

STYLES OF COMMUNICATION



EDITURA UNIVERSITĂȚII DIN BUCUREȘTI
BUCHAREST UNIVERSITY PRESS

EDITURA UNIVERSITĂȚII DIN BUCUREȘTI – BUCHAREST UNIVERSITY PRESS

Bd. Mihail Kogălniceanu, nr. 36-46, Cămin A (curtea Facultății de Drept), Corp A,
Intrarea A, etaj 1-2, Sector 5, 050107, București – ROMÂNIA
Tel. + (4) 0726 390 815
E-mail: editura.unibuc@gmail.com
www.editura-unibuc.ro

Librăria EUB-BUP

(Facultatea de Sociologie și Asistență Socială)
Bd. Schitu Măgureanu nr. 9, Sector 2, 010181 București – ROMÂNIA
Tel. +40 213053703



UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST
ROMANIA



FACULTY OF JOURNALISM
AND COMMUNICATION SCIENCES,
UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST



POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
WROCLAW BRANCH

UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST FACULTY OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Bd. Iuliu Maniu 1-3, Complex "Leu", Corp A, 6th floor, district 6
Bucharest, Romania
E-mail: stylesofcomm@fjsc.ro
Website: <http://stylesofcomm.fjsc.unibuc.ro/>

Styles of Communication Vol. 17 (2), 2025

© All rights reserved by the authors

The selected articles cannot be given for publication to other journals.

The quality of the articles is ensured by a blind review process with minimum two national and international reviewers.

Publication frequency: 2 issues per year

The journal is on the list of international journals: *Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education*.

It is included in international databases: *IndexCopernicus; EBSCO; Genamics*.



ISSN 2065 – 7943

ISSN-L 2065 – 7943

E-ISSN 2067-564X

Cover & DTP: EUB-BUP

CONTENTS

Editorial	5
IULIA-MARIA BÂRZĂ, VERONICA CÂMPIAN, <i>Echoes of Nationalism: The Party for the Alliance of Romania (AUR) Political Narrative on Romania's Schengen Integration</i>	7
LAURA BOIA, DELIA CRISTINA BALABAN, <i>The Impact of Aestheticized Influencer Marketing on Romanian Gen Z Females' Behaviors and Practices</i>	39
ROXANA CHIVU, <i>The Media Agenda Reconfiguration of Televised Political News in the Digital Ecosystem. The Case of the Pre-Campaign of the 2024 European Parliamentary and Local Elections in Romania</i>	71
INDRĖ IGNOTAITĖ, <i>Categorising English Text Fragments by Length in Lithuanian "Twitter" Messages: A Translanguaging Perspective</i>	107
GRACE O. PREZI, <i>A Sociolinguistic Study of Business Conversations among Traders and Buyers in Selected Markets in Yenagoa</i>	141
SEKAR DIVA PARASDYA, EDI SANTOSO, MITE SETIANSAH, <i>Representation of Vulnerability of Female Workers in the Film Sleep Call (2023) – A Semiotic Analysis</i>	173

BOOK REVIEW

IONEL BARBALAU, Book Review of: JOSÉ VAN DIJCK, KARIN VAN ES, ANNE HELMOND, FERNANDO VAN DER VLIST (editors). <i>Governing the Digital Society Platforms, Artificial Intelligence, and Public Values</i>	203
--	-----

EDITORIAL

This is the 17th issue, no. 2 of *Styles of Communication*, the international journal which is published annually by the Faculty of Journalism and Communication Studies (University of Bucharest, Romania) in cooperation with the Committee for Philology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Wrocław Branch, Poland. From 2009 to 2014, *Styles of Communication* was published by the “Danubius” University of Galați, Romania.

The main purpose of *Styles of Communication* is to show the unity existing within global diversity. As communication implies, besides the transfer of information to others and the decoding of the others’ messages, the production of meaning within (non)verbal texts/objects is closely connected to interculturality, creativity and innovation and it needs a refining of styles in order to avoid misunderstandings.

This issue is a plea for interdisciplinarity as its aim is to include different perspectives on communication, coming from different fields, such as advertising, public relations, journalism, literary studies, translation, or linguistics.

Styles of Communication is indexed by ERIH PLUS, Index Copernicus, DOAJ, Genamics Journal Seek, EBSCOhost databases, and it is recommended by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

We would like to see this journal as an ongoing project in which future issues may contribute to the exchange of research ideas representing broad communication -oriented approaches.

CAMELIA M. CMECIU¹
PIOTR P. CHRUSZCZEWSKI²

¹ <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5533-8274>, University of Bucharest, Faculty of Journalism and Communication Studies, camelia.cmeciu@fjsc.ro

² <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3915-650X>, University of Wrocław, Poland, piotrchruszczewski@poczta.onet.pl

IULIA-MARIA BÂRZĂ¹
VERONICA CÂMPIAN²

ECHOES OF NATIONALISM: THE PARTY FOR THE ALLIANCE OF ROMANIA (AUR) POLITICAL NARRATIVE ON ROMANIA'S SCHENGEN INTEGRATION

Abstract. By using the public's general dissatisfaction and negative feelings regarding the political class, far-right parties have succeeded in gaining the favour of the people all over Europe. They have reached success by criticising the status quo and by often promoting nationalist and Eurosceptic ideologies. The Party for the Alliance of Romania (AUR), founded in 2019, also followed this trend, shaping itself around ultra-nationalist and anti-establishment rhetoric and a strong social media presence. This paper looks into how AUR weaponised the potential Schengen ascension to further their Eurosceptic discourse and to fabricate a depiction of 'the people' pitted against 'the corrupt political elite'. A qualitative content analysis was conducted on Facebook posts from key AUR members and official party statements over a six-month period, respectively, three months before and after the Schengen decision. The paper looks into the narrative techniques by which the AUR party paints Romania as a victim of both external and internal forces. Results show that AUR intentionally frames the Schengen rejection to mobilise its supporters. It does so by targeting other EU states and depicting them as national enemies, and by criticising

¹ <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-0224-7591>, Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, iulia.barza@stud.ubbcluj.ro

² <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1647-9250>, Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, veronica.campian@fspac.ro

the Romanian government. With this framing, the party can position itself as the sole defender of national interests. This paper highlights how AUR uses the Schengen issue to deepen societal divisions and promote Euroscepticism, contributing to the broader understanding of political discourse and far-right dynamics in Romania.

Keywords: far right party, populism, euroscepticism, content analysis

1. Introduction

The growing prominence of radical right-wing movements and parties has caused significant concern in liberal democracies. Once dismissed as a temporary phenomenon, the radical right has risen to become a formidable force in the Western world (Betz & Johnson, 2004). As Golder (2016) asserts, a significant number of far-right parties are distinguished by a common ideological framework that integrates elements of nationalism, radicalism, and populism.

A defining feature of populist discourse is the appeal to resentment – an emotion tied to power, injustice, and blame – that projects an outward sense of outrage (Salomon, 1994). Populism’s emphasis on inequality and injustice makes it an effective strategy for challenging the status quo. Modern radical right-wing populism, according to Betz & Johnson (2004), appeals to mobilisers by addressing both grievances and solutions.

Griffin (2000) argues that the modern radical right, unlike its predecessors, embraces democracy while holding dissenting views and different moral standards (Griffin, 1999). Thus, strategies like exclusion and marginalisation have proven ineffective. As Betz and Johnson (2004) argue, extreme right-wing parties now position themselves as guardians of the public interests of ordinary people and champions of democracy.

Given the radical right’s adaptability, a deeper understanding of this phenomenon is necessary to mitigate its anti-democratic impact. This paper analyses the discourse of the far-right party, the Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR), through content analysis to explore how nationalism and populism underpin its communication strategies.

The focus is on the AUR party’s nationalist and populist discourse in response to Romania’s potential Schengen accession in December 2022. Both official party statements and Facebook posts from members

will be analysed to address two research questions: (1) Does AUR exploit this event to propagate Euroscepticism and mistrust of the EU? (2) Does AUR frame the issue as a divergence between a 'morally flawless people' and a 'corrupt political elite'?

The findings aim to identify trends in far-right politics at both European and national levels. The analysis of AUR's discourse provides insights into the party's rhetoric and goals, which, in turn, can help reduce its influence and promote democratic values to combat it. This research contributes to the political literature about Romania's EU integration. It also contributes to the understanding of the European far-right.

The chosen method for the analysis of AUR's discourse is the content analysis. Both official statements and unofficial materials (social media posts) were analysed. The interdisciplinary perspective on political communication and far-right parties of this paper is given by a blend of political science, communication, and sociology.

Its originality lies in the diverse materials used in the analysis, which provide a comprehensive understanding of AUR's public discourse and its stance on Schengen ascension.

The rise of the AUR party is a well-documented phenomenon in the literature on nationalist parties, but there is a research gap regarding the party's response and communication following Romania's Schengen rejection in 2022. This event represents a pivotal moment for the party, because it allowed them to gain visibility and support by criticising other European countries and the Romanian leadership. This type of situation is particularly significant in Eastern Europe, where the rise of the far right remains a recurring phenomenon. AUR's rise in Romania is relevant in the view of Stoica (2021), who argues that populism thrives in crisis situations and that Eastern Europe provides the perfect environment for the growth of this ideology. The analysis of Romania's accession attempt is of great significance, particularly given the attention it received in the media and public eye three years ago. AUR employs various strategies to popularise its discourse and uses the Schengen discourse to gain popularity. This approach positioned AUR as anti-system; a position the party also adopted regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. (Doiciara & Crețana, 2021; Radoiu, 2024).

The decision regarding Romania's possible Schengen accession presents an opportunity to analyse AUR's formal and informal discourse and to

examine its communicative and narrative strategies. The Schengen issue had been deeply polarizing within the Romanian civil society and held considerable relevance for citizens (Mișcoiu, 2023), highlighting its societal and political implications. The discourse surrounding Romania's possible Schengen accession offers evidence of how AUR constructs its political agenda by shaping its rhetoric and articulating its broader vision through this event, just as the party has done with the discourse surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic (Doiciara & Crețana, 2021).

This analysis contributes to the understanding of the party's communication strategies and provides valuable insights into its role in shaping contemporary political and social debates in Romania.

2. Literature review

Economic instability, marked by high job losses, declining labor force participation, and reduced per capita income, has fueled widespread public discontent, leading to diminished trust in mainstream politics and growing skepticism toward the political elite (Ferrante & Pontarollo, 2019). This climate of dissatisfaction has created fertile ground for populist movements, which, as Mudde (2004) explains, thrive on anti-elite rhetoric. Populist parties strategically employ anti-elite and anti-European narratives to present themselves as defenders of the 'common people' against a 'corrupt ruling class', according to Acemoğlu et al. (2013).

Radical right-wing populist parties further reinforce this dynamic by blending authoritarianism, populism, and nationalism (Mudde, 2007). Their authoritarian stance advocates for a strong state that enforces order through strict policing, harsh punishments, and discipline in education (Mudde, 2004). Populism deepens societal divides by framing politics as a battle between 'the morally righteous people' and 'the unethical, immoral elite', reducing political discourse to emotional binaries where compromise becomes impossible (Mudde, 2007). This strategy has proven effective; as Kitschelt and McGann (1997) observe, early far-right electoral successes were driven by a mix of neoliberal economic policies and nationalist, authoritarian socio-cultural agendas.

A key element of this agenda is Euroscepticism, which manifests in varying degrees. While some far-right parties criticize specific EU policies but support the broader concept of European integration, others reject the EU entirely (Szczzerbiak & Taggart, 2008; Szöcsik & Polyakova, 2018). Alongside political mistrust and perceived ethnic threats, Euroscepticism significantly influences far-right voting behavior (Szöcsik & Polyakova, 2018). These parties politicize European integration, casting the EU as a threat to national identity, sovereignty, and cultural traditions, often using religion and customs to emphasize this divide (Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Stoica & Voina, 2023).

This fear of cultural erosion is especially prominent in Eastern Europe, where concerns about being overshadowed by Western European values intensify nationalist sentiments. Nationalism, in this context, offers a sense of security and belonging, providing comfort in a rapidly globalizing world (Kinnvall, 2004). By fostering a direct emotional connection to a *homeland*, nationalism eases existential anxiety and strengthens ontological security.

Betz (1994) argues that the upward trend of the radical populist right is an outcome of deeper socio-economic and cultural transformations within advanced democracies, where evolving societal structures have weakened traditional political loyalties and created opportunities for nationalist, populist movements to flourish.

The Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR) was founded on 1 December 2019, Romania's national day, by activists George Simion and Claudiu Târziu. Târziu's close ties to the Romanian Orthodox Church and role in the 2018 referendum on the traditional family in Romania reflect the party's conservative orientation. AUR promotes Christian and nationalist values, structured around four core pillars: freedom, faith, family, and homeland, as stated by Ilie (2022).

AUR's rapid political rise was evident in the December 2020 parliamentary elections, where it secured 9.1% of the vote, translating into 33 deputies and 14 senators (Doiciara & Crețana, 2021). This success was partly attributed to the demographic shift during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the decline in the number of older voters. Data shows that about 40% of AUR's supporters are under 35, and only 8% hold a university degree (Doiciara & Crețana, 2021). Euroscepticism also

played a role in shaping voter preferences, as many AUR supporters perceived Romania's EU membership as disadvantageous and believed the country faced unequal treatment within the Union (Stoica, Krouwel, & Cristea, 2021).

Ideologically, AUR aligns with the core features of right-wing populist movements: an ultra-nationalist agenda, hostility toward certain religious, ethnic, and sexual minorities, and a populist rhetoric centered on anti-establishment narratives, authoritarian tendencies, and Euroscepticism. The party's charismatic leadership and strategic use of social media have, as Ilie (2022) stated, further amplified its message.

AUR's digital presence, particularly on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, has been instrumental in mobilizing supporters. George Simion's Facebook posts quickly gain widespread traction through mass sharing. Additionally, the party livestreams dramatic, and at times violent, events to engage its online audience (Doiciara & Crețana, 2021). By consistently participating in protests and maintaining a daily presence across the country, AUR leaders have fostered a strong connection with their base.

Their viral content – ranging from speeches and images to videos – has, according to Ilie (2022), reached hundreds of thousands of users, solidifying their influence. The party's communication style is polarizing, often framing diverse issues in black-and-white terms. Some narratives often used are the claims that Romania is being used as a dumping ground by other European countries, accusations of corruption towards mainstream politicians, and the assertion that Christian family values would be under threat. As highlighted by Doiciara and Crețana (2021), this type of message frequently portrays international alliances and liberal policies as harmful to national interests.

AUR also strategically cultivates online echo chambers, meant to reinforce the party's viewpoints. Within these digital spaces, users are not exposed to opposing perspectives, which leads them to strengthen their beliefs (Despa & Albu, 2021). By presenting itself as a political force outside of the mainstream political offer, AUR positions itself as an alternative to the establishment.

The parties' campaign rhetoric involved simplistic solutions that exceeded democratic principles, targeting issues relevant only to a specific segment of the population (Ilie, 2022). This approach reflects the party's

broader strategy of appealing to discontented voters through emotionally charged, exclusionary narratives.

3. Methodology

To better understand AUR's discourse and narrative surrounding Romania's failed Schengen attempt, this paper employed a qualitative research method. This approach was important for capturing the complexity and nuance of their political communication, particularly in the analysis of how language, rhetoric, and symbolism were used to construct Eurosceptic and populist narratives. The content analysis was particularly well-suited to identify the recurring themes, rhetorical patterns, and the ways in which the AUR party framed the Schengen issue to mobilize public sentiment and reinforce its political agenda.

The theoretical model employed in this study is discourse analysis, a concept closely linked to political analysis. Van Dijk (1997) asserts that the analysis of public discourse is inextricably linked to its influence on shaping public opinion.

According to Van Dijk (1997), political discourse analysis focuses on the analysis of political discourse. Therefore, it should be able to address issues in political science and provide meaningful answers to relevant political questions.

In addition to the compliance with official discourse norms, discourse structures can, according to Van Dijk (1997), also fulfil persuasion and efficacy criteria. Thus, lexical items may be selected not only in accordance with official norms of decorum but also for their ability to legitimately exert political power, gain support, manipulate public opinion, generate political consent, and effectively emphasise or diminish political views and opinions (Van Dijk, 1997). Based on the particularities of the discourse analysis, it was found to be the most relevant theoretical model for the research purposes of this paper.

The article's first research question aims to determine whether the AUR party uses this political event to propagate Euroscepticism and distrust of European institutions. The second research question addresses whether AUR is attempting to frame this event as an us-versus-them,

the morally sound people against the corrupt political class, narrative inherent in the ideology of far-right parties.

All articles on the Schengen area on the website of the AUR party and official statements on the website of the Chamber of Deputies were used as the party's official means of communication. Selected as unofficial means of communication were the posts on the Schengen area on the personal Facebook pages of George Simion (party president), Claudiu Târziu (president of the National Leadership Council of the party), Dan Tanasă (vice president of AUR), Robert Alecu (vice president of AUR), and Gianina Șerban (member of the Chamber of Deputies of the Romanian Parliament), who are all visible members of the party.

The selected timeframe spans six months, specifically three months prior to the European Parliament's decision on December 8, 2022, and three months thereafter. During this period, an analysis was conducted on six official statements and 36 Facebook posts regarding Romania's accession to the Schengen area.

Overall, these two research questions could provide a general view of the AUR party's nationalist discourse and Romania's political landscape in the context of Schengen accession.

The rise of the AUR party is well documented in the literature on nationalist far-right parties. However, there is a research gap regarding the party's reaction to Romania's rejection from the Schengen area at the end of 2022 and its communication on this event. This event is significant because it offers the far-right party an opportunity to criticise other European countries and the Romanian leadership to gain voter support. This research topic is significant in the Eastern European space as the rise of far-right parties is a constant phenomenon, and the rise of the AUR in the Romanian political space is recent as, according to Stoica (2021), populism flourishes particularly well in crisis situations, meaning that the current geopolitical situation is a perfect environment for its development, especially in Eastern Europe.

The codes used in the content analysis were developed using an inductive method based on the existing literature on far-right political parties in Europe and their typical ideologies and communication styles. Euroscepticism was the main element considered when developing the codes. Euroscepticism manifests in Eastern Europe through the fear of

being overshadowed by Western European values (Kinnvall, 2004). The literature about far-right parties (Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Stoica & Voina, 2023) affirms that they often use the topic of European integration to their advantage. They do so by portraying the EU as a threat to national identity, sovereignty, and culture.

To avoid individual biases, we applied collaborative coding to establish the final list of codes to be used in the analysis.

Table 1

Table of codes

Code	Description
C1	Trivialising the benefits of Schengen accession: statements or activities that downplay or deny the potential benefits or opportunities of Romania's Schengen accession.
C2	Portraying Romania as a victim of the EU: Portraying Romania as a victim of unfair or unequal treatment by the EU or other Member States in the context of the Schengen accession.
C3	Criticising the EU: Directly or indirectly criticising the European Union or its institutions in the context of Schengen accession.
C4	Criticism of other EU countries: Statements in which the AUR party criticises other EU countries or highlights negative examples from other countries in order to promote euroscepticism.
C5	Accusations against other political actors: Direct or indirect accusations or finger-pointing against other political actors or parties in connection with the possible Schengen accession.
C6	Positioning of AUR as saviour: Statements or activities in which the AUR party presents itself as a saviour or protector from the supposed dangers of other political actors.
C7	Appeal to citizens to mobilise: Calls or appeals to citizens to position themselves against national or international political actors in connection with Schengen accession or to join the AUR party.

The codes for the content analysis were developed based on the findings of Mudde (2007) and Stoica and Voina (2023) regarding the ideology and communication strategy of the far right and adapted to fit the scope of the study.

Each analysed Facebook post is labelled with the letter P followed by a number, while each official statement is marked with the letter S and a corresponding number.

4. Analysis of results

Regarding the first code, trivialising the benefits of the Schengen accession, Szczerbiak and Taggart (2008) argue that Euroscepticism does not imply outright rejection of the European Union or its integration process. This aligns with AUR's communication regarding Romania's Schengen accession. Although their discourse is rooted in nationalism and populism, AUR members frequently support Schengen accession and highlight its importance for Romania's economy. They even make promises regarding a future secure Schengen membership through an AUR-led government (P34: Gianina Șerban, 2022).

Although populist parties often use opposition and protest as strategies (Sitter, 2001), AUR directs criticism toward politicians and countries that are blocking Romania's Schengen entry, rather than opposing the accession itself. Sørensen (2008) identifies four types of Euroscepticism: democratic, economic, sovereign, and social. AUR aligns with sovereignty-based Euroscepticism. They acknowledge the economic benefits of EU aid while accusing the Union of undermining national sovereignty. Their rhetoric aims to frame the Schengen accession as submission to EU dominance, describing it as a lack of backbone and the perfection of the art of submission (S2: AUR, 2022).

None of the 36 Facebook posts or 6 official statements analysed reject the importance of the possible Schengen membership or its benefits. This adaptability to current events and voters' wishes may reflect political strategy, as parties often shift ideologies to compete effectively (Halikiopoulou *et al.*, 2012). For AUR, Schengen is a significant economic milestone, and as a young party, it can more easily adjust its ideology than established parties with entrenched positions (Downs, 1957).

Regarding the second code that was analysed, far-right parties across Europe often exhibit scepticism toward the EU, reflecting nationalist ideologies that frame politics as a conflict between 'pure people' and 'immoral elites' (Mudde, 2004). AUR's discourse echoes this sentiment, portraying the EU as actively exploiting Romania's resources and treating Romanians as second-class citizens (P11: George Simion, 2023). Positioning itself as the voice of the Romanian people, AUR condemns what the party perceives as the West's unjust treatment of Romania through official statements and social media.

The December 2022 Schengen discussions provided AUR with an opportunity to amplify Euroscepticism. They vilify the EU by blaming it for Romania's struggles, claiming that it restricts people's mobility (P35: Gianina Șerban, 2022) in response to the EU's 2035 ban on internal combustion engine vehicles, which aims to reduce pollution. Party members tie such measures to economic harm for Romania, portraying the EU as stifling the country's development and keeping its citizens in perpetual poverty. Statements like 'The Romanian economy is losing enormously due to the decision not to be accepted' [into Schengen] (S3: Tanasă, 2022) are prevalent in AUR's discourse. A dichotomy arises between affirming the importance of Romania's possible Schengen accession and the benefits of EU membership while simultaneously portraying the Union as responsible for Romania's shortcomings. This dual narrative aligns with Stoica and Voinea's (2023) observation that Euroscepticism in Eastern Europe often stems from fears of being absorbed by more developed Western nations.

AUR members argue that Romania will always be viewed as the 'poor relative' within the Union (P20: Claudiu Târziu, 2022) unless the current political dynamics change. They claim that other countries exploit Romania's resources but don't respect it as a nation. This rhetoric appears designed to manipulate individuals with insecurities and low self-esteem who strongly identify with national pride (Dunn, 2013; Kinnvall, 2004), fostering resentment toward Western nations and, consequently, reinforcing nationalist sentiment.

A possible motivation for this strategy is AUR's highly conservative values, including Christian faith and traditional family structures. More progressive Western ideologies may therefore be perceived as a threat to AUR's ideological foundation.

Additionally, AUR's discourse suggests that Romania is being forced to sacrifice its integrity to gain Schengen membership. Statements like 'If the endless hypocrisy, lack of backbone, and constant improvement of the art of flattery open the way to Schengen, then allow me to reject this prospect' (S2: AUR, 2022) reveal mistrust toward both Romanian political actors, accused of betraying their country, and international entities, seen as imposing unjust demands.

This populist stance criticizes the national politicians for allegedly prioritizing international interests over Romania's security and welfare, reflecting broader patterns of populist rhetoric (Rydgren, 2007).

The party's overarching goal of inciting public outrage becomes evident when its discourse is analysed through a pragmatic lens. According to Mazzoleni (2008), populist parties often use media as a tool, mobilizing the population through aggressive language. AUR members employ slogans such as 'second-class citizens in Europe' (P11: George Simion, 2023), 'poor relatives of the West' (P20: Claudiu Târziu, 2022), and 'We are not a second-class people!' (P30: Gianina Șerban, 2022) in an attempt to frame the European Union as an adversary. These expressions leverage patriotism and personal or national pride to foster distrust toward the EU.

Of the 36 Facebook posts by high-ranking AUR members, eight portray Romania as a victim of unfair or unequal treatment by the EU or its member states regarding Schengen accession. Similarly, five out of six official statements deliver the same message.

A central theme in AUR's rhetoric is Romania's sacrifices over the years, which they claim remain unacknowledged internationally. They assert that Western countries have exploited Romania for their own interests, offering nothing substantial in return. While acknowledging the EU's significance, AUR simultaneously accuses it of mistreating Romania and its citizens.

Despite their support for Romania's Schengen accession, AUR members extensively criticize the EU institutions, an aspect analysed using the third code. Before the critical vote on the possible accession, party leader George Simion referred to the European Parliament as the 'Tower of Babel' (P1: George Simion, 2022), highlighting the EU's perceived inability to reach meaningful decisions. This biblical reference aligns with AUR's broader communication strategy, which often emphasizes Christian values.

AUR also accuses the EU of prioritizing the interests of other member states, suggesting that the Schengen vote was a mere formality, devoid of meaningful follow-up (S1: AUR, 2022). This stance reinforces the narrative that Romania holds less importance than Western countries within the Union. Furthermore, AUR claims that members of the European Parliament lack resolve and are easily swayed by Dutch interests.

Another recurring criticism from AUR is that, while Romania is deemed adequate to take on risks and finance NATO and EU initiatives, it is not considered good enough for Schengen membership (S6: AUR, 2023).

Out of the 36 Facebook posts and 6 official statements analysed, only 2 were explicitly accusatory of the European Union or its institutions. Given the ideological framework of populist parties, this relatively reserved critique suggests that AUR adopts an atypical approach for far-right parties. According to Heinisch et al. (2020), this reflects a strategy named equivocal Euroscepticism.

Equivocal Euroscepticism, as described by Taggart and Szcznerbiak (2001), occupies a middle point between hard and soft Euroscepticism. Political actors employing this strategy will adopt an ambivalent position by fusing elements of both moderate and hard Euroscepticism while deliberately avoiding any extreme positions, such as advocating EU withdrawal or endorsing unconditional support for the Union in its current form.

This approach allows parties to appeal to a broader audience, including both soft and hard Eurosceptics, whether they are voters or potential political allies. Heinisch et al. (2020) highlight the intentionality of the ambiguity, simultaneously denying a negative stance while presenting arguments that align with hard Eurosceptic rhetoric to attract as many voters as possible.

After the European Parliament vote in December 2022 that denied Romania's entry into the Schengen area, AUR attempted to position Austria and the Netherlands as common adversaries of the Romanian people, aligning with the fourth analysed code. Betz (2007) observes that right-wing populist parties often weaponize public disappointment to further their own agenda, a tactic evident in AUR's efforts to demonize these two EU countries. For instance, party members suggested that Romania's exclusion from Schengen was tied to corruption and bribery demands, posing provocative questions such as, 'What bribe does the Netherlands want for Schengen?' (P2: George Simion, 2022). This rhetoric aims to stoke public anger and foster resentment against the other EU member states.

Another strategy used by the party AUR casts doubt on the reasons stated by Austria and the Netherlands for opposing Romania's Schengen ascension. For example, Austria's claim regarding a high influx of illegal

immigrants was dismissed as a 'shameful excuse' (P14: Claudiu Târziu, 2022; P16: Claudiu Târziu, 2022). AUR's narrative promotes feelings of hatred, insecurity, and disdain by portraying Western countries as exploitative imperialists. They claim that Romania's exclusion from Schengen represents an international humiliation, one that Romanian citizens are unfairly expected to endure in silence.

In order to try to further highlight perceived injustices, members of AUR accused Western countries of hypocrisy and corruption. The Netherlands was described as a 'narco-state' (P24: Dan Tanasă, 2022), plagued by high levels of crime, bribery scandals, and child exploitation. They emphasized the irony of the situation, suggesting that living conditions in the Netherlands are less secure than those in Romania (P24: Dan Tanasă, 2022; S2: AUR, 2022). Such statements are designed to foster animosity and deepen nationalist sentiments among Romanian citizens.

According to Minkenberg (2000), feelings of vulnerability do not stem from actual victimization but rather from the perceived loss of social and cultural capital. Salmela and Von Scheve (2017) emphasize the role of emotions in shaping subjective perceptions of vulnerability and threat, linking these feelings to predispositions that drive support for right-wing populist parties. In this context, AUR's strategy of portraying Austria and the Netherlands as deceitful toward Romania and Romania as unfairly treated aligns with its political goals. By fostering radical contempt for these nations, the party leverages nationalist sentiments to attract voters.

This contempt is particularly evident in official statements. For instance, former Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte was accused of behaving with a 'superior attitude of a head of state visiting a colony' during his visit to Romania (S1: AUR, 2022). Austria's resolution to block Romania's entry into the Schengen area was labelled 'malicious' (S4: Tanasă, 2023), with comparisons highlighting that other Schengen countries face greater corruption and illegal immigration problems than Romania (S6: AUR, 2023). Such narratives emphasize the perceived injustice against Romania, fuelling indignation and rallying public support.

From the analysed materials, 11 Facebook posts and 4 official statements criticized other EU member states. AUR's discourse seeks to underscore the shortcomings of these countries, accusing them of hypocrisy and insinuating that they view Romania as inferior. This approach appeals

to nationalist sentiments, fostering a sense of victimization and using it as a tool to galvanize voter support.

In the broader discourse surrounding the Schengen area, AUR positions itself as an opposition force, sharply criticizing Romania's leadership. An aspect was analysed using the fifth code of the content analysis. Betz and Johnson (2004) note that populist parties often depict the elite as a 'parasitic class' that enriches itself while neglecting the discontent of the ordinary citizens. This motif is central in AUR's rhetoric, with leadership accused of inaction and moral corruption. For example, President Klaus Iohannis is blamed for failing to improve Romanians' living conditions during his two terms (P1: George Simion, 2022). Similarly, former Minister of Justice Cătălin Predoiu was accused of betraying the country if failing to address Romania's Schengen rejection (P1: George Simion, 2022).

AUR also criticizes the lack of accountability among Romania's leadership, claiming they failed to act decisively at critical moments (P4: Tanasă, 2023). Insults such as 'lackey' (P9: George Simion, 2023; P12: George Simion, 2023; P26: Dan Tanasă, 2022) are frequently directed at political figures, including the President, to portray them as submissive to Austria and unwilling to defend Romania's interests. This rhetoric aims to undermine their authority and paint them as weak and cowardly.

A hallmark of populism is inciting public hostility toward the current power structure (Betz, 1994). For AUR, the constant criticism of ruling politicians aligns with this tactic. Statements such as 'Romanian politicians have gone down on their knees' (P11: George Simion, 2023) attribute Romania's exclusion from Schengen to a lack of dignity and resolve among its leaders.

The AUR party asserts that the Parliament is neglecting measures related to Romania's Schengen accession. For example, a Facebook post by Claudiu Târziu, chairman of the party's National Leadership Council, criticizes the Parliament for addressing topics like gender identity, which Târziu dismisses as part of a 'neo-Marxist handbook' (P19: Claudiu Târziu, 2022). This post appears to target AUR's conservative supporters, who generally oppose progressive issues, aiming to cast the leadership in a negative light.

Additionally, the party condemns President Klaus Iohannis' refusal to boycott both Austrian products and services. From AUR's perspective, this decision represents a betrayal of his country (P4: Tanasă, 2023), as it prioritizes diplomacy and foreign relations over the interests and desires of the Romanian citizens. This rhetoric aligns with Golder's (2016) characterization of populist parties, which often accuse liberal political actors of promoting internationalism and consequently marginalizing the public. According to Golder (2016), such actors are scapegoated for societal problems and portrayed as conspirators against the populace.

Populist narratives also elevate the public as morally superior to the ruling political elite (Golder, 2016). This sentiment is evident in AUR's discourse, which accuses politicians of betraying the supremacy of the Romanian Constitution (P15: Claudiu Târziu, 2022), neglecting Romania's future (P27: Dan Tanasă, 2022), attacking national sovereignty (S5: Tanasă, 2022), and deceiving Romanian citizens (P34: Gianina Șerban, 2022). This criticism lays the groundwork for an aggressive rhetoric aimed at discrediting the political class and amplifying public distrust.

Of the 36 Facebook posts and 6 official statements analysed, 23 posts and 5 statements directly or indirectly criticised political actors or ruling parties regarding Schengen accession. Critique dominates the examined material. AUR aims to position itself as the opposition, attacking political leaders and their response to Romania's rejection from the Schengen area. This binary framing aligns with Eatwell's (2004) observation that populist strategies present issues in stark black-and-white terms, leaving no space for nuance or interpretation. By deliberately ignoring diplomatic complexities, AUR simplifies the narrative to fuel anger and contempt toward political actors, portraying them as corrupt.

