. It also presents the distinction between the different central tendency aspect, focusing on the mode, the median, and the arithmetic mean. These concepts proved to be extremely important in linguistics as the researches often deal with a large amount of data that could be easily processed and analysed with the help of these tools (the mode can show the most frequent use of a specific structure; the median is meant to identify the middle of a sequence on a scale that questions the acceptability of a structure; the mean can easily represent the average scale when using a certain structure in language). The latter, bivariate descriptive statistics, focuses on the same concepts of categorical, ordinal, and numeric variables, however, this time represented as functions of different variables in the same model.

The following chapter is *Monofactorial tests* and sheds light on different distribution, frequency, dispersion, central tendencies, correlation, simple linear regression types of analyses that one can use to manage a statistical view on linguistics. In the introduction of the fourth chapter, the author briefly describes it as a chapter that shows 'how to decide which significance test to use' (p. 164), anaphorically presented in the first chapter of the textbook. In a step-by-step manner, a first question should target the kind of research one wants to conduct, for which the author presents three possible types: (i) descriptive; (ii) hypothesis-generating; (iii) hypothesis-testing. Based on each type of study conducted, a different approach would be needed. However, Gries decides to continue with the hypothesis-testing type of approach and elaborates a whole theory in order to give a comprehensive characterization of the types of tests suitable for this purpose. He also considers important to know the type of variables that one should involve in order to test the hypothesis as well as the number of variables included in the model. After the reader managed to gather all the information regarding the type of research, the author starts to discuss, in great detail, each type of analysis and its main advantages.

Perhaps the central chapter of this book, as stated by the author, chapter five is entitled *Fixed-effects regression modeling* and tackles concepts related to *multifactoriality*, focusing on both linear and binary logistic regression but also other models (multinomial regression and ordinal logistic regression). It is interesting to see a consistent amount of information that is organised in comprehensible graphic structures with actual examples related to languages and linguistics.

The current edition also presents two new chapters that were not tackled in the previous two editions. Firstly, it is chapter 6 which focuses on *Mixed-effects regression modeling*. It provides a case study for the linear mixed-effects regression, but it should be mentioned that the fixed-effects regression model is closely related to the mixed-effects one. For this, Grief exemplifies with a model design and the first step would be to build the fixed-effects regression structure (including fixed variables that do not change and are easily adapted to the nature of the study). The next step would be to focus on the mixed-effects regression structure, where one can include the random effects (variables that are context-dependent).

Lastly, it is the seventh chapter that presents *Tree-based approaches* and it introduces the regression trees. The author mentions this chapter as 'crossing from the domain of statistical modeling [...] into that of machine learning' (p. 453), the latter domain being closely related to linguistics, especially in generative-transformational terms. The chapter mostly argues both in favor and against this model as this type of approach is still emerging and not yet a canonical type of analysis in linguistics. Even so, it is also brought into account an alternative emerging view and it refers to conditional inference tree. Different from the other tree-based approaches, it implies the use of p-value. In the end, the author concludes that the above-mentioned approach seems to be 'more intuitively interpretable' (472) as compared to other ways of visually organising the information, such as simple summaries or coefficients in tabular formats.

The last part of the book is represented by *References* and a note *About the author*. Surprisingly and atypically, the study does not have a general conclusion section, however, the author somehow concludes and summarizes the main ideas at the end of some chapters.

In the end, I would like to address a few observations regarding terminology, drawbacks but also favored traits regarding this textbook. First and foremost, the terminology used in the book is clearly explained even from the first two introductory chapters. However, when comparing this edition with its two previous editions (2009 and 2013), one gets to see a difference regarding the use of specific terms, for example, Chapter 4 was initially entitled *Analytical statistics*, however, in the current edition, we get a clearer understanding of the chapter from its title, namely, *Monofactorial tests*, which certainly represents a plus. Even so, I believe this motivation should be briefly addressed in the introduction of the textbook as well, alongside others, so that the reader figures out the inconsistency and correlates the two concepts accordingly (especially if the reader is already familiar with the previous editions). Secondly, it is worth mentioning that an improvement could be made with

regard to abbreviations. Even if the main purpose is to explain different phenomenon and types of analyses throughout the book, I strongly believe an abbreviation list should be added at the beginning of the textbook just to make sure the readers have a unified comprehension of the technical words at least. Lastly, perhaps one of the traits of this book is the fact that it always provides sets of examples for each and every tackled issue, irrespective of the chapter or concept. More than that, something that I find extremely useful is that the author provides recommendations in terms of bibliography, advice regarding practical issues or even advice regarding the sets of tasks that one could complete in order to get familiar with the modelling designs that can be used later in actual research papers.

