

## Message from the Editors

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Welcome to the December 2021 Volume 9, Number 2 of *Language Discourse and Society*. This thematic issue is special as it marks the Journal's 10-year anniversary. By whichever measure, this is a momentous achievement which requires not just celebration but also reflection. The first two articles provide reflection of the journey and achievements of the journal and of Research Committee 25 of ISA. Celine-Marie Pascale retraces the growth of RC 25 in the first article, *The Past Doesn't Stay Behind Us: RC 25 in Historical Perspective*. The second article is by one of the Journal's former editors, Federico Farini. The article, *Now, where were we? Celebrating ten years of Language Discourse and Society doing what we do best: researching Language in Society* traces the development of *Language Discourse and Society*.

### Thematic Section

The five articles in this section were in response to a call by Stephen O. Okpadah and Osakue S. Omoera on Language of Sustainable Development: Discourses of the Anthropocene in Literature and Cinema.

There is a raging debate in stratigraphy (the branch of geology that studies rock strata) whether the Anthropocene qualifies to be an epoch that can be incorporated into the geological timescale. The moot question is whether human activity has impacted on the planet we call home to an extent that such impact is recorded in the earth's strata. A definitive and geologically acceptable answer to this question lies in data, methods and thresholds that are beyond the scope of the articles published in this journal. The rocks are yet to speak but anything alive today can narrate the horrors of the impact of human 'civilization' on our shared home. Therefore, it could be argued that a comprehensive definition of the Anthropocene Epoch probably lies at the intersect of disciplines.

From a sociological perspective, the Anthropocene Epoch marks the pyrrhic victory of mankind over nature: we have established dominion over the rest of creation but we are yet to begin to learn to tame ourselves. We live in an age where greed and selfishness are the foundation of what we ourselves have termed as 'unsustainable' development. Despite our remarkable capacity to innovate, we have failed to create a paradise – and we wonder why. The articles in the thematic section of this issue might shed light on the 'why'. Drawn from different social contexts, the articles reveal various aspects of human struggle against oppression and discrimination by fellow man. In addition, they paint a picture of exploitation of resources for the benefit of a few and to the detriment of the majority.

Focusing on two diverse political contexts, Stephane Rodrigues Dias and Phoebe Kisubi Mbasalaki question the use of political rhetoric to sell hate in modern democratic societies. Their article, *A Study of Hate Speech in the North and South: Politicians as Communicative Agents*, pulls back the mask on online 'communities' and romanticised views of the global village. Their data from Brazil and the Netherlands shows how digital technologies have created communities

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that are based on discrimination and fear. Unfortunately, the ideals of such communities are easier to sell and spread now than ever before, thanks to the same technologies.

The article by Chinyere Lilian Okam and Onyekachi Peter Onuoha, titled *Revolutionary Trope and Environmental Pedagogy in Frank Arase's 'Somewhere in Africa: The Cries of Humanity' and David Attwood's 'Blood and Oil'*, focuses on films that have documented exploitation of the environment and of communities. The authors argue that the two eco-cinemas vividly capture the power plays that underlie the wanton decimation of the environment for capitalistic gains. Global multinationals have, ironically, managed to make allies of governments, who in turn facilitate the continued exploitation and displacement of local communities in the quest for control of oil resources. The films depict homelessness, hopelessness and desolation that can only be addressed by arousing the agency of the people.

The third article in the thematic section is Abdullah Qabani's *Identity Negotiation in the Arab Spring Discourse: The Egyptian Case*. The author shows the attempts of a regime to marshal discourse resources to justify and protect itself. Of interest is the fact that language is used to give legitimacy to a political elite whose stay in power was largely based on coercion. In the face of unrest that threatens the regime, language is used to create a father figure identity for the leader and a sense of shared nationhood. These attempts, however, seem not to appease the protestors.

*Language of the Oppressed: Boon of Nature and Curse of Humans in the Life of a Refugee* by N. Lavanya and M. Anjumkhan present the tortured life of a refugee. The oppressors who create refugees in the first place, also work hard towards the total destruction on the refugee by denying him/her access to basic human rights such as education. This is the waking reality of the Karen community refugees, whom, the authors argue, the world has learned to live without seeing or hearing them.

Oyenka Ike's *Protestations and the Search of Redress in Chimamanda Adichie's 'Purple Hibiscus' and 'Half of a Yellow Sun'* addresses the role of protest literature in demanding for an end to mindless violence and discrimination. His analysis of these two literary works also shows the need for justice, if there is to be peace. Those that have received nothing but brutality and suffering from fellow men must have redress, which, in turn, will act as a foundation of a new future.

## **Non-Thematic**

The non-thematic sections presents variety in the topics covered by the following four articles.

Kwabena Sarfo Sarfo-Kantankah, Ebenezer Agbaglo, Frank Mensah, Jr. address a topical global issue: Covid-19. The article, *Metaphorical conceptualisation of Covid-19 in parliamentary discourse: A corpus-assisted study* looks at the use of language by Ghanaian parliamentarian to construct an identity of a new enemy and the war that needs to be waged against it.

From the field of social psychology, Claire Prendergast, Imac Maria Zambrana zoom in on an urban setting in Lebanon to show how a community can feel excluded from a neighbourhood they have called home for a long time. Working within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, the article *Relational Needs and Belonging in Conditions of Social Exclusion: A Critical Discourse Analysis* shows how physical transformational processes can be conceptualized as well-meaning by one group but exclusionary by another.

*Linguistic cultural heritage of politeness strategies among the Shona and Ndebele of Zimbabwe* by Tsitsi Roselene, Bwetenga Diocleciano Nhatuve uses the Politeness Theory to analyse the politeness practices among the Shona and Ndebele of Zimbabwe.

The last article '*If you ride a lame horse into a race ...*': *A Corpus-Based Analysis of Metaphors in John Mahama's Political Speeches* by Richmond Sadick Ngula, examines the use of metaphors by a prominent political leader in Ghana. The Conceptual Metaphor Theory is used to show how John Mahama used metaphors to construct a unique rhetorical style which in turn contributed to his success in politics.