Editor's Note.
Theoretical and practical explorations of intercultural communication

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1. Preliminary considerations

This thematic issue contains some of the papers presented at the 7th edition of the International Conference on Theoretical and Applied Linguistics – *Structure, Use, and Meaning* – which has become a landmark in theoretical and practical explorations in communication. The edition from 2022 celebrated and, at the same time, marked the evolution of the interface culture/language. In late 60s and early 70s of the 20th century, Hymes (1974) introduced the concept of *communicative competence* in response to Chomsky's (1965) *linguistic competence* and *performance*. For more than fifty years, researchers have been investigating the relationship between language and society, between language structure, language use, and meaning creation in various settings. Their research became more and more refined and various concepts were put forward: *cultural linguistics* (Langacker 1994), *languaculture* (Agar 1994), *ethnolinguistics* (Wierzbicka 1997), *ethnopragmatics* (Goddard 2006) or *intercultural pragmatics* (Kecskes 2014).

The dialogic nature of language has been traditionally interpreted as either a contiguous or an interactive process, in which the two interlocutors may merely be mutually presenting ideas to each other or enabling and affecting the other, in a 'functional' manner, highly dependent on the multiple voices and cultural logics that need to contend with each other. If one investigates the structure of language and linguistic presentation, one might also say that the utterance/ sentence/ word itself stands in a similar juxtaposed relationship to other utterances/ sentences/ words in a speech or text, as in a kind of internal dialogue without hierarchy. Bakhtin (1981, 275) presents a three-layer nesting model of juxtaposed "dialogue orientation, [first] amid other utterances inside a single language, (…) [second] amid other 'social languages' within a single national language, and finally amid different national languages within the same culture", also relating to genre, age group, social dialects, and so on. The essential elements in Bakhtin's dialogical theory

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refer to the existence of multiple voices in 'polyphony,' the open communication among these voices, and the development of human beings during dialogue.

2. Practical and theoretical explorations

In her contribution, *Interethnic jokes in Transylvania. The case of Gypsy jokes*, Noémi TUDOR puts forward a distinction between ethnic jokes and interethnic jokes. She considers that ethnic jokes are the ones in which only the portrayal of the minority is perceived, while interethnic jokes illustrate the presence of both the central and the minority group, thus mirroring intercultural relationships existing among ethnic groups which live together in the area under investigation. The analysis is carried out at a lexical and a grammatical level and reveals that the presence of the central group may be explicitly stated via ethnonyms or may be implied through lexical or grammatical means. Lexically, the use of lexemes referring to (1) occupations/professions, (2) a person in general, or (3) proper names are the most frequent representations. Grammatically, the use of pronouns and verbs (1st and 2nd person, singular or plural) are widely used tools.

Reima AL-JARF continues the discussion of the perception of the "Other" in her contribution focusing on sectarian language in Arabic media. The author collected a sample of Arabic sectarian expressions from social media, print media and TV channels, and carried out a survey among Arab college students and instructors. The analysis shows that sectarian language used by students, faculty and Arab media is characterized by contempt, hostility, hatred, and intolerance of the sect(s) they disapprove of as they constitute political and ideological threats.

Demah Aamer ALQAHTANI investigates the role of social media platforms in figurative language learning for Arabic speakers and suggests three different borrowing models: similar expression - similar meaning, different expression - similar meaning, and similar expression - different meaning. The analysis also shows that one needs to pay attention to the different interpretations the target language speakers will have of the same expression in the source language so that proper understanding is achieved.

The rise of online communication has led to the creation of specific means of communication, memes being one of the them. Gabriela Corina ȘANTA (CÂMPEAN) explores a set of memes in English dealing with the concepts of HEALTH and ILLNESS to detect similarities and differences in approaching the two concepts. She carried out a multimodal analysis of memes since the semantic meaning of the memes needs to be correlated with the relevance of the pictures. The analysis of the memes reveals changes in the message they convey, using humour supported by the image as well, contradicting, emphasising or merely changing the message.

Simona ȘOICA puts forward a cross-cultural insight into the neolocal discourse of craft beer industry. In her paper, she analyses three craft breweries

from Romania, France and United States of America as mirrored in the social media. By employing the cultural dimensions framed by Hofstede, the author carries out a semiotic analysis and the results show that national cultures impact the neolocal discourse in terms of the most appropriate choices craft brewers make to relate to their communities.

In her contribution, Mihaela TĂNASE-DOGARU looks at size nouns of the type *grămadă* 'heap/pile' in Romanian and classifies them into two categories: size nouns with a *comparative interpretation* and size nouns with a *quantifying interpretation*. The lexico-syntactic analysis reveals that such constructions can be included among pseudopartitive structures in which the size noun either preserves (some of) its lexical features or it only has a functional role, that of referring to a great amount.

In another theoretical exploration of language structures, Mădălina MATEI and Sofiana I. LINDEMANN survey causality in language with a focus on implicit causal relations expressed inter-clausally by verbs. The authors aim to assess the extent to which causal biases impact on next mention and pronoun resolution in the subsequent discourse. The authors also aim to test the validity and strength of the implicit causality verb bias patterns reported for verbs from other languages on Romanian interpersonal verbs. The preliminary results show that implicit causality bias can have a great impact on psycholinguistics as it has a key role in discourse comprehension patterns, on teaching anaphoric resolution to speakers with poor comprehension abilities generated by trauma.

Nóra ESTÉLYI-TALA and Ildikó HORTOBÁGYI explore the multilingual environment provided by movies, focusing on realia or culture-specific items that pose challenges to translators. The authors combined three taxonomies already existing in translation studies and identified a trend towards *domestication* of culture-related items as far as Hungarian films and their English subtitles are concerned.

In their contribution, Erika-Mária TÓDOR and Enikő TANKÓ examine the diversity of linguistic attitudes of young Hungarian speakers in Romania, more specifically, aim at identifying the speakers' choice for using Romanian and/or English loanwords in their everyday Hungarian communication. The analysis shows that that young speakers tend to mix languages in everyday colloquial language, but they consider formal and written communication is much stricter and therefore does not allow for such a mix of linguistic codes. This further leads to the conclusion that young speakers mix languages to stand out or differentiate from other age populations and to connect to the global communication culture.

The final paper in this issue is dedicated to tracing the changes that have occurred in the Korean family institution since the beginning of the 20th century, when Korea opened its borders to foreigners. Elena BUJA explores novels authored

by Korean and Korean-American writers, such as H. Lee, S. Park, and N.J. Cho in the theoretical framework of thematic analysis. The analysis reveals a slow change in the family institution, which could be attributed to factors such as the Western influence, the spread of Christianity in the peninsula, as well as the massive industrial, technological, and economic development of Korea.

3. Concluding remarks

The papers in this thematic issue all share the view that dialogue is a situated performance, which allows the interplay among communication, context, action, and meaning, being viewed as a holistic and systemic outcome of the human linguistic manifestations. In turbulent times, a dialogical approach may equate with initiating and facilitating negotiations between conflicting groups, and mobilising them towards a common goal (Gao 2017). The dialogic nature of culture is very similar to that of the language, in the sense that just as language is seen as a mobile system with different glosses and meanings built up over time, so can culture be interpreted as something on the move, or, as Street (1993) comments, 'culture is a verb'.

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