Overall, even if people that are not necessarily familiar with statistical approaches get to read the book, it could be enough to bring a good understanding regarding the correlation between the two fields as Gries uses a friendly 'interface'. With an increasing interest regarding the empirical and corpus-based research, the present book is surely becoming one important piece in the 'big puzzle picture' amongst the new generation of linguistic studies.

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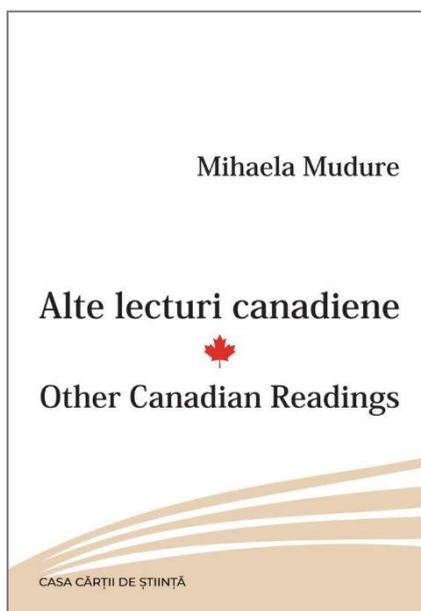*Email: nicoleta.manlup@ubbcluj.ro*

BOOKS

Mihaela Mudure, *Alte lecturi canadiene / Other Canadian Readings.* Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2020, 195 p.

It is a commonly held opinion that Canada's political and economic contributions to the global scene are linked almost exclusively with the tipping points of history, such as the two World Wars and some more recent conflicts. Indeed, if Canada has a "great story" to tell, as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau declared some years ago in an interview given to *Maclean's* magazine,[1] to many it remains unclear wherein this alleged greatness lies. And yet, on the literary stage, Canadian voices have been an integral part of a more convincing narrative, as demonstrated by the internationally-acclaimed names of Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro or Michael Ondaatje, to mention but a few.

It is precisely this other story, of Canada as a text to be deciphered by insightful readers, that is addressed in Mihaela Mudure's book *Alte lecturi canadiene / Other Canadian Readings*. As she explains in the Preface, this collection of essays complements the texts in an earlier volume*, Lecturi canadiene* (2009), being thus an expression of a sustained interest in Canadian culture and literature (5). The author proposes a highly consistent interpretive exercise, centred around the peculiarities of Canadian multiculturalism. In fact, the first essay offers a summary and explanation of the concept, as formulated by the Trinidadian-Canadian author and theorist Neil Bissoondath. In Bissoondath's opinion, Mudure notes, multiculturalism should not be understood as a rigid notion and should always be adequately contextualised, for there is a risk that it might lead to racism through excessive appraisal and idealisation of ethnicity (8). According to Bissoondath, in a Canadian context, multiculturalism has led to a simplification of culture (11) and even to its

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[1] Wells, Paul. 'An Interview with Justin Trudeau'. *Macleans.Ca*, 1 July 2017, https://www.macleans.ca/politics/justin-trudeau-the-canada-day-interview/.

reification. Moreover, blindly accepting multiculturalism is equal to submitting oneself to a process of racialisation (12) and demands conformity with the dominant understanding of the concept, which, in the final analysis, is a form of wilful self-censorship (13).

This multicultural and multifaceted character of Canadian literature will represent in fact the thematic focus of the volume. Guided by a diachronic perspective, Mudure devotes the first three essays to notable First Nations writers, Beth Brant and Thomas King. In her works, Brant speaks about ancient creation myths (for example, the Sky Woman) but also addresses contemporary issues such as domestic abuse, patriarchal law, the treatment of girls in traditional families and lesbianism. Brant is one of the most outspoken critics of colonialism, which she holds responsible for a series of "surgical operations" performed on the natives with a view to supporting the interests of the European newcomers to Canada (19). By contrast, Thomas King's approach to myth and history is more detached, informed by the characteristically postmodern love of irony and satire. As Mudure explains, King simultaneously manipulates and derides mythology and religion, thus inviting his readers to adopt an amused stance on history (22). In his stories, as well as in the novel *Green Grass, Running Water*, Thomas King writes about a world that has lost its centre and is in search of a new equilibrium (30).