By framing themselves as the authentic agents of the people, far-right political actors like AUR aim to distance themselves from the political elites they deem unreliable. Their discourse follows a populist formula of scandal, provocation, transgression, and emotional appeal (Sauer *et al.*, 2017; Wodak, 2019). This strategy allows them to present themselves as informed crisis managers, problem solvers, and saviours – traits that may bolster voter confidence in their capabilities (Katsourides & Pachita, 2021).

AUR's portrayal of the political class as incompetent and untrustworthy prepares the electorate to view the party as the saviour of Romania and

the champion of national interests, as analysed through the sixth code. They promise, for instance, that under AUR governance, they will ‘send Sweighoffer where it belongs’ (P6: George Simion, 2022). By capitalizing on public dissatisfaction with Romania’s exclusion from the Schengen area and outrage toward Austria, the party builds its political strategy on nationalist and populist appeals.

AUR also promises that under its governance, Romania will gain membership in the Schengen area (P34: Gianina Șerban, 2022), positioning itself as more competent than the current political actors. Despite this claim, only four Facebook posts in the analysed materials explicitly portray AUR as the saviour of the Romanian people.

According to Gattinara *et al.* (2021), far-right protests can be analysed using three heuristic models: opportunities, grievances, and resource mobilization. These elements – discontent, political environment, and organizational strength – should not be viewed as mutually exclusive explanations but as interconnected factors that drive popular activism.

Gattinara *et al.* (2021) further classify mobilization resources into two categories: symbolic resources, such as ideology, visibility, networks, and material resources, such as institutional presence and access to public office. Ideology serves as a crucial symbolic resource for organizing far-right activities.

In the context examined in the last code, AUR vehemently opposes Austria and the Netherlands following Romania’s rejection of Schengen membership in December 2022. According to Canovan (1999), populist rhetoric seeks to mobilize ordinary people against the established power structure.

The party has sought to mobilize public sentiment by advocating a boycott of these countries, claiming such actions will yield long-term benefits (P4: George Simion, 2022). Specifically, AUR calls on citizens to: boycott Austrian and Dutch products, brands, and services; close Romanian accounts in Austrian and Dutch banks, transferring funds to ‘friendlier’ institutions, and cancel leisure or holiday trips to Austria and the Netherlands (P17: Claudiu Târziu, 2022). This hostile stance stems from nationalist sentiment and a wounded sense of Romanian pride.

The Schengen vote provided AUR with an opportunity to amplify its nationalist agenda and express dissatisfaction with the current government.

The party organized protests targeting the Austrian and Dutch embassies as well as Romanian political leaders. Supporters were urged to participate through Facebook posts (P7: George Simion, 2022; P22: Claudiu Târziu, 2022; P30: Gianina Șerban, 2022; P31: Gianina Șerban, 2023).

Of the analysed materials, eight Facebook posts and one official statement call for mobilization through protests or boycotts in response to the EU's refusal to grant Romania Schengen membership. These efforts reflect AUR's broader strategy of leveraging nationalistic rhetoric to galvanize public action.

Table 2 summarizes the most relevant results identified during the analysis.

Table 2

Summary of the analysis

Key concept derived from literature	Code	Quote	Source
Euroscepticism does not imply outright rejection of the European Union or its integration process (Szczerbiak & Taggart, 2008).	Trivialising the benefits of Schengen accession.	'If unmitigated hypocrisy, spinelessness and continued perfection in the art of the underdog will pave the way to Schengen, then allow me to reject that prospect.'	S2: AUR, 2022
Conflict between 'pure people' [Romanian people] and 'immoral elites' [European Union] (Mudde, 2004).	Portraying Romania as a victim of the EU	'[...] we are second-class citizens of Europe.'	P11: George Simion, 2023
Equivocal Euroscepticism lies between soft and hard Euroscepticism (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2001).	Criticising the EU	We are full members of the European Union, but it seems we are only good at taking risks and contributing to the costs of financing the NATO Alliance and the European Union!	S6: AUR, 2023
Weaponizing public disappointment to further their own agenda (Betz, 2007).	Criticism of other EU countries	'What bribe does the Netherlands want for Schengen?'	P2: George Simion, 2022

Populist parties often depict the elite as a 'parasitic class' that enriches itself while neglecting the discontent of ordinary citizens (Betz & Johnson, 2004).	Accusations against other political actors	Mister Predoiu, who told us to give up the national constitution, it's time for him to do something; otherwise, he will be listed in the black book of traitors of the Romanian nation.	P1: George Simion, 2022
Far-right parties present themselves as saviours (Katsourides & Pachita, 2021).	Positioning of AUR as a saviour	'When AUR will govern [...] we will send Sweighoffer where it belongs.'	P6: George Simion, 2022
Populist rhetoric seeks to mobilize ordinary people against the established power structure (Canovan, 1999).	Appeal to citizens to mobilise	'Protest in front of the Austrian Embassy at 6 pm today. Come as many as you can!'	P22: Claudiu Târziu, 2022

The content analysis concludes that the Party for the Alliance of Romania uses public space discussions about Schengen accession to propagate euroscepticism and to incite disdain towards the European Union and Western EU countries. AUR portrays the European Union and its members as taking advantage of Romania and its resources, without providing any substantial benefit in return.

The AUR party also positions itself as the opposition of the ruling political class and the voice of the Romanian people. It does so by harshly criticising the ruling politicians for their perceived failures. They use aggressive discourse to build the narrative of the lazy or corrupt politicians who not only failed their country but are actively trying to sell or betray it. The aim of this communication strategy is to push the voters to a binary way of thinking, where all the politicians are corrupt, and the population is without fault.

5. Discussion

In recent years, concern about radical right-wing movements and parties has grown significantly within liberal capitalist democratic systems. Once considered a fleeting phenomenon, the radical right has emerged as one of the most formidable political forces challenging liberal democracy in

the West (Betz & Johnson, 2004). This rise is underpinned by an ideology that merges nationalism, radicalism, and populism, a combination that unites many far-right parties (Golder, 2016).

A key feature of far-right populism is its appeal to resentment – a complex emotion associated with power-seeking, internal outrage, a sense of injustice, and outward blame projection (Salomon, 1994). By addressing both perceived injustices and inequality, contemporary radical right-wing populism resonates strongly with activists, offering both a critique of the status quo and a call to action (Betz & Johnson, 2004).

Traditional strategies, which rely on their inability to adapt to the shifting political contexts, are becoming increasingly ineffective in containing the far-right. As Betz and Johnson (2004) argue, a deeper understanding of the radical right's social and political dimensions is indispensable to develop effective measures to counter their anti-democratic influence.

This article contributes to this understanding by analysing the discourse of the far-right Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR) party. Through content analysis, this study concludes that nationalism and populism are core elements in the parties' communication.

The research fills a gap in the academic literature. It does so by examining the strategies and narratives of far-right parties through the lens of discourse analysis. Recognizing far-right populism as a threat to democracy (Daly & Jones, 2020), this work provides an overview of this discourse, offering a deeper, clearer understanding of far-right political communication strategies.

The discourse analysis centres around the Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR) and its communication surrounding Romania's unsuccessful bid to join the Schengen area at the end of 2022. In order to gain a thorough understanding of the parties' approach, both formal and informal communication methods were analysed. Official communications included statements from the party's website and the Chamber of Deputies' website. Unofficial communications consisted of Facebook posts from the personal accounts of prominent party members.

Two research questions guided the study. Based on these, it was revealed that AUR used the Schengen rejection as leverage to amplify Eurosceptic rhetoric, portraying the EU and its institutions as unfair and dismissive of Romanians' interests. The paper also demonstrated that AUR

employed populist narratives by framing a perceived duality between the virtuous Romanian populace and the deceitful, immoral political elite (Mudde, 2004), thereby positioning itself as the sole defender of national interests.

The analysis reveals that the AUR party strategically employs nationalist and populist narratives to fuel Euroscepticism and position itself as the voice of the Romanian people. The main point of their argument is that Romania faces systemic disadvantages within the EU compared to other EU members. This framing emphasizes Romania's alleged victimhood and aims to foster solidarity and national pride among voters. By highlighting these perceived injustices, the AUR party seeks to mobilize support through a strongly presented opposition to the external forces it claims 'oppress' Romania.

The strategic adoption of ambivalent Euroscepticism is a key element of AUR's strategy (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2001). On the one hand, the party highlights the potential benefits of Schengen accession to appeal to voters who favour closer EU integration, and on the other hand, it simultaneously critiques EU institutions to cater to its base of hard Eurosceptics. This dual approach allows AUR to target a broader voter base by positioning itself as a pragmatic yet critical political force capable of addressing both the advantages and disadvantages of EU membership.

A very prominent aspect of the party's communication is its construction of enemy images. Their tactic consists of targeting countries such as Austria and the Netherlands, which have blocked Romania's Schengen accession. AUR stokes hostility and strengthens nationalist sentiments through aggressive rhetoric and through the dissemination of negative stereotypes (Mazzoleni, 2008). These enemy images serve to polarize the electorate, underlining the rejection of the blocking nations and thus consolidating support for the party.

The purpose of the party is to solidify its role as the defender of Romanian interests in voters' minds. A part of the strategy for achieving this consists of propagating Euroscepticism and mistrust in European institutions. The party's portrayal of Romania as a victim of systemic injustices within the EU enables it to attract a diverse group of voters, from hard Eurosceptics to those cautiously optimistic about the EU's benefits. By painting nations like Austria and the Netherlands as villains, the party can further nurture nationalistic sentiments and hostility, and as such, reinforce the party's narrative of external oppression.

The AUR party effectively uses Romania's Schengen accession and the national and international political context to advance its own agenda and popularity. By intertwining nationalist and populist rhetoric with ambivalent Euroscepticism, the party consolidates its position as a political force in Romania while deepening scepticism and mistrust toward the European Union.

The analysis also suggests that the AUR party deliberately frames Romania's Schengen accession within an 'us versus them' narrative (Mudde, 2007). This dichotomy positions the morally upright Romanian people against an immoral political class. The party seeks to mobilize its base and present itself as the authentic voice of the Romanian people through nationalist and populist rhetoric.

An important part of this strategy is a harsh critique of the political elite, encompassing both the government and other established political actors (Grapă & Mogoș, 2023). By portraying these figures as inept and complicit in Romania's failure to achieve Schengen accession, AUR positions itself as the sole legitimate alternative. The party assumes an oppositional stance by vocally condemning the government's perceived mishandling of the Schengen rejection. By avoiding any diplomatic subtleties, AUR stirs contempt and distrust toward the Romanian political figures involved in the possible ascension, portraying them as emblematic of the corrupt system.

The simplification of complex political realities into a binary division between a corrupt establishment and morally impeccable citizens reinforces the party's 'us versus them' narrative (Mudde, 2007). AUR aims to grow a sense of solidarity and shared purpose among the voters by leveraging this dichotomic view.

The creation of enemy images remains an indispensable in their strategy. AUR targets EU nations like Austria and the Netherlands, which blocked the country's Schengen accession, as well as various EU institutions. These narratives emphasize Romania's perceived disadvantages within the Union and alleged systemic injustices (Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Stoica & Voina, 2023). By focusing on external threats and internal betrayal, AUR reinforces nationalist sentiments and cultivates a narrative of collective victimhood of the Romanian people.

This strategy aims to convince voters that the Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR) is the only defender of the people's interests, thereby

contrasting with corrupt political elites and foreign entities that pose a threat to Romania's sovereignty. As a result, the political discourse surrounding Romania's potential Schengen accession is reframed to promote AUR's agenda.

6. Conclusions & limitations

In conclusion, the AUR party uses the Schengen ascension as a pretext to deepen its populist appeal, mobilise its supporters, and solidify its position as the voice of the people. Through its narrative, it transforms political discourse to further its political goals.

This study focuses on the AUR party's communication strategies in the context of possible Schengen accession. This narrow focus does not encompass other far-right parties or their dynamics within Romania or beyond. Including a wider range of parties could have provided a more comprehensive perspective on regional far-right movements.

While the findings offer valuable insights into the AUR parties' communication strategies, they may not apply to other far-right groups, as each operates within unique historical and political contexts. The study relied on a specific set of sources (official party statements and Facebook posts from AUR party members), which may limit its representativeness. Broader data sources or different methodologies might have yielded a more comprehensive understanding of the far-right phenomenon.

Additionally, the study was carried out within a specific time frame, which may not fully account for the ever-evolving far-right strategies. A longer observation period would have provided a more comprehensive view of these movements' adaptations over time.

The rise of the far-right poses a significant threat to democratic societies. This paper has provided insights into the communication strategies used by far-right parties, but it did not cover certain aspects of the subject. Future research might focus on a comparative analysis of far-right strategies across regions to uncover common patterns and develop counterstrategies. Investigating the effectiveness of educational initiatives aimed at addressing far-right ideology could yield valuable insights into promoting political awareness and democratic engagement.

Furthermore, investigating far-right propaganda in media outlets may reveal strategies that facilitate the dissemination of extremist ideologies. As such, counterefforts can be developed. These research avenues can enhance our comprehension of right-wing extremism and fortify democratic societies.

REFERENCES

- Acemoğlu, D., Egorov, G., & Sonin, K. (2013). A political theory of populism. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 128(2), 771–805. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjs077>
- Betz, H. (1994). *Radical Right-Wing populism in Western Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Betz, H.G. (2007). The new politics of resentment - Radical right-wing populist parties in Western Europe. In C. Mudde (Ed.), *The populist radical right* (pp. 356-369). Routledge.
- Betz, H. G., & Johnson, C. (2004). Against the current-stemming the tide: the nostalgic ideology of the contemporary radical populist right. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 9(3), 311–327. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1356931042000263546>
- Canovan, M. (1999). Trust the people! Populism and the two faces of democracy. *Political studies*, 47(1), 2-16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.00184>
- Daly, T.G., & Jones, B.C. (2020). Parties versus democracy: Addressing today's political party threats to democratic rule. *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, 18(2), 509–538. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icon/moaa025>
- Despa, O., & Albu, B. (2021). In 'echo-chambers' of nationalist Romanian party, Russia's favourite narratives. *Balkan Insight*, 8. <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/10/08/in-echo-chambers-of-nationalist-romanian-party-russias-favourite-narratives/> (accessed on 1/2025).
- Doiciara, C., & Crețana, R. (2021). Pandemic populism: COVID-19 and the rise of the Nationalist AUR party in Romania. *Geographica Pannonica*, 25(4), 243–259. <https://doi.org/10.5937/gp25-33782>

- Downs, A. (1957). An economic theory of political action in a democracy. *Journal of Political Economy*, 65(2), 135–150. <https://doi.org/10.1086/257897>
- Dunn, K. (2013). Preference for radical right-wing populist parties among exclusive-nationalists and authoritarians. *Party Politics*, 21(3), 367–380. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068812472587>
- Eatwell, R. (2004). Introduction: The new Extreme Right challenge. In R. Eatwell & C. Mudde (Eds.), *Western democracies and the New Extreme Right challenge* (pp. 1–15). Routledge.
- Ferrante, C., & Pontarollo, N. (2019). Regional voting dynamics in Europe: The rise of anti-elite and anti-European parties. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 52(6), 1019–1022. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518x19884942>
- Gattinara, P.C., Froio, C., & Pirro, A. L. (2021). Far-right protest mobilisation in Europe: Grievances, opportunities and resources. *European Journal of Political Research*, 61(4), 1019–1041. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12484>
- Golder, M. (2016). Far right parties in Europe. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 19(1), 477–497. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-042814-012441>
- Grapă, T.E., & Mogoș, A.A. (2023). The spectacle of “patriotic violence” in Romania: Populist leader George Simion’s mediated performance. *Media and Communication*, 11(2), 148–162. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i2.6367>
- Griffin, R. (1999). Afterword: Last rights? In S. P. Ramet (Ed.), *The radical right in Central and Eastern Europe since 1989* (pp. 297–321). Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Griffin, R. (2000). Interregnum or endgame? The radical right in the ‘post-fascist’ era. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 5(2), 163–178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713682938>
- Halikiopoulou, D., Nanou, K., & Vasilopoulou, S. (2012). The paradox of nationalism: The common denominator of radical right and radical left Euroscepticism. *European Journal of Political Research*, 51(4), 504–539. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2011.02050.x>
- Heinisch, R., McDonnell, D., & Werner, A. (2020). Equivocal Euroscepticism: How populist radical right parties can have their EU cake and eat it. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 59(2), 189–205. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13055>

- Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2009). A postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From permissive consensus to constraining dissensus. *British Journal of Political Science*, 39(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0007123408000409>
- Ilie, M. (2022). The rise of a nationalist-populist party in Romania – The Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR). *Serbian Political Thought*, 78(4), 143–174. <https://doi.org/10.22182/spm.7842022.9>
- Katsourides, Y., & Pachita, E.K. (2021). Normalizing far-right party rhetoric: the impact of media populist frames and coverage on the electoral prospects of far-right parties in the case of Cyprus. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 31(1), 132–150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2021.1951184>
- Kinnvall, C. (2004). Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity and the Search for Ontological Security. *Political Psychology*, 25(5), 741–767. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2004.00396.x>
- Kitschelt, H., & McGann, A.J. (1997). *The radical right in Western Europe*. University of Michigan Press. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.14501>
- Mazzoleni, G. (2008). Mediated Populism. In W. Donsbach (Ed.), *The International Encyclopedia of Communication* (pp. 3031–3033). Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Minkenberg, M. (2000). The renewal of the radical right: Between modernity and anti-modernity. *Government and Opposition*, 35(2), 170–188. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1477-7053.00022>
- Mișcoiu, S. (2023). Romania: Between Europeanisation and De-Europeanisation. In: Akande, A. (eds) *Politics Between Nations. Contributions to International Relations*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-24896-2_28
- Mudde, C. (2004). The populist Zeitgeist. *Government and Opposition*, 39(4), 541–563. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00135.x>
- Mudde, C. (2007). *Populist radical right parties in Europe*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511492037>
- Radoiu, R.D. (2024). Towards a new common sense? A Gramscian analysis of the discursive strategies of Romania's Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR). *Perspective Politice*, 17, 177–187. <https://doi.org/10.25019/perspol/24.17.0.17>

- Rydgren, J. (2007). The sociology of the radical right. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 33(1), 241–262. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.33.040406.131752>
- Salmela, M., & Von Scheve, C. (2017). Emotional roots of right-wing political populism. *Information Sur Les Sciences Sociales/Social Science Information*, 56(4), 567–595. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0539018417734419>
- Salomon, R.C. (1994). One hundred years of resentment: Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals. In R. Schacht (Ed.), *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality* (pp. 95–127). University of California Press.
- Sauer, B., Krasteva, A., & Saarinen, A. (2017). Post-democracy, party politics and right-wing populist communication. In M. Pajnik & B. Sauer (Eds.), *Populism and the web* (pp. 14–35). Routledge.
- Sitter, N. (2001). The politics of opposition and European integration in Scandinavia: Is Euro-scepticism a government-opposition dynamic? *West European Politics*, 24(4), 22–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402380108425463>
- Sørensen, C. (2008). *Love Me, Love Me Not...: A Typology of Public Euroscepticism*. Sussex European Institute.
- Stoica, M.S. (2021). Populist political advertising in times of pandemic: Framing elites as anti-religious. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 115–127.
- Stoica, M.S., & Voina, A. (2023). Measuring receptivity to eurosceptic media discourses in the vicinity of war: evidence from Romania. *Media and Communication*, 11(4), 34–46. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i4.7122>
- Stoica, M., Krouwel, A. & Cristea, V. (2021). Stealth populism: Explaining the rise of the Alliance for the Unity of Romanians". European Politics and Policy – London School of Economics and Political Science. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/euoppblog/2021/02/26/stealth-populism-explaining-the-rise-of-the-alliance-for-the-unity-of-romanians/> (accessed on 1/2025).
- Szczerbiak, A., & Taggart, P. (2008). *Opposing Europe?: The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism: Volume 2: Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives*. Oxford University Press.
- Szöcsik, E., & Polyakova, A. (2018). Euroscepticism and the electoral success of the far right: the role of the strategic interaction between center and far right. *European Political Science*, 18(3), 400–420. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41304-018-0162-y>

- Taggart, P., & Szczerbiak, A. (2001). *Parties, positions and Europe: Euroscepticism in the EU candidate states of Central and Eastern Europe*. Brighton: Sussex European Institute.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (1997). What is Political Discourse Analysis? *Belgian Journal of Linguistics*, 11, 11–52. <https://doi.org/10.1075/bjl.11.03dij>
- Wodak, R. (2019). The trajectory of far-right populism: A discourse-analytical perspective. In B. Forchtner (Ed.), *The far right and the environment* (pp. 21–37). Routledge.

Official statements

- S1: COMUNICAT DE PRESĂ. (2022, October 21). https://www.cdep.ro/relatii_publice/site2015.text_presa?pid=24608
- S2: DECLARAȚIE DE PRESĂ. (2022, October 26). https://www.cdep.ro/relatii_publice/site2015.text_presa?pid=24654
- S3: Dan Tanasă – Întrebare către Guvernul României – Aderarea României la spațiul Schengen. (2022, December 20). *interpelari*. <https://partidulaur.ro/dan-tanasa-intrebare-catre-guvernul-romaniei-aderarea-romaniei-la-spatiul-schengen/>
- S4: Dan Tanasă – Întrebare către M.A.E. – România și spațiul Schengen. (2023, February 2). *interpelari*. <https://partidulaur.ro/dan-tanasa-intrebare-catre-m-a-e-romania-si-spatiul-schengen/>
- S5: Dan Tanasă – întrebare către Guvernul României – România și spațiul Schengen. (2022, December 19). *interpelari*. <https://partidulaur.ro/dan-tanasa-intrebare-catre-guvernul-romaniei-romania-si-spatiul-schengen/>
- S6: COMUNICAT DE PRESĂ. (2023, January 26). https://www.cdep.ro/relatii_publice/site2015.text_presa?pid=25124

Facebook Posts

- P1: Simion, G. (2022, December 6). *Direct de la Bruxelles: nu vom intra în Schengen. Mai sunt două zile...* Facebook. <https://fb.watch/slW0WrQ3LZ/>
- P2: Simion, G. (2022, October 12). *Dacă pentru intrarea în UE a trebuit să dăm PETROM, ce șpagă vrea Olanda pentru Schengen?* Facebook.

- <https://www.facebook.com/george.simion.unire/posts/pfbid0zUtuKx3JY8cffupkotxveVSmPQXbxCUq2PCfH1wpp4DJBZnPx8UEwzaZp7YrWbCl>
- P3: Simion, G. (2022, December 12). *Alternative pentru brandurile Austriece!* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/george.simion.unire/posts/pfbid02QkwUvzYtnXxwp22hv6TghAtgf9B4buziHDFgryv75We6NwDwkBoAPetd1gJrNcB6l>
- P4: Simion, G. (2022, December 19). *România nu trebuie refuzată în Schengen.* Facebook. <https://fb.watch/slwTvOi9XG/>
- P5: Simion, G. (2022, November 21). *Cozile din vămi, cazul Calafat:* Facebook. <https://fb.watch/slxnp5AXY1/>
- P6: Simion, G. (2022, December 27). *Când AUR va guverna, nu doar că nu "privatizăm" RomSilva dar îl trimitem și pe Sweighoffer unde îi e locul.* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/george.simion.unire/posts/pfbid0WBuJyUTyo6NJgeugDpZvJ9eHCMNQpRzmvDj1Wd4KCCd1GRHZdU8hEBR2qsyiSDeI>
- P7: Simion, G. (2022, December 9). *Protestul împotriva guvernului și a aliaților lor: Austria și Olanda!* Facebook. <https://fb.watch/slxGyzrEy7/>
- P8: Simion, G. (2022, December 7). *Așteptăm ca și Gheorghe Flutur să izgonească Sweighoffer.* Facebook. https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.libertatea.ro%2Fstiri%2Flider-aur-bistrita-nasaud-retrage-produse-austriece-magazin-protest-schengen-4372364%2F&h=AT2ZQH7IGe6AW_nyFyTPju6REmavy1foeSLbGgEwZknG8rIc0eRY2RjIKsVnd5jpD16NDUFNfgwA_EjdBvT3tTB8VsIkMQYyNXREGysRUEQuEYEDhuYITs5vuG8k8_IXvGMN&s=1
- P9: Simion, G. (2023, January 27). *Astăzi, premierii Olandei și Austriei au spus public că se opun în continuare extinderii Schengen. Reacția slugilor noastre: nici una.* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/george.simion.unire/posts/pfbid0jqZpvcYFYeEYcva4GN8xQNxoiB1A9e5ATBbDt3WYtEJLzPsszcurEG3F5XMx2fjSl>
- P10: Simion, G. (2023, January 27). *În Schengen nu intrăm, bani pe veci luăm de la sârmani. Piața din Botoșani:* Facebook. <https://fb.watch/slxZTCXAIR/>
- P11: Simion, G. (2023, February 4). *Miercurea următoare, 8 februarie, e ultima zi când guvernul Ciucă poate contesta neprimirea noastră la Schengen. Uitați consecințele:* Facebook. <https://fb.watch/sly2EAB4ha/>
- P12: Simion, G. (2023, January 26). *Iohannis l-a trimis înapoi ambasador pe Hurezeanu la Viena, cancelarul austriac s-a dus în Bulgaria și nu*

- răspunde întrebărilor românilor.* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/george.simion.unire/posts/pfbid0WXT9vzCjpG91MFuJH5adVqsUAvMFrpbkpuwQvSLLAXToVsdMhUppYSoDnQNFwASXl>
- P13: Simion, G. (2023, January 16). *Așa DA.* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/george.simion.unire/posts/pfbid01CWckSCvTcdT4WGA5gzF2tTRnL6Q3d5CLfKjgu2GxBVXCCciqw5ZAdfWMPeVvKwpl>
- P14: Tanasă, D. (2022, November 18). *Austria se opune intrării României în Schengen. Lemnul și petrolul românesc sunt bune pentru Austria, românii nu!* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/dantanasa.ro/posts/pfbid0N5KJUBK7T6anjPQQTpQNLsjNuSC88mwc7fE7R9vNUjnNmicfcRRzz1vfYxq3bhJYl>
- P15: Târziu, C. (2022, October 21). *Regimul Iohannis a vîndut inclusiv supremația Constituției României pentru ridicarea MCV și primirea în Schengen.* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/claudiutarziuaur/posts/pfbid0RdiwQTQFuohWD5mrNGxfDjDeKR61WfU1oivKUFJw7L4miXosSFilFK62fq3UCCpl>
- P16: Târziu, C. (2022, December 13). *În cele două mandate ale lui Klaus Iohannis, România a fost transformată într-un stat vasal, într-un slujitor bun al interesului european și al prietenilor prezidențiali.* Facebook. <https://fb.watch/slzgf11QWz/>
- P17: Târziu, C. (2022, December 9). *DESTUL! De peste trei decenii, ne-am obișnuit să ni se ia resursele naturale pe nimic.* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/claudiutarziuaur/posts/pfbid04FeEDvkGS9hN8RyPHhFB1CiDPireNW2ZG5XdjkP1aUMfY87WehD8JqcVfgxGL2qwl>
- P18: Târziu, C. (2022, December 7). *Dacă România nu va fi admisă mâine în Schengen, cine va fi de vină? Actuala guvernare sau cancelariile străine?* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/claudiutarziuaur/posts/pfbid0wrmJBgQa6eM7jCvyhRH7f2CDEbxkfsfj3fQauKxCsjWxvYAPLU4LdeEbBcEcnhiil>
- P19: Târziu, C. (2022, December 12). *“Genul” este o ficțiune, instrument al neomarxismului.* Facebook. <https://fb.watch/slzc1jn16W/>
- P21: Târziu, C. (2022, December 8). *Austria și Olanda au zis NU. Și ne costă. Ce reacție trebuie să aibă guvernul român?* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/claudiutarziuaur/posts/pfbid0xpni8QwrWkCWHuz5q65Yy4Mhm2FC1iCcunt35F25ddgT23tNMHQQW5uvfndvuNapI>
- P22: Târziu, C. (2022, December 9). *Azi, la ora 18, protest în fața Ambasadei Austriei. Veniți cît mai mulți!* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/>

- claudiutarziuaur/posts/pfbid02MiTSKUu6YQ5UrWeLyBZxf8qP6GabaJLmYwFBBicjX3Au9wXiHykExSEwGSSr5Pqil
- P23: Târziu, C. (2022, December 13). *Austria și Olanda ne-au trântit ușa în nas, iar guvernul lui Iohannis încă "rezistă"*. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/claudiutarziuaur/posts/pfbid02mutiqHBfU9otZ8Qg5Nq5eU1pH52YRJMAQ4aiuAsv8qSe1ro58rjSeTcCA217aSNl>
- P24: Tanasă, D. (2022, October 20). *Olanda, un narco-stat în care jurnaliștii sunt împușcați în cap pe stradă, se opune intrării României în Schengen*. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/dantanasa.ro/posts/pfbid038BnFQ6EEmnRBYVZ9JMt1G7UcXh9pef577EiFU8YpEqEXiJPze87p2D45ien31H4l>
- P25: Târziu, C. (2022, December 7). *Austria se opune intrării României în Schengen, sub un pretext rușinos: că am fi sursă sau loc de tranzit pentru imigranții ilegali din Europa*. Facebook. <https://fb.watch/slymUE0HVz/>
- P26: Tanasă, D. (2022, December 14). *Iohannis nu are nimic de reproșat Austriei în cazul Schengen! Sluga nu are curaj să deranjeze stăpânul!* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/dantanasa.ro/posts/pfbid02M1hSdCZzhxybVWLpnHq5Jh58oNvrhU6kQvRN9DFw4gjSp1jbJYvvFnZWcxSHNGcl>
- P27: Tanasă, D. (2022, December 10). *Iohannis e tot la schi în Austria? Îl doare în Schengen de România!* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/dantanasa.ro/posts/pfbid02vkDi3SpWAFkZ4rpDFfkuMzuv1t2BVK27k6viqc47LARhR6B4jeov1FEwvnMnUzYil>
- P28: Tanasă, D. (2022, December 9). *Nu e nimeni vinovat pe Schengen. Nici PSD. Nici PNL. Nici Iohannis. Nimeni*. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/dantanasa.ro/posts/pfbid0yyWvTUjFawWYa6MnTKMjUTk7QyKwSqcmdRrGTHsAgDtmh73dCdamNfFPFTpknnCKl>
- P29: Tanasă, D. (2022, December 8). *După "România educată" Klaus Iohannis a atins astăzi un nou obiectiv de țară: România fără Schengen! Cu sprijinul PSD și PNL!* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/dantanasa.ro/posts/pfbid02F8f6biHu87Kn7My27dHMno1d9mi6hLu9U2ssTrCn3qxRjcfBDpw5fcsUms7WqTPl>
- P30: Șerban, G. (2022, December 9). *Nu suntem un popor de mână doua! În fața ambasadei Austriei, luptăm pentru demnitatea românilor*. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/gianinaserbandeputatAUR/posts/pfbid0JRZLeSXDBYAsLPDoouZoK9X1r5nfUtCFv9xeDYB6enHsS9HGqTKkfbwxwDaBNZJ9l>

- P31: Șerban, G. (2023, February 6). *Am atras atenția guvernanților asupra faptului că 8 februarie e termenul limită pentru ca Guvernul României să conteste neprimirea în Schengen!* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/gianinaserbandeputatAUR/posts/pfbid027R1GUz3hjdgFE6uwc6Rfoitvj9CpwWYxQRqNiayic4JwQDvohcvNvNFj6Zg2xZ9Kl>
- P32: Șerban, G. (2023, March 9). *De România în Schengen nu e vorba. Azi și mâine, program în consiliul JAI.* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/gianinaserbandeputatAUR/posts/pfbid0Mb9798EMmfDoq1aat1qWqLhxi64kbY7iERwkUU26eEGzXqj2pM6oxHVqakFVGUCCI>
- P33: Șerban, G. (2022, December 19). *UE spune că suntem pregătiți, Iohannis ne pune din nou la coada Europei.* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/gianinaserbandeputatAUR/posts/pfbid02wPMMdb4yeNYRXZRUZv5B5dBNzJQ7BpRLxiXAZmpKM9Rf3kwY5eDwMKKbrc8PzKxml>
- P34: Șerban, G. (2022, December 8). *Guvernul impotent PSD-PNL-UDMR o nouă trădare pentru români. Viitoarea guvernare AUR va duce România în Schengen!* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/gianinaserbandeputatAUR/posts/pfbid0c9LLnWh8EBzDwfSL85jDTGnWvjvEoV33b69YbykCDbaYh8gaqu67HiL1qH3YgmPtl>
- P35: Șerban, G. (2022, October 28). *Am o curiozitate.* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/gianinaserbandeputatAUR/posts/pfbid02HtDNK41jJoxYjDoYy5eKRP1j74L7Lh3sWwC7AJYbQaoSzhuh2bHVxfU8yshy6WPoI>
- P36: Alecu, R. (2022, December 14). *“Nu va exista un boicot la adresa Austriei.”* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/RobertAlecu.AUR/posts/pfbid02xJeSSVNzgv2Q91wN14aiJAVggp6iBkqGfExFWkynaw4pqukW rXAtJLUgmhFtsho7l>

All links were verified by the editors and found to be functioning before the publication of this text in 2025.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

FUNDING

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this paper.

