

Editor's note: Discourse across cultures

Elena BUJA¹

The articles included in this special issue are the outcome of the presentations made at the DN32 conference, organized in March 2025 by the Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Letters, Transilvania University of Braşov, under the aegis of Discourse Net Community. They align with the theme of the event, i.e. cross-cultural discourse patterns, as well as specific communicative practices within cultures, but also extend to the broader domain of discourse studies, including translation, narrative, or sociolinguistic studies. Altogether, the issue comprises 13 articles and two book reviews.

One domain that was approached by the authors is that of political discourse. We open this issue with **Najla Lilya Jaballah** and **Ahlem Bounechada's** comparative analysis of the speeches of two important political figures, Donald Trump and Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, the current presidents of the United States and Egypt, respectively, which aimed at highlighting how each president makes use of discursive strategies that reflect authority, control, and dominance. The findings indicate clear differences between the two, Trump's discourse laying emphasis on competition and confrontation, whereas the speeches of El-Sisi envelop leadership in paternalistic narratives.

Olena Semenets's article touches upon a very delicate issue, i.e., the meaning and preservation of religious traditions even in times of war, as is the case of the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The author investigated the public discourses of academics, clergy, and culture actors that emerged after a culinary event was filmed in the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra Monastery in December 2024 and distributed via YouTube. The findings show that despite some comments against a monastery hosting a secular event, the general opinion is that Lavra could be "a source of new meanings and a great potential for the development of Ukraine".

¹ Transilvania University of Braşov, elena.buja@unitbv.ro

Reima al-Jarf also focused on political discourse, more specifically on the structure, meaning, and purpose of metaphorical slurs that appeared in the Arab media in connection with the Syrian revolution and the Gaza-Israeli war. Those who employ such lexical structures, often in a satirical or insulting manner, do it to express their contempt, criticism or even hostility towards political personalities, countries or TV channels they oppose or dislike.

Cristina Vâlcea attempts to persuade the reader of the existence of a new genre – *antiscience* – and of its hybridizing strategies on the basis of the analysis of a collection of statements of Romanian politicians and influencers and of some texts related to the health measures taken during the Covid pandemic. The scholar warns against the predatory character of the antiscientific genre, which thrives on the scientific vocabulary and on mimicking the scientific method.

Also making use of Romanian data, **Andreea Petre**'s article delves in the representation of masculinity in the discourse of advertisements that are broadcast on various television channels, pointing out that the persuasive strategy employed in them is the anti-stereotype; the macho figure in advertisements is undermined by means of humour and irony, showing the society's tendency to rethink virility.

A number of contributions centre on the strong relationship between discourse, culture, and foreign language teaching. **Olivia-Carmen Țârlea** emphasizes the importance of teaching not only the language of a certain country, but also something about its cultural elements so that the student/learner is able to communicate effectively in intercultural interactions. The lexicultureme discussed by the author in teaching Romanian is *Mărțișor*, a symbol of spring.

The article co-authored by **Raluca Levonian** and **Ioana Joița** continue the idea of the importance of the exposure of foreign learners of Romanian to elements of Romanian culture. In this respect, the two scholars present an experiment carried out with their foreign students who were presented with paintings of various Romanian artists and asked to comment on them by expressing their emotions and by mentioning which particular element in the works of art captured their attention. The results of the analysis indicate a high interest of the international students in Romanian art, which they compared to that of their own cultures.

Remaining in the same field, **Ioana-Clara Enescu's** article narrows down Romanian language teaching and learning to the context of Chinese education, focusing on the analysis of the structure of the Romanian language textbooks designed for Chinese students. Once again, the interconnection language – culture is emphasized, the author stating that “[t]he textbook not only facilitates language acquisition but also promotes intercultural communication”.

Zahra al-Sharoufi offers a sociolinguistic perspective on the acquisition of French as a foreign language, pointing out that the linguistic output of the foreign learners of French is very much influenced by the type of input they receive (the latter being characterized by both diamesic and diaphasic variation), as well as by the learners' linguistic attitudes. The findings indicate that learners' output is much better if they are culturally immersed and if they are first provided with spoken, rather than written input, as they have to communicate in real-life, context-based situations.

Also on the basis of data collected from students, by means of interviews, **Gabriela Chefneux** aimed at showcasing how their professional identity is expressed in the narratives they produced when asked about an experience that really made them feel part of the university. The students' narratives were analysed in terms of their structure and of the identity elements that emerged from them. Two types of professional identity were revealed: an individual one, when students talked about their feelings and changes and a collective one, when they spoke about exams.

Mahinur Akşehir's contribution takes readers to the realm of literature: Homer's *Odyssey* and Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad*. By comparing these two masterpieces and by using concepts of Critical Discourse Analysis, the Turkish scholar emphasized “the possibility of creating a kind of discourse free from the imposition of social hierarchies that are deeply embedded in language”.

In **Elena Buja's** article, one finds an analysis of the father – children power relationships as they emerge from the discourse of two novels, the Romanian *Moromeții* (The Moromete Family) written by Marin Preda (1964) and the Korean *I Went to My Father*, authored by Kyung-Sook Shin's (2023). The framework employed consists of Hofstede's (1994) *power distance* cultural dimensions and Foucault's (1982) *theory of power*. The findings indicate that

the Romanian father makes use of *hard power* (power based on authority, control, or force), while the Korean one employs *the power of love*.

Finally, **Nigar Babayeva** brings again into discussion the *culturemes*, this time from the perspective of the problems they pose in literary translations. The scholar highlights the importance of positioning the process of translating at the intersection between culture, communication, and sustainable development.

This issue ends with two reviews of recent publications in the field of translation studies. **Mădălina Avram (Irimia)** focused on Claudine's Borg (2023) *A Literary Translation in the Making – A Process-Oriented Perspective*, while **Maria Tatu** looked into Victoria Young's (2024) *Translation and the Borders of Contemporary Japanese Literature: Inciting Difference*, both books being published by Routledge.