In the next two essays, the author's attention turns to female voices. The first of these is Marie de l'Incarnation (Marie Guyart), founder of the religious order of the Ursulines in Canada. Marie de l'Incarnation, we are told, is the first European that left us epistolary accounts of life in Canada.

An exponent of the Counter-Reformation and colonial literature, she stands out mostly through her clear, "Cartesian" rational style. Mudure aptly points out that Marie de l'Incarnation's letters are of seminal importance as literary and historical documents that can enable us to understand how the West came to dominate a large part of the world (33-34). Closer to our times, Dublin-born Isabella Valancy Crawford is presented as an author who combines a fine eye for domestic detail with a patriotic stance, as in the poem "His Wife and Baby", which uses a scene of maternal love as an occasion for addressing the topic of duty in times of war. Crawford's moral and conservative stance is also evident in "How the Nightingale and the Parrot Wooed the Rose", a piece written in the tradition of Oscar Wilde's morality tales. Like Wilde, Mudure explains, Crawford's insistence on the more sordid aspects of existence is not meant to shock through militant realism, but rather to increase the sensitivity of the readers toward the Christian values of modesty, compassion and moderation (37-38).

Next, we return to Neil Bissoondath, this time as author of the novel *The Soul of All Great Designs.* This work provides multiple complex narratives focused on the migrant Indian community of Toronto, which intersect at crucial moments. In Mudure's reading, this plurality can also be attributed to the multicultural impulse that tries to accommodate, in a hospitable way, all the major founding myths of Canada, including those of the First Nations, of the successful English and French settlers and of the immigrants seeking a better life in the New World (43-44). The literary reflection of the social and existential problems of local communities is also at the core of the next essay, devoted to

Sylvain Rivière's novel *La Belle Embarquée*. Mudure highlights some of the qualities of this text, such as the keen eye for detail which renders convincingly the "ethnic puzzle" of Québec and the novelist's staunch realism (which echoes the technique of the great predecessor, Balzac).

Our understanding of the complex socio-cultural Canadian landscape is enriched through a series of other interesting insights. First, we learn about Guy Vanderhaeghe's novel *The Englishman's Boy*, whose double plot is concerned, on one hand, with the life of Shorty McAdoo, a genuine Canadian cowboy, and, on the other, with the fascinating world of cinema. As Mudure remarks, the novel attempts at demythologising and demystifying the birth and growth of Canada. In our world of illusions, cinema creates a reality that supersedes actual history. Truth is no longer important and nowhere is this more evident than in the stereotypical and prejudiced depiction of the First Nations (54-55). We return to realism, however, with the next author discussed in the book, Mavis Gallant. Her short stories bespeak of a talent found in a Chekhov, Mansfield or Alice Munro, reflecting the ways in which a majority can become a minority in certain conditions, since Gallant writes from the perspective of an Anglophone living in Québec. Her short stories continue the internationalist stance of Henry James (*sans* the upper-class placement of character and plot) and are imbued with humour that has a feminist touch (58-60). Gallant's realism, Mudure concludes, offers a more nuanced understanding of the multiple faces of contemporary Canadian identity (61).

In four of the essays of the next segment of the book we are invited to look at works by authors of hyphenated ethnicity. Thus, Joy Kogawa's work, *Obasan*, is described as one of the most important North American literary forays into the ordeal of Japanese people who suffered the humiliation of internment during World War II. Mudure justly compares this to the relevance of the Holocaust in Jewish History (62-63). The question of allegiance to different cultures is also explored with reference to Darcy Tamayose's novel *Odori*, whose plot focuses on the destinies of five generations of Japanese-Canadians with lives split between Okinawa and Canada. It is a novel that reflects the struggles of bicultural and bilingual individuals, abounding in Japanese words and phrases which the author employs as a subtle mechanism of forcing readers to face and accept alterity (66). Uprooting and the shock of losing a country are further discussed in the essay on Dionne Brand's novel *In Another Place. Not Here*. A text infused with poetic qualities (68), Brand's novel deals with the condition of the migrant who is simultaneously included and excluded in the host country (70). The last two essays of this lot focus on Jewish-Canadian writers, namely, Miriam Waddington and Matt Cohen. The former is appraised for the skill demonstrated in the short stories depicting the condition of the grown-up woman constrained by social obligations (78) and the problematic of the diasporic Jewish communities (81). By contrast, the latter's novel, *The Spanish Doctor,* reveals the historical plight of these people through a plot that follows the fate of a Sephardic Jewish doctor in a 14th century Spain ruled by the brutal laws of the Inquisition. Among the qualities of this novel Mudure enumerates the convincing historical references and the faithful presentation of the tension between the individual and the communal (87).