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0>

LAURA BOIA¹
DELIA CRISTINA BALABAN²

THE IMPACT OF AESTHETICIZED INFLUENCER MARKETING ON ROMANIAN GEN Z FEMALES' BEHAVIORS AND PRACTICES

Abstract. By 2025, the global influencer marketing market has reached an estimated \$32.55 billion, with projections indicating continued growth at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 33.11% (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2025). While existing research has examined source credibility and authenticity in influencer marketing, limited attention has been paid to how aestheticized influencer content specifically affects Gen Z females' beauty-related behaviors and practices. This study addresses the gap in understanding how social media influencers' aestheticized content translates into actual consumer practices through the lens of Social Learning Theory and Practice Theory. This exploratory study aims to investigate how Romanian Gen Z females integrate beauty-related advice from social media influencers into their daily practices, examining the role of aesthetics in purchase behavior and the learning processes involved. Qualitative data were collected through focus group interviews with 21 Romanian Gen Z females aged 15-26, divided into three age-based groups. Participants were recruited from middle-class backgrounds across urban and rural areas of Romania. Thematic analysis was employed to identify emerging patterns regarding beauty influencers, aesthetics and styles, social media's influence on beauty practices, and social learning processes. Results indicate that Romanian Gen Z females actively learn

¹ <http://orcid.org/0009-0002-6071-9415>, Babeş-Bolyai University, Doctoral School of Political and Communication Sciences, boia.laura@ubbcluj.ro

² <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3509-533X>, Babeş-Bolyai University, Doctoral School of Political and Communication Sciences, delia.balaban@fspac.ro

beauty techniques and product knowledge through observation and imitation of social media content, particularly on TikTok and Instagram. They demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of product ingredients and safety, having developed comprehensive skincare routines influenced by social media education. Five distinct aesthetic typologies emerged as influential: Clean Girl, Cottage Girl, Korean Beauty, Asian glitter trends, and Old Money aesthetics. Participants value authenticity, transparency, and relatability over traditional influencer metrics, with the "de-influencing" phenomenon reflecting their desire for genuine recommendations. Platform differences were observed, with Instagram serving as visual inspiration and TikTok functioning as an educational resource. The findings confirm both Social Learning Theory and Practice Theory, demonstrating that consumers learn through observation, imitation, and the integration of personalized practice. For practitioners, the study suggests that beauty brands should prioritize user-generated content, authentic representation, and educational value over traditional celebrity endorsements when targeting Romanian Gen Z females. The research contributes to understanding culturally-specific consumer behavior in the digital marketing landscape.

Keywords: social media influencers (SMI); influencer marketing (IM); beauty marketing; consumer behavior; generation Z

1. Introduction

Since 2015, influencer marketing and its impact have been studied extensively in various academic contexts (De Veirman *et al.*, 2017; Evans *et al.*, 2017; Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). Thanks to the ever-evolving nature of social media, the continuous introduction of new features, and the expansion of built-in advertising options, influencers must adapt and keep up with algorithm changes. Thus, this field has attracted considerable scholarly attention from multiple disciplines (Balaban *et al.*, 2020; Hughes *et al.*, 2019; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Pöyry *et al.*, 2019; Scholz, 2021), offering insights from social-scientific and psychological perspectives in understanding demographics, consumer behavior, motivation, and mental impact of social media, while exploring new perspectives regarding advertising and marketing strategies.

The goal of this paper is to explore how influencer marketing works on Instagram and TikTok for Romanian Gen Z females, and how aestheticized content created by influencers affects their purchase behavior and practices regarding makeup and skincare products. This comparison is essential because Romanian Gen Z consumers navigate multiple platforms within a single consumer journey, and understanding

platform-specific functions is crucial for understanding how aestheticized content influences behavior differently across digital environments. There is consensus that this postmillennial demographic cohort is characterized by diversity and immersion in digital technology. Gen Z grew up in a rapidly changing and interconnected world, which has influenced their values and attitudes. One defining characteristic of this specific age group is their digital nativism (Kotler *et al.*, 2021; Ngo *et al.*, 2022). They have grown up with technology and tend to feel comfortable using it to shop and make purchases online (Goldring & Azab, 2020). Gen Z is known for its practical, realistic approach, which anticipates accessing and assessing a wide array of information before making purchases (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Generation Z's primary motivation for consumption, as observed, is the pursuit of truth on both personal and communal levels (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Many Gen Z individuals feel comfortable embracing diverse forms of self-expression and are highly willing to understand and accept people from various backgrounds. Gen Z is not confined to a single identity; rather, they explore different ways of being themselves and shape their individual identities over time (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). In this sense, they could be described as "identity nomads" as Francis and Hoefel (2018, p. 4) point out, explaining that consumption becomes a way of self-expression (Francis & Hoefel, 2018, p. 8).

According to Meola (2023), Generation Z will soon become "the most pivotal generation to the future of retail" and will have crucial spending power by 2026. To target this demographic cohort, marketers need to understand Gen Z now to keep up with them. They differ from other generations; thus, a qualitative exploration of their needs and habits is necessary. When it comes to purchase decisions, this study investigates what role aesthetics play in the purchase behavior of Romanian Gen Z consumers and finally, informed by Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1971) and Practice Theory (Holt, 1995), this study will gather data on how this consumer segment learns and integrates into their daily practices the advice received from social media influencers.

While existing research has extensively examined source credibility, authenticity, and general influencer effectiveness (Balaban & Szabolcs, 2022; Kim & Kim, 2021; Pöyry *et al.*, 2019), there remains a significant gap in understanding how aestheticized influencer content specifically

impacts consumer practices in culturally specific contexts. Most studies have focused on purchase intentions rather than actual behavioral integration, and few have examined the role of visual aesthetics as a mediating factor in the influence process. Additionally, limited research has explored how Gen Z consumers in emerging markets, such as Romania, engage with and translate influencer recommendations into personal practices. This study contributes to the literature by examining the intersection of aesthetic appeal, social learning processes, and practice integration among Romanian Gen Z females. By applying both Social Learning Theory and Practice Theory, this research provides a comprehensive framework for understanding not just what influences this demographic, but how they actively incorporate influencer guidance into their daily beauty routines and consumption practices. The following research questions are addressed in this study:

RQ1: How do social media influencers affect the purchase behavior of Romanian Gen Z females regarding beauty products?

RQ2: What role do aesthetics play in the purchase behavior of Romanian Gen Z consumers?

RQ3: How do Romanian Gen Z consumers integrate advice received from social media influencers into practice?

This paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents the literature review and theoretical framework, examining influencer marketing research, platform-specific characteristics of Instagram and TikTok, consumer behavior and aesthetics, and the theoretical foundations of Social Learning Theory and Practice Theory. Section 3 outlines the qualitative methodology employed, including focus group procedures and a thematic analysis approach. Section 4 presents the findings organized around key themes that emerged from the data. Section 5 discusses the theoretical and practical implications of the findings, and Section 6 concludes with a discussion of the study's limitations and suggestions for future research.

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1. Influencer marketing

Influencer marketing has emerged as a popular strategy in social media marketing, leveraging product placements and endorsements from content creators. Campbell and Grimm (2019, p. 110) define influencers as "individuals who post to their social media accounts in exchange for compensation." Due to high market saturation in traditional advertising channels, brands are investing increasingly in influencer collaborations, as such partnerships can offer them targeted access to diverse and extensive audiences. The influencer marketing market size has been growing worldwide, particularly since 2016, when global spending surpassed \$1.6 billion. By 2023, spending had grown exponentially, reaching \$21.1 billion in influencer marketing investments (Dencheva, 2023), and according to Statista, it is projected to reach \$44,18 bn by the end of 2025. Even so, investing in influencer marketing is much more cost-effective than traditional advertising (Evans *et al.*, 2017; Hwang & Zhang, 2018; Phua *et al.*, 2017), as influencers can generate high brand engagement at a fraction of the cost of traditional marketing campaigns (Balaban & Mustăţea, 2019). Various studies have analyzed the impact of different influencer characteristics on brand attitude, consumer behavior, and purchase decisions. For example, De Veirman *et al.* (2017) found that Instagram influencers with a high number of followers are considered more likable and influential than those with a small following. Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) examined the credibility of online celebrities' Instagram profiles and their influence on purchase decisions. Evans *et al.* (2017) investigated the effect of disclosure language in influencer advertising on advertising recognition, attitudes, and behavioral intent, highlighting the importance of transparency and disclosure in influencer marketing campaigns.

Numerous studies have examined the source credibility of social media influencers and their impact on consumer behavior. Hughes *et al.* (2019) conducted an empirical investigation of sponsored blogging campaigns on Facebook, while Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández (2019) explored the role of digital influencers in brand recommendation through electronic word of mouth. Lou and Yuan (2019) proposed an

integrated model to account for the roles of advertising value and source credibility. Balaban and Mustățea (2019) examined users' perspectives on the credibility of social media influencers in Romania and Germany. Breves *et al.* (2019) investigated the perceived fit between Instagram influencers and endorsed brands, highlighting its consequences for influencer trustworthiness, brand evaluations, and behavioral intentions.

Recent studies have expanded beyond traditional metrics to examine deeper consumer engagement patterns. Matin *et al.* (2022) discovered how social media influencers impact brand awareness levels, and how perceived extrinsic traits positively affect brand image and trust in sponsored content. Scholz (2021) focused on how consumers respond to influencer content and actively incorporate it into their own practices, examining consumption patterns and active engagement with influencer content. The perceived information quality and trustworthiness of influencers were explored by Balaban *et al.* (2020), highlighting the role of these factors in shaping audiences' attitudes toward influencers.

Generation Z-specific research has emerged as a critical area of inquiry. Ghaliba and Ardiansyah (2022) focus specifically on the influence of Instagram influencers on Generation Z's purchase intentions, highlighting how influencers shape this consumer segment's purchasing behavior. Barta *et al.* (2023) examined the determinants of success in influencer marketing campaigns on TikTok, with particular emphasis on the effectiveness of humor and followers' hedonic experience. Berman *et al.* (2023) compared influence and advertising in influencer marketing, examining the role of social learning in influencer marketing and the effects of targeted advertising on information aggregation and product awareness. Consumer avoidance behaviors have also gained attention, with Pradhan *et al.* (2023) studying circumstances and motivations behind Gen Z consumers' avoidance of influencers and endorsed brands.

Perceived authenticity has emerged as critical for influencers to foster relationships with their community (Balaban & Szambolics, 2022; Pöyry *et al.*, 2019), with scholars arguing that authenticity is positively associated with advertising activities when influencers' intentions to recommend products or services for external compensation appear genuine (Balaban & Szambolics, 2022; Evans *et al.*, 2017; Kim & Kim, 2021).

Table 1

Key studies in influencer marketing

Author(s) & Year	Purpose	Method	Sample/Data	Key Findings
De Veirman <i>et al.</i> (2017)	Examine the follower count impact on brand attitude	Experimental design	271 Belgian participants	Higher follower count increases likability and influence perception
Evans <i>et al.</i> (2017)	Investigate disclosure effects in influencer advertising	Experimental study	330 US participants	Disclosure language affects advertising recognition and attitudes
Djafarova & Rushworth (2017)	Analyze celebrity credibility on Instagram	Survey research	409 female participants	Credibility significantly influences purchase decisions
Balaban & Mustăţea (2019)	Compare influencer credibility perceptions	Cross-cultural survey	400 Romanian/German users	Cultural differences in credibility evaluation exist
Hughes <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Examine sponsored blogging effectiveness	Empirical investigation	Facebook campaign data	Source credibility mediates brand engagement
Lou & Yuan (2019)	Develop an integrated credibility model	Survey methodology	500 US consumers	Advertising value and credibility jointly predict outcomes
Scholz (2021)	Analyze consumer incorporation of influencer content	Qualitative interviews	30 consumers	Consumers actively integrate content into personal practices
Ghaliba & Ardiansyah (2022)	Focus on Gen Z Instagram influence	Quantitative survey	Indonesian Gen Z sample	Influencer characteristics significantly predict purchase intentions

Barta <i>et al.</i> (2023)	Examine TikTok campaign success factors	Content analysis + survey	TikTok campaigns + 312 users	Humor and hedonic experience drive engagement
Pradhan <i>et al.</i> (2023)	Investigate Gen Z avoidance behaviors	Mixed methods	847 Gen Z participants	Authenticity concerns drive influencer avoidance
Current Study (2025)	Analyze the aestheticized content's impact on Romanian Gen Z practices	Focus groups	21 Romanian Gen Z female participants	Aesthetic typologies mediate learning and practice integration

2.2. Instagram and TikTok

Instagram has maintained its position as one of the most popular social media platforms, ranking third globally with over 2 billion monthly active users and 500 million daily active users (Backlinko, 2025). Instagram has evolved beyond being just a social media platform and has emerged as a significant advertising platform. While Instagram's core features remain social interaction and content sharing, its integration with Meta enables businesses to leverage various advertising capabilities. Brands can reach wider audiences through influencers and promote their products or services effectively to targeted demographics. The platform's visual-centric nature offers an appealing, immersive experience for users while providing businesses with an ideal environment to capture audience attention through advertising.

With over 1 billion active monthly users (Doyle, 2023), TikTok's exponential growth since 2016 has positioned the platform as a leader in short-form video social networking. TikTok has become a powerful social media platform, considered one of the most popular worldwide, with significant influence on Generation Z's perceptions and behaviors (Ngo *et al.*, 2022). One of TikTok's defining characteristics is its focus on short-form video content, featuring bite-sized videos typically 15 to 60 seconds long, though a 10-minute format was introduced in 2023 for

more in-depth content, leading to increased exposure and engagement time. TikTok's algorithm plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of its advertising. The platform's algorithm analyzes user behavior, preferences, and interactions to deliver personalized content recommendations. Influencers on TikTok benefit from the platform's algorithm, as it helps expand the reach of engaging influencer content to wider audiences. TikTok creators are known to build substantial follower bases in shorter periods, thanks to the algorithm's nature and its potential reach.

2.3. Consumer behavior and aesthetics

The pioneering work of Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) fundamentally shifted marketing research from purely rational, functionality-focused approaches toward recognizing the significance of emotions, fantasies, and aesthetic experiences in consumer decision-making. In the early development of consumer behavior research, scholars primarily focused on the rational aspects and functionality of products or services, believing that consumers made decisions based primarily on logical reasoning and practical benefits (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). However, a notable paradigm shift occurred as researchers began recognizing the significance of what Holbrook and Hirschman (1982, p. 132) termed "irrational buying need," discovering motivational aspects that influence consumer behavior beyond pure rationality. Holbrook and Hirschman's (1982) seminal research highlighted that consumers are not solely driven by rationality and functionality but are also deeply influenced by their emotions, desires, and imaginative experiences. This shift in focus led to the emergence of new research perspectives and approaches, such as experiential, entertainment, and aesthetic marketing, acknowledging the power of emotions, sensory stimuli, storytelling, and aesthetics in capturing consumers' attention, evoking desires, and shaping their perceptions of products and brands.

Aesthetics on social media refer to the visual presentation and style of content posted by users, encompassing color schemes, filters, fonts, and overall look and feel of a social media account or post (Yang *et al.*, 2021). The use of aesthetics can create specific moods or overall vibes and can be used to reflect brand personality to attract specific audiences.

On Instagram, particularly, influencers build successful social media presence by differentiating themselves and sending signals to potential followers through the aesthetics and styles they adopt in their content feeds. Aesthetics on social media have become increasingly important for brands and influencers alike, as they seek to stand out and differentiate themselves in crowded online landscapes. This shift has opened new approaches for researching and understanding ways of influencing consumer behavior through aesthetic elements. With the rise of aestheticized social media marketing and influencer marketing, understanding the interplay between aesthetics, emotions, and fantasies has become crucial for comprehending consumer decision-making processes in digital environments.

2.4. Social Learning Theory and Practice Theory

Albert Bandura's (1971) Social Learning Theory suggests that learning occurs through a combination of processes: observation, imitation, and cognitive processes. According to Social Learning Theory, social interactions, modeling, and reinforcement are key elements in shaping human behavior. The theory provides insights into how individuals acquire new behaviors and skills and how behavior change can be facilitated. In the context of social media and influencer marketing, this theoretical framework helps explain how individuals learn through observation, model influencers' actions, and apply what they see on social media in their daily lives.

Douglas B. Holt's (1995) Practice Theory offers a conceptual framework and holistic approach for studying how consumers integrate influencer content into their own consumption experiences (Scholz, 2021). Social media users are conceptualized through this lens as practitioners who seek to improve their practice performances by learning how to use objects and perform bodily actions in socially sanctioned ways (Scholz, 2021). Holt (1995) defines consumers as practitioners who "immerse themselves in a practice by thinking and acting like a practitioner" (assimilating) and "assert their individuality while engaging in a practice" (personalizing) (Scholz, 2021, p. 513). These actions help explain how consumers apply influencer practices into their own practice performances and how consumer tastes develop (Maciel & Wallendorf, 2017). According to

Maciel and Wallendorf (2017), Practice Theory postulates that social practices consist of three elements: "(1) understandings, or a tacit sense of what to say and do; (2) rules, such as explicit prescriptions and instructions; and (3) teleoaffectivities or modes of engagement, which are the accepted ends and emotions implicated in a practice" (p. 727).

Based on the reviewed literature, while extensive research has examined influencer credibility, authenticity, and general effectiveness, significant gaps remain in understanding how aestheticized influencer content specifically impacts consumer practices in culturally specific contexts. Most existing studies focus on purchase intentions rather than actual behavioral integration, and few examine the role of visual aesthetics as a mediating factor in the social learning process.

This research aims to fill this gap by analyzing how Romanian Gen Z females learn from and integrate beauty-related influencer content into their own practices. By combining Social Learning Theory and Practice Theory, this study examines how social media influencers impact the learning process of users, and how, through observation, imitation, and practice, consumers integrate beauty-related influencer content into their experiences by understanding product usage, appropriate practices, accepted rules of skincare and makeup application, and personalizing learnings based on individual needs.

3. Methodology

This qualitative, exploratory study employed focus group methodology to gain a deeper understanding of participants' perspectives, attitudes, and preferences through interactive group discussions. The study aimed to examine how influencer marketing and advertising efforts on social media translate into actual practices among Romanian Gen Z females. Focus groups were selected as the data collection method because they enable the exploration of complex social phenomena through group interaction and allow participants to build on each other's responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The study employed purposive sampling to recruit participants who met specific demographic criteria: Romanian females aged 15-26 who actively use social media platforms (Instagram

and/or TikTok) and engage with beauty-related content. The target sample size of 21 participants was determined based on theoretical saturation principles established by Guest *et al.* (2006), who suggest that for relatively homogeneous populations with focused research questions, saturation typically occurs within 12-24 participants in focus group studies. Participants were recruited through targeted invitations across urban and rural areas of Romania to ensure geographical diversity within the sample. All participants came from stable, middle-class socio-economic backgrounds. High school participants (aged 15-18) represented a more homogeneous urban demographic, while university participants (both bachelor's and master's students) provided broader representation from both rural and urban backgrounds across Romania. Most adult participants reported having independent income sources, with only a few students over 23 mentioning continued financial dependence on parental support.

Data collection occurred from April 27 to May 10, 2023. Participants were divided into three age-based focus groups: 15-18 years (7 participants), 19-22 years (8 participants), and 23-26 years (6 participants). This age-stratified approach aimed to capture developmental differences in social media engagement and consumer behavior within the Gen Z cohort. Each group consisted of 6-8 participants to ensure diverse perspectives while enabling meaningful interaction. Two focus groups were conducted in-person in a controlled, comfortable environment with refreshments provided, while one group was conducted online via Zoom due to geographical constraints. No significant differences in discussion quality or participant engagement were observed between online and in-person sessions. A semi-structured discussion guide was developed covering key thematic areas aligned with the research questions, exploring participants' social media usage patterns and platform preferences to understand their digital engagement behaviors. The guide examined influencer-following behaviors and preferences to identify what drives participants to connect with specific content creators, and investigated beauty product purchase decision processes to understand how social media influence translates into consumer actions. Additionally, the discussion explored participants' preferred aesthetics in consumption choices to uncover the role of visual appeal in decision-making, analyzed how participants integrate social media advice into personal practices to

understand the learning and adoption process, and sought specific examples of learned behaviors and techniques to provide concrete evidence of social media's educational impact on beauty routines. The same discussion guide was used across all three groups to ensure consistency. All focus group sessions were audio-recorded with participant consent, averaging 85 minutes per session. This duration allowed for comprehensive topic exploration while maintaining participant engagement. Non-verbal cues and group dynamics were documented through the researcher's notes during sessions.

Thematic analysis was conducted following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach using Delve qualitative data analysis software. The analysis process began with familiarization through multiple readings of transcripts to identify initial patterns, followed by systematic initial coding that involved labeling relevant text segments related to research concepts. Codes were then grouped into potential themes during the theme development phase. The process continued with clear articulation of theme meanings and definitions, and finally with reporting the findings identified in the themes, supported by data.

All participants provided informed consent prior to participation, with parental consent obtained for participants under 18 years. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time and were assured of confidentiality and anonymity in reporting. The study procedures were designed to minimize any potential discomfort or risk to participants.

Table 2

Participant demographics

Participant ID	Age	Location Background	Education Level	Online/In-person
ID1-ID6	15-18	Urban	High School	In-person
ID7-ID14	19-22	Mixed rural/urban	University	In-person
ID15-ID21	23-26	Mixed rural/urban	University	Online

4. Findings

This section presents the key themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of focus group discussions with 21 Romanian Gen Z females.

The findings are organized around three primary themes that directly address the research questions: influencer-driven purchase behaviors and decision-making processes among Romanian Gen Z females in beauty consumption, the role of aesthetic trends and visual culture in shaping consumer choices, and the practical integration and adaptation of social media beauty advice into personal routines and purchasing decisions.

4.1. Social media's influence on beauty: learning effects

The analysis revealed a strong relationship between social media engagement and beauty-related consumer behaviors among Romanian Gen Z participants. Data suggest that recommendations from online sources significantly influence makeup and skincare purchases, consistent with Social Learning Theory's observation-imitation-practice framework (Bandura, 1971).

Participants demonstrated active learning from social media content, particularly on TikTok. One participant noted:

"I'm mostly influenced regarding makeup on TikTok. If it's an irrelevant person and they do good makeup and present it nicely, I'm very tempted to buy it." (ID17, 24 years)

This finding aligns with previous research on source credibility, which suggests that content quality matters more than influencer fame (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Participants showed particular interest in skincare products promoted online, with brands such as L'Oréal Paris, CeraVe, The Ordinary, and La Roche-Posay receiving significant attention for their extensive digital campaigns and endorsements.

The data indicate that social media exposure has fundamentally altered beauty and skincare behaviors among Romanian Gen Z females. Prior to social media engagement, participants reported having no established routines, but subsequently developed systematic approaches to beauty practices. They began researching specific products, understanding application sequences, and incorporating trending techniques, such as "lifting and snatching effects" (ID7, 22 years), into makeup application.

Participants demonstrated sophisticated knowledge acquisition regarding skincare ingredients. Social media exposure increased awareness of the importance of sunscreen, the benefits of Vitamin C serum, and the use of retinol. This educational aspect represents a shift from traditional beauty marketing toward peer-to-peer learning models.

"Social media has influenced my makeup and skincare routines. Before social media, I didn't have a routine, and after using social media, I realized that I should have these routines in my life. I researched what products would fit my type and in what order I should do my skincare or makeup steps." (ID7, 22 years)

The learning process extends beyond product selection to technique correction. Participants reported learning both what to do and what to avoid through social media content, suggesting active information processing rather than passive consumption. This pattern supports Holt's (1995) Practice Theory, in which consumers act as practitioners who personalize learned behaviors to fit individual contexts.

4.2. Platform-specific usage patterns: Instagram versus TikTok

Analysis revealed distinct usage patterns between Instagram and TikTok among Romanian Gen Z participants, suggesting platform-specific functions in the beauty learning process. These differences have important implications for understanding how aestheticized content influences consumer behavior.

Participants described TikTok as their primary source for beauty education and technique acquisition. The platform's algorithm-driven content delivery enables the discovery of diverse creators and methods. However, participants noted difficulty remembering specific influencer names on TikTok due to the platform's rapid content cycling.

"I don't really remember the names of the content creators I follow. I follow a lot of people, and on TikTok, new faces appear constantly." (ID7, 22 years)

In contrast, Instagram functions as a visual inspiration archive where participants save content in organized collections. The platform's emphasis on aesthetic coherence supports long-term inspiration gathering and reference.

"On Instagram, I am saving makeup looks I see in a saved folder, and when I'm in need for inspiration, I check what I have saved, and I try to recreate the look." (ID7, 22 years)

The analysis revealed age-stratified preferences within the Gen Z cohort. Participants aged 15-18 primarily used Instagram, while those over 20 showed a stronger preference for TikTok. This shift may reflect platform evolution and changing user needs as participants develop more sophisticated beauty knowledge. TikTok's recent search engine functionality has positioned it as a preferred information source over traditional search engines like Google. Younger participants reported directly searching for product reviews and technique tutorials on TikTok, indicating a significant shift in information-seeking behavior. The platform differences suggest that effective beauty marketing requires distinct approaches: TikTok for educational content and technique demonstration, Instagram for aesthetic inspiration and brand building.

4.3. Beauty influencer relationships and authenticity

Romanian Gen Z participants demonstrated complex relationships with beauty influencers, characterized by selective trust, verification behaviors, and a preference for authentic content. Participants prioritized genuineness and transparency over follower counts or celebrity status. The emergence of "de-influencing" content in early 2023 resonated strongly with participants, who appreciated creators who discouraged unnecessary purchases.

"I am most definitely influenced by random persons on TikTok. I don't even know those persons, but they are very manipulative in maybe a good way. But I always double-check with my friends who know facts about products." (ID19, 24 years)

Participants employed sophisticated evaluation strategies, cross-referencing influencer recommendations with peer opinions and independent research. This suggests active, critical consumption rather than passive acceptance of influencer content.

Participants valued content that combined beauty instruction with personal storytelling or lifestyle sharing. This preference aligns with research on parasocial relationships in social media marketing (Hwang & Zhang, 2018).

Long-term influencer relationships demonstrated a significant impact on purchasing behavior. One participant reported that approximately 90% of her beauty products were driven by a single influencer's recommendations over four years, suggesting the potential for sustained influence through consistent authenticity.

"I think 90% of my products are recommendation-based from Monica Palcau on Instagram. I've been following her for more than four years now, and every single recommendation was excellent."
(ID20, 23 years)

These findings suggest that Romanian Gen Z consumers prefer relationship-based influence over transactional celebrity endorsements, requiring marketers to focus on authentic, long-term content strategies.

4.4. Aesthetic typologies and their role in consumer behavior

The analysis identified five distinct aesthetic typologies that significantly influence Romanian Gen Z beauty consumption patterns and lifestyle aspirations. These aesthetics function as comprehensive identity frameworks that guide both product selection and behavioral practices.

Clean Girl Aesthetic: Characterized by minimalist "no-makeup" makeup looks emphasizing natural appearance and simplified routines. This aesthetic extends beyond beauty to encompass values of sustainability, health consciousness, and authenticity. Participants drawn to this aesthetic actively seek brands that align with clean, natural values.

Cottage Girl Aesthetic: Encompasses romantic, nature-connected lifestyle elements, including floral prints, earthy tones, and vintage-inspired items. These aesthetic influences both fashion choices and beauty product selection toward natural, environmentally conscious options.

Korean Beauty Aesthetic: Korean beauty standards demonstrated strong influence among participants through the adoption of specific aesthetic techniques, including glitter placement, tinted lips, and particular makeup application methods. This aesthetic centers on achieving healthy, luminous skin through multi-step skincare routines and subtle makeup enhancement.

Old Money Aesthetic: Associated with understated luxury, classic styles, and timeless quality, this aesthetic influences preferences for high-quality products and subtle, refined appearance choices. The aesthetic serves as an aspirational ideal, allowing participants to create the appearance of sophisticated wealth through careful styling choices, offering a way to embody luxury without the financial means typically associated with elite social circles.

Participants over 22 years demonstrated greater aesthetic awareness and conscious adoption of specific styles. They articulated clear preferences and could explain aesthetic choices in relation to personal identity expression. Younger participants (15-18 years) showed interest in aesthetics but faced constraints due to financial limitations and social expectations from peers and adults.

"Some mentioned even waiting to get older and have more freedom to express themselves and buy all the products they wish, in order to live up to an aesthetic typology or to live the lifestyle they desire." (Researcher observation)

These aesthetic typologies function as more than visual preferences; they serve as identity frameworks that guide consumption decisions, lifestyle choices, and self-expression strategies. This finding suggests that successful beauty marketing to Romanian Gen Z requires understanding and

authentically engaging with these aesthetic communities rather than focusing solely on individual products or traditional demographic segments.

The relationship between aesthetics and consumption behavior demonstrates the intersection of visual culture, identity formation, and consumer practices, supporting both Social Learning Theory's modeling concepts and Practice Theory's emphasis on identity-driven consumption integration.

Table 3

Summary of key findings and implications

Research Question	Key Finding	Theoretical Implication	Practical Implication
RQ1: Influencer Impact on Purchase Behavior	Romanian Gen Z demonstrates selective trust with verification behaviors and a preference for authentic content	Supports Social Learning Theory with evolved digital selectivity	Brands should prioritize authentic, educational content over celebrity endorsements
RQ2: Role of Aesthetics	Aesthetic typologies function as identity frameworks guiding consumption	Extends Practice Theory through aesthetic identity integration	Marketing should target aesthetic communities rather than broad demographics
RQ3: Practice Integration	Platform-specific learning (TikTok education, Instagram inspiration) with personalized adaptation	Confirms Practice Theory with digital platform differentiation	Develop platform-specific content strategies supporting complementary consumer journeys

This table contextualizes the study's findings within existing theoretical frameworks while identifying practical applications for beauty marketing strategies targeting Romanian Gen Z consumers. The results contribute to understanding culturally-specific manifestations of global consumer behavior trends in digital environments.

5. Discussion

5.1. *Theoretical implications*

The findings provide strong support for Bandura's (1971) Social Learning Theory in the context of digital consumer behavior. Romanian Gen Z participants demonstrated the classical observation-imitation-practice sequence when engaging with beauty content on social media platforms. The data reveal that participants actively observed influencer techniques, imitated specific practices, and subsequently modeled learned behaviors for peers, creating a continuous cycle of social learning. This digital manifestation of social learning theory extends beyond traditional face-to-face interactions. Social media platforms serve as rich repositories of behavioral models, providing Romanian participants with access to diverse beauty practitioners whose techniques they can observe repeatedly and practice privately. The asynchronous nature of social media content allows for repeated observation, which strengthens the learning process compared to traditional one-time demonstrations. Particularly noteworthy is how participants developed sophisticated evaluation criteria for selecting models to imitate. Unlike in traditional social learning contexts, where geographic proximity limits model availability, Romanian Gen Z participants could choose from global influencers, yet they preferred authentic, relatable models over celebrity figures. This selectivity suggests the presence of evolved social learning processes in digital environments.

The study's findings align closely with Holt's (1995) Practice Theory while revealing culturally-specific adaptations among Romanian participants. Participants functioned as practitioners who immersed themselves in beauty practices through social media observation, then personalized these practices to fit individual contexts and preferences. The three elements of Practice Theory – understandings, rules, and teleoaffectivities – manifested distinctly in the Romanian context. Understandings developed through platform-specific learning, with TikTok providing technical knowledge and Instagram offering aesthetic inspiration. Rules emerged through community standards within aesthetic typologies (Clean Girl, Korean Beauty, etc.), where participants learned appropriate product usage and application techniques. Teleoaffectivities

were evident in participants' emotional connections to specific aesthetics and their aspirational lifestyle associations.

The personalization aspect of Practice Theory proved particularly relevant, as Romanian participants adapted global beauty trends to local cultural contexts, economic constraints, and personal preferences. This suggests that practice integration involves active cultural translation rather than passive adoption of observed behaviors.

The emergence of distinct aesthetic typologies among Romanian participants suggests a new way for understanding identity formation through consumption practices. Unlike traditional consumer behavior models that focus on individual product choices, these aesthetic typologies function as comprehensive identity frameworks that guide multiple consumption decisions simultaneously. Each aesthetic typology (Clean Girl, Cottage Girl, Korean Beauty, Old Money, Asian Glitter) represents more than visual preferences – they constitute coherent lifestyle philosophies that integrate product choices, behavioral practices, and value systems.

