

FOREWORD

From the primordial command “Let there be light” to the contemporary inputs fueling text-generating AI bots, words have long stood as humanity's primary vehicle for representing reality. Interwoven in intricate relationships, words possess an inherent capacity to connect, define, express, suggest, and construct fictional realms. Discourses not only shape and reflect societal pursuits but also imbue meaning into human interactions, preserve the past, and conceive future paradigms. The breadth of studies, interpretations, and theories in discourse analysis and typology attests to the remarkable versatility of words in conveying pragmatic meaning.

The present collection of studies reflects its authors’ refreshingly diverse experiences with the power of words in academic contexts. The authors are specialists in language and literature from the Petru Maior Faculty of Sciences and Letters within the G.E. Palade University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Science, and Technology of Targu Mures. This project emerged as a collaborative effort of the contributors, aiming to use the concept of alternativity as a unifying methodological concept of their endeavors in the field of discourse.

Simply put, alternativity is defined as the power to choose between two courses of action. We chose this concept as the unifying foundation of the present book in recognition of the power of divergence from the prevailing norms in the study of discourses of all types. The frequently invoked crisis of the humanities asks for novel manners of approaching the study of words: the paradigms that have long dictated the landscape of philology are no longer comprehensive enough to encapsulate the intricacies and dynamism inherent in linguistic and literary exploitation.

The diverse array of the authors’ research interests, ranging from specialized languages to literary texts, and from linguistic didacticism to translated discourse, embodies the commitment to transcend the limitations imposed by convention. The practical illustrations of each individual chapter mark deliberate attempts to depart from mainstream approaches, methodologies, and theories. However, embracing alternativity is not merely a departure. It is, at the same time, an invitation to redefine, rejuvenate, and revolutionize approaches to discourse varieties in a more accurate reflection of current pedagogical and educational philosophies.

The chapters of the book “communicate” with each other, weaving a narrative of alternative techniques that challenge the conventional paradigms of each author’s

field of interest. While emerging as individual explorations, the book's contributions converge on the common thread of the significant difference to the norm. Examples of such significant differences are illustrated in contributions ranging from language acquisition techniques to literary perspectives and translation practices, thus covering major areas of philology.

The first part of the book reunites a collection of innovative approaches in the field of specialized discourses. Dana Rus's opening chapter, "Beyond Tradition: Alternative Paradigms to Specialized Discourses," proposes methodological changes in teaching specialized discourses that align with the ethos of "21st-century skills", as envisioned in the framework of Education 4.0. Anișoara Pop's stance on medical discourse advocates for alternative approaches that foster learning autonomy while proposing innovative tools across social media platforms to expand the practice of medical discourse beyond traditional boundaries. Medical discourse is also the topic of Adrian Năznea's contribution titled "Mastering the Language of Healthcare: Overcoming Challenges in Medical Communication," which focuses on original methodologies such as simulation-based learning, problem-based learning, and telemedicine to empower learners in acquiring not only language skills but also cultural competence. The same concern for learning outcomes is manifested in Nicoleta Marcu's "Technology-Enhanced Alternative Approaches to Legal Discourse," where the author provides theoretical and practical demonstrations of the advantages of using technology in teaching "Legalese."

The subsequent section of the book delves deeper into the idea of resorting to technology as a means to boost discourse acquisition. Andreea Ban's "Erforschung neuer Technologien für unabhängiges Lernen," ("Exploring New Technologies for Independent Learning") is a consistently argued plea for the introduction of technology as a solution to develop autonomous, self-directed language learning. Similarly, Corina Lirca's contribution, "Digital Content in the Language Class – from Foe to Friend," further advocates for the incorporation of technology, examining the benefits, rationale, and practical approaches of using digital content for the advancement of language proficiency. Similarly aligned, Bianca Han's "Wanna Teach? Gotta Tech! Take the Call! On the Use of Call Alternative Methods" brings theoretical and practical arguments in favor of technologically enriched language acquisition experiences as alternative methods for personalized learning.

Another stance on alternative approaches to discourse is the one suggested by Andreea Ban and Arina Modrea in their joint chapter "Exploring Alternative

Approaches to Developing Linguistic Competence through Interdisciplinarity.” The authors’ central argument emphasizes the significance of interdisciplinary approaches in discourse, aiming for learning outcomes that surpass mere linguistic achievements.

A significant section of the book is dedicated to innovative approaches and interpretations of the literary discourse. Smaranda Ștefanovici’s contribution, “Decanonization and Alternative Approaches to Literature,” is a theoretical defense of the inclusion of marginalized voices in language education, highlighting the significance of striking a balance between canonical and non-canonical texts. Iulian Boldea’s approach, in his chapter entitled “Exploring Alternative Discourses of Identity: the Representation of Romanian Literary Exile,” is to create an alternative portrayal of the representatives of the exile, highlighting a clash between traditionalist ideologies rooted in Romanian identity and a fervent embrace of liberal values. Reka Kutasi, the author of the chapter “Beyond Traditional Discourse: the Role of Literature in Teaching English as a Foreign Language,” suggests a provocative use of literary discourse as an alternative means to learning language skills. A slightly different definition of languages is the one provided by Georgeta Matei, in her chapter “Speaking the Language of Vulnerability: Alternative Languages in Literary Discourse”. Here, the interpretation key suggested by the author to decipher literary discourse refers to substitute modes of expression transcending cultural and linguistic boundaries.

The concluding chapter of the book refers to alternative strategies applied to translated literary discourse. Corina Bozedeau’s contribution: “Une perspective alternative en traduction: travailler l’alterité ou son identité?” (“An Alternative Perspective in Translation: Working on Otherness or One's Identity?”) advocates for a nuanced stance of the translation process entailing affective, empathic features.

Guiding readers from specialized languages to literary motifs, and from innovative didactic approaches to provocative translation techniques, the book is an invitation to embark on a journey beyond the confines of convention. As a whole, the contributions attempt to reimagine discourse from a diverse range of unconventional stands, which makes the book an invigorating read for professionals and language enthusiasts alike.

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