With the next author, Carol Shields, we are in a different sphere, that of the novel of the family. A work that draws on the conventions of the diary genre, Shield's *The Stone Diaries* provides a credible and sensitive view on the frailty of life, on death and the human ability to cope with the sense of inevitable ending (92). Mudure sees in Shield a fine observer of society, a quality that enables the novelist to rebel against the gender privileges imposed and maintained throughout centuries of patriarchal rule (89). We are given a short respite from the heavier theme of social problems in the essay that explores Douglas Coupland's "fascination with the simulacrum". His novel *Miss Wyoming* concentrates on the "overwhelming voyeurism" of modern society that leads to the loss of identity and a life devoid of ideals, direction, meaning and feelings (93). As a response, Mudure explains, one must seek to return to the simple values of the first Canadians who were drawn to the Adamic promise of the New World (96). A different face of the media is presented in Elizabeth Hay's *Nights on Air*, a novel set in the extreme Canadian North, which combines several narrative threads around an ecological theme that is examined from the perspective of the influence of the modern means of communication (the radio) upon human interaction. Here, we are told that the impact of media and technology is inevitable, making the Western acculturalisation of the First Nations irreversible.

Hay's work is further examined in the first of three essays devoted to women writers included thereafter. Hay's cycle of captivity stories reflects, on the one hand, a colonial tradition consolidated by writers like Susannah Willard Johnson and, on the other, the post-modern preference for the marginal and de-centred (101-102).

Mudure aptly notes that in Hay's stories about Canadians who settle in the United States writing becomes a "therapeutic exercise", a mode of resistance for the Canadian immigrant in face of the intimidating force of the imperialist southern neighbour (102). Next, we read about Marianne Brandis and her historical novel *Elizabeth, Duchess of Somerset*. Brandis proves to be a fine connoisseur of the period of Queen Anne's reign, creating a feminist piece that tackles the survival of the family against the ambitions of men (108). Brandis succeeds in reviving the past and creating a vivid picture of the lives of both aristocracy and ordinary people, giving readers a lesson about the will to continue in face of loss and suffering (110). In a similar fashion, in her story "A Bird in the House", Margaret Laurence offers a most touching image of death and the agony of growing up. To become an adult, Mudure notes, is wonderful and troublesome and hard. Only a handful of writers reached this "generous understanding of life" and even fewer captured its essence in the right words (117).

The first part of this volume ends with essays on writers that take a lighter look at existence. One such case is Allan Weiss' story "The Domitable Knight Errant", a glimpse of Canadian humour and an extended postmodern language game that discreetly but firmly satirises political correctness, seen as one of the major missteps of our age (119-123). The flawed nature of the present is also addressed by Louky Bersianik, a prime representative of the Québec feminist school, most notably in her novel *L'Equelionne*, whose protagonist, a giant feminine alien visitor of Earth, is shocked by the aggressive patriarchy that permeates our society and in her essay *Le pique-nique sur Acropole*, an ironic take on Plato's *The Banquet* (126-

131). Postmodern modes are also at the core of other works on hyphenated identities discussed next in this book. Thus, Haitian-Canadian Dany Lafèrriere's novel *L'Enigme du retour* combines prose, verse and prose poetry in a way that reflects the confusion of identity experienced by the modern migrant (133). It is a novel that fuses the "luxuriant beauty of the Caribbean" with the "fascination for the apparent order and fairness of Canadian or American capitalism" (140). On the other hand, in Thai-Canadian writer Souvankham Thammavongsa's volume *How to Pronounce Knife*, the sombre themes of acculturation and death of traditional family values are tackled from an angle commonly found in traditional oriental tales, with wisdom and detachment. Tragedy can never replace healthy laughter and the joy of living, Mudure notes.