5.2. Comparison with existing literature influencer credibility and effectiveness research

The study's findings reveal both convergences with and divergences from established influencer marketing literature. Regarding the importance of follower count, our results partially contradict De Veirman *et al.*'s (2017) finding that Instagram influencers with high follower counts are perceived as more likeable and influential. Romanian participants demonstrated greater concern for content authenticity and educational value than follower metrics, suggesting that credibility evaluation criteria may have evolved since 2017 or vary culturally.

This evolution aligns with Lou and Yuan's (2019) integrated credibility model, which posits that advertising value and source credibility jointly predict consumer outcomes. However, our findings extend their model by revealing sophisticated verification behaviors among Romanian Gen Z participants, who actively cross-reference influencer recommendations with peer opinions and independent research before making decisions. This suggests more complex credibility evaluation processes than previously documented.

The Romanian context provides an interesting contrast to Balaban and Mustăţea's (2019) cross-cultural credibility study, which compared Romanian and German participants. While their research focused on general credibility perceptions, our findings suggest Romanian Gen Z participants have developed more sophisticated evaluation strategies since 2019, possibly reflecting platform evolution and increased media literacy. The underlying reason for this development may be the rapid growth of influencer marketing saturation, leading consumers to develop more critical evaluation skills as protective mechanisms.

Purchase Decision and Consumer Behavior Research

Our findings both support and extend Djafarova and Rushworth's (2017) research on Instagram celebrity credibility and purchase decisions. While they found a significant credibility impact on purchase intentions, our study reveals that Romanian participants move beyond simple credibility assessment to active verification behaviors. This suggests a maturation in consumer sophistication, where credibility is necessary but not sufficient for purchase influence.

The emergence of "de-influencing" content resonated strongly with Romanian participants, supporting Kim and Kim's (2021) findings on the importance of authenticity while revealing culturally specific manifestations. Romanian participants valued transparency and honesty over promotional content, suggesting that traditional celebrity endorsement models may be less effective with this demographic than peer-to-peer recommendation systems.

The contrast with Pradhan *et al.*'s (2023) findings on Gen Z avoidance behaviors is particularly noteworthy. While they identified circumstances leading to influencer avoidance, our study demonstrates that authentic, long-term relationships can overcome general skepticism. One participant's four-year relationship with a single influencer, resulting in 90% of purchases driven by recommendations, directly contradicts the avoidance patterns Pradhan *et al.* identified. The underlying reason may be that sustained authenticity creates trust that transcends general consumer skepticism about influencer marketing.

Ghaliba and Ardiansyah's (2022) Indonesian study on Generation Z purchase intentions provides cross-cultural comparison opportunities. While they found significant influencer impact on purchase intentions, our Romanian participants demonstrated more complex behavior integration patterns. The difference may reflect cultural variations in consumer decision-making processes or methodological differences between intention measurement and actual behavior analysis.

5.3. Platform-specific research contributions

Our platform differentiation findings extend existing research by revealing complementary rather than competitive platform usage. While previous studies examined Instagram and TikTok separately, Romanian participants demonstrated integrated cross-platform consumer journeys in which each platform serves distinct functions within a single consumption process. This functional differentiation has implications for understanding social media's role in consumer decision-making processes. Rather than competing platforms, Instagram and TikTok appear to serve different stages of the consumer journey: Instagram for need recognition and desire formation, TikTok for information search and alternative evaluation. The age-stratified platform preferences within our Gen Z sample (younger participants preferring Instagram, older preferring TikTok) contradict some general assumptions about platform adoption patterns and suggest more nuanced intra-generational differences than previously recognized. This finding has implications for targeted marketing strategies that consider not only generational cohorts but also age microsegments within generations.

5.4. Theoretical framework applications

The application of Social Learning Theory in digital contexts confirms Bandura's (1971) core principles while revealing platform-specific manifestations. The asynchronous, repeatable nature of social media content enhances traditional observational learning by allowing multiple exposures and private practice opportunities. This digital extension of

social learning theory contributes to understanding how traditional psychological frameworks apply in contemporary media environments.

Practice Theory applications (Holt, 1995) prove particularly relevant, with Romanian participants demonstrating clear patterns of immersion, assimilation, and personalization. However, the cultural adaptation aspect – where global trends undergo local modification – suggests that practice integration involves more active cultural translation than Holt's original framework emphasized.

Aesthetic and Consumer Behavior Research

The identification of aesthetic typologies as identity frameworks represents a novel contribution that extends existing consumer behavior research. While previous studies focused on individual product choices or brand relationships, these aesthetic typologies function as comprehensive lifestyle philosophies that guide multiple consumption decisions simultaneously. This finding suggests that in digital environments, aesthetic coherence may be more predictive of consumer behavior than traditional demographic segmentation. The underlying reason may be that social media platforms enable identity expression and community formation around aesthetic preferences in ways that weren't possible in pre-digital consumer environments.

Cultural Specificity

The study's aesthetic typologies findings contribute to the literature by revealing how global beauty trends undergo local adaptation. Romanian participants did not merely adopt Korean Beauty or Clean Girl aesthetics wholesale; instead, they selectively incorporated elements that aligned with local cultural values and economic realities. This selective adoption process suggests that globalization in beauty consumption is more complex than simple cultural homogenization. In this context, Romanian Gen Z participants acted as cultural curators, choosing elements from global aesthetic trends while maintaining cultural specificity in their personal expression.

5.5. Practical implications for marketing strategy

Authentic Content Strategy Development

The findings suggest that beauty brands targeting Romanian Gen Z consumers should prioritize authentic content creation over traditional celebrity endorsements. Participants responded more positively to peer-created content and educational tutorials than to highly produced promotional materials. The success of "de-influencing" content indicates that Romanian consumers appreciate honest product evaluations, including negative reviews and cautionary advice. Participants demonstrated a preference for micro-influencers and ordinary consumers over established macro-influencers in their product evaluation processes, reflecting a credibility hierarchy that prioritizes perceived authenticity and relatability over celebrity status. The preference for micro-influencers suggests that participants value testimonials from individuals with smaller follower counts who are perceived as having genuine product experiences rather than commercial motivations, thereby reducing the perceived distance between endorser and consumer in the evaluation of product recommendations.

Platform-Specific Content Optimization

Beauty brands should develop platform-specific content strategies that acknowledge the functional differences between Instagram and TikTok. Instagram content should focus on aesthetic inspiration, lifestyle integration, and visual storytelling, while TikTok content should emphasize educational value, technique demonstration, and product functionality. Cross-platform strategies should recognize that Romanian Gen Z consumers use these platforms complementarily rather than exclusively. Content should be designed to support consumer journeys that span multiple platforms and touchpoints.

6. Conclusion

This research makes several important theoretical contributions to consumer behavior and digital marketing literature. First, it validates and extends Social Learning Theory in digital environments, demonstrating how Romanian Gen Z consumers employ sophisticated selection criteria when choosing behavioral models from social media content. The study reveals that digital social learning involves active curation rather than passive imitation, with participants developing verification strategies and cross-referencing multiple sources before adopting practices. Second, the research extends Practice Theory by identifying platform-specific learning functions that support complementary consumer journeys. The differentiation between TikTok's educational role and Instagram's inspirational function provides new insights into how consumers navigate multi-platform environments for learning and identity formation. Third, the emergence of aesthetic typologies as identity frameworks represents a novel contribution to understanding consumer identity formation in digital contexts. The five identified typologies (Clean Girl, Cottage Girl, Korean Beauty, Old Money, etc.) function as comprehensive lifestyle philosophies rather than simple visual preferences, guiding multiple consumption decisions simultaneously.

The study provides a comprehensive examination of the impact of aestheticized influencer marketing on Romanian Gen Z females, filling a significant gap in culturally specific consumer behavior research. The findings reveal distinct cultural adaptations of global beauty trends, demonstrating how local contexts mediate patterns of international influence. The research identifies age-stratified differences within the Gen Z cohort, with younger participants (15-18) showing different platform preferences and aesthetic adoption patterns compared to older participants (20-26). These intra-generational differences have important implications for targeted marketing strategies.

6.1 *Practical implications*

Beauty brands targeting Romanian Gen Z consumers should prioritize authentic, educational content over traditional celebrity endorsements.

The preference for peer-created content and the positive reception of "de-influencing" phenomena indicate that transparency and honesty are more valuable than promotional messaging for this demographic. Marketing strategies should acknowledge platform-specific functions in consumer journeys. Instagram content should focus on aesthetic inspiration and lifestyle integration, while TikTok content should emphasize educational value and technique demonstration. Cross-platform strategies should support consumer journeys that span multiple touchpoints rather than treating platforms as competing channels. The identification of aesthetic typologies suggests opportunities for community-based marketing approaches. Brands should consider targeting specific aesthetic communities with tailored content and product offerings rather than broad demographic segments. This requires authentic engagement with aesthetic communities and a deep understanding of their values and practices. Platform developers should recognize the complementary functions their platforms serve in consumer learning processes. Features that support educational content discovery (TikTok) and aesthetic curation (Instagram) align with user needs and may increase engagement and platform loyalty. The importance of authenticity in influencer relationships suggests opportunities for features that enhance transparency, such as detailed disclosure mechanisms and authentic review systems that cannot be easily manipulated. Romanian Gen Z consumers demonstrated sophisticated media literacy skills in evaluating influencer content, employing verification strategies and critical evaluation criteria. However, continued education about digital marketing tactics, algorithmic influence, and consumer rights in digital environments remains important as platforms and marketing strategies evolve.

6.2. Study limitations and future research directions

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. The study's sample was limited to 21 Romanian middle-class females aged 15-26, which constrains generalizability to other cultural contexts, economic segments, or demographic groups. The findings reflect specifically Romanian Gen Z experiences and may not apply to Gen Z populations in other countries with different cultural, economic, or regulatory environments.

The cross-sectional design captures participant perspectives at a single point in time (April-May 2023) and may not reflect the dynamic evolution of social media engagement patterns or consumer behaviors. The rapidly changing nature of social media platforms, algorithms, and cultural trends suggests that longitudinal research would provide valuable insights into behavioral changes over time. The self-reported nature of focus group data may be subject to social desirability bias, particularly regarding consumption behaviors and the acknowledgment of social media influence. Participants may have emphasized rational decision-making processes while underreporting impulsive or emotionally-driven purchase behaviors. While the study provides valuable insights into Romanian Gen Z behavior, the findings may not generalize to other cultural contexts without adaptation. Romanian consumers operate within specific economic, cultural, and social media regulatory environments that influence their behavior patterns. The middle-class socio-economic background of participants further limits generalizability. Economic constraints significantly influence beauty consumption patterns, and different economic segments may respond differently to influencer marketing strategies.

Future studies should examine Gen Z consumer behavior across different cultural contexts to understand how local factors mediate the influence of global digital marketing. Comparative research between Romanian participants and Gen Z populations in other European, North American, and Asian markets would illuminate cultural specificity versus universal patterns in digital consumer behavior. Investigating different economic segments within Romanian Gen Z populations would provide insights into how economic constraints influence aesthetic adoption, platform use, and influencer relationship patterns. Understanding socio-economic variations in digital consumer behavior has important implications for inclusive marketing strategies. Longitudinal research could also examine how major platform changes, algorithm updates, and cultural shifts influence consumer learning processes and patterns of practice integration. Understanding temporal dynamics would inform the development of a more resilient marketing strategy. Future research building on these findings will contribute to more nuanced, culturally sensitive, and effective digital marketing practices.

REFERENCES

- Backlinko. (2025, March 11). Instagram statistics 2025: Key demographic and user numbers. <https://backlinko.com/instagram-users>
- Balaban, D.C., Iancu, I., Mustăţea, M., Pavelea, A., & Culic, L. (2020). What determines young people to follow influencers? The role of perceived information quality and trustworthiness on users' following intentions. *Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations*, 22(3), 5–19. <https://doi.org/10.21018/rjcpr.2020.3.306>
- Balaban, D.C., & Mustăţea, M. (2019). Users' perspective on the credibility of social media influencers in Romania and Germany. *Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations*, 21(1), 31–46. <https://doi.org/10.21018/rjcpr.2019.1.269>
- Balaban, D.C., & Szabolics, J. (2022). A proposed model of self-perceived authenticity of social media influencers. *Media and Communication*, 10(1), 235–246. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v10i1.4801>
- Bandura, A. (1971). *Social learning theory*. General Learning Press.
- Barta, S., Belanche, D., Fernández, A., & Flavián, M. (2023). Influencer marketing on TikTok: The effectiveness of humor and followers' hedonic experience. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 70, Article 103149. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2022.103149>
- Berman, R., Oery, A., & Zheng, X. (2023). *Influence or advertise: The role of social learning in influencer marketing* (SSRN Working Paper No. 4324888). <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4324888>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Breves, P.L., Liebers, N., Abt, M., & Kunze, A. (2019). The perceived fit between Instagram influencers and the endorsed brand: How influencer-brand fit affects source credibility and persuasive effectiveness. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 59(4), 440–454. <https://doi.org/10.2501/JAR-2019-030>
- Campbell, C., & Grimm, P.E. (2019). The challenges native advertising poses: Exploring potential federal trade commission responses and identifying research needs. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 38(1), 110–123. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743915618818576>
- De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017). Marketing through Instagram influencers: The impact of number of followers and product

- divergence on brand attitude. *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(5), 798–828. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035>
- Dencheva, V. (2023, May 10). Global influencer market size 2023. *Statista*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1092819/global-influencer-market-size/>
- Djafarova, E., & Rushworth, C. (2017). Exploring the credibility of online celebrities' Instagram profiles in influencing the purchase decisions of young female users. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 68, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.11.009>
- Doyle, B. (2023, March 21). TikTok statistics – everything you need to know [Mar 2023 update]. *Wallaroo Media*. <https://wallaroomedia.com/blog/social-media/tiktok-statistics/>
- Evans, N.J., Phua, J., Lim, J., & Jun, H. (2017). Disclosing Instagram influencer advertising: The effects of disclosure language on advertising recognition, attitudes, and behavioral intent. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 17(2), 138–149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2017.1366885>
- Francis, T., & Hoefel, F. (2018). 'True Gen': Generation Z and its implications for companies. *McKinsey & Company*. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/true-gen-generation-z-and-its-implications-for-companies>
- Ghaliba, A.S., & Ardiansyahb, M. (2022). The role of Instagram influencers in affecting purchase decision of Generation Z. *International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Research*, 6(7), 89–103. <https://doi.org/10.53748/jbms.v2i3.44>
- Goldring, D., & Azab, C. (2020). New rules of social media shopping: Personality differences of US Gen Z versus Gen X market mavens. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 20(4), 884–897. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1855>
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 59–82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903>
- Holbrook, M.B., & Hirschman, E.C. (1982). The experiential aspects of consumption: Consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9(2), 132–140. <https://doi.org/10.1086/208906>
- Holt, D.B. (1995). How consumers consume: A typology of consumption practices. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209431>

- Hughes, C., Swaminathan, V., & Brooks, G. (2019). Driving brand engagement through online social influencers: An empirical investigation of sponsored blogging campaigns. *Journal of Marketing*, 83(5), 78–96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242919854374>
- Hwang, K., & Zhang, Q. (2018). Influence of parasocial relationship between digital celebrities and their followers on followers' purchase and electronic word-of-mouth intentions, and persuasion knowledge. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 87, 155–173. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.05.029>
- Influencer Marketing Hub. (2025). Influencer marketing benchmark report 2025. <https://influencermarketinghub.com/influencer-marketing-benchmark-report/>
- Jiménez-Castillo, D., & Sánchez-Fernández, R. (2019). The role of digital influencers in brand recommendation: Examining their impact on engagement, expected value and purchase intention. *International Journal of Information Management*, 49, 366–376. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2019.07.009>
- Kim, D.Y., & Kim, H.-Y. (2021). Trust me, trust me not: A nuanced view of influencer marketing on social media. *Journal of Business Research*, 134, 223–232. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.05.024>
- Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. (2021). *Marketing 5.0: Technology for humanity*. Wiley.
- Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2019). Influencer marketing: How message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 19(1), 58–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2018.1533501>
- Maciel, A.F., & Wallendorf, M. (2017). Taste engineering: An extended consumer model of cultural competence constitution. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 43(5), 726–746. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucw054>
- Matin, A., Khoshtaria, T., & Todua, N. (2022). The impact of social media influencers on brand awareness, image and trust in their sponsored content: An empirical study from Georgian social media users. *International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media*, 10(18), 37–58. <https://doi.org/10.54663/2182-9306.2022.v10.n18.37-58>
- Meola, A. (2023, January 1). Generation Z: Latest Gen Z news, research, facts 2023. *Insider Intelligence*. <https://www.insiderintelligence.com/insights/generation-z-facts/>

- Ngo, T.T.A., Le, T.M.T., Nguyen, T.H., Le, T.G., Ngo, G.T., & Nguyen, T. D. (2022). The impact of SNS advertisements on online purchase intention of Generation Z: An empirical study of TikTok in Vietnam. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 9(5), 497–506. <https://doi.org/10.13106/jafeb.2022.vol9.no5.0497>
- Phua, J., Jin, S.V., & Kim, J.J. (2017). Gratifications of using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or Snapchat to follow brands: The moderating effect of social comparison, trust, tie strength, and network homophily on brand identification, brand engagement, brand commitment, and membership intention. *Telematics and Informatics*, 34(1), 412–424. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2016.08.004>
- Pöyry, E.I., Pelkonen, M., Naumanen, E., & Laaksonen, S.-M. (2019). A call for authenticity: Audience responses to social media influencer endorsements in strategic communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 13(4), 336–351. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2019.1609965>
- Pradhan, D., Kuanr, A., Pahi, S.A., & Akram, M.S. (2023). Influencer marketing: When and why Gen Z consumers avoid influencers and endorsed brands. *Psychology & Marketing*, 40(1), 27–47. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21746>
- Scholz, J. (2021). How consumers consume social media influence. *Journal of Advertising*, 50(5), 510–527. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2021.1964728>
- Yang, Y., Tang, Y., Zhang, Y., & Yang, R. (2021). Exploring the relationship between visual aesthetics and social commerce through visual information adoption unimodel. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, Article 700180. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.700180>

All links were verified by the editors and found to be functioning before the publication of this text in 2025.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

FUNDING

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this paper.

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0>

ROXANA CHIVU¹

THE MEDIA AGENDA RECONFIGURATION OF TELEVISED POLITICAL NEWS IN THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM. THE CASE OF THE PRE-CAMPAIGN OF THE 2024 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY AND LOCAL ELECTIONS IN ROMANIA

Abstract. In the context of continuous technological development, the current literature discusses the reconfiguration of televised news due to the impact of the Internet, with an emphasis on aspects such as the recursiveness of information and the fragmentation of media content. This study examines the ways in which TV networks integrate digital practices in creating electoral communication when they transpose televised political news to the digital environment. The analytical framework privileges theoretical approaches that discuss media convergence in relation to practices relevant to news reconfiguration, such as hybrid communication and news (re)mediation. The research consists of 27 televised political news items, each with a duration of approximately one hour and 24 minutes, shared on the Internet by two 24-hour news TV networks in Romania (Euronews Romania and the news channel of Romanian Public Television, TVR Info, respectively) on their Facebook pages and websites, as a recurring practice. It considers the intense political negotiations in the public sphere in February 2024 regarding the merger of the local elections and the European Parliament elections. Through a qualitative thematic

¹ <http://orcid.org/0009-0009-2161-8639>, University of Bucharest, Faculty of Journalism and Communication Studies, roxana-geanina.chivu@s.unibuc.ro



analysis, the study investigates videos (and their transcripts) of televised political news shared on the Internet and highlights a reconfiguration of the media agenda and the role of journalists as “loyal facilitator” and “interventionist”, through hyperlinks, information fragmentation, and repetitiveness. The research shows that televised political news is recontextualized through digital hybrid practices, highlighting a bias in televised political communication during a key campaign moment in Romania.

Keywords: televised political journalism, digital environment, news mediation, hybrid practices

1. Introduction

Under the rapid expansion of digital technologies and the accompanying challenges, journalists working for TV news bulletins continue to update the rules by which they operate, thereby revolutionizing their profession day by day. For more than a decade now, television news has been presented not only in linear formats but also in non-linear frames dictated by Internet rules, forcing professionals in the field to constantly adapt their practices on social media platforms (Chadwick, 2017; Reinardy, 2011) in order to attract new audiences and to keep up with an increasingly competitive environment.

In this context, McLuhan’s (1964) famous principle that “the medium is the message” (p. 13) applies perfectly in the contemporary media landscape, as it implies how the characteristics of a certain medium fundamentally shape the very nature of the journalistic content it conveys. As such, in the new paradigm of TV channels increasingly integrating with social networks, journalistic content is constantly reconfigured by algorithms based on users’ preferences, engagement histories, and behavioural data (Reid, 2024). This represents a shift from the traditional role of media channels as primary content providers, which fundamentally alters the dissemination of information, moving, for example, from a broadcast model to an algorithmically curated one.

From this perspective, in the era of traditional-digital interdependence, it results in a blending of offline/online practices, and thus the emergence of mutant elements of communication that are transforming the principles and methods behind crafting messages for a given medium (Altheide, 2004; Fenton, 2010). The specialized literature refers to this new phenomenon as hybrid journalism, highlighting a potential mismatch with traditional

journalistic values such as transparency, accountability, and responsibility (Komatsu et al., 2020). As such, a new hybrid logic of media discourse occurs through the “mediation” process within a convergent medium (Jenkins, 2004). The new communicative practices also affect the news framing process (Entman, 1993; Goffman, 1974) since the social/political reality is no longer outlined exclusively through the objective lenses of journalists, but also by subjective digital algorithms.

Globally, in the current technological context, television-cut segments from TV news bulletins are adapted and shared on the internet to capture audiences in the digital environment as well. This practice is also prevalent in Romania, where many television networks are now present on social media platforms, offering their journalistic content. The Reuters Digital News Report 2025 indicates that the primary sources of information in Romania are online (70%), TV (60%), and social media (46%) (Newman *et al.*, 2025). The same report reveals that the press remains relevant for the digital audience despite the increasing importance of social media platforms. In key electoral moments, the activity of television networks on the Internet increases as social networks become the primary channel for disseminating political messages (Bărbieru, 2022), and thus become a key factor for voters in their decision-making process when casting ballots.

The period from May 2024 to May 2025 was an atypical political electoral moment in Romania, with all four types of elections (European parliamentary, local, parliamentary, and presidential), giving rise to many debates and political controversies related to the possible merger of elections. Politicians declared their aims to be to streamline costs and combine election days, so that voter turnout would be as high as possible.

Considering the general spectrum of news reconfiguration under a complex political context in Romania, the main objective of this article is to analyse the recontextualization of political news practices considering the transposal of the political televised news on the Internet, as a media recurrence. To investigate this, the study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: How is the televised electoral agenda reframed in the online environment?

RQ2: How do journalists perform specific roles in the new media environment?

The approach to the media agenda does not concern the perspective of (re)framing theory, by which journalists emphasise certain aspects of a topic. Instead, the focus is on the reconfiguration/reconstruction (Ségur, 2024) of the initial media agenda (established within the news bulletins) after the TV news is shared online. The investigation shows that the media agenda is changed, *e.g.*, through the repetition of specific news or by redirecting users to more political news, and even to topics unrelated to politics. The aim of this research is to examine whether the process of televised news transformation in the online world leads to (in)balanced political information provision during the electoral pre-campaign period for the local elections and the European Parliament elections in Romania in 2024.

To provide answers to these questions, the study is based on generic, theoretical, and empirical premises. The first part highlights the context and analytical framework. A qualitative thematic content analysis then demonstrates the structural and content transformations of two television networks on digital media. Finally, the research shows that hybridization leads to a dramatic reconfiguration of the televised electoral agenda.

The study concentrates on two media actors: two 24-hour TV news broadcasters from the mainstream media in Romania, both with different orientations. Euronews Romania is a commercial European-oriented station that claims to offer “unfiltered, impartial, fact-based journalism” and that its journalists “cultivate clarity, empathy and integrity” (Euronews Romania, n.d.). This broadcaster is also very active online, maintaining accounts on nearly all digital platforms dedicated to news coverage. The second broadcaster researched is the public service television news channel TVR Info, one of the nine channels of the Romanian public television (TVR). It aims to be the most balanced and credible provider of televised programmes (Romanian Television, n.d.) and is also present on the Internet and social media.

2. Analytical approach

The theories and concepts presented in the following section support the analysis of media discourse in the context of media convergence and in identifying new hybrid journalistic practices of electoral communication

that reconstruct the television media agenda and the role of the television journalists, and, implicitly, the political reality in Romania, in the pre-electoral campaign period.

2.1. Agenda media reconfiguration within the media convergence process

The research epistemologically highlights the changes that occur within televised political news under the media convergence process, defined as:

“(...) the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries (...) and the situation in which multiple media systems coexist and where media content flows fluidly across them” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 282).

Convergence allows the mediation of news “as the resultant of flows of production, circulation, interpretation, and recirculation” in the digital environment (Couldry, 2008, p.383). This occurs within the media hybridisation process (Chadwick, 2017) derived from the interaction of traditional media with digital media. The two spaces adopt each other’s practices of communication, transforming the content created and its distribution in a multitude of styles of communication due to the multiple ways of transmitting the information. Furthermore, a “re-mediation” of the televised news transposed onto the Internet takes place, a change from the initial state of a news item to other (multiple) forms of it.

From this point, cascading changes begin, including at the first level of public agenda, namely at the level of “agenda-setting” construction (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996), when journalists select and rank the political news considered of general interest. In close relation, framing theory (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007) suggests that mass media shape the political reality and influence public opinion/discourse by highlighting certain significant aspects of political events/declarations. The second level of the media agenda is “attribute agenda setting,” by which journalists also expose and accentuate some of the characteristics of those events/statements (McCombs *et al.*, 2000), which greatly impacts the building of the media agenda through what they bring to attention.

At the third level is “agenda-building” theory (Badham, 2019), where other actors, such as “organizations (e.g., corporations and state bodies)” and even “media audiences” (p.164), and not only journalists, are engaged in information selection.

The current study focuses on agenda-setting and examines the integration of hybrid elements into journalism, specifically in news selection for the media agenda. In the context of digital expansion, recent studies have demonstrated that Internet-specific recommendation systems and AI subjectively reclassify journalistic content, creating an “algorithmic agenda-setting” (Einarsson *et al.*, 2025; Sichach, 2024). Algorithmic news filtering systems select news that overexposes certain political actors based on users’ own beliefs, thereby creating “echo chambers” (Verma, 2024) that isolate users from the diversity of perspectives specific to journalism. According to media scholars, this selective exposure can lead to heightened polarisation and represents a challenge to the fundamental journalistic principle of providing a balanced and diverse range of information. It thus touches upon journalistic integrity and ethical standards, especially those regarding the inherent bias in artificial intelligence systems; as subjective news coverage occurs, the objectivity of journalism is undermined (Rahman, 2024; Verma, 2024). The discussions highlight journalists’ responsibility towards the public when they use AI and algorithms to prioritize certain news over others.

As underscored in the introduction, this study approaches the media agenda in the context of new conditions in modern communication. The media agenda may be compared with a chessboard, and political news with chess pieces. With each movement of the playing pieces, the chessboard is reconfigured, and, implicitly, the interpretation towards which the audience is oriented. Thus, this research concerns the way in which TV journalists recreate the media agenda in a convergent medium, by extracting news from traditional news bulletins, integrating it, and adapting it for digital platforms.

From this perspective, the study takes into account previous research focused on the recompositions of media products and on the convergence-television relationship. Erdal Ivar John (2009) established a typology of different forms of “repurposing” televised content in online environments, including the “rhetoric of augmentation”, “recombination”,

and the “rhetoric of reversioning” (pp. 181-185). Furthermore, García-Perdomo (2020) determined that television networks can utilize Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram to promote programs, post news, or share news headlines, and also integrate new multimedia creations, such as video animations. González-Neira *et al.* (2022) noticed that traditional broadcasters can leverage YouTube channels as a promotional tool to engage with the young public without a full migration of media content to the internet. From an exploratory approach, Ségur (2023) demonstrated that the integration of hashtags and QR codes into news bulletins has led to a fragmentation of information consumption. Consequently, television networks have lost their monopoly as distributors and gatekeepers of information. Lastly, Carillion (2024) investigated the concept of a so-called “public service algorithm” and revealed a discrepancy between the values declared by media organizations such as “diversity, transparency, and quality” (pp.424-431), and their implementation.

The contribution of this study to the literature regarding media convergence and television journalism is highlighted in a table that provides a summary of the mentioned authors, year, methodology applied, data size, and main findings (see the Annex).

As we can see from the table in Annex, in the new information ecology, the convergence process determines a “new audiovisual arborescent structures” (Kredens & Rio, 2015, p. 23) determined by socio technical characteristics of the Internet. In the next section we will discuss the theoretical consequences of these disruptions on professional routines and the role of the journalists.

2.2. Television journalists' practices in the new media environment

Nowadays, journalists are faced with Internet search algorithms that selectively analyse the subject and model the textual object (as presented above) and create a suite of “rearrangements” of news formats, and, eventually, favour the “recursiveness” of journalistic practices in the online environment (Uricchio, 2022, p. 301). This characteristic disrupts the traditional media flow and logic of constructing a message in a specific way for a particular medium, bringing a change in “rhythm,

grammar, and format" (Altheide, 2004, p. 294). Under these circumstances, journalists become dependent on the logic of flux (Lobato & Lotz, 2021), taking into account "the rethinking of the production" and "new enunciative models" (Kredens & Rio, 2015, p. 16) when they create news and publish it on the Internet.

Media scholars also claim that, along with the news forms of journalism, there is a lack of "editorial control", which could negatively impact the democratic process of elections (Fenton, 2010, pp. 6-7). As the new digital environment disrupts traditional journalistic practices (Broersma & Peters, 2016), concerns have arisen regarding the potential erosion of journalistic values, as discussed in the first part of this section.

As new forms of writing, packaging, and information presentation are implemented in accordance with Internet search algorithms, they can influence medical discourse in favour of or against certain politicians (McPhillips & Merlo, 2008). Consequently, the roles of television journalists are also reconfigured (Ségur, 2023). Some researchers view journalists as marketing guides (Chaney, 2001), while others emphasize the transition to a "gate-watcher" role (Bruns, 2005), thus marking the end of the "gatekeeper" era. Media professionals no longer analyse reality in an objective way, by "(...) impartial and balanced reporting" of political news (El Bour et al., 2017, p. 42), but they let the algorithms do their job in an almost unpredictable way in terms of information selection. In other words, algorithms become subjective and unpredictable gatekeepers while journalists create a news circuit in a digital environment through an impressive network of hyperlinks that could cause informational confusion (Bruns, 2005). Or it could confer "credibility" to certain political messages (Lilleker, 2014, p. 2) or to a particular political event. This departure from the traditional functions of the press occurs in a context where journalists create websites' hypertexts, providing vast amounts of textual, video, and image content with numerous options for accessing information (Bruns, 2005). By working in a more digital style, journalists transform themselves from the "traditional news publishers" experts to "news players" (Bruns, 2005, p. 2). They are, in fact, publishing "(...) whatever relevant content is available anywhere on the Web (and beyond) (...)", leading to "multiperspectival" news coverage (Bruns, 2005, pp. 14-16), which negatively affects their job.

Journalism seems thus to move away from representing “vital resources for processes of information gathering, deliberation and action” as “the life-blood of a democracy” (Fenton, 2010, p. 3) to a more subjective journalism. The media academics point out that the “key challenge for political journalists is how to avoid becoming a megaphone for party and government propaganda machines” (Lilleker & Temple, in Allan & Fowler-Watt, 2013, p. 383), and to find a balance between the values that define the profession and technological changes. The previous observations come against the backdrop of newly identified roles of journalists, such as those outlined by Mellado (2014):

- “*the interventionist*” – when the journalist interprets the facts or stays by someone’s side;
- “*the loyal-facilitator*” – when a journalist “supports institutional activities” and creates a “positive image of the political elite”;
- “*the infotainment role*” – supposing “personalisation”, “emotion”, “sensationalism”;
- “*the civic role*” – by giving the “citizen perspective” over facts and encouraging the citizens to take action by informing them on a large number of political issues (p.13).

Mellado also suggests that multiple roles are fulfilled simultaneously, such as the “watchdog role” alongside the civic or loyal-facilitator roles (*ibidem*), resulting from journalistic hybridization, which requires professionals to address multiple audiences simultaneously and in various forms. These types of studies emphasize that the journalist’s role as a democracy guarantor is significantly impacted by the consumption era and the speed of information dissemination via the Internet.