The book ends with three essays written in English, which skilfully combine the author's already demonstrated reading talent with the findings of rigorous academic research. The first provides an analysis of old age in Rohinton Mistry's novel *Family Matters*. In Mudure's reading, one of the main concerns of this work is the "conflict between the flesh and the spiritual and the human desire to surpass this opposition" (152). Despite the "cruelty of the old age lesson", Mistry's approach is infused with "mild and quality humour" (154) and the novel's message remains optimistic. *Family Matters*, Mudure argues, proves that the opposition "evolution vs. involution" is only apparent and not a real dichotomy. (Post-)colonial history involves both of these, in a "rich combination that can turn it from a time of tears

into a starting point for reflection, reparation and survival" (158). The scholarly excursion takes us next to Ronald Lee, whose autobiographical novel *Goddam Gypsy* can be read as a "fictional account of fight and resistance to prejudice and discrimination" (162). With a narrative influenced by the picaresque *peripateia* (164) and bespeaking the author's fascination with modern-day picaros like the hippie or the beatnik (165), this novel also suggests that we are all inherently "nomads, and Gypsies, from birth to death" and at the same time "we are all brothers and sisters, and brothers and sisters should we all be". (172) Mudure's book concludes with a much welcomed contribution on the Romanian-born Felicia Mihali, whose novel *The Darling of Kandahar* is filtered through an analysis anchored in Freud's exposé in his essay *Beyond the Pleasure Principle.* Mudure astutely explains how in Mihali's novel the intertwining of three narrative threads (a tragically-ended erotic story, a successful immigration experience and an account of one's duty toward their adoptive country) both confirm and undermine the original Freudian scheme.

If, as Margaret Atwood said, "literature is a map, a geography of the mind"[2] that tells us about our cultural emplacement, readers of the literary map of Canada inevitably experience a strange mix of apprehension and wonder, much akin to that of the earliest explorers and settlers of this northern territory. In the Canadian cultural space, the answer to "where is here?" remains forever elusive, like the dream of discovering a passage to the bountiful and enigmatic Cathay that drove

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[2] Atwood, Margaret. *Survival*. House of Anansi Press, Inc., 2012, p. 12.

many to this land in the first place. In this context, Mihaela Mudure's book serves a twofold purpose. To the everyday reader, these essays provide ample material illustrating the diversity and vastness of the Canadian literary landscape; to the specialist, they are a confirmation that the journey they once embarked upon was worth the while, but also a reminder that the pleasure of reading is—and must remain—an essential ingredient of any scholarly effort.
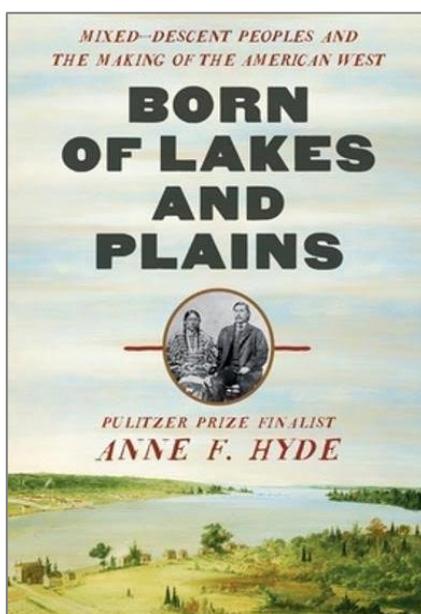
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BOOKS

Anne F. Hyde, *Born of Lakes and Plains: Mixed-Descent Peoples and the Making of the American West.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2022, 442 p.

It is a privilege for me to review this book for many reasons. First of all, it represents today's best American research in matters of history, anthropology, mentalities, traditional culture: it is vivid, enlightening, enjoyable. As a book about politicians' cynicism and abuse, invasion of neighbours' territories, utmost violence, gruesome battles and raids, atrocities, massacres, unlimited cruelty – it was first published in the spring of 2022, this fateful year for our entire world peace. As such, it echoes a kind of atmosphere nowadays rendered familiar once again, unfortunately, though in some other parts of the same world. As usual, those who suffer are families of people with no decision power, but with the stamina of good survivors.

Moreover, this volume has the outstanding merit of changing its reader's previous approach of some essential aspects of American history and civilization, such as the essential importance of the *American Indigenous peoples*, and then of their *mixed-descent families*, in both these fields of study; their quest for identity; last but not least, the traps of racist theories. But it also has the merit of (deeply and dramatically) refreshing the reader's understanding of the finest classic American literature, due to this most accurately and brilliantly provided historical context thus recovered from the shadows of the past.

For instance, in my case, William Faulkner's *Yoknapatawpha* remains a fascinating mystery, despite my almost three decades of assiduous research of it. Yet now, after reading *Born of Lakes and Plains: Mixed-Descent Peoples and the Making of the American West* by Anne F. Hyde[1], I may return to Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha from an

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[1] Professor Anne F. Hyde is a Pulitzer finalist as the author of numerous other impressive volumes studying the "Making of the American West". She teaches history at the University of Oklahoma, USA.

incomparably better viewpoint. For Yoknapatawpha[2] has never been just about the South, whether "Old" or "New". It is at least as much about the West, whether "Wild" or "civilized" – just as Huckleberry Finn would put it, voicing his own rebellious mastermaker, Mark Twain.

On the other hand, Anne F. Hyde can tell a love story quite well, up to the rewarding wedding moment, and especially afterwards. As a cool historian, she can plead for the old novelistic plot pattern of the "reasonable" *marriage contract*, in which mind and soul merge ideally, and is persuasive in a manner at once warm hearted, full of feminine insight and irony, not quite beyond compare to that of the classic novelist of manners. After all, the contemporary American historian's message in a nutshell is that love prevails against any legal absurdity.

Marriage has always been a risky alliance. The spider-web-like network of economic and social relationships revealed in this book as yielded by the ancient institution (or rather *survival-strategy*) of *marriage* – allegedly "free-willing" and "under no constraint"– is amazing. All the more so since this book studies particularly *intermarriage*. *Hope, courage, commitment, devotion, resilience* – this is the minimum *moral basis* that the young couple should contribute to the survival contract of complex partnership. Within the *five main families* whose *mixed-descent genealogies* the author has followed up by means of intricate/perverse census documents and archives,

ever since the 17th century until (almost) today, this survival partnership has been shared by (one or more) Native American women married to (one or more) White men, coming from France, England, Canada or America. This *moral basis* has been crucial, from one generation to the next. *A family* is supposed to promise its offspring that kind of protection and affection, especially required by survival in such *a tough country and climate*, as those of the Northern American continent (i.e. Canada and the US), as this book demonstrates so convincingly.

The family *business basis*, on the other hand, was originally *fur trade*; then it became *bison hide trade*. Contemplating this *intermarriage trade foundation* may again bridge the gap between the historical past, here rekindled to life, and our own contemporary issues. Because *fur trade* has lost so much of its appeal today, not only since humans have become more seriously concerned about their fellow animals' lives, but also since *global warming* has imposed itself as an issue endangering the lives of "all creatures great and small", humans included. Who wants *fur* anymore today? Yet for centuries on end, *fur* was not only one of the (European) royalties' luxuries, but also generally useful as a shield against the terrible winter frost. It is a question that makes the same reader here remember Herman Melville's (pseudo-whaling) masterpiece, *Moby-Dick*. Who needs white-whale sacrifice today, when we can just turn on the light, taking the precious gift of electricity for granted?

[2] Let us remember here that, according to Faulkner himself, in the Chickasaw people's language Yoknapatawpha means "*water-flows-slow-through-flat-land*". In other words now, possibly the kind of *plains* Anne F. Hyde writes about in her book.

Then there is also the mysterious "Ikkemotoubbe: a dispossessed American king", in Faulkner's 1945 "Appendix" to *The Sound and the Fury*. He is only mentioned there, within the entire Faulknerian diegesis. Yet he is an essential Indigenous American ghost of allegorical Yoknapatawpha.

In the precocious beginning of the (same) reader's career, always fond of American literature, James Fenimore Cooper's Natty Bumppo's *Leatherstocking* diegetic cycle provided an exotic, adventurous challenge of the imagination. Only much later on did the voices of Bumppo, the lonely white scout, and Chingachgook, the tragic Mohican father-figure – talking together as friends about the correspondence and differences between their *mother tongues* and their traditional representations of cosmogony, life and death – acquire their true *elegiac* meanings. The same suggestion of inhuman sacrifice of a *natural and native world for ever lost now* can be found now between the lines of Hyde's dense book. Beyond her huge effort of gathering *facts*, the author proves here a genuine *literary* narrative gift, which can only render her work ever better suited for anyone else's study and re-reading. Because Anne F. Hyde does (indirectly) interpret these historical facts, just like a refined *writer*, without pushing the reader to conclusions.

Hyde emphasizes particularly the importance of *languages*, *translation*, *chronicles,* a quality which renders her book *self-reflexive,* as it deals with the (d)elusive *power of words* all along the much troubled American history. The book actually culminates with the evocation of George Bent, a *mixed-descent* offspring himself, "White and Cheyenne, [. . .] removed from Colorado to Oklahoma" (Hyde 2022, xix) – an early 20th century chronicler of Native American history as partly his own life-experience, but also a possible example of that old ironical phrase "*traduttore – traditore*" (i.e. translator and traitor).