From this perspective, in analyzing political agenda-setting and the role of journalists during the pre-election campaign in Romania, this study approached political communication from the journalists’ intentionality towards politicians’ messages (McNair, 2003). The premise is that digital media create an environment of “indirect communication” through “online versions of mass media news production” (Lilleker, 2014, p. 3) that negatively impacts the construction of political reality.

Above, I discussed how, at a theoretical level, in a convergent medium characterized by hybridity, traditional political news is continually remediated, and how the watchdog and gatekeeper roles of journalists are being reshaped. These findings highlight aspects related to a potential political bias among journalists and personal choices, rather than the journalistic neutrality and equidistance expected in professional ethics.

The next section presents the methodology and research on a representative set of political TV news transposed online, as well as the effects of this transposition on the media agenda and journalistic roles.

3. Methodology

To scrutinize the reconfiguration of the media agenda and of journalists' roles in a hybrid environment, this study draws upon Braun and Clarke's (2021) thematic analysis of developing, investigating, and interpreting patterns across a qualitative dataset. This method allows the examination of textual and visual television coverage of a political event by identifying new communicative patterns and establishing their significance in relation to televised political journalism in the digital era.

To illustrate the premises of the research, this paper analyzes 27 televised political news items about the merging of local elections with the European Parliament elections in Romania. The research period is from 1 to 22 February 2024, during the pre-campaign period. During a month, politicians debated the election calendar and whether or not to hold four separate elections (also the parliamentary and presidential elections), resulting in voters having to go to the polls four times. The media agenda focused on the leaders of the liberal and social democratic parties and their decisions and declarations regarding the establishment of an election timetable, as well as the strategy of the governing parties for the autumn presidential elections in Romania.

This research is based on a unitary dataset, consisting of video news that was initially broadcast by Euronews Romania and TVR Info, and then transposed onto their websites and Facebook pages, as a recurring practice.

Euronews Romania and TVR Info are both 24-hour TV news stations that offer live newscasts with presenters, in traditional formats, and informative shows on political, social, and educational topics. The commercial Euronews Romania TV network was launched in 2022 as an affiliated station of Euronews International TV in Brussels, from where it broadcasts to 160 countries (Euronews Romania, n.d.). Euronews Romania's stated mission is to follow the values of the international mother station and to operate under the principle of "All Views", meaning to present all points of view "at the highest journalistic standards" (*ibidem*). Euronews Romania is also very active in the online environment, specifically on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, X, and YouTube, where it publishes news immediately after broadcast on the traditional screen. In the same year when the Euronews franchise launched in Romania, the public service television news channel TVR Info returned to the local media market after a ten-year break (Romanian Television, n.d.). The public institution under which it operates (TVR) was the first network on the continent to broadcast live a revolution – the Romanian Revolution in 1989 (Popescu, 2022). TVR is funded and controlled by Parliament and sets as its goal to be politically impartial and independent. Over time, the national public service television has been repeatedly accused of not having a balanced editorial line, but rather serving as a speaking tube for political power, especially since it is under the control of the legislative body (Eur.Activ.ro, 2005). The public service 24-hour news channel is also present on the Internet, but on fewer platforms compared with Euronews Romania.

The study of the political news disseminated on the Internet by the two broadcasters comprised an analysis conducted over one month to identify recurring communicative hybrid practices that impact agenda setting and the role of journalists. The methodological framework consists of several steps, beginning with data collection. This process was conducted on the network's Facebook pages, consisting only of video items posted on their pages and then redirected to the networks' websites. The sample consists of 18 Euronews Romania items, with a total duration of 47.63 minutes, and 19 items from TVR Info, with a total duration of 36.56 minutes. Next, each news item was downloaded from the websites with By Click and 4K Video Downloader programmes, and, via

Vatis technology, transcriptions of the videos were obtained. Subsequently, the same news items were analysed by considering their circulation and reframing through the networks' websites and Facebook pages. More precisely, the analyses involved the hybrid elements introduced to traditional video news on digital media, as well as video transcripts, to compare themes with the published online content. In the final step, through thematic analysis, a set of codes was established for outlining new patterns of televised political communication on the Internet. For a better understanding, the table below (Table 1) summarises data information, the analytical steps, and processes of data collection.

Table 1

Research methodology: data collection and analyses of news videos

Data information and the analytical steps and processes	
Step 1	Data collection of 18 video political televised news items transposed by Euronews Romania initially on Facebook, then redirected to the website Data collection of 19 video political televised news transposed by TVR Info initially on Facebook, then redirected to the website
Step 2	Download of 27 video news items from network websites with ByClik and 4K Video Downloader (47.63 minutes Euronews and 36.56 minutes TVR Info of downloads)
Step 3	Loading the 27 videos into the Vatis program to obtain transcripts of each of them
Step 4	Subsequently, the same news was analysed by considering its circulation and reframing through the website and social media pages
Step 5	A set of codes established through thematic analysis for outlining new patterns

The coding was conducted inductively, based on recurrences, and also deductively, using an analytical framework. The identified codes are as follows:

- (1) *dissonance* – the differences (disharmony) between the offline TV political news content and the online content around it after the news was transposed into a digital environment;
- (2) *hybrid elements* – the changed news elements resulted from the combination of the initial offline TV political news with the online specific features; there could be videos, texts, or graphics' changes derived from the impact of the offline with online features when a televised news item is published on a website or on Facebook;
- (3) *online fragmentation* – a televised news item is posted on the network's Facebook pages just to direct the user to the website where the same news is presented in an augmented form;
- (4) *redundancy* – the information presented in the augmented TV news transposed from offline to the network's website is identical to online content attached below it/that accompanies it.

Based on the coding established through thematic analysis, the analyses identified new hybrid elements and practices resulting from the transposition of televised political news into new media within the mentioned political context, as presented in the next section.

4. Findings

4.1. *The Internet's impact on Euronews Romania and TVR Info political news*

In line with Erdal's (2009) observations that "one of the characteristics of convergence journalism" is that the media content is "repurposed", "in part or as a whole", "with a characteristic rhetoric" (pp. 178-181), our analysis shows that both Euronews Romania and TVR Info have certain templates of posting the news videos on their websites.

In the case of the Euronews network, video news items are found on the Internet in various forms, e.g., intro by TV presenter + Live reporter + synchronous (politicians' statements), or beta without intro, or intro + synchronous, or only synchronous. Additionally, as Erdal (2009, 2011) noted, the added online content (below the transposed

video news) sometimes includes transcripts of the video and repeats the information from the initial news, while also reproducing longer political statements than those in the video news. In other situations, older video news/info is inserted into online content as background political information, enrolling in the “rhetoric of recombination,” where online content incorporates parts of news reports and raw material reused in a different context (Erdal, 2009, p. 184). However, unlike Erdal’s findings, there is no longer informational coherence, but rather a political puzzle that users must figure out. The online content can contradict the video news’s lower third or the headlines attached to it on the Euronews Romania website. Additionally, the online content is updated (sometimes several times a day), which contradicts the information presented in the video news item, as seen in the next item from Euronews Romania (Vulpe, 2024). The accompanying text was updated two times: once for publication, and once for updating (“Published on: 21/02/2024, 19:05 – Updated on: 28/02/2024, 16:00” – Figure 1). More than a rhetoric of recombination, this analysis reveals a *dissonance* (as a code applied in the study) between offline and online information, resulting in two different agenda-setting topics. The video dates from February 21st and announces that the government is holding a new round of negotiations on the merger of elections, while the text published underneath (and probably updated on February 28th) talks about an agreement (still unofficial) on the merger of elections to be held on 9 June 2024. The online content also announces that PNL (the Liberal Party) and PSD (the Social-Democratic Party) have agreed to have joint lists for the European Parliament elections, which indicates a political communication in contradiction with the information presented in the traditional video news item transposed on the website.



Figure 1. Screenshot from 15 of March 2024
(Source: Euronews Romania website)

The investigation also reveals informational dissonance at the visual level, which further complicates the understanding of political information. In the online content (attached to the original video news dated February 21st), two other offline videos broadcast by Euronews Romania have been inserted, on different days (February 20th and February 19th). As presented above, Euronews Romania sometimes uses video content as a background for a news update, making it difficult for viewers to understand the entire political information being offered. In this case, embedding video in online content increases viewing time, from two minutes and 22 seconds, as in the news presented above, to more than 12 minutes since two other long-term background news stories were inserted. In this reuse of content, *hybrid elements* such as hyperlinks are integrated into all traditional videos, altering the direction of political communication through their interactive nature. In this first example (Figure 2), the technical tool's functions are as it follows:

1. one of them is formatted as a headline: "Election merger, round 4. Little chance for PSD-PNL to reach a deal". Once accessed, it sends users to the same Euronews news item, but posted on the Euronews YouTube channel;

2. another one is a Copy Link icon. Once activated, it also sends viewers to the same news item posted on the network's YouTube channel;
3. if the original video news item is paused, four more videos appear, and a simple click on the recorded material redirects the users to other video information about elections or on different topics, originally broadcast by Euronews or even by competing stations. This occurs due to specific YouTube algorithms (Bryant, 2020) that automatically suggest to users other video materials posted on the platform, from various dates and fields.

This finding aligns with Sørensen's (2019) observation that algorithmic recommendations function like collaborative filtering, guiding users to optimize content exposure. The author wondered if the growth of algorithmic recommender systems would lead to a loss of exposure diversity, and this is specifically what this paper demonstrates: that users are redirected to a smaller but repetitive amount of information. Uricchio (2022) noticed that the rearrangements in the digital environment represent “algorithmic ruptures with familiar subject” (p. 301), and this study shows that the use of hyperlinks takes users away from their daily media agenda.



Figure 2. Screenshot from 15 of March 2024
(Source: Euronews Romania website)

These results also confirm Ségur's conclusion (2023), namely that the merging of two different communication media (TV news' bulletins and websites) occurs through the "insertion" of discourses and practices specific to each of them. In the present analysis, hyperlinks specific to the online environment associated with television political news represent a mutated communication practice that leads to an informational recursiveness, an effect of digital communication on television (*ibidem*). Furthermore, the information is presented "à la carte" (users have only a certain number of news items to watch on many platforms) and undermines the pluralism of opinion (*ibidem*). In the present study, repetitive political information fosters a repetitive media agenda rather than a diverse political agenda that adheres to objective journalism. Other transformations identified within the hybrid elements code included the insertion of hyperlinks in the digital content attached to the video, as shown in another example (Euronews Romania, 2024a). By clicking on the title "Share this news," users are invited to promote the video news item on their own social media accounts (see Figure 3). This underlines what Henry Jenkins postulated, namely that "convergence makes it possible to cement consumer loyalty" (Jenkins, 2013, p. 290) and to broaden the spectrum of users. The continuous desire to attract and retain audiences also explains Erdal's research results (2009) that the "news production relies on certain standardised practices for easy repurposing of content from one medium to another" (p. 193), represented here by the insertion of hyperlinks that modify the initial video news structure, and news visibility.



Figure 3. Screenshot from 15 of March 2024
(Source: Euronews Romania website)

As with all Euronews products analyzed in this study, in this example, within the online text, the intertitle "See also" invites the users to other news, and below it, there are other hyperlinks that redirect the users to more items about the elections created by the same television. Furthermore, the message of Liberal Prime Minister Nicolae Ciucă – that the party will have its own candidate in the presidential elections – is repeated in various forms. The same political message is found in the news title above the video: in the title of the hyperlink attached to the video, in the video's lower third, in the beginning of the text accompanying the video news, and in the interview of the politician at the end of the video (Figure 4). Moreover, the same information shared by the prime minister can be found on many other social media platforms if the users redistribute it (as mentioned above), and this is typical for other items.

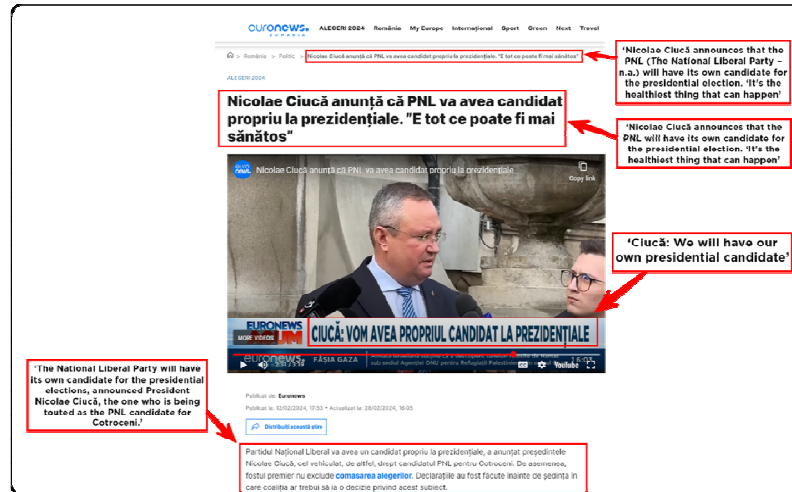


Figure 4. Screenshot from 15 of March 2024
(Source: Euronews Romania website)

The prime minister's message can also be found on the Euronews Facebook account (Euronews Romania, 2024b), where the offline video news was also published (Figure 5).

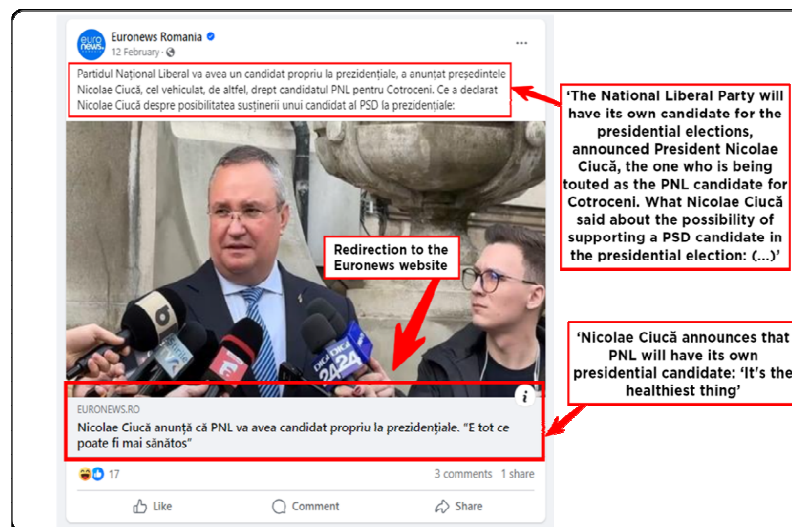


Figure 5. Screenshot from 15 of March 2024
(Source: Euronews Romania Facebook page)

As can be seen in Figure 5, the politician's message is propagated by Euronews Romania firstly in the text that accompanies a link to its website, and then in the title of the video hyperlink attached to it, which creates *redundancy* both at the visual and textual level, and represents a pattern for Euronews. In this video news item (as in other analyzed transposed videos), under the online fragmentation coding, the analysis reveals that the same televised news was posted on the Euronews Facebook page, primarily to direct users to the television website and thus to the augmented news. This reference appears with a click on the text "Nicolae Ciucă announces that PNL will have its own presidential candidate: 'It's the healthiest thing'" (*ibidem*). This sending to the augmented news corresponds to "the rhetoric of augmentation" as described by Erdal (2009), "where content is republished in a relatively unedited form" (p. 193). Yet, unlike his observations, it's not just a cloning of information, but a recontextualization of it since the television news item published on a website "in a window with text and graphics" not only gives information "about what this particular news item is about" (Erdal, 2009, pp.184-193), but determine a reconfiguration through multiple versions and repetitions of it. Another interesting element observed in Euronews materials is a pictogram featuring the letter "I" added to photos published on Facebook. In this case, this pictogram is attached to the picture of the liberal prime minister Nicolae Ciucă and redirects users to four other Euronews Romania video news items. The media agenda is therefore constantly enriched and thus changed while the Facebook platform is more used to promote the same news on the website. The recursiveness of information on Facebook results from the fact that, most of the time, the content attached to the link that is sending viewers to the website is identical with the one in the title of the news on the website.

Facebook serves as a promoter of video news on its network websites, as well as on the TVR Info account (TVR News, n.d.), but with some differences from Euronews. For example, the public service 24-hour news network also posted the initial news videos on Facebook, which means the same information was propagated in full on two platforms from the very beginning, serving as a sign of *redundancy*, another code applied in this research. As in the case of Euronews, redundancy is also achieved by the fact that news posted on Facebook and redirected to

websites is repeated identically several times within the same day. A Euronews video item from February 14th, for example, was repeated four times on Facebook, on the same day or on different days. The content attached to the video news on Facebook was updated each time, but the one added on the website remained the same. In the case of TVR Info, a news item was repeated five times, and the online content updates were also made only on Facebook. Another interesting approach observed, but only in a single TVR Info news, is the representation of an ongoing event: a protest organized in the context of debates regarding the merger of elections. The video news item on Facebook (TVR News, 2024) is different from the one in the hyperlink (TVR Info, 2024a), depending on the time lapse in the item (at the beginning or at the end, as can be observed in Figures 6-7), which represents a dissonance in the dissemination of political information.

All these redirections and recombinations of TVR Info electoral news thus represent a deviation from what Sørensen (2019) traced as the public service media should propagate. Instead of facilitating diverse information and a media agenda to inform democratic discussions, TVR INFO creates ambiguity through dissonance.

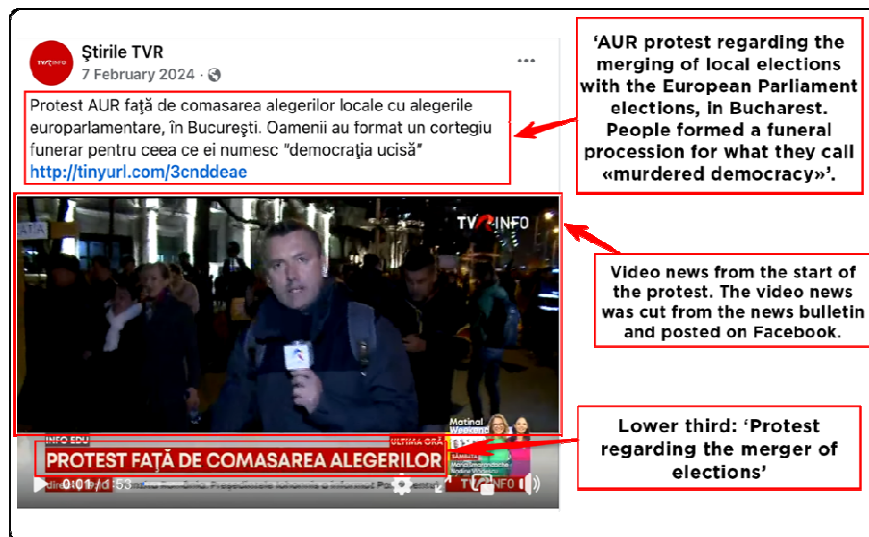


Figure 6. Screenshot from 31 of August 2025
(Source: TVR News Facebook page)



Figure 7. Screenshot from 31 of August 2025
(Source: TVR Info website)

Erdal (2009) noticed that in the “rhetoric of augmentation” and the “rhetoric of recombination” the content has a relatively unedited form, but this research demonstrates that news is hard to follow, having a convoluted structure also due to the ongoing updates on the website that creates a contradiction with the political information presented in the video, as in Figure 7. The next TV news item was published online on 19th of February with the headline “Coalition negotiations continue. Marcel Ciolacu and Nicolae Ciucă have agreed [on the merger of elections], but are having discussions in their own parties” (TVR Info, 2024b). Immediately next to the original offline news item and the text below it are other hyperlinks referring to “Last minute news” items (a constant column on the website). If accessed months later, the “Last minute news” section contains links to current news (such as “US Treasury, the target of Chinese hackers” – Figure 8), which represents another way of reconfiguring the media agenda. TVR Info also redirects users from the electoral theme of the televised news items to topics most followed by the audience. The discursive rupture occurs thus at the level of changing the environment on which the information is disseminated, with hyperlinks

reestablishing “a new epistemological order, inherently recursive” as Uricchio (2022, p.304) observed. Through recursion dictated by hyperlinks in the digital environment, “a discursive framework that could allow for critical analysis is missing” (Uricchio, 2022, p. 312), eliminating thus the critical elements in the reporting.



Figure 8. Screenshot from 31 December 2024
(Source: TVR INFO website)

This analysis also identified elements of information *redundancy* on the TVR Info website, as in this example (Figure 8), where the information that the political negotiations regarding elections continue is found in the headline attached to the offline televised news, in the lower third of it, and in the text immediately below the video. By broadcasting in cascade the same message during the pre-campaign period within the logic of the flux and the content fragmentation features of the online environment, the role of TVR Info journalists is that of *interventionists* that are “taking a side” of a certain politician or create a “positive image of the political elite” as Mellado has traced (2014, p. 7). Their role is also that of loyal facilitators, in the detriment of their watchdog mission, by

which they are supposed to be “critical” and “investigative” (*ibidem*) with politicians, especially during campaigns, and in particular as a public service television. Another relevant aspect is that, in the case of the public service network, the video news items transposed on the website do not have a byline, the news is impersonal, and the network presumably assumes responsibility for the content in its entirety. At Euronews, out of a total of 18 news items analyzed, 13 have a byline of Euronews journalists, which means that the political information is most often attributed to individual journalists. For the most part, the conclusions of this research indicate deviations from the classic journalistic rules of presenting televisual electoral information in the online environment, both for a commercial television station and a public one in Romania.

5. Conclusions

While the process of transforming online news has been investigated, the area of televised news reconfiguration under the impact of the digital environment remains less explored (Ségur, 2024). This paper aims to fill this gap by examining the transformations taking place in television news as a journalistic genre (news bulletins) under the influence of the Internet, and demonstrating that traditional news content is re-contextualized in a convergent environment through technical practices when it is shared on social media.

For Jenkins (2004), convergence is “a consumer-driven, upward process” during which “media companies are learning how to accelerate the flow of media content across delivery channels to expand revenue opportunities” and to “broaden markets’ (p. 37). In other words, the flow of media content across multiple platforms is based on commercial considerations, and this paper operationalised the concept of media convergence precisely from this angle. This paper fills this gap and shows what transformations are taking place in television news as a journalistic genre (news bulletins) under the influence of the Internet, demonstrating that traditional news content is re-contextualized through technical practices when it is shared on social media. I used the notion of reframing in the sense of reshaping a news story, starting from the fact

that television journalists transpose political television news stories by appealing to practices specific to the digital environment that, however, manipulate the scope of the respective news on the media agenda. The general structure, therefore, considers formal and structural conditions related to the genre, which can also affect the informational content, an aspect that can be further analyzed in studies.

The first conclusion is that, as a consequence of the Internet's impact and technical pressures, the media agenda is reconfigured through information dissonance, the insertion of hybrid elements (such as hyperlinks), online fragmentation, redundancy, and algorithmic recommendations. All these aspects demonstrate that media hybridisation processes favour a reframed, and hence biased, media agenda by amplifying a certain televised political message posted on the Internet.

The second conclusion is that the digital environment also reconfigures traditional TV news practices, and consequently, the role of television journalists shifts from interventionists to loyal facilitators of certain political messages, at the expense of their roles as watchdogs and gatekeepers. Through redirection hyperlinks, journalists cascade the same political messages, indirectly promoting certain politicians during the pre-campaign period in Romania, depending on the logic of the flow and the characteristics of content fragmentation in the online environment. Additionally, under the socio-technical conditions imposed by the digital environment, the media agenda is transformed into an algorithmic agenda, in which algorithmic recommendation systems subjectively select and prioritize news according to users' preferences. In the new media logic, hybridisation therefore allows hyperlinks to take over the role of journalists as gatekeepers in terms of prioritizing political information, eliminating information with no news value, or even fake news, in contrast to the editorial profiles of Euronews Romania and TVR Info.

The third conclusion is that the changes in online televised political news, including the use of hyperlinks, repetition, and fragmentation, could distance media professionals from the standards of journalistic integrity. Instead of remaining faithful to the fundamental principles of their profession, television journalists let the hyperlinks do their jobs and decide which political information can be prioritised (Sørensen, 2019; Verma, 2024), disrupting the traditional media flow and media logic of political message distribution.

The three conclusions of the present study are also summarized in the form of a table, as it can be seen below.

Tabel 2

**Key findings of the reconfiguration of
electoral media agenda and journalistic integrity**

The effects of the transposition of political television news on the digital environment	
1.	The electoral media agenda is reconfigured through the dissonance of political information, the insertion of hybrid elements (hyperlinks), online fragmentation, redundancy, and algorithmic recommendations.
2.	The digital environment reconfigures traditional TV news practices, and consequently, the role of political television journalists shifts from interventionists to loyal facilitators.
3.	The changes experienced by televised political news in the online environment could distance media professionals from the standards of journalistic integrity due to the socio-technical conditions of news item distribution.

To sum up, the process of remediating television news, characterized by the fluidity of information distribution from one digital platform to another as outlined by Henry Jenkins (2006) in the context of media convergence, becomes a biased fluidity dictated by the social-technical conditions specific to the Internet. According to Couldry (2008), news remediation “has implications for the sustaining or expansion of democracy, but only under complex conditions” and goes beyond “texts or processes of production or distribution” (p. 374). As demonstrated here, even through a single hyperlink, political information is limited to certain messages, leaving the door open for increased polarisation. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the fact that users are often redirected to “echo chambers” (Verma, 2024), where they encounter the same type of biased political information, without being able to form an opinion based on a balanced selection of information. In this respect, Euronews Romania and TVR Info serve as megaphones for politicians when they adapt their televised content to digital communication conditions. These findings are even more relevant as Euronews Romania and TVR Info are not recognised as networks that explicitly assume a form of biased communication or a biased editorial policy.

Finally, this assumption of biased communication does not belong to an explicit but to a collective voice, as a large number of the 27 news stories analysed are impersonal, without bylines of specific journalists. Moreover, there are no statements from the two networks in this regard, and it is thus hard to identify whether these consequences result from a biased online political communication strategy, a market positioning and audience capture strategy, or even editorial negligence.

Considering these effects, a possible hypothesis for future research might be that the online reconfiguration contributes to an online marketing strategy aimed at capturing audiences and to position Euronews Romania and TVR Info as competitive actors under the pressure of rapid technological development. By highlighting these new communication trends, further comparative studies on a larger corpus could shed light on the perspectives regarding the digital impact on televised journalism.

REFERENCES

-
- Altheide, D.L. (2004). Media logic and political communication. *Political Communication*, 21(3), 293–296. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600490481307>.
- Badham, M. (2019). Four news media roles shaping agenda-building processes. In F. Frandsen, W. Johansen, R. Tench, & S. Romenti (Eds.), *Big ideas in public relations research and practice (advances in public relations and communication management, vol. 4)* (pp. 163–176). Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S2398-391420190000004012>.
- Bărbieru, M. (2022). Adapting political communication to technology: Case study: evolutionary aspects on social networks in Romania. *Swedish Journal of Romanian Studies*, 5 (2), 117–136. <https://doi.org/10.35824/sjrs.v5i2.23777>.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. Sage.
- Broersma, M., & Peters, C. (2016). Rethinking journalism again. Introduction: Towards a functional perspective on journalism's role and relevance. In C. Peters & M. Broersma (Eds.), *Rethinking journalism again: Societal role and public relevance in a digital age* (pp. 1–17). Routledge.

- Bruns, A. (2005). *Gatewatching: Collaborative online news production*. Peter Lang.
- Bryant, L.V. (2020). The YouTube algorithm and the alt-right filter bubble. *Open Information Science*, 4(1), 85-90. <https://doi.org/10.1515/opis-2020-0007>.
- Carillion, K. (2024). An algorithm for public service media? Embedding public service values in the news recommender system on RTBF's platform, Belgium. *Emergin Media*. 2(3), 422-448. <https://doi.org/10.1177/27523543241290976>.
- Chadwick, A. (2017). *The hybrid media system: Politics and power* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Chaney, D.C. (2001). From ways of life to lifestyle: Rethinking culture as ideology and sensibility. In J. Lull (Ed.), *Culture in the communication age* (pp. 75-88). Routledge.
- Couldry, N. (2008). Mediatization or mediation? Alternative understandings of the emergent space of digital storytelling. *New Media & Society*, 10(3), 373-389. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444808089414>.
- Einarsson, Á.M., Helles, R., & Lomborg, S. (2025). Algorithmic agendasetting: The subtle effects of news recommender systems on political agendas in the Danish 2022 general election. *Information, Communication & Society* 28(2), 218-238. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2024.2334411>.
- El Bour, H., Frey, E., & Rhaman, M. (2017). *Negotiating journalism: Core values and cultural diversities*. Nordicom.
- Entman, R.M. (1993). Framing: toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51-58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>
- Erdal, I.J. (2009). Repurposing of content in multi-platform news production. *Journalism Practice*, 3(2), 178-195. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512780802681223>.
- Fenton, N. (2010). *New media, old news, journalism & democracy in the digital age*. Sage.
- García-Perdomo, V. (2020). Re-digitizing television news: The relationship between TV, online, media and audiences. *Digital Journalism*, 9(2), 136-154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2020.1777179>.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Harper & Raw.

- González-Neira, A., Quintas-Froufe, N., & Vázquez-Herrero, J. (2022). Convergence of linear television and digital platforms: An analysis of YouTube offer and consumption. *European Journal of Communication*, 37(4), 426–442. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02673231211054720>.
- Jenkins, H. (2004). The cultural logic of media convergence. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 7(1), 33–43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877904040603>
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture where old and new media collide*. University Press.
- Jenkins, H. (2013). *La culture de la convergence: des médias au transmédia*. Armand Colin.
- Kredens, E., & Rio, F. (2015). La télévision à l'ère numérique: entre pratiques émergentes et reconfiguration de l'objet médiatique. *Études de Communication*, 44(1), 15–28. <https://doi.org/10.4000/edc.6332>.
- Komatsu, T., Gutierrez Lopez, M. E., Makri, S., Porlezza, C., Cooper, G., MacFarlane, A., & Missaoui, S. (2020). AI should embody our values: Investigating journalistic values to inform AI technology design. In *Proceedings of the 11th Nordic Conference on Human-Computer Interaction: Shaping Experiences, Shaping Society (NordiCHI '20)* (pp. 1–12). ACM. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3419249.3420105>.
- Lilleker, D.G. (2014). *Political communication and cognition* (1st ed.). Palgrave MacMillan.
- Lilleker, D.G., & Temple, M. (2013). Political Reporting: Enlightening citizens or undermining democracy? In S. Allan & K. Fowler-Watt (Eds.), *Journalism: New challenges* (1st ed., pp. 282–303). Centre for Journalism & Communication Research, Bournemouth University.
- Lobato, R., & Lotz, A.D. (2021). Beyond streaming wars: Rethinking competition in video services. *Media Industries*, 8(1), 89–108. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mij.1338>.
- McCombs, M.E., & Shaw, D.L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176–187. <https://doi.org/10.1086/267990>.
- McCombs, M. E., López-Escobar, E., & Llamas, J. P. (2000). Setting the agenda of attributes in the 1996 Spanish general election. *Journal of Communication*, 50(2), 77–92. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2000.tb02842.x>.

- McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding media: The extensions of man*. Gingko Press.
- McNair, B. (2003). *An introduction to political communication*. Routledge.
- McPhillips, S., & Merlo, O. (2008). Media convergence and the evolving media business model: an overview and strategic opportunities. *The Marketing Review*, 8(3), 237-253. <https://doi.org/10.1362/146934708x337663>.
- Mellado, C. (2014). Professional roles in news content. *Journalism Studies*, 16(4), 596–614. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2014.922276>.
- Rahman, M.A. (2024). Artificial intelligence in journalism: A comprehensive review. *Journal of Scientific Reports*, 6(1) 56-65. Retrieved from <https://ijsab.com/wp-content/uploads/1035.pdf>.
- Reinardy, S. (2011). Newspaper journalism in crisis: Burnout on the rise, eroding young journalists' career commitment. *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism*, 12(1), 33–50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884910385188>.
- Scheufele, D.A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 9–20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0021-9916.2007.00326.x>.
- Séгур, C. (2023). Faites votre JT. La personnalisation de l'information télévisée au service des publics? *Les cahiers du journalisme et de l'information*, 10(2), 71–85. <https://cahiersdujournalisme.org/V2N10/CaJ-2.10-R071.html>.
- Séгур, C. (2024). Introduction du dossier 2024B : Les reconfigurations de l'information télévisée. *Les Enjeux de l'Information et de la Communication*, 24(3), 5–12. <https://lesenjeux.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/2024/dossier/00-introduction-du-dossier-2024b-les-reconfigurations-de-linformation-televisee/>.
- Shoemaker, P., & Reese, S. (1996). *Mediating the message. Theories of influence on mass media content* (2nd ed.). Longman.
- Sichach, M. (2024, October 5). *From mainstream media to algorithms: Agenda setting in the age of artificial intelligence*. [Preprint]. SSRN. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=5040125>.
- Sørensen, J. (2019). Public service media, diversity, and algorithmic recommendation: Tensions between editorial principles and algorithms in European PSM Organizations. In *RecSys 2019: 13th ACM Conference on recommender systems – 7th International workshop on news recommendation and analytics*. Association for Computing Machinery.