On the other hand, Native American *reservations* still exist in today's US. Hyde's book presents an impressive account of these reservations, ever since their beginnings, sustained by accurate maps and photographs. For many American *mixed-descent families*, as well as for the ever fewer American Indians, these reservations have represented sometimes *shelters,* yet some other times – *prisons*.

Hyde's book consists of twelve chapters, with well-nuanced subchapters. The foreign reader, perhaps acquainted with rather conventional American scholars' approaches of such upheaval moments in American history and civilization as: the Revolutionary War of Independence, the Louisiana Purchase, the Civil War, the Gold Rush, will be surprised by this new viewpoint. Because here such momentous historical changes are recaptured from these *mixed-descent families'* points of view. For those people involved in *fur trade*, and then in *bison-hides trade*, whether living and working on Canadian or (what would eventually become) American territories, such overpowering events came implacably, challenging their resilience and resources of self-adjustment.

The Prologue, so poetically entitled "Seasons of Marriage and War", presents the beginnings of *fur pelts trade* on the Northern American continent, even earlier than the 17th century; it sums up the entire book's plan, therefore is good to revisit after having read the entire book through. Adventurous immigrants from France, England, Ireland, the Netherlands, Switzerland, once crossed the Atlantic, ready for a new life, and likewise ready to share it with daughters of Indigenous people's chiefs. And yet:

> *Marriage, central to alliances, did not mean a lifelong commitment to a single person*. For an Ojibwe woman, marriage was only one relationship in a mesh of kin, far less important than her relationships with her father and her brothers.

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She owed her actual family responsibilities – providing protection, resources, and comfort – to a *clan* who shared an animal relative, a "nindoodem*". Cranes, bears, catfish, loons, martens, wolves, moose, and a dozen more beings *connected the human world to the nonhuman one*, connections that were essential for a successful life in North America. *A marriage outside one's clan was a strategic relationship. It strengthened ties to other villages and clans and was essential to meeting clan needs for hunters, warriors, or parents*. (Hyde 2022, 8; my emphasis)

Nevertheless, *White European fur traders*, such as "Henry Hudson and the English traders who followed him to Hudson Bay, teaching them how to survive winter and find fur" (Hyde, p. 12), came as *intruders* upon a traditional Indigenous *modus vivendi*:

The trade in furs with Europeans unbalanced long-established political relationships between Native nations. The new source of wealth empowered Native people to purchase allies and weapons. Gunpowder and muskets were revolutionizing warfare across the globe in the early 1700s, and North America was no exception. *The Iroquois Confederacy, long a power in the northeast, became a superpower with guns it obtained from English traders. For other nations like the Cree, the fur trade brought missionaries, new diseases, and few guns. Intermarriage remained crucial to their efforts to protect power and manage the costs of killing, which had become easy*. (Hyde 2022, 13; my emphasis)

For the sake of their new *mixed-descent families*, those first Indigenous wives were ready to accept double names, for instance Ozhaguscodaywayquay (i.e. Green Prairie Woman) became Susan to her English speaking family members. Hyde's research offers so much more than just these recovered original names: it makes the reader wonder about those women's *double personalities*, their gift for *foreign languages*, and their *psychological sophistication*.

These are just in a nutshell the most obvious qualities of Anne F. Hyde's latest book. Even if she may never start a novelist's career, this volume remains a generous source of inspiration for writers to come. They could be today her students, inspired by her research and lectures.

On the other hand, this book also deserves a Romanian version as soon as possible. A good translation into Romanian could be so much more persuasive and useful than my enthusiastic review.

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BOOKS

Susana Benavente Ferrera, Francisco Calvo del Olmo, Erika Hilde Frisan, Veronica Manole, Karine Marielly Rocha da Cunha, Hugues Sheeren, *PanromanIC. Manuale di intercomprensione tra lingue romanze.* Bologna: Zanichelli Editore, 2022, 208 p.

« Voici enfin un manuel qui régalera à coup sûr les amateurs d'intercompréhension (IC) ! » (p. XVI) Nous ne saurions commencer autrement que par la confirmation de cette promesse d'un livre attendu autant que nécessaire. Pour enthousiasmante et efficace qu'elle soit, cette approche de l'apprentissage des langues par les adultes n'a point bénéficié ces dernières années de matériel didactique nouveau sous la forme d'un manuel intelligemment structuré, d'autant moins concernant une langue comme le roumain. Le travail des six auteurs vient donc à la rencontre de tous ceux qui, en tant qu'enseignants ou apprenants, cherchent à perfectionner leur compréhension des langues romanes par une méthode qui met à profit l'héritage latin afin de faciliter la « confrontation » avec les différences entre les idiomes néolatins.

L'ouvrage propose dix unités thématiques classées par ordre progressif du point de vue de la difficulté linguistique : « Territoire », « Langue », « Caractère des gens et stéréotypes », « Gastronomie »,

« Personnalité emblématique », « Art et patrimoine », « Musique », « Habitudes du quotidien », « Fêtes et traditions », « Légendes, superstitions et croyances ». Chaque unité comporte six fiches (une pour chacune des langues concernées : portugais, espagnol, catalan, français, italien, roumain), ainsi qu'une section d'approfondissement, dans laquelle les auteurs présentent un point de grammaire à partir du latin et en relèvent les similarités et les différences susceptibles d'améliorer l'intercompréhension. Les thèmes abordés suivent à leur tour une progression et touchent à tous les sujets à même d'apparaître avec une grande fréquence dans n'importe quel texte : l'article, le pronom personnel sujet, les phrases interrogatives, les démonstratifs, les possessifs, le comparatif et le superlatif, la négation, les pronoms relatifs, les préfixes et les prépositions.

Grâce aux fiches-découvertes intitulées « Focus » qui closent chaque unité, dix langues romanes régionales ou minoritaires trouvent voix au chapitre, ce qui

ouvre une perspective enrichissante sur l'espace roman, plutôt méconnu au lecteur intéressé surtout par les langues de grande ou relativement grande diffusion. Comme le mot « *Pan*romanIC », jouant sur les consonances, l'indique, les auteurs se sont effectivement proposé de permettre une ouverture vers *l'ensemble* du monde roman et de contribuer ainsi à l'effort – peu important encore – de protection de la diversité écolinguistique. Le lecteur découvrira ici des textes en corse, sarde, galicien, mirandais, occitan, francoprovençal, frioulan, ladin, romanche et aroumain, suivis de questions de compréhension. Forcément la liste des idiomes romans est, en réalité, plus longue, mais le désir du lecteur d'en découvrir d'autres aura déjà été stimulé par cette sélection représentative. On ne tiendra certainement pas rigueur aux auteurs d'avoir tranché par ce choix.

Les soixante fiches (une par langue romane étudiée et six au total dans chaque unité) sont composées chacune d'un texte de niveau intermédiaire portant sur le thème de l'unité envisagée et d'exercices de compréhension allant du plus simple au plus difficile et dont les consignes sont chacune dans une autre langue du manuel. Les corrigés de même que des enregistrements sonores des textes sont disponibles sur le site des éditions Zanichelli. Dans un souci de souligner le fait que les idiomes ne sont pas liés à un seul pays, de rendre justice à « la dimension kaléidoscopique » du phénomène linguistique, comme l'appellent les auteurs dans l'introduction (p. XVII), ces lectures à haute voix mettent en scène des locuteurs natifs de genres, d'origines et d'âges différents. L'expérience d'apprentissage inédite est plus riche, même en autonomie, par la possibilité de faire constamment le lien entre l'oral et l'écrit.

L'ouvrage se clôt sur un guide des verbes qui présente la conjugaison comparative de huit verbes usuels représentatifs.

Le lecteur peut aborder la matière du livre en fonction de ses intérêts immédiats, et soit choisir de se concentrer sur une seule langue et prendre une par une toutes les fiches qui la concernent, soit approfondir un même thème et l'envisager de manière multilingue.

Pas en avant vers la réalisation du rêve de compréhension qui hante l'humanité depuis Babel, le présent ouvrage marque indubitablement un tournant et peut servir de modèle à des manuels futurs. De par son approche centrée sur l'apprenant, sa flexibilité, la diversité des contenus et son ouverture vers des aspects souvent négligés de la *Romania*, *PanromanIC* a toutes les chances de devenir un outil de choix tant pour ceux qui étudient une langue en autonomie que pour les étudiants et enseignants des universités qui peuvent y trouver un moyen d'approfondissement. Il est, en même temps, une preuve que, si la quête de l'harmonie universelle n'a pas (encore) abouti, elle a néanmoins permis de découvrir des trésors en cours de route, dont cette formidable manière de parvenir à comprendre l'Autre grâce à des racines communes.

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