- Uricchio, W. (2022). Médias récurrents. *Questions de Communication*, 41(1), 301–314. <http://journals.openedition.org/questionsdecommunication/29145>.
- Verma, D. (2024). Impact of artificial intelligence on journalism: A comprehensive review of AI in journalism. *Journal of Communication and Management*, 3(2), 150–156. <https://doi.org/10.58966/JCM20243212>.

Webography

- EurActiv.ro. (2005). *TVR recunoaște cenzura [TVR recognizes censorship]*. Euroactiv. Retrieved October 29, 2025, from <https://www.euractiv.ro/news/tvr-recunoaste-cenzura-59116>.
- Euronews Romania. (n.d.). *Despre Euronews România. [About Euronews Romania]*. Euronews Romania. Retrieved October 29, 2025, from <https://www.euronews.ro/despre-noi>.
- Euronews Romania. (2024a, February 12). *Nicolae Ciucă anunță că PNL va avea candidat propriu la prezidențiale. "E tot ce poate fi mai sănătos" [Nicolae Ciucă announces that the PNL will have its own candidate for the presidential election. "It's the healthiest thing that can happen]*. <https://www.euronews.ro/articole/nicolae-ciuca-anunta-ca-pnl-va-avea-candidat-propriu-la-prezidentiale-e-tot-ce-po>.
- Euronews Romania. (2024b, February 12). *Partidul Național Liberal va avea un candidat propriu la prezidențiale, a anunțat președintele Nicolae Ciucă, cel vehiculat, de altfel, drept [The National Liberal Party will have its own candidate for the presidential elections, announced the president Nicolae Ciucă, the one.]*. [Text, image and hyperlink – <https://shorturl.at/PJOnO>]. [Post]. This image:



Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/ro.euronews/posts/pfbid02hahjHaYXSnV4sXQ2gzqouCzgUCvqUY4MmPijMDfHKX6dtasy3oPRTbvmiqVHcnb7l>.

Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Robertson, C.T., Eddy, K., Kleis Nielsen, R., & Ross Arguedas, A. (2025). *Digital News Report 2025*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2025>

Popescu, G. (2022, December 20). *TVR – mator și actant în decembrie 1989* [TVR – witness and actor in December 1989]. România Actualități. Retrieved October 29, 2025, from <https://www.romania-actualitati.ro/emisiuni/istorica/tvr-martor-si-actant-in-decembrie-1989-id171735.html>.

Reid, L. (2024, May 14). *Generative AI in search: Let Google do the searching for you*. Google Blog. <https://blog.google/products/search/generative-ai-google-search-may-2024/>.

Romanian Television. (n.d.). *Despre TVR* [About TVR]. Romanian Television. Retrieved October 29, 2025, from <http://www.tvr.ro/despre-tvr.html#view>.

- TVR Info. (2024a, February 7). *Protest AUR în București față de comas area alegerilor locale cu alegerile eurparlamentare* [AUR protest in Bucharest against the merging of local elections with European Parliament elections]. TVR Info. <https://tvrinfo.ro/protest-aur-in-bucuresti-fata-de-comas-area-alegerilor-locale-cu-alegerile-europarlamentare/>.
- TVR Info. (2024b, February 19). *Negocierile în coaliție continuă. Marcel Ciolacu și Nicolae Ciucă s-ar fi înțeles, dar au discuții în propriile partide* [Coalition negotiations continue. Marcel Ciolacu and Nicolae Ciucă are said to have reached an agreement, but they are having discussions within their own parties]. TVR Info. <https://tvrinfo.ro/negocierile-in-coalitie-continua-marcel-ciolacu-si-nicolae-ciuca-s-ar-fi-inteles-dar-au-di-scutii-in-propriile-partide/>.
- TVR News. (n.d.). *TVR Info. Știri de încredere* [TVR Info. Trustful news]. [Posts] [Facebook page]. Retrieved October 29, 2025, from <https://www.facebook.com/stiri.tvr.ro>.
- TVR News. (2024, February 7). *Protest AUR față de comasarea alegerilor locale cu alegerile europarlamentare, în București. Oamenii au format un cortegiu funerar pentru ceea* [AUR protest against the merging of local elections with the European Parliament elections, in Bucharest. People formed a funeral procession for what]. [Text with hyperlink – <http://tinyurl.com/3cnddeae>, and video]. [Post]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1522335925164626>
- Vulpe, M. (2024, February 21). *Alegeri comasate în iunie pentru europarlamentare și locale. Nicolae Ciucă: E necesar să facem un mic sacrificiu de orgolii* [Merged elections in June for the European Parliament and local elections. Nicolae Ciucă: We need to make a small sacrifice of pride]. Euronews Romania. <https://www.euronews.ro/articole/comasarea-alegerilor-runda-a-patra-sanse-mici-ca-psd-pnl-sa-ajunga-la-vreo-intele>.

Study's contribution to media convergence and TV journalism research

Author	Method	Data size	Main findings
Erdal, 2009	Case study	Data gathering for four weeks in radio and television newsrooms of the Norwegian public service broadcaster – NRK (two weeks in each newsroom, in 2006)	News content is often partially or entirely adapted for publication on various media platforms.
	Qualitative interviews	30 semi-structured interviews (with managers, editors reporters)	Forms of repurposing media content: rhetoric of augmentation/reversionin g/recombination
	Content analysis	Radio and television prime-time news produced by NRK, news stories produce by individuals, JPEGs and videos of top stories on the Web	
García-Perdomo, 2020	Ethnography	Data gathering in two Colombian televisions – Caracol TV and Citytv (one month in 2016, per case)	A TV station's web pages and social media accounts could mirror the editorial structure of its traditional newscast.
	Qualitative interviews	45 in-depth interviews with newsroom managers, directors, editors, and reporters	Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram serve as platforms for promoting TV programs and sharing news packages that have been clipped from the main bulletins. Facebook Live can be utilized by TV organizations for promotional purposes.

González-Neira <i>et al.</i> , 2022	Structural content analysis Audience behaviour	The content offered by three TV media groups in Spain (RTVE, Mediaset, Atresmedia) on their 45 YouTube channels, in December 2019 Viewer data gathered between February and May 2020 – the most viewed videos	There are no parallels between the offer of televisions and what they publish on YouTube YouTube is a promotional instrument used primarily to reach young users.
Séguir, 2023	Dispositive analysis	An exploratory study of the integration of hashtags and QR codes into TV news by two major television stations in France – TF1 and France 2	The Internet transforms the news, making it “personalised, delinearised, à la carte” The use of hashtags and QR codes in TV products such as news reporting allows viewers to share the communicate role with journalists
Carillion, 2024	Thematic analysis	13-month ethnographic study at RTBF (the Belgian Radio Television of the French Community) - researcher’s notes - 900 pages of internal documents - 400 pages of external documents Six semi-structured interviews with stakeholders of the media group	Algorithms do not reflect the public service values they are meant to embody Journalists are insufficiently involved in translating their professional values A de-prioritization of journalistic principles
Ongoing research		27 televised political news shared on the Facebook pages and websites by two 24-news televisions in Romania – one month period in 2024	The electoral media agenda is reconfigured through dissonance, insertion of hybrid elements (hyperlinks), online fragmentation, redundancy and algorithmic recommendations

			<p>The digital environment reconfigures traditional TV news practices and, consequently, the role of political television journalists</p> <p>Technological developments distance journalists from integrity norms</p>
--	--	--	---

All links were verified by the editors and found to be functioning before the publication of this text in 2025.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

FUNDING

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this paper.

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0>

INDRĖ IGNOTAITĖ¹

CATEGORISING ENGLISH TEXT FRAGMENTS BY LENGTH IN LITHUANIAN “TWITTER” MESSAGES: A TRANSLANGUAGING PERSPECTIVE

Abstract. Translanguaging research has predominantly focused on spoken interaction in educational contexts, leaving written multilingual practices outside classrooms comparatively underexplored. This article addresses that gap by examining translanguaging in written, asynchronous computer-mediated discourse by analysing the length of English text fragments embedded in 2,100 Lithuanian “Twitter” messages. Adopting computer-mediated discourse analysis within a translanguaging framework, this study operationalises a length-based typology, reports relative frequencies of each length category, and discusses their characteristic features, thus linking structural distribution, pragmatic function, and sociocultural meaning. A total of 2,493 English fragments were identified and categorised as word-length (1,459, or 58.5%), phrase-length (603, or 24.2%), and sentence-length (431, or 17.3%). This corresponds to approximately 118.7 fragments per 100 tweets, or roughly 75.6 fragments per 1,000 words. Empirically, the research shows that English single-word insertions dominate, functioning as compact, high-salience resources for stance-taking, identity indexing, technological literacy signalling, and memetic reference, whereas longer forms are comparatively rare. Methodologically, this paper demonstrates how the structural and pragmatic dimensions of computer-mediated discourse analysis can be adapted to capture the distribution, form, functions, and meaning of multilingual features in social media texts. These findings extend beyond the Lithuanian-English context, as they highlight how brevity-driven platforms, such as “Twitter”, foster highly lexicalised translanguaging, with implications for understanding

¹ <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-6655-6105>, Klaipėda University, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Klaipėda, Lithuania, indersmbox@gmail.com



language contact, digital literacy, lexicography, and language technology. Limitations include the single-corpus scope and the absence of user metadata. This study concludes with recommendations for comparative, cross-platform, and mixed-methods research to further theorise short-form translanguaging as a distinct phenomenon in global digital communication.

Keywords: Lithuanian-English translanguaging, computer-mediated discourse, language contact, multilingual communication, social media, the social network “Twitter”

1. Introduction

The incorporation of English words into Lithuanian social media exchanges has become widespread across the Lithuanian digital sphere. This multilingual language contact phenomenon, referred to as *translanguaging*, is defined here following Dumrukcić (2020, pp. 111-112), García and Kano (2014, p. 261), García and Lin (2016, p. 117), Moore and Stoelting (2021, p. 8), Otheguy *et al.* (2015), Vogel *et al.* (2018, p. 91), and Wei (2011, p. 1223). These authors characterise translanguaging as an adaptable, fluid, dynamic, transformative, and context-sensitive discursive practice, which occurs within a single communicative event. It involves language users drawing on their full linguistic repertoires, alternating between or blending resources from two or more languages or their varieties they are proficient in for communicative purposes, but still respecting the grammatical expectations of the main language they are using.

Although contemporary translanguaging research has broadened in recent years and there is a growing, albeit still somewhat limited, interest in exploring the applications of translanguaging in various multilingual contexts, much of the research remains concentrated in the educational context, particularly in language learning classrooms. This focus is unsurprising given the theory’s origins and its demonstrable productivity in pedagogical contexts (Vogel & García, 2017). Consequently, investigations of translanguaging outside the classroom setting, for example, in written, public, or digital domains, still remain comparatively scarce. The Lithuanian scholarly output, likewise, reflects this tendency, with the majority of studies situated in the educational context (see, *e.g.*, Geben & Zielińska, 2021; Mačianskienė & Bijeikienė, 2021; and Meškauskienė *et al.*, 2021).

Much translanguaging research has focused on spoken or written interaction in classroom settings, typically examining exchanges between teachers and students who are familiar with one another and constantly interact. Therefore, there has been relatively little systematic attention to the grammatical, morphological, lexical, and syntactic properties of the target language fragments into which language users translanguage. One of such understudied properties is *fragment length*. Scholars usually discuss levels of translanguaging and tend to focus on classroom talk: Sahan and Rose (2021) discern utterance-level translanguaging; Lee and Garcia (2020) explore word-level and sentence-level translanguaging; and Aoyama (2020) and Nugrahaeni and Asib (2022) distinguish word-level, phrase-level, and clause-level translanguaging. These researchers consider the natural oral linguistic output of students and teachers solely in classroom interactions, which include language combinations of Turkish-English (Sahan & Rose, 2021), Korean-English (Lee & García, 2020), Japanese-English (Aoyama, 2020), and Indonesian-English (Nugrahaeni & Asib, 2022). These scholars primarily aim to identify the purposes and contextual factors that influence translanguaging, when and how often it occurs, and what students do during it, but they do not analyse the fragment length of the target language. Accordingly, these authors commonly advocate adopting a translanguaging perspective in both language teaching and research, arguing that it more flexibly captures the functions of multilingual practice than traditional code-switching frameworks.

Despite growing interest in translanguaging, relatively little research examines translanguaging in written language and outside the educational context. This gap prompts an investigation into how translanguaging operates in more diffuse, anonymous online environments, most notably social media platforms, such as “Twitter”. Accordingly, this study asks: What are the principal length-based categories of English text fragments in Lithuanian “Twitter” messages? How prevalent is each category? What are the characteristic formal² and functional features of fragments in each category, given the mediating influence of the “Twitter” platform

² Here, *formal* features refer to observable structural properties of fragments (their morphology, syntactic shape, orthography, and internal length), as distinct from their *functional* uses (involving stance, identity work, or memetic reference).

on message structure and use? To answer these questions, the aim of this paper is to operationalise a length-based typology of English fragments, quantify their distribution in a hand-annotated corpus, and conduct a qualitative analysis of their features. The theoretical framework and the methodological procedures are described in the following pages.

2. The definition of translanguaging

According to García & Lin (2016, p. 118), Lewis *et al.* (2012), Rymes & Smail (2020, p. 4), Williams (1994), Zhang (2018, p. 46), and Zhang & Ren (2020, p. 3), the term *translanguaging* derives from the Welsh word *trawsieithu*. Coined by pedagogical researcher Cen Williams and his colleague Dafydd Whitehalli in the early 1980s, the concept first appeared in Williams's unpublished doctoral thesis. Initially, *trawsieithu* was translated into English as 'translanguifying', but eventually Cen Williams and Colin Baker shaped it into its contemporary form – 'translanguaging'.

García and Lin (2016, p. 118), Rymes and Smail (2020, p. 4), Wei (2011, p. 1224), Zhang (2018, pp. 46–47), and Zhang and Ren (2020, p. 3) note that *trawsieithu* was originally coined for use within the Welsh educational context. It was framed as both a cognitive skill to be cultivated and a special pedagogical approach and practice that foregrounded the learners' bilingual repertoires rather than teacher-centred instruction. Employed in bilingual classrooms, the practice aimed to effectively revitalise Welsh language learning, enhance competence in both Welsh and English, and strengthen academic literacy through purposeful alternation between languages across listening, reading, speaking, and writing activities. However, translanguaging was initially stigmatised under entrenched monolingual prescriptivism and policies against so-called 'cross-contamination' in classrooms (Baker, 2001, p. 9; Dumrukcić, 2020, p. 111; Jacobson & Faltis, 1990, p. 4; MacSwan, 2017, p. 172). Nonetheless, as Wei and Ho (2018, p. 35) put it, the concept persisted and received sustained theoretical development from scholars, such as Auer (2010), Baker (2001), Creese (2017), Crystal (1987), Dumrukcić (2020), Gafaranga (2007), Heller (2007), Jacobson and Faltis (1990), MacSwan (2000, 2017), Pinker (1994), and Wei and Ho (2018).

Over time, translanguaging moved beyond its pedagogical origins and into broader scholarly discourse. Colin Baker (2001) was instrumental in introducing the term to a wider academic audience and elaborated on its pedagogical benefits for bilingual learners' development of academic language. In the last decades of the 20th century, scholars, such as Cummins (1981, 2000), Grosjean (1982), and Hornberger (2003), were among the first to openly challenge the social and linguistic stigma attached to multilingual practices and to promote the use of various multilingual practices in the classroom, including translanguaging. The endorsement of such ideas proved successful. As Rymes and Smail (2020, p. 4) and Wei (2011, p. 1224) explain, Ofelia García's influential work (2009) further consolidated the concept of translanguaging within the international scientific community by articulating a more comprehensive and refined definition. As Rymes and Smail (2020, p. 4) and Wei (2011, p. 1224) note, García's work provided a foundation for subsequent theoretical and empirical work on translanguaging. As Makoni and Pennycook (2007), May (2013), Otheguy et al. (2015), and Vogel *et al.* (2018, p. 91) observe, the global diffusion of *translanguaging* contributed to a multilingual turn that challenged outdated and entrenched structuralist and hierarchical conceptions of language. This paradigm shift encouraged scholars to reconceptualise language use as fluid and practice-based, prompting broader applications of the term *translanguaging* to describe diverse, boundary-crossing linguistic behaviours – practices that resist neat classification into socially constructed, named language categories (Vogel *et al.*, 2018, p. 91).

As evidenced by the works of Wei and Ho (2018, p. 35) and Zhang (2018, p. 47), because of these developments, the use of the term *translanguaging* in academic literature discussing multilingualism has grown substantially and globally over the past decade. The term has moved beyond its original focus in bilingual education and sociolinguistics to inform work across applied linguistics, communication, and other areas concerned with multilingual and hybrid language practices. As Rymes and Smail (2020, p. 2) and Zhang (2018, p. 47) observe, researchers now deploy the term *translanguaging* to highlight a range of phenomena, including cross-linguistic strategies, hybrid repertoires, and other forms of mediated multilingual communication, resulting in a sizeable and expanding body of scholarship.

In its contemporary conceptualisation, translanguaging encompasses not only the distinct linguistic structures and systems of different languages, but also multiple modalities of communicative activity, such as speaking, writing, signing, listening, reading, and remembering (Wei, 2011, p. 1223). Scholars understand translanguaging to cover a wide range of discursive practices, including code-switching and code-mixing, loanwords and borrowings, translation, creolisation, pidgins, transfer, crossing, lexical coinages, hybrids, and fusions (García, 2009, p. 45; Moore & Stoelting, 2021, p. 8). From this perspective, translanguaging emphasises how language users creatively and transformatively mobilise linguistic resources, thereby constituting a process of resemiotisation (Wei, 2018). Furthermore, these resources also constitute what is known as a *linguistic repertoire*.

According to García and Wei (2014, p. 25), a language user's linguistic repertoire involves the process of drawing on various social features within a fluid and intricate system of numerous semiotic signs, as they adjust their languaging to meet the demands of the immediate task, highlighting its adaptability. Wei (2011, p. 1223) defines the concept of *languaging* as the process of using language to acquire knowledge, to make sense of experience, to express one's thoughts, and to reflect on language use itself. In this process, as Swain (2006, p. 97) explains, language is a mechanism through which thought is made coherent and converted into a product form. As Becker (1988, p. 25) argues, languaging is essentially a verb-centred view that treats language not as a static noun, but as an ongoing, productive process.

According to García (2009, p. 45) and Wei (2011, p. 1223), in general, translanguaging does more than transmit information or knowledge; it also facilitates cross-linguistic discursive practices. It also enables language users to articulate thoughts and to create new meanings by mobilising appropriate linguistic resources. Through translanguaging, language users also perform and express their language identity, drawing on the distinct extents of their personal experiences, values, attitudes, beliefs, ideologies, capacities, and social relations to give voice to emergent socio-political realities. In doing so, they make sense of and communicate their multilingual actuality in a practical, efficient manner. and in synchronised and purposeful acts that create social spaces for language alternation. Importantly, Creese and Blackledge (2010, p. 109), Dumrukci

(2020, p. 113), García and Kano (2014, p. 261), and Moore and Stoelting (2021, p. 8) caution against treating translanguaging as evidence of linguistic incompetence. Rather, they frame it as a resource through which language users develop new and sustain old components of their linguistic repertoire, treating languages not as hierarchically ranked codes, but as parts of an individual, integrated, and unified linguistic system with multiple features.

A range of related concepts appears in the translanguaging literature, including *linguaging*, *translanguaging space*, *code-switching*, *code-mixing*, *code-meshing*, *crossing*, *metrolingualism*, *code-mashing*, *networked multilingualism*, and *translation* (Dumrukic, 2020; García & Lin, 2016; Rymes & Smail, 2020; Schreiber, 2015; Wei, 2011, 2018; Wei & Ho, 2018; Williams, 2002; and Zhang & Ren, 2020). Scholars routinely map the connections and distinctions between these terms and *translanguaging*, thus highlighting its significance in understanding these multilingual practices. While translanguaging shares affinities with several of these concepts, it is often characterised as analytically broader: not confined to a particular context, linguistic resource, environment, or purpose, but encompassing diverse and dynamic linguistic performances, cognitive activities, knowledge construction, and effective communication. At the same time, researchers warn against conceptual overextension, since an excessively broad deployment of the term *translanguaging* risks terminological vagueness and may undermine its usefulness in empirical analysis.

3. Methodology

The social network “Twitter” was selected as the data source. Although the platform was rebranded as “X” in 2023³, the data in this study were collected between 2017 and 2020, and the service is therefore referred to as “Twitter” throughout. Regarding the sample size and data composition, the corpus comprises 2,100 Lithuanian-language “Twitter” messages, totalling 32,960 words (*i.e.*, lexical tokens). Within the collected corpus, the messages range in date from 2007 to 2020. The minimum length of the collected “Twitter” messages is at least two words (one Lithuanian and

³ <https://www.statista.com/topics/737/twitter/#topicOverview>

one English), and they may contain as many Lithuanian and English words as authors manage to fit until they reach the length limit of 280 characters⁴, imposed by “Twitter” itself at the time the messages were collected.

The *procedure of data collection* included the official “Twitter Advanced Search Tool”, used without logging in to search for messages without evoking any possible user preferences (the tool was accessible without an account at the time of collection). The only search criterion relevant to research objectives was ‘language’, thus it was set to ‘Lithuanian’. The results were inspected via the platform’s ‘Top’ view (sorted by relevance and recency). “Twitter” messages were sampled consecutively from the auto-generated, scrollable results page. Each tweet containing coherent text and at least one Lithuanian and one English word was retrieved and recorded. This process was repeated until 2,100 qualifying messages had been extracted. All retrieved messages were saved to a plain-text (‘.txt’) file together with their hyperlinks for reference.

A *purposive data sampling method* was employed in this paper, since it involves selecting data considered most relevant to the research question and objectives, and enables in-depth analysis within a particular linguistic context (Bryman, 2004, pp. 418-419). The size of the corpus was adequate for achieving the aims of this paper and ensured both manageability and robustness, balancing feasibility within research resources and constraints with the need for a diverse and representative sample. Sampling proceeded until a practical point of *data saturation* was reached, that is, when additional data no longer provided meaningful insights for addressing the study’s questions, in line with established principles outlined in the literature on data sampling methods (Guest et al., 2006; Saunders et al., 2018).

The study adopts *computer-mediated discourse analysis* as its principal analytical approach, situated within a *translanguaging* framework. Herring (2001, p. 612) defines computer-mediated discourse analysis as a methodological specialisation used within the broader field of computer-mediated communication studies, characterised by its emphasis on language and language use in computer networked environments, and by its application of discourse analysis methods to address that emphasis. Crucially, computer-mediated discourse analysis permits the examination of multiple dimensions

⁴ <https://developer.twitter.com/en/docs/counting-characters>

of new-media language, including its structural form, meaning, interactional practice, social function, and technological affordances, making it especially well-suited to analysing multilingual practices and translanguaging on social media (Dumrukcić, 2020, p. 116).

After manually *pre-processing and annotating* each of the 2,100 Lithuanian “Twitter” messages, a total of 2,493 instances of English insertions were identified. Since each message contains at least a single English word, when separated from each other by at least a single Lithuanian word from one or both sides (depending on the position of the English element under scrutiny⁵), each of such elements was considered as a distinct fragment of English text⁶. Then, each English text fragment was further manually processed, coded, and categorised to identify and label its length.

The adopted length-based classification of English text segments is grounded in observable distinctions among words, phrases, and sentences, as commonly discussed in works on English language structure and grammar (e.g., Aarts, 2011; Biber *et al.*, 1999; Plag *et al.*, 2015). In the present study, these distinctions were adapted for the analysis of translanguaging in computer-mediated discourse. Given that computer-mediated discourse is often informal, syntactically incomplete, disconnected, and highly variable, *fragment length* serves as a less theoretically ambiguous and clearer, practical, and functional analytical dimension than rigid syntactic criteria or pragmatic units, such as phrases or utterances.

While several scholars (Aoyama, 2020; Lee & García, 2020; Nugrahaeni & Asib, 2022; and Sahan & Rose, 2021) distinguish between different levels of translanguaging, their studies do not provide explicit definitions of these categories. This study builds on their insights by operationalising a length-based categorisation that is both practically applicable and linguistically grounded. The categories proposed here are not meant to represent strict grammatical units, but rather flexible analytical tools that reflect the functional differences in language use across varying segment lengths. This approach, which reflects both the nature of the data and the goals of the analysis, is particularly suited to the fragmented and

⁵ For instance, when an English text fragment is at the very beginning or the very end of a “Twitter” message, it can be separated by a Lithuanian word or words from a single side only.

⁶ In the case of English-Lithuanian hybrid words (discussed in more detail in Subsection 4.1.), they were considered as English text.

creative nature of written, asynchronous computer-mediated discourse data, where traditional sentence boundaries and grammatical structures often diverge from standard norms. Therefore, each English text fragment present in a “Twitter” message was identified, categorised, and counted as an instance of either word-length, phrase-length, or sentence-length translanguaging according to the following operational descriptions of each length category:

Word-length translanguaging refers to the insertion of a single English word into a Lithuanian message. These may include English nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, or pronouns. This category also includes English compounds – words, which are composed of two or more elements written as one word or hyphenated (*e.g.*, *kpop*, *check-in*), as long as they appear as a single lexical unit (Biber *et al.*, 1999, p. 58). To determine whether a given item qualifies as a compound, reference was made to at least two out of the following dictionaries: “Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English”⁷ (*LDOCE*), the “Merriam-Webster Dictionary”⁸ (*MWD*), and the “Cambridge Dictionary of English”⁹ (*CDE*). If confirmed, the instance was categorised as word-length translanguaging. This category captures the shortest possible English insertions, whether simple or morphologically complex, provided they appear as standalone word forms.

Phrase-length translanguaging involves the insertion of a short sequence of English words that function together as a text fragment, but do not form a complete sentence. These fragments are longer than a single word and typically consist of commonly used expressions, set phrases, short descriptive or referential chunks, or partial constructions. Examples include adjective phrases (*e.g.*, *super not amused*), noun phrases (*e.g.*, *pizza delivery guy*), or short idiomatic expressions (*e.g.*, *on point*). These fragments lack the full structure of a sentence, such as a subject-verb combination, but are longer and more complex than single-word insertions. Their length and form vary, but they generally function as self-contained multi-word units embedded into Lithuanian message text.

⁷ <https://www.ldoceonline.com/>

⁸ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>

⁹ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

Sentence-length translanguaging refers to the insertion of complete or nearly complete English sentences into Lithuanian tweets. These segments typically include a subject and a predicate, and often express a full thought or idea. In some cases, sentence-length fragments may also consist of multiple coordinated clauses or short sequences of sentences. Although not always grammatically perfect due to the informal nature of “Twitter” discourse, these English fragments are generally long enough to stand alone as sentences and often carry clear communicative intent. Punctuation or orthographic completeness is not required, and unpunctuated or informal strings that nevertheless instantiate a subject-predicate structure, or perform the discourse function of a sentence, are treated as sentence-length items. Examples may include direct statements (e.g., *I’ll become king if I’ll ever survive this*), questions (e.g., *god, is that you*), or commands (e.g., *fight me*), whether used alone or inserted between other parts of Lithuanian message text. This category captures the longest and most structurally elaborate English insertions observed in the data.

To illustrate how English fragments appear in context and how fragment-level categorisation was applied, Table 1 presents *representative KWIC-style concordance lines* drawn from the annotated corpus, with all concordances generated using “AntConc”. Each row shows the immediate left and right Lithuanian context surrounding an English fragment (‘Hit’), with English translations provided below each example for clarity. Example numbers are presented in the left-most column. All excerpts were anonymised to remove identifying information. These lines were extracted from the hand-annotated dataset to exemplify word-length, phrase-length, and sentence-length translanguaging and to demonstrate category boundaries.

Table 1.

KWIC concordance lines illustrating English fragments

Example No.	Left context (Lithuanian)	Hit (English fragment)	Right context (Lithuanian)
(1)		Tfw	net nežinojai kad turi svajonę o in ima ir išsipildo
	‘Tfw you didn’t even know you had a dream but then t comes true’		
(2)	Labai stiprus	ego boost	, kai instagrame kas nors panaudoja ’

	, kai instagrame kas nors panaudoja '	close friends	' funkciją ir supranti, kad tave kažkas vertina.
	'It's a huge ego boost when someone uses the ' close friends ' feature on Instagram and you realise that somebody appreciates you.'		
(3)	[Interlocutor username] AS IS RIMTO VERKIU	THIS IS THE BEST THING EVER	
	'[Interlocutor username] I AM SERIOUSLY CRYING THIS IS THE BEST THING EVER '		
(4)		story fucking time	katik kazkokia sviesa praskrido pro dangų belei kaip greitai, bet negali but zvaigzde, nes
	katik kazkokia sviesa praskrido pro dangų belei kaip greitai, bet negali but zvaigzde, nes	literally	rukais visur ir
	rukais visur ir	im shaking unnies	visiskai
	visiskai	omg CHILLS	KAS TEN KAIP UZMIGT SITOJ NEZINIOJ
	' story fucking time just now some kind of light flew across the sky really fast, but it cant be a star because theres literally fog everywhere and im shaking unnies totally omg CHILLS WHAT IS THAT HOW CAN I SLEEP IN THIS UNCERTAINTY'		

Table 1 provides KWIC-style concordance lines that illustrate representative English insertions in the analysed Lithuanian "Twitter" corpus. These qualitative, context-rich examples ground the length-based categories used in the quantitative analysis, showing how single-word, multi-word, and full-clause/sentence English text fragments operate within the Lithuanian "Twitter" messages and how they were identified in situ. Example (1) illustrates word-length translanguaging (*Tfw*), example (2) exemplifies phrase-length translanguaging (*ego boost* and *close friends*), and example (3) represents sentence-length translanguaging (*THIS IS THE BEST THING EVER*). Example (4) demonstrates multiple fragment types contained in a single tweet: one word-length insertion (*literally*), two phrase-length segments (*story fucking time* and *omg CHILLS*), and one sentence-length fragment (*im shaking unnies*). In each case, the length category of each

English text fragment was determined by its internal composition and by the presence of Lithuanian words separating each fragment.

After labelling every occurrence of each English text fragment, the **frequency counts** for each length category were computed in “Microsoft Excel” to derive category percentages and to determine which of them is the most prevalent and which is the least common. Meanwhile, “AntConc” was used to verify that the frequency counts were correct. All percentages are based on the total number of English fragments in the corpus and were calculated at the fragment level ($N = 2,493$). Each English fragment was manually assigned to exactly one category (either word-, phrase-, or sentence-length), so the category percentages are mutually exclusive and sum to 100%. As was shown in example (4), individual “Twitter” messages may contain one or more English text fragments from different length categories occurring in varying configurations. In this analysis, each fragment was treated as an independent analytical token and counted equally regardless of its length. Quantitative counts and percentages for each length category are reported in Table 2 (in Section 4).

Subsections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 present a selection of examples that illustrate *salient features of each length category* in computer-mediated discourse. The discussion focuses only on linguistic content and category-relevant characteristics rather than on a specific group of “Twitter” users of certain demographic criteria. In each presented example, the English fragment of analytic interest is highlighted in **bold**. An English translation of the full message is provided beneath each example to ensure accurate interpretation of English text fragments, especially when their syntactic role or pragmatic meaning might be ambiguous. These translations help clarify whether the English segment functions as a word, a phrase, or a sentence in its original context. English translations preserve relevant orthographic irregularities where these contribute to analysis, while the remainder of the message is reproduced without special formatting to retain its original linguistic features. To protect user privacy and minimise potential harm, usernames, non-public individual names, and other such identifiable elements were anonymised. Common product, company, and media names were excluded from the English fragment counts to prevent data distortion.

Definitions for various English words under inquiry were checked against major online dictionaries: LDOCE, MWD, and CDE. The online dictionary “Dictionary.com”¹⁰ was used to look up the meanings of words originating in netspeak, such as *rekt*, *lit*, and *cringe*. The crowdsourced online dictionary “Urbandictionary.com”¹¹ was consulted for more obscure and recent urban and online slang words and phrases, the definitions of which are simply not available in conventional dictionaries. Names and commonly attributed functions of emoji placed in the immediate vicinity of the various English text fragments were verified using “Emojipedia”¹². “Urbandictionary.com”, “Dictionary.com”, and “Emojipedia” were used with caution and only to interpret items absent from established dictionaries. Where relevant, lexical claims were corroborated with at least two authoritative sources.

4. Findings

The analysis shows that all English fragments in the dataset can be classified into three distinct categories based on their length:

- 1) Word-length;
- 2) Phrase-length;
- 3) Sentence-length.

Table 2 reports the number and percentage of English text fragments in each category.

¹⁰ <https://www.dictionary.com/>

¹¹ <https://www.urbandictionary.com/>

¹² <https://emojipedia.org/>

Table 2.

The frequency of English text fragments by length

Length of English text fragment	Number of instances	%
Word-length	1,459	58.5
Phrase-length	603	24.2
Sentence-length	431	17.3
Total:	2,493	100

As Table 2 shows, the annotated corpus of 2,100 Lithuanian “Twitter” messages contains a total of 2,493 English text fragments. This corresponds to approximately 118.7 English fragments per 100 tweets, or roughly 75.6 per 1,000 words. Among these, word-length translanguaging is the most prevalent (1,459 cases, or 58.5%), representing over half of all instances. Phrase-length insertions appear in 603 instances (24.2%), while sentence-length fragments are the least frequent, with 431 occurrences (17.3%), despite being the longest and most elaborate.

These findings suggest that Lithuanian “Twitter” users most commonly insert English elements into single-word fragments, with longer, more elaborate English fragments appearing less frequently. This pattern reflects a general tendency toward brevity and conciseness in English use within Lithuanian tweets. A more detailed qualitative analysis of each category is presented in the following Subsections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3, including a discussion of their characteristic features.

4.1. Word-Length translanguaging

The first and most concise category of English insertions identified in the data is *word-length translanguaging*. This category encompasses individual lexical items, including single English words and compounds. This Subsection presents illustrative examples from the corpus, discusses the defining features of this category, and explores its relevance within the broader context of computer-mediated discourse. To illustrate word-length translanguaging, consider example (5):

- (5) Noriu bliuduku nusikirpt Ne, Greta, baik Negalvok apie tai
 Atrodysi kaip grybas Nu bet **cool** Tu nesi tokia **edgy** BET
 BLIUUUUUUDAS NE **Ugh** ...vis tiek noriu Tai gal bent **mullet**
 NE BLET

‘I want to get a bowl haircut No, Greta, stop it Don’t think
 about it You’ll look like a mushroom Yeah but **cool** You’re not
 that **edgy** BUT BOOOOOOWL NO **Ugh** ...I still want to Maybe
 at least get a **mullet** haircut FUCK NO’

Example (5) contains the English text fragments *cool*, *edgy*, *Ugh*, and *mullet*, which constitute instances of word-length translanguaging. These items illustrate a common tendency for language users to employ English sparingly – as short, minimally complex lexical segments used to name or describe singular or simple concepts in English, while the remainder of the message is expressed in Lithuanian. In deploying such insertions, the posters actively access, negotiate, and draw on their linguistic repertoires to include the resources needed to satisfy specific pragmatic or expressive needs, even when those resources take the form of single words.

When engaging in translanguaging, authors of the analysed “Twitter” messages not only tend to deploy various ready-made English lexical resources common in computer-mediated discourse, but also know how to adapt these items to the specific contexts and content of their postings, in such a way as to satisfy their personal communicational needs. In some instances, users even improvise novel variants of English words to use them in contexts they are not typically related to, as illustrated in example (6):

- (6) aš noriu ne **bootycall**, o **beautycall**, kad paskambintu pasakyti
 kokia aš graži ir dingtu

‘i don’t want a **bootycall**, but a **beautycall**, so that they would
 call me to tell me how beautiful I am and get lost’

In example (6), the English nouns *bootycall* and *beautycall* both constitute instances of word-length translanguaging. *Bootycall* is defined in MWD

as a communication <...> by which a person arranges a sexual encounter with someone. In this message, *bootycall*¹³ functions as an adoption of an English vulgar slang term, whereas *beautycall* demonstrates how an existing lexical item may be creatively repurposed and softened to convey a poster's desire for attention and appreciation of their attractiveness.

In the analysed tweets, English text fragments include not only plain, unmodified English lexical items, but also hybrid words. According to Andrason (2021), Belpoliti and Bermejo (2019, p. 45), Crystal (2005), Gogonas and Maligkoudi (2019), Gutiérrez et al. (1999, p. 288), Mackinney (2022), Nash and Piña (2020), Poza (2017, pp. 107-108), Qi and Li (2022, pp. 1-2), Qi and Zhang (2020, p. 12), and Rubdy and Alsagoff (2013), hybrids are a specific form of language, blending items from two or more separate languages. Such intentional and creative mingling of linguistic components yields dynamic, diverse, and adaptable hybrid forms that language users strategically deploy to produce new sociocultural meanings, actions, and specific purposes, and to communicate identities and voices. Hybrids also contribute to shaping nuance, expressing ideas, creating distinctive pragmatic, semantic, and onomatopoeic effects, managing interpersonal relationships, and enabling inventive language play across different languages. Moreover, hybrids represent innovation and a departure from entrenched language ideologies, contributing to communicative change, as recurrent use may lead some hybrids to become integrated into the vocabulary of a particular language community. Example (7) illustrates a hybrid formation in which an English base is combined with affixes and letters drawn from the Lithuanian language:

(7) man keista kad apskritai atskirą **devaisą** turi navigacijai. Tai jau praktiškai **obsolete** reikalas su **smartphone'ais** kišenėse

'i find it strange that you have a separate **device** for navigation at all. That's already practically an **obsolete** thing with **smartphones** in pockets'

In example (7), the English text fragments 'devaisą', 'obsolete', and 'smartphone'ais are instances of word-length translanguaging, with 'devaisą' and

¹³ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/booty%20call>

'*smarphone'ais* constituting English-Lithuanian hybrids. *Devaisq* derives from the English noun *device* (rendered orthographically as *devais*), to which the Lithuanian accusative suffix *-q* is appended, producing a morphologically-adapted English-Lithuanian hybrid noun that is phonologically rendered to approximate Lithuanian pronunciation and inflectional patterning. Similarly, the hybrid noun *smartphone'ais* is formed by appending the Lithuanian instrumental/plural suffix *-ais* to the English noun *smartphone*. Of note here is the use of an apostrophe ' as a visual marker clearly denoting the boundary between the English base and the Lithuanian morphological material. Such orthographic and morphological strategies introduce extra cultural nuance, informality, authenticity, character, and emphasis, thereby imitating the conversational style. This illustrates how English and Lithuanian coexist dynamically among users on "Twitter", showcasing the diverse ways they tend to deploy their language skills to blend the resources of both languages.

4.2. *Phrase-Length translanguaging*

The second category focuses on phrase-length translanguaging, which involves short, multi-word English insertions, collocations, or expressions that function together as self-contained units but do not constitute complete sentences, as they typically lack a subject-verb structure. The examples presented in this Subsection illustrate the typical forms and characteristics of these fragments, as well as the communicative trends they reflect within the "Twitter" environment. Example (8) provides a representative instance of phrase-length translanguaging:

- (8) Aaaaaaa galvojau tipo iš tos serijos.: aš norėčiau būti į ją panaši nes ji turi *kažkokios **strong independent woman*** savybes

'Ummmmmm I thought it's, like, a kind of a 'I would like to be like her because she has *some **strong independent woman*** features' deal'

In example (8), the English phrase *strong independent woman* constitutes a case of phrase-length translanguaging. The message author uses this

multi-word English insertion to describe a culturally recognisable female persona associated with empowerment and autonomy. Since it exceeds a single lexical item, this English phrase permits more nuanced identity construction and evaluative commentary than a single-word insertion would. Furthermore, the non-standard spelling *independed* (for *independent*¹⁴) is likely unintentional, yet it reflects characteristics commonly associated with computer-mediated discourse, such as non-standard orthography, which is prevalent in digital writing and is considered a consequence of how users engage with multilingual and informal online environments. This minor error does not impede comprehension. Rather, it enhances the authenticity and informality of the message, emphasising the spontaneous and personal quality of the expression.

Phrase-length translanguaging also includes fixed combinations of words that are commonly encountered together in groups, appear in particular contexts, and function as packaged units of meaning. Example (9) illustrates this phenomenon:

(9) **double tap to wake up** ne tik LG yra įdiegti. O apie **finger print scanner** panašiai galvojau, kol pats nepradėjau naudoti. Gėris.

‘**double tap to wake up** is not only available on LG. I thought the same about the **finger print scanner** until I started using it myself. It’s great.’

In example (9), the message author discusses the useful features of smartphones and names two English technical concepts – *double tap to wake up* and *finger print scanner*, both of which constitute instances of phrase-length translanguaging. These two multi-word expressions are specific to the domain of information technology and rely on English lexical conventions for technical concepts, suggesting greater user familiarity with English terminology than with Lithuanian equivalents. This pattern is consistent with a learning strategy known as chunking, introduced by cognitive psychologist George A. Miller (1956).

¹⁴ <https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/independent>

Chunking is a widely applicable cognitive strategy in language acquisition, facilitating faster comprehension, greater fluency, and reduced error rates. By packaging and storing frequently co-occurring words together into single, salient, and retrievable chunks, language learners acquire and deploy multi-word sequences more effectively than by assembling items one word at a time. By treating technical terms as ready-made, multi-word packages, language users reduce cognitive load and facilitate rapid uptake and reuse of specialised vocabulary in contexts associated with computer-mediated discourse. Consequently, phrase-length translanguaging both reflects and supports the acquisition and online dissemination of domain-specific knowledge, and the presence of compact, ready-to-use technical phrases in example (9) suggests that the author likely acquired and accesses these terms as chunks.

Several English phrases in the corpus reference Internet memes. As shown in example (10), text-based memes often comprise unique, fixed, and formulaic multi-word constructions, such as *big tiddie goth gf*, which here functions as an instance of phrase-length translanguaging:

(10) Kur mano **big tiddie goth gf** kur skaniai valgyt daro

‘Where’s my **big tiddie goth gf** who makes delicious meals’

In example (10), the message author makes a reference to a variation of the Internet meme, commonly referred to as “Goth GF”¹⁵, by specifically using the English phrase *big tiddie goth gf*. According to “Know Your Meme”, this meme typically jokes about desiring a gothic-subculture girlfriend and is frequently circulated with accompanying images. However, in example (6), the meme appears in text form only. Such textual deployment demonstrates that effective translanguaging on social media requires not only bilingual competence, but also familiarity with platform-specific conventions and meme culture. The poster’s use of the phrase in a jocular register indicates knowledge of the meme’s form and function despite its absence from standard and established dictionaries, as, for instance, LDOCE, MWD, and CDE do not provide any definitions of *goth gf*.

¹⁵ <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/goth-gf>

The concept of *meme* was first introduced in Richard Dawkins' 1976 book "The Selfish Gene". In his work, the distinguished zoologist, ethologist, and evolutionary biologist proposes memes as cultural replicators – units of cultural transmission or imitation (Blackmore, 2000, p. 6). According to Dawkins (1976), memes encompass a wide range of transmissible cultural items, such as ideas, catchphrases, tunes, and fashions, that propagate through imitation. Contemporary scholarship emphasises that memes are particularly prone to user-generated variation (such as parodies, remixes, mashups) and that they typically operate intertextually, referencing and recombining prior items in creative ways (Shifman, 2013, p. 2). From a linguistic perspective, memes are not merely units of imitation, but also carry grammatical and lexical meanings. Furthermore, they are instantiated in language and shaped by morphology, lexis, and syntax, which makes them pertinent objects of linguistic analysis (Driem, 2002, p. 56).

Given these properties, the study of memetic practices intersects naturally with translanguaging, since memes provide ready-made, high-salience multi-word packages that language users can import, adapt, and hybridise across languages. Example (10) thus illustrates how translanguaging on "Twitter" entails mixing of not only lexical resources, but also sociocultural practices and replicable semiotic forms, reinforcing the argument that online multilingualism is as much about shared cultural repertoires as it is about formal linguistic structures.

4.3. Sentence-Length translanguaging

The final category comprises sentence-length translanguaging, referring to grammatically complete or nearly complete English clauses or sentences embedded within Lithuanian "Twitter" messages. These segments typically contain a subject and a predicate, may also involve multiple coordinated clauses or short sequences of sentences, and are generally sufficiently long to stand alone. Additionally, they usually express a full thought or idea and carry a clear communicative intent when in context. Drawing on illustrative examples, this Subsection examines how such instances function within "Twitter" discourse, outlines their distinctive features,

and highlights the broader communication patterns they reveal in social media contexts. Example (11) provides an instance of sentence-length translanguaging:

- (11) Tas laikas, kai įsisportuoji, ir po treniruočių nieko nebeskauda ir jauties **like you're doing it wrong**.

'That moment when you've worked out and nothing hurts anymore after a workout and you feel **like you're doing it wrong**.'

In example (11), the English text fragment *like you're doing it wrong* constitutes an instance of sentence-length translanguaging. Such insertions often convey more complex, detailed information than single words or short phrases, allowing language users to articulate fuller stances or interpretations. In this message, the author describes post-exercise experience in Lithuanian but elects to render the evaluative stance (the impression that they're doing it wrong) in English at the end of the tweet, suggesting that English here serves as a resource for expressing a particular evaluative or stance-taking nuance.

In some instances of sentence-length translanguaging, the English segment is markedly longer than the surrounding Lithuanian part of the message. Example (12) illustrates this pattern:

- (12) uoj bus kavytės ☕ **and gonna Do Many Things i've been thinking about them all morning** uwu

'coffee coming up soo ☕ **and gonna Do Many Things i've been thinking about them all morning** uwu'

In example (12), the English fragment *and gonna Do Many Things i've been thinking about them all morning* constitutes an instance of sentence-length translanguaging. The poster begins this message in Lithuanian, but switches to English after three words, maintaining English for the remainder of the message. The extended use of English here appears to be stylistic or affective. English enables the author to adopt a more

performative or expressive register, framing their productivity plans in a playful and exaggerated tone. The choice to render *Do Many Things* in initial uppercase letters and *i've* in an initial lowercase letter, the arguably superfluous word *them* between *about* and *all*, the use of the *hot beverage*¹⁶ emoji (🍹) as a kind of visual boundary to separate the Lithuanian part of the message from the English one, and the inclusion of *uwu*¹⁷, an emoticon used to depict a cute face that is associated with positive emotional expressivity, all reinforce a casual, Internet-savvy voice, which may be felt as more natural or impactful in English. Taken together, these features suggest that the author is not merely conveying information, but is also deploying English to craft a particular persona and stance toward their day's activities.

Sentence-length translanguaging also includes the deployment of English idiomatic expressions. In example (13), the poster directs their interlocutor toward an implied, arguably risqué meaning that they appear reluctant to state explicitly:

- (13) Eik į barą su random žmonėm. Dažniausiai būna afigienai nuobodu bet kartais su laiminga pabaiga **if you know what I mean**

'Go to a bar with random people. Most often it's awfully boring but sometimes with a happy ending **if you know what I mean**'

In example (13), the message author signals a double entendre by deploying the English idiomatic expression *if you know what I mean*, which indexes an additional, more suggestive meaning. On the surface, the poster seems to recommend that their interlocutor go to a bar with random people to end the day on a positive note. However, in the pragmatic sense, the idiom implies that such an outing could lead to meeting a partner for a one-night encounter. As noted in MWD¹⁸, *if you know what I mean* is commonly used to check whether the interlocutor has grasped an intended indirect meaning. The use of such ready-made idiomatic

¹⁶ <https://emojipedia.org/hot-beverage>

¹⁷ <https://www.dictionary.com/e/slang/uwu/>

¹⁸ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/if%20you%20know%20what%20i%20mean>

expressions thus enables Lithuanian users of English to convey nuanced, potentially delicate meanings efficiently while attenuating bluntness.

5. Conclusions and discussion

This study examined 2,100 Lithuanian “Twitter” messages and identified 2,493 English text fragments, which were grouped into three distinct categories based on their length: word-length (1,459, or 58.5%), **phrase**-length (603, or 24.2%), and sentence-length (431, or 17.3%). This corresponds to approximately 118.7 fragments of English per 100 tweets, or approximately 75.6 English fragments per 1,000 words, highlighting the relative density of English use in this Lithuanian “Twitter” discourse sample.

The predominance of word-length insertions indicates that users most often incorporate English in compact, lexicalised forms rather than extended English discourse. This pattern is plausibly driven by several interrelated factors. First, the affordances of short-form social media, which blend the features of spoken and written language, and favour fluidity, brevity, unhindered communication, and rapid exchanges (Androutsopoulos, 2011; Herring & Androutsopoulos, 2015; and Honeycutt & Herring, 2009). Second, the communicative economy of using ready-made lexical items (such as technical terminology and memes) reduces production and processing effort. Third, the indexical functions of single words, which express stance, affect, or identity. In short, English words appear to function more as stylistic and pragmatic resources in the form of quickly deployable signals of social meaning rather than as vehicles for extended content in this medium.

The analysis revealed that message authors employed English fragments in various ways: adapting individual words to personal preferences, creating English-Lithuanian hybrids, acquiring and reproducing phrases through chunking, incorporating meme-based expressions, embedding English segments that exceeded the length of the surrounding Lithuanian text, and utilising full English utterances as idiomatic expressions. These findings **fit naturally within the translanguaging perspectives** that view multilinguals as effectively and purposefully negotiating and drawing from their whole linguistic repertoire to make meaning rather than

switching between bounded codes (García, 2009, p. 45; García & Wei, 2014, p. 25; Vogel *et al.*, 2018, p. 91; and Wei, 2011, p. 1223). The length-based distribution observed here suggests that, in computer-mediated discourse, translanguaging often takes the form of selective lexical importation, which usually involves individual words or short phrases and serves pragmatic ends, such as indexing youth culture, technological literacy, humour, or affiliation, rather than producing long stretches of discourse in the other language.

At the same time, translanguaging entails more than the blending of languages. It integrates linguistic practices with elements of behaviour, culture, and digital communicative norms. Choosing to communicate in English, even when Lithuanian equivalents are available, reflects not only pragmatic efficiency, but also agency, stylistic creativity, and the desire to infuse nuance, playfulness, or expressive intensity into messages. In this way, the findings align with and extend existing theoretical accounts of translanguaging as an efficient, creative, strategic, and identity-inflected practice of voice and self-expression (Dumrukcić, 2020, pp. 111-112; García & Kano, 2014, p. 261; García & Lin, 2016, p. 117; Moore & Stoelting, 2021, p. 8; and Otheguy *et al.*, 2015).

While prior studies (*e.g.*, Aoyama, 2020, p. 7; Lee & García, 2020, p. 7; Nugrahaeni & Asib, 2022, p. 145; and Sahan & Rose, 2021, p. 10) identify utterance-level translanguaging, word- and sentence-level translanguaging, or word-, phrase-, and clause-level translanguaging, most do not operationalise these levels for written, computer-mediated discourse data. Where comparable, Lee and García's (2020) finding that word-level instances outnumber sentence-level ones is corroborated here. Nevertheless, this study extends that observation by providing explicit operational criteria for length categories, normalising frequencies for cross-study comparability, and situating the analysis in asynchronous social media rather than classroom talk. These methodological contributions make the results directly reusable for future corpus and computer-mediated discourse studies involving translanguaging.

Speaking of practical and sociolinguistic implications, the predominance of short English insertions suggests that analyses that track only clause-, sentence-, or utterance-level translanguaging will substantially underestimate the presence and functions of short-form translanguaging on digital

platforms (as seen in Sahan and Rose, 2021). For educators, lexicographers, and language technology developers, recognising short-form translanguaging as functional (not merely ‘errors’ or noise) is important for assessment, dictionary coverage, and natural language processing tools that handle mixed-language content. This aligns with translanguaging scholarship that supports treatment of short-form items as legitimate entries rather than mere noise (Amari, 2010, p. 9; Creese & Blackledge, 2010, p. 112; Herring, 2001, pp. 616-617; Solorio & Liu, 2008, p. 1055).

This study has limitations, however. It is based on a single corpus of Lithuanian “Twitter” messages containing English text fragments and does not include any insights into language user demographics or interactional metadata. Corpus annotations were manual and based on contextual judgment, which may limit replicability across different coders or platforms. The dataset is cross-sectional rather than longitudinal, so inferences about changes in translanguaging practices over time are not supported.

To build on these findings, recommendations for future research directions involve these concrete avenues: cross-platform comparisons (*e.g.*, across “Instagram”, “Facebook”, and “TikTok”, among others) to test whether length distributions differ by medium. Incorporation of sociodemographic metadata and user network analysis to examine who uses which fragment types and in what contexts. Development of automated detection methods to scale annotation and enable large-scale frequency or sequence analyses. Mixed-methods studies combining corpus analysis with interviews or interactional analysis to link fragment use to conscious identity work and pragmatic intent. Experimental or comprehension studies to test how short versus long English insertions affect message interpretation among different audiences. In addition to going beyond the educational context, involving more than spoken language, and considering more diverse language combinations, more emphasis should be put on the exploration of the relationship between translanguaging and identity formation (Schreiber, 2015), creativity (Wei, 2016), translanguaging space (Hua *et al.*, 2017), and translanguaging among peers (Kolu, 2018).

To conclude, by operationalising a length-based typology adapted to computer-mediated discourse, this study contributes both a practical tool for corpus analysis and new empirical evidence on how English

functions as a creative, concise, and socially meaningful resource in Lithuanian “Twitter” discourse.

REFERENCES

- Aarts, B. (2011). *Oxford modern English grammar*. Oxford University Press.
- Amari, J. (2010). *Slang lexicography and the problem of defining slang*. <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:fd2d4042-0f65-4037-bfd3-230c6193bc1d/files/m00726697418d64b3e050d8f6c0e38f8e>.
- Andrason, A. (2021). Camko-lect: The translanguaged grammar of a hyper multilingual global nomad. Part 2 – contact mechanisms. *Studia Linguistica Universitatis Iagellonicae Cracoviensis*, 138(1), 7–24. doi:10.4467/20834624SL.21.002.13279.
- Androutsopoulos, J.K. (2011). From variation to heteroglossia in the study of computer-mediated discourse. In C. Thurlow & K. Mroczek (Eds.), *Digital discourse: language in the new media* (pp. 277–298). Oxford University Press. <http://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199795437.003.0013>.
- Aoyama, R. (2020). Exploring Japanese high school students’ L1 use in translanguaging in the communicative EFL classroom. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language*, 23(4), 1–18. <https://tesl-ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume23/ej92/ej92a12>.
- Auer, P. (2010). Code-switching/mixing. In R. Wodak, B. Johnstone, & P.E. Kerswill (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of sociolinguistics* (pp. 460–478). SAGE Publishing.
- Baker, C. (2001). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism*. Multilingual Matters.
- Becker, A.L. (1988). Language in particular: A lecture. In D. Tannen (Ed.), *Linguistics in context: Connecting observation and understanding: Lectures from the 1985 LSA/TESOL and NEH Institutes (Advances in discourse processes, Vol. 29)* (pp. 17–35). Ablex.
- Belpoliti, F., & Bermejo, E. (2019). *Spanish heritage learners’ emerging literacy: Empirical research and classroom practice*. Routledge.

- Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., & Finegan, E. (1999). *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. Longman.
- Blackmore, S. (2000). *The meme machine*. Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A. (2004). *Social research methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Creese, A. (2017). Translanguaging as an everyday practice. In B. Paulsrud, J. Rosen, B. Straszer, & A. Wedin. (Eds.), *New perspectives on translanguaging and education* (pp. 1–9). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783097821-002>.
- Creese, A., & Blackledge, A. (2010). Translanguaging in the bilingual classroom: A pedagogy for learning and teaching? *The Modern Language Journal*, 94(1), 103–115. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2009.00986.x>.
- Crystal, D. (1987). *The Cambridge encyclopedia of language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2005). *The stories of English*. Penguin Books.
- Cummins, J. (1981). The role of primary language development in promoting educational success for language minority students. In California State Department of Education (Ed.), *Schooling and language minority students: A theoretical framework* (pp. 3–49). California State University. <http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/2.1.1334.9449>.
- Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire*. Multilingual Matters.
- Dawkins, R. (1976). *The selfish gene*. Oxford University Press.
- Driem, G. van. (2002). *Languages of the Himalayas: An ethnolinguistic handbook of the greater Himalayan region, containing an introduction to the symbiotic theory of language*. Brill.
- Dumrukci, N. (2020). Translanguaging in social media. Output for FLT didactics. *heiEDUCATION Journal*, 5, 109–137. <https://doi.org/10.17885/heiup.heied.2020.5.24159>.
- Gafaranga, J. (2007). Code-switching as a conversational strategy. In P. Auer, & L. Wei (Eds.), *Handbook of multilingualism and multilingual communication* (pp. 279–313). de Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110198553.3.279>.
- García, O. (2009). *Bilingual education in the 21st century: A global perspective*. WileyBlackwell.
- García, O. (2009). *Bilingual education in the 21st century: A global perspective*. WileyBlackwell.

- García, O., & Kano, N. (2014). Translanguaging as process and pedagogy: Developing the English writing of Japanese students in the US. In J. Conteh, & G. Meier (Eds.), *The multilingual turn in language education: Opportunities and challenges* (pp. 292-299). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783092246-018>.
- García, O., & Wei, L. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education*. Palgrave Macmillan Pivot.
- García, O., & Lin, A.M.Y. (2016). Translanguaging in bilingual education. In O. García, A.M.Y. Lin, & S. May (Eds.), *Bilingual and multilingual education (Encyclopedia of language and education)* (pp. 117-130). Springer. http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02258-1_9.
- Geben, K., & Zielińska, M. (2021). Translanguaging in Polish minority schools in Ukraine and Lithuania. *Zeitschrift für Slawistik*, 66(2), 229-248. <http://doi.org/10.1515/slwa-2021-0011>.
- Gogonas, N., & Maligkoudi, C. (2019). Translanguaging instances in the Greek linguistic landscape in times of crisis. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 32, 66-82. <https://doi.org/10.26262/jal.v0i32.7528>.
- Grosjean, F. (1982). *Life with two languages: An introduction to bilingualism*. Harvard University Press.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 59-82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903>.
- Gutiérrez, K.D., Baquedano-López, P., & Tejeda, C. (1999). Rethinking diversity: Hybridity and hybrid language practices in the third space. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 6(4), 286-303. <http://doi.org/10.1080/10749039909524733>.
- Heller, M. (2007). Bilingualism as ideology and practice. In M. Heller (Ed.), *Bilingualism: A social approach* (pp. 1-22). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230596047_1.
- Herring, S.C. (2001). Computer-mediated discourse. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, & H.E. Hamilton (Eds.), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 612-634). Blackwell Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470753460.ch32>.
- Herring, S.C., & Androutsopoulos, J.K. (2015). Computer-mediated discourse 2.0. In D. Tannen, H.E. Hamilton, & D. Schiffrin (Eds.), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 127-151). Wiley-Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118584194.ch6>.

- Honeycutt, C., & Herring, S.C. (2009). Beyond microblogging: conversation and collaboration via Twitter. *Proceedings of the forty-second Hawai'i international conference on system sciences*, 1–10. IEEE Press. <http://doi.org/10.1109/HICSS.2009.89>.
- Hornberger, N. (2003). *Continua of biliteracy: An ecological framework for educational policy, research, and practice in multilingual settings*. Multilingual Matters.
- Hua, Z., Wei, L., & Lyons, A. (2017). Polish shop(ping) as translanguaging space. *Social Semiotics*, 27(4), 411–433. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2017.1334390>.
- Jacobson, R., & Faltis, C. (1990). *Language distribution issues in bilingual schooling*. Multilingual Matters.
- Kolu, J.K. (2018). Translanguaging practices in bilingual adolescents' conversations in Haparanda, Stockholm and Helsinki. *Nordiques*, 35, 135–153. <https://doi.org/10.4000/nordiques.1016>.
- Lee, C., & García, O. (2020). Unpacking the oral translanguaging practices of Korean-American first graders. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 43, 32–49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2019.1703844>.
- Lewis, G., Jones, B., & Baker, C. (2012). Translanguaging: Developing its conceptualisation and contextualisation. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 18(7), 655–670. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13803611.2012.718490>.
- Mačianskienė, N., & Bijeikienė, V. (2021). Perspectives of linguistically sensitive teaching as a component of inclusive classrooms in Lithuanian general education. *Pedagogika / Pedagogy*, 142(2), 89–104. <https://doi.org/10.15823/p.2021.142.5>.
- Mackinney, E. (2022). "It's how we get along" – translanguaging in middle-school mathematics class. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language (TESL-EJ)*, 26(3), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.55593/ej.26103a8>.
- MacSwan, J. (2000). The threshold hypothesis, semilingualism, and other contributions to a deficit view of linguistic minorities. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 20(1), 3–45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986300221001>.
- MacSwan, J. (2017). A multilingual perspective on translanguaging. *American Educational Research Journal*, 54(1), 167–201. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216683935>.
- Makoni, S., & Pennycook, A. (2007). *Disinventing and reconstituting languages*. Multilingual Matters.

- May, S. (2013). *The multilingual turn: Implications for SLA, TESOL, and bilingual education*. Routledge.
- Meškauskienė, A., Pundziuvienė, D., Matulionienė, J., & Ringailienė, T. (2021). The role of linguistic and cultural mediation in learning the host country's language. In A. Daukšaitė-Kolpakovienė & Ž. Tamašauskaitė (Eds.), *Sustainable multilingualism 2021: 6th international conference, June 4-5, 2021: Book of abstracts* (p. 117). Conference paper. Vytautas Magnus University.
- Miller, G.A. (1956). The magical number seven, plus or minus two: Some limits on our capacity for processing information. *Psychological Review*, 63(2), 81–97. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0043158>.
- Moore, P., & Stoelting, S.L. (2021). My favorite subject is lengua because the teacher es un crack: Translanguaging in CLIL student writing. *CLIL Journal of Innovation and Research in Plurilingual and Pluricultural Education*, 4(1), 7–18. <http://doi.org/10.5565/rev/clil.49>.
- Nash, K.T., & Piña, I.P. (2020). Translanguaging pedagogies in a bilingual preschool classroom. In K.T. Nash, C.P. Glover, & B. Polson (Eds.), *Toward culturally sustaining teaching: Early childhood educators honor children with practices for equity and change* (pp. 35–61). Routledge. <http://doi.org/10.4324/9781351108317-2>.
- Nugrahaeni, R.P., & Asib, A. (2022). The role of L1 in English language acquisition using translanguaging pedagogy of Indonesian EFL students. *English Education Journal*, 10(3), 138–150. <https://doi.org/10.20961/ee.v10i3.60357>.
- Otheguy, R., García, O., & Reid, W. (2015). Clarifying translanguaging and deconstructing named languages: A perspective from linguistics. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 6(3), 281–307. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2015-0014>.
- Pinker, S. (1994). *The language instinct: How the mind creates language*. W. Morrow.
- Plag, I., Arndt-Lappe, S., Braun, M., & Schramm, M. (2015). *Introduction to English linguistics*. Walter de Gruyter GmbH.
- Poza, L. (2017). Translanguaging: Definitions, implications, and further needs in burgeoning inquiry. *Berkeley Review of Education*, 6, 101–128. <http://doi.org/10.5070/B86110060>.

- Qi, F., & Zhang, K. (2020). Translanguaging hybrids on Chinese gateway websites. *Asian Englishes*, 23(2), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2020.1743913>.
- Qi, F., & Li, J. (2022). Chinese university students' translanguaging hybrids on WeChat: Creativity nurtured language play in the context of a Chinese digital social media. *English Today*, 39(4), 1-10. <http://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078422000256>.
- Rubdy, R., & Alsagoff, L. (2013). The cultural dynamics of globalization: Problematizing hybridity. In R. Rubdy & L. Alsagoff (Eds.), *The global-local interface, language choice and hybridity* (pp. 1-14). Multilingual Matters. <http://doi.org/10.21832/9781783090860-002>.
- Rymes, B., & Smail, G. (2020). Citizen sociolinguists scaling back. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 12(3), 419-444. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2019-0133>.
- Sahan, K., & Rose, H. (2021). Translanguaging or code-switching? Re-examining the functions of language in EMI classrooms. In B. Di Sabato & B. Hughes (Eds.), *Multilingual perspectives from Europe and beyond on language policy and practice* (pp. 348-356). Routledge. <http://doi.org/10.4324/9780429351075-6>.
- Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingstone, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., Bartlam, B., Burroughs, H., & Jinks, C. (2018). Saturation in qualitative research: Exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. *Quality & Quantity*, 52, 1893-1907. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0574-8>.
- Schreiber, B.R. (2015). "I am what I am": Multilingual identity and digital translanguaging. *Language Learning & Technology*, 19(3), 69-87. <http://doi.org/10125/44434>.
- Shifman, L. (2013). *Memes in digital culture*. The MIT Press.
- Solorio, T., & Liu, Y. (2008). Part-of-speech tagging for English-Spanish code-switched text. *Proceedings of the 2008 conference on empirical methods in natural language processing*, 1051-1060. <https://aclanthology.org/D08-1110.pdf>.
- Swain, M. (2006). Linguaging, agency and collaboration in advanced second language learning. In H. Byrnes (Ed.), *Advanced language learning: The contributions of Halliday and Vygotsky* (pp. 95-108). Continuum, Bloomsbury Publishing.

- Vogel, S., & García, O. (2017). Translanguaging. In G.W. Noblit (Ed.), *Oxford research encyclopedia of education*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.181>.
- Vogel, S., Ascenzi-Moreno, L., & García, O. (2018). An expanded view of translanguaging: Leveraging the dynamic interactions between a young multilingual writer and machine translation software. In J. Choi & S. Ollerhead (Eds.), *Plurilingualism in teaching and learning: Complexities across contexts* (pp. 89–106). Routledge. https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_pubs/435/.
- Wei, L. (2011). Moment analysis and translanguaging space: Discursive construction of identities by multilingual Chinese youth in Britain. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(5), 1222–1235. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2010.07.035>.
- Wei, L. (2016). New Chinglish and the post-multilingualism challenge: Translanguaging ELF in China. *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca*, 5(1), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jelf-2016-0001>.
- Wei, L. (2018). Translanguaging as a practical theory of language. *Applied Linguistics*, 39(1), 9–30. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amx039>.
- Wei, L., & Ho, W.Y.J. (2018). Language learning sans frontiers: A translanguaging view. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 38, 33–59. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190518000053>.
- Williams, C. (1994). *Arfarniad o ddulliau dysgu ac addysgu yng nghyd-destun addysg uwchradd ddwyieithog / An evaluation of teaching and learning methods in the context of bilingual secondary education*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Wales Bangor.
- Williams, C. (2002). *Extending bilingualism in the education system. Education and lifelong learning committee report (ELL 06-02(p.4))*. National Assembly for Wales: Education and Lifelong Learning Committee. [https://web.archive.org/web/20161220052821/http://www.assembly.wales/Committee%20Documents/ELL%2006-02\(p.4\)%20Dr%20Cen%20Williams%20paper-20032002-28970/3c91c7af00023d820000595000000000-English.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20161220052821/http://www.assembly.wales/Committee%20Documents/ELL%2006-02(p.4)%20Dr%20Cen%20Williams%20paper-20032002-28970/3c91c7af00023d820000595000000000-English.pdf).
- Zhang, L. (2018). *The relationship between online translanguaging practices and Chinese teenagers' self-identities*. PhD thesis. University of Leeds. Identification number/EthosID: uk.bl.ethos.762534. https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/22538/1/Thesis_LZ.pdf.

Zhang, Y., & Ren, W. (2020). 'This is so skrrrrr' – creative translanguaging by Chinese micro-blogging users. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 19(3), 289–304. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2020.1753746>.

All links were verified by the editors and found to be functioning before the publication of this text in 2025.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

FUNDING

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this paper.

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0>

GRACE O. PREZI¹

A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF BUSINESS CONVERSATIONS AMONG TRADERS AND BUYERS IN SELECTED MARKETS IN YENAGOA

Abstract. This research work is a sociolinguistic study of business conversations among traders and buyers in selected markets in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. A total of 50 business persons, both male and female, are observed during business transactions to collect primary data from their conversations, while secondary data are obtained from textbooks, journals, and the internet. The observations are conducted at the Swali, Kpansia, Tombia, Agudama, and Igbogene markets in Yenagoa. The researcher uses a conversation analysis (CA) approach to interpret the data and such findings as the ones below are evident: Traders and buyers adopt conversation strategies such as the use of pleading, request, promise, explanation, repetition, code-alternation and questioning/answering bearing in mind factors such as purpose of the speech, setting and participants while choosing them during business transactions. Some sociolinguistic significance of the appropriate choice of conversation strategies by traders and buyers in Yenagoa is to create an environment for peaceful business transactions, prevent conflict/crises, and maximize profits. Equally evident in the study is that conversational participants are very aware of when, where, and how to organize, allocate, and take turns coherently. Again, features of adjacency pair structures such as question/answer, request/decision, offer/acceptance, pleading, and acceptance/consideration/rejection abound in business conversations. Turn allocations are observed to be through prosodic turns, yielding eye-gaze and hand signals by the current speaker, thus resulting in minimal overlapping of talk-turns. The researcher also

¹ <http://orcid.org/0009-0007-6972-580X>, Niger Delta University, Faculty of Arts, grace.nyemaechi79@gmail.com.



recommends that traders and buyers should consider the setting, participants, and purpose of the talk while choosing a conversation strategy. It is also recommended that further studies be conducted on business conversations in formal settings.

Keywords: Business, conversation, conversation analysis, turn construction and taking, sequence organization

1. Introduction

In every society, human beings interact with one another in their Day-to-day activities in areas such as business, education, religion, sports, and others. In their interactive activities, language is usually necessary, as it enables effective interaction. Language, an important and indispensable means of human interaction, requires competence on the part of users, both linguistic and communicative, for such interactions to be successful. This implies that the knowledge of a language is a prerequisite for its use; however, it is not sufficient for successful communication. When communication fails, interaction may be hindered, potentially leading to chaos in society. Societal norms of interaction or linguistic etiquette serve as guides for interlocutors in the course of communication during interactions, but sometimes people deviate from these norms, and consequently, problems/crises/conflicts arise among the interlocutors, and the purpose(s) of communication are defeated.

Business interactions are not exceptions to the crises caused by communication failures; hence, the way people use language in business affects the success of the business. It is in view of the relevance of proper use of language in business transaction that made Kuzhevskaya (2019, p. 36) to say this, "the success of any business activity depends on the success of extensive business contacts with partners, potential customers, suppliers and numerous organisations, which, in its turn, is ensured by the strategic correctness of business communication." The author's emphasis in the above statement is that business contact with partners may take the form of language to ensure unhindered and successful communication. It is against this background that this research aims to study the use of language among traders and buyers in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria, to examine how different conversational strategies can be used to avert crises/conflicts, facilitate effective communication, and enable the maximization of profits in business.

The data for this research are in Nigerian Pidgin English, as it is the variety of English most commonly used for trade in Yenagoa. According to Ekpe (2010, p. 166), Nigerian Pidgin English is spoken throughout Nigeria and is used by Nigerians of different ethnolinguistic origins.

Yenagoa is the capital of Bayelsa State, in Nigeria's South-South region. The state is bounded by such states as Rivers (East) and Delta (West), and the Atlantic Ocean to the South. Although the indigenous language of the people of Yenagoa local government area is Epie, the city has attracted businessmen and women, government workers, contractors, farmers, students, tourists, and others from different parts of the country, as it is the state capital. As a result of this attraction, Yenagoa city is now a multilingual society, and to make communication easier, the inhabitants use Nigerian Pidgin English for informal activities.

It is to be noted that all the Nigerian pidgin English constructions used in this work are presented as obtained from the field and equally italicized in order to differentiate them from standard English. The pidgin English constructions are followed by their translations in standard English.

Purpose of study. This sociolinguistic study of business conversations among traders and buyers in selected markets in Yenagoa has the specific objectives of identifying the conversational strategies adopted during business transactions and the factors that guide their choice. The study also investigates the sociolinguistic significances of the appropriate use of conversational strategies during business transactions.

2. Literature review

In this section, the researcher reviewed relevant literature to deepen the understanding of this research. The conversational analysis, which is the approach for this study, is also reviewed.

2.1. The communicative role of language in business

Language is an indispensable factor in all aspects of human relationships. In view of the communicative roles that language performs in human

relationships, including relationships in business, many authors have aired their views concerning the functions of language as reviewed here under:

Sheikh, Teli, and Khursheed (2022, p. 408) opine that “communication involves sharing the information, feelings, emotions, etc. by means of mutually understood signs, symbols or behaviour.” Kaptiurova (2014, p. 91) argues that the communicative role of language is realized through the activities of human speech. This implies that the message a person's speech conveys to the listener/hearer/audience is termed the communicative function of a language. Purwanto *et al.* (2023) argue that effective communication is essential across all aspects of life, including personal relationships, education, business, and politics. The present researcher also upholds the claim of the above authors, as no aspect of life can function effectively without effective communication, including the human body systems.

In their own opinion, Marvellon and Nilsson (2008, p. 1) hold, “effective communication between trading partners is vital for operational efficiency and better trading relations.” It is this effective communication among human beings, in general and specifically among business partners, that is the target of all communicative acts.

2.2. Norms of interaction

During human interactions in their day-to-day affairs, like religious, business, political, educational, legal, economic, and others, the use of semiotics, verbal and/or non-verbal means of communication becomes important, and for these means of interaction to be effective, there are some norms that guide people on how to use them. Correct application of these norms results in meaningful and successful human interactions. These norms vary from one society to another, and that is why what people in one society see as acceptable and normal may be viewed as abnormal and unacceptable by people in other societies.

In view of the linguistic norms, Hudson (1980), as paraphrased, claims that there are norms that govern the quantity of utterance/speech

that people produce, which ranges from very little to very much, and consequently can lead to crises or conflicts when people from other societies with different norms of interaction come together for interactions. For him, these norms regulate how many people can speak at once during conversations. In some societies, it is normal and acceptable for several people to talk at the same time, while in others, people frown on it. In some societies, there may or may not be a limit to the number of interruptions allowed during conversations. Going by Hudson's norms of speech, one can postulate that the general nature of speech events, the actions associated with them, and the number of people who talk at the same time depend on people's culture.

Also, Grice's (1975) co-operative principle captures another aspect of the norms of interaction, requiring someone not only to be informative during a speech event but also to specify a referent that is as informative as possible. This implies that some speech events require a given kind of construction, while others require another, but in any speech event, the efforts of the interactants should be geared towards achieving the desired end/goal(s).

2.3. *Nigerian markets: An overview*

Hodder and Ukwu (1969, p.2), define market as an "authorized public concourse of buyers and sellers of commodities meeting at a place, more or less strictly limited or defined at an appointed time." Mbah *et al.* (2019, p. 19) claim that marketplaces not only serve as points of economic life but also as innovative, political, and social centres of human interaction. For Ogunbona (2021, p. 43), a market is "a place where products are bought and sold; where buyers and sellers interact directly or through intermediaries to trade goods and services for money or barter."

Based on the authors' claims above, it is evident that markets have specific locations within a given community where its inhabitants and people from other communities go to buy and sell, hence the terms buyers and sellers. Nigeria, as a society, is not an exception to the practice of having markets. Markets are found in various authorized places across communities in different states in Nigeria.

In talking about the nature of markets in Nigeria, Salaudeen (n.d.) opines that Nigeria's markets are local trading centres and agricultural and manufactured goods export hubs. The author also asserts that these markets are where traders actively participate in economic activities such as wholesale, retail, and artisan. From the foregoing, it is clear that Nigerian markets are good sources of social relationships, and, in view of this, Ambakederemo and Kalu (2018, p. 17) hold that, in Nigeria and indeed in Bayelsa State, rural markets are important socio-economic institutions that help facilitate social relationships. Apart from facilitating social relationships, markets also enhance economic growth for individuals and society as a whole.

Furthermore, Ambakederemo and Kalu (2018, p. 20) identify six variables of rural markets in Bayelsa State, including the location of rural markets, income generation, social interaction, quality, pricing, and distribution of goods. According to the authors, rural markets in Bayelsa State have not developed due to poor infrastructure, limited transportation and telecommunications, and a lack of appropriate warehouses.

Ogunbona's (2021, p. 43) study of the generic structure potential of local market strategy in Nigeria reveals that there are three compulsory elements in a typical market context in Nigeria which include request, response about object of sales and closing while the optional elements are initiating and response to greetings, invitation and response to purchase invitation, haggling, persuasion, requesting for payment, payments, purchase, joke and others. Ogunbona's findings above confirm that in every culture, there are norms that guide people's behaviour during relationship activities. There are behaviours that are expected in social interactions, and others that are not.

2.4. Linguistic etiquette and trading

In social relationships, there are rules and regulations that guide the behaviour of the people involved. Going by these rules and regulations, Ryabova (2015, p. 91) postulates, "etiquette is understood as a system of rules and conventions that regulates social and professional behavior." The reason for Ryabova's postulation is not Far-fetched because human

beings have different cultures, traditions, behaviours, and what may be seen by one ethnolinguistic group as normal and good may be seen by another as abnormal and bad. In the same way, what an individual likes may be hated by another. So, considering different situations, there should be available norms, etiquette, rules, and regulations guiding people's behaviour at any time and in any place they find themselves, to prevent misbehaviour, misuse of words, and the resulting conflicts/crises. Trading is not an exception to this, since it usually calls for interaction among people from different family backgrounds, social groups, careers, and others, using language in either written or oral form.

With reference to speech events, Ryabova (2015, p. 91) says that speech etiquette is connected to situations of communication, as well as to parameters such as place, time, personality, and theme, in addition to communicative motive and purpose. According to Ryabova (2015, p. 91), speech etiquette can be realized at the linguistic level through verbal expressions such as please, thank you, good bye, and others. Continuing, the author posits that at the level of grammar, one can use polite forms such as the pronoun "vous" and the interrogative sentence instead of the imperative form of sentences.

In discussing the requirements for business interaction, Rosida and Losi (2022, p. 361) posit that "the buying and selling process requires language speakers to use language as a communication tool to convey ideas through language agreements until buying and selling occur." In Caputo's (2024) own contribution, he notes that effective communication is very important in any type of business transaction. Heritty (2024) claims that, in the process of establishing clear communication, one can avoid misunderstandings that can prevent him/her from reaching a compromise with the interlocutor.

While stating the need for a language user to be linguistically competent for an effective business transaction, Ljungbo (2010) holds that "language competence is decisively important in international business, increasing efficacy, efficiency, sales and profits." Ljungbo further postulates that "language and language competence constitute management and the managers building structures, processes, cultures and personalities being the most fundamental and the most important working instrument to get things done through making them understandable, interesting and worthwhile."

From Rosida and Losi's, Caputo's, Heritty's, and Ljungbo's claims, it is clear that people, during business interactions, organize their social interaction – whether talk-based – in such a way that the end product is a common understanding and goal achievement. The implication is that social interaction is structurally and systematically organized in sequences in such a way that the collaborative efforts of the participants result in the achievement of the interaction objective(s), and this prompted the choice of the conversational analysis approach to this study.

2.5. The conversation analysis (CA)

Conversational analysis, henceforth written as the CA approach to the study of social interaction, originated in the 1960s in the works of a sociologist called Harvey Sacks, but later in the same 1960s and early 1970s, he collaborated with Emmanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson in order to consolidate this approach, which is rooted in the field of ethnomethodology. The proponents of this approach to the study of social interaction view social interaction as orderly, context-shaped and empirical action that human beings engage in so as to arrive at a common understanding.

According to Gonzalez-Lloret (2010, p. 59), CA concerns itself with how “interaction is organized structurally and systematically by interlocutors, since by this engaging in interaction that every day (or not-so-frequent) social activities are carried out.” While citing Hutchby and Wooflitt (2008), Gonzalez-Lloret (2010, p.59) asserts, “CA addresses two main analytical questions: (1) How do participants understand and respond to one another in their turns at talk, and (2) how are sequences of actions generated?” The answers to these questions are the major concern in CA. The efforts of the participants in a social interaction are geared towards a common understanding, and that is why they organise their interactions structurally and systematically to achieve their purpose(s) of interaction(s).

Based on the contributions of the authors above, it is evident that social activities involving interactions among people in the environment are carried out through well-organized speeches/talks, both in structure and system, to achieve the purpose(s) of the interaction. In view of the sequential and purpose-oriented actions in the course of interactions

through conversations, Gonzalez-Lloret (2010, p. 61), while quoting (Kasper, 2009, p. 36), posits that during interactions, participants concerned organize their actions sequentially following turn-by-turn order in an attempt to achieve joint interpretation of goal-oriented activities.

Concerning the required data for CA (Jefferson, 2004; Sacks, 1984), as quoted in Horton (2017, p. 12), holds that CA "relies almost exclusively upon recordings and transcripts of natural talk in spontaneous interactive contexts." Horton (2017, p. 11), while citing Schegloff & Sacks (1973), asserts that conversations follow an orderly principle that a conversation analyst can identify through participants' careful observation. The author (p. 7) also adds that the interlocutors rely on the principles of the conversation to understand the purpose of their interaction.

The choice of this approach is necessitated by the fact that businesses are carried out through interactions that require collaborative efforts of the participants, and CA, according to Gonzalez-Lloret (2010, p. 19), concerns itself with how participants structurally and systematically organize interactions.

3. Research methodology

The data for this study are both primary and secondary, while the research instrument is participant observation. The primary data are gathered through participant observation of spontaneous natural talk in interactive contexts (see appendix), while the secondary data are obtained from journals, books, and the internet, as evident in the references section. Fifty conversations among 50 male and female, young and old traders and buyers in Swali (a daily market), Kpansia (Saturday market), Tombia (a daily market), Agudama (Wednesday market), and Igbogene (Thursday market) markets, all in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria, form the data for this research.

The choice of these particular markets is based on the fact that they form a representative sample of the markets in Yenagoa, since each of them attracts a large number of buyers and sellers on each market day from different parts of Yenagoa and even outside the state. In addition, these markets are situated in areas that are motorable and easily accessible for people from every part of Yenagoa and nearby states.

Conversations during trading affairs are observed by the researcher and tape-recorded during fieldwork. The tape-recorded data are later transcribed, and only the relevant but representative data are used for the analysis. The data for this qualitative research are analysed using a descriptive method following the CA approach.

4.1. Business conversation strategies among traders and buyers in Yenagoa based on the CA approach

In the course of this study, the researcher observed from the selected markets in Yenagoa that during business transactions, traders and buyers adopt such conversation strategies as the use of pleading, request, promise, explanation, repetition, and code-alternation. It is also observed that they follow the principles of conversational analysis in trying to arrive at a common understanding and achieve their speech objectives, which are successful buying and selling, hence the choice of the conversational analysis approach to this study. These conversation strategies, as evident in the primary data, are discussed hereunder:

4.1.1. Use of pleading

During the act of buying and selling in Yenagoa, both traders and customers are observed to use the strategy of pleading to achieve their communicative goals, which aim to persuade and convince one another. On the part of a trader, he/she use the strategy of pleading to persuade and convince the customer to buy his/her product(s). The buyer equally pleads with the trader to sell at his/her desired price, as one can see in the data below:

1. Trader: ... *Abeg, follow me buy na. Na the same price everywhere. / ... Please, buy from me (politely). The price is the same everywhere.*
Buyer: *Leave am for that price wey I talk, abeg. You know se I be your customer.*
Buyer: Please, leave it for that price that I said. You know that I am your customer.

Trader: *Oya, bring money.* / Okay, bring money.

Buyer: Thank you.

In number 1 above, someone can see that the trader pleaded with the buyer to buy from her, as evident in the statement, "*Abeg, follow me buy na....*". In the same conversation, when the trader took his turn, he also pleaded, as shown in the data, "*leave am for that price wey I talk, abeg....*" From the example, it implies that both sellers and buyers used pleading to be able to make their communication successful in a business transaction.

Through the application of the CA approach to the data, the researcher observed that the interlocutors were able to communicate successfully by taking their talk-turns properly without overlapping and unusual gaps. All speaker transitions are done at relevant places for transition, as can be seen in the data, "*Trader: Abeg, follow me buy na. Na the same price everywhere. Buyer: Leave am for that price wey I talk, abeg. You know se I be your customer. Trader: Oya, bring money.*" It is observed in the above conversation that at each completion of a trader's turn, there is a transition to the buyer (conversation partner) who took her own talk-turn.

Apart from proper turn-taking, the rule of adjacency pair in sequence organization is also observed among the interactants, as one can see in number 1 above. A request from the trader to the buyer to come and buy a product from her made the buyer make a decision to buy from her, as shown in the negotiation, "*Buyer: Leave am for that price wey I talk, abeg. You know se I be your customer.*" and then "*thank you.*"

Also, the buyer's request for the trader to sell the product at his desired price is also accepted by the trader, as evident in the trader's speech, "*oya, bring money.*" The implication of the conversation in number 1 is that participants can engage in meaningful, successful conversations by adhering to the principles of conversation, having a common understanding, and, consequently, achieving their speech objective, which is buying and selling. So, in this way, speech/talk is seen as a collaborative act that involves the speaker and listener.

4.1.2. Request

In the act of buying and selling, it is observed that both the traders and buyers use requests as a conversation strategy in order to ask for a favour in the trading act. The conversations in the examples below illustrate the application of the strategy of request:

2. Trader: *Sister, abeg, buy from my hand today. I go do am well for you.* /
Sister, please, buy from me today. I will do it well for you.
Buyer: *Okay, bring better cup.* / Okay, bring a better cup.
Trader: (Showed him a cup)
Buyer: (Observed the cup) *Oya, measure.* / (Observed the cup) Okay,
measure it.
3. Buyer: ... *Abeg, put jara for me.* / ... Please, put an extra as gift for me.
Trader: No problem.

In numbers 2 and 3 above, one can see that both the trader and the buyer asked for a favour from each other, but in a very polite way, using the word "*abeg*" in each case. The trader politely requested the buyer to buy the product from him in his statement: "*sister, abeg buy from my hand today.*" On the other hand, the buyer also requested that the trader add an extra one as a gift for her, as shown in her statement: "*Abeg, put jara for me.*"

Based on the CA of the talk in examples 2 and 3 above, the researcher observed that the trader and the buyer took turns at the relevant transition points. The change of speech between the trader and the buyer is smoothly coordinated, with non-overlapping, minimal-gap turns. The interlocutors adopted simple turn construction units in the form of simple sentences, as evident in their speeches in numbers 2 and 3 above. This simple sentence format made it easy to predict the end of turns and, in turn, enabled timely turn-taking among the conversation participants.

In terms of the sequence organization of their talk, one can see that the turns in their speeches are ordered coherently in such a way that made the participants coordinate their interactional activities properly and consequently arrived at a common communicative goal of request by the trader to buy from him and the decision of the buyer to buy from

him. This is shown in their talk, “trader: ...*abeg, buy from my hand today...*” and “buyer: *Oya, measure.*” In the first part of the pair turn, the buyer listened to the trader’s request and then completed the second part of the pair of utterances with her decision, as evidenced in her own talk in the last sentence of example 2 above: “*oya, measure.*” This is clear evidence of an adjacency pair in conversation, as evidenced by the interactants’ turn-taking.

4.1.3. Promise

In the process of trading in the area of study, the data gathered show that traders use promises as a strategy during the business transaction. The strategy of promise can be seen in the conversation between the trader and the buyer below:

4. Trader: *Come buy from my hand, I go use better cup measure am for you. I no go cheat you.* / Come and buy from me so that I will use a good cup to measure it for you. I will not cheat you.
5. Buyer: *Wee the cup? Make I see am.* / Where is the cup? Let me see it.
6. Trader: (Showed her the cup)
 Buyer: (Observed the cup)
 Trader: *I go do jara for you. Follow me buy na.* / I will give you an extra as a gift. Buy from me (politely).
 Buyer: (After the buyer put a small quantity of rice with hand)
Put better jara for me na. / (After the buyer put a small quantity of rice with hand) Put better extra for me (politely).

In the example above, no. 4 shows how the trader promised to use a better cup to measure the product for the buyer, as one can see in the statement from the trader, “*I go use better cup measure am for you.*” In no. 6, the trader also promised the buyer that he would give her an extra one as a gift, as someone can see in his speech: “*I go do jara for you.*”

The data, as evident in numbers 4, 5, and 6, show how the interactants organized their turn-taking coherently and meaningfully, starting with

the first pair part, which is the trader's promise to use a better cup to measure the product as it is in the utterance, "*....I go use better cup measure am for you. I no go cheat you.*" The buyer completed the second pair part of the turn by requesting that the trader show her the cup as it is in this statement, "*Wee the cup? Make I see am.*"

It is also observed that the turns between the trader and the buyer are sequentially organized into sentence and prosodic turn construction units. The sentence turn construction unit is evident in the data in numbers 4 and 5, while the prosodic turn construction unit is shown in the first part of the data in no. 6 (the showing and observation of the cup by the trader and buyer, respectively). The interactants coordinated their interactional activities, which are in the form of talk and prosodic acts, through a series of turns and finally arrived at a common understanding and successful conversation, which is shown in the final speech in no. 6, "Buyer: (After the buyer put a small quantity of rice with hand) *Put better jara for me na.*" This statement from the buyer shows that the act of buying and selling was achieved through a collaborative, successful social interaction.

4.1.4. Explanation

The data gathered show that traders usually use the strategy of explanation to convince buyers to purchase their products. In this strategy, the trader provides a clear account of their product(s) to buyers. Examples are shown in the conversations from the data below:

7. Trader: ... *One bag of okro now, na ten thousand naira. E cost well well. I dey sell to know whether something go enter for me. Abeg, na the same thing everywhere, make you buy from my hand. I shade my own big pass other people own. I no go cheat you my sister.* / Trader: ... The cost of one bag of okra now is ten thousand naira. It is very costly. I am selling it to know whether I can make little gain. Please, it is the same everywhere, so, buy from me. The quantity I kept is bigger than other people's own in the market. I will not cheat you, my sister. Buyer: *I know say you no go cheat me, but e too small.* / I know that you will not cheat me but it is too small.

8. Trader: ... *Na correct ogbonge shoe. Na pure leather. If you use am, you go like am. / It is a correct strong shoe. It is made of pure leather. If you use it, you will like it.*
Buyer: (Observed it keenly.)
9. Buyer: *I hope this rat poison no dey make the rat to smell when e die?/*
I hope, this rat poison does not make the rat to smell when it dies?
Trader: *This rat poison, na kill and dry. E no dey smell. No nyama nyama. Go u.../* This rat poison kills and dries the rats. It does not smell.
No dirt. Go ...
Buyer: (Started talking when the trader was still talking) *The one wey I buy last time no kill lai lai.* (Started talking...) The one I bought last time did not kill at all.
Trader: (Completing his turn) *Go use am. This one dey kill well well./*
Go and use it. This one kills very well.

In example 7 above, the trader used the explanation strategy to tell the buyer that okra is very expensive by showing the buyer how much she paid for the bag of okra and also explaining that okra is generally expensive everywhere in the market. This explanation is seen in the trader's statements, '*One bag of okro now, na ten thousand naira. E cost well well...*' Likewise, a strategy of explanation is used in examples 8 and 9 to make the customers see the reason to buy their products. In no. 8, the trader clearly explained to the buyer that the shoes are of good quality and that he would like them if the buyer bought and used them. In no. 9, the seller of the rat poison explained to the buyer how it operates. According to the trader, the rat poison kills the rat and dries it up. He also explained that the dead rat neither smells nor contaminates the environment.

Using the CA approach to explore the data, one can see that when traders deploy the strategy of explanation, both traders and buyers engage in turn-taking. There are cases of proper turn transitions from traders to buyers at turn transition relevant places, but sometimes, cases of overlapping turns have arisen. Sometimes, they complete their turns successfully without overlapping. Successful completion of turns without overlapping can be seen in nos. 7 and 8 among the interlocutors, but in no. 9, there is an overlapping of turns by the trader and buyer, as it is in their conversation, "Trader: *This*

rat poison, na kill and dry. E no dey smell. No nyama nyama. Go u... Buyer: (Started talking when the trader was still talking) *The one wey I buy last time no kill lai lai.*" Before the trader could complete her turn as she was explaining, the buyer started taking her own talk-turn, and this led to the overlapping of turns between the interlocutors. However, when the buyer completed her second pair part of the turn, the trader continued her own turn until it was completed.

The implication of the overlap is that, among traders and buyers, the strategy of explanation sometimes leads to overlapping turns, since the explanation may be long. Despite the disrupted adjacency caused by overlapping turns, the turn was later completed, and the participants understood each other and accomplished their speech objective.

Also observed in this strategy is that the turn construction units are in sentence forms since they are explanatory in nature. Examples 7, 8, and 9 above show sentence-format turn construction units which are coherently and meaningfully organized for the interactants to achieve their conversation goals of understanding and buying/selling.

4.1.5. Repetition

Prezi (2014, p. 163) posits, "repetition is a rhetorical device which involves saying a word, phrase, or sentence more than once in a speech or writing." In the current study, the researcher observed that traders often use a repetition strategy. They are seen to repeat some structures during conversations with buyers. Structures showing repetition strategy are evident in their following conversations:

10. Buyer: *How much for this potato?* / How much is this potato?

Trader: *Na one one thousand naira.* / It is one thousand naira each set.

11. Trader: *This oil dey red well well...* / The oil is very red.

Buyer: *No problem. I go buy test am today.* / No problem, I will buy and test it today.

12. Trader: ...*No nyama nyama.* / ...No dirt.
 Buyer: *You mean am?* / Do you mean it?
 Trader: *Na so e dey oo!* / That is how it is oo!

In examples 10, 11, and 12 above, structures such as “one, well, *and nyama*” are repeated respectively in the traders’ speeches. According to the collected data, repetition is used to emphasize. In example 10, the trader uses repetition to indicate ‘each.’

Going by the CA approach for repetition, the researcher observed that there is coherence and proper coordination in turn taking by the traders and buyers. There is neither overlapping nor too many gaps between one turn and the other.

In terms of sequence organization, one can see that there is a question-answer pre-sequence in no. 10, as shown in the asking of the price of potatoes, which indicates that the buyer was willing to enter into conversation with the trader. The question-answer adjacency pair is used for nos. 10 and 12, where the buyers asked questions and the traders replied with answers to the questions, as shown in the data, “Buyer: *How much for this potato?* Trader: *Na one one thousand naira.* And Buyer: *You mean me?* Trader: *Na so e dey....!*”

For the turn construction unit, only the simple design is used by the conversation participants. At this point, it is worth noting that all the principles of conversation (turn construction, taking, sequence organization, and others) that the interactants observed during the act of conversation in the examples above are geared towards the coordination and accomplishment of their speech objectives, which are understanding, buying, and selling.

4.1.6. Code- alternation

Based on the data, it is also observed that traders in the selected markets code-alternate in their speeches during the act of buying and selling. This strategy is usually used when traders advertise their products to ensure effective communication. It is in this regard that Mauranen (2012), in Toomaneejindaa and Saengboonb (2022, p. 161), claims that code

alternation not only facilitates mutual understanding but also maintains smooth interaction among the interlocutors. This is also the case with this study, as evident in the data below:

13. Trader: *I no know money. Nwa obere ego, nwa obere ego.* (Raising up the clothes.)/ I do not know money. Small amount of money, small amount of money. *Na chunkiri money.* (Still raising up the clothes.)/ It is a very small amount of money. (Still raising up the clothes).

Buyer: Customer, how much?

Trader: *Any one wey you pick na two hundred naira.*/ Each one of them is two hundred naira.

Buyer: *Na him be the chunkiri money? No be hundred hundred naira?/* Is that the small money? Will you sell for one hundred naira each?

Trader: *Oya, select and pay.*/ Okay, select and pay.

14. Trader: *Buy your okpa* (an Igbo (people from the South Eastern region of Nigeria) – native food made from bambara groundnuts' flour).

Buyer: *How you dey sell am?/* How much do you sell it?

Trader: *These ones na two two hundred naira (pointing at them) while these big ones na / five five hundred (pointing at the big ones).*

Trader: These ones are two hundred naira each while these big ones are five hundred naira each. (pointing at them)

Buyer: *Put one five hundred naira own.* /Put one that costs five hundred naira.

Trader: Take. (Giving it to the buyer)

In examples 13 and 14 above, one can see evidence of code alternation from Nigerian pidgin English into the Igbo Language. The sentence, "*I no know money,*" is rendered in the Nigerian pidgin English, while the second part of the utterance is rendered in the Igbo Language, as one can see in example 13, '*I no know money. Nwa obere ego, ...*'

Based on the CA approach to the data on code-alternation, it is clear that the interlocutors strictly follow the principles of turn-taking

and turn sequence organization to achieve their communicative roles. They know very well when, where, and how to change their roles during communicative acts. The coherent organization and turn-taking, question-and-answer, advertisement, and the decision-to-buy adjacency pairs are observed in numbers 13 and 14. A series of turns, organization, and taking are evident in the conversations that led the traders to finally decide to sell to the buyers, as shown in the speeches: "Oya, select and pay" in no. 13 and "take" in no. 14. The implication is that both the traders and buyers achieved their conversation objective, which is buying and selling, through their collaborative interaction efforts in the form of a well-organized series of talk-turns and even prosodic turn-taking (raising up..., pointing..., and giving...) as seen in the data.

4.1.7. *The strategy of questioning and answering*

Questioning and answering is an indispensable conversation strategy in business transactions in the selected markets studied, especially in non-supermarket shops. The buyers ask the traders whether they have a particular item/product that they desire to buy, and if those items/products are not exhibited where they can be seen, the traders usually answer the questions. Buyers also ask about item prices. Examples are shown below:

15. Buyer: *Customer, you get Dogbara herbicide?/* Customer, do you have Dogbara herbicide?

Trader: *Yes, e dey./* Yes, it is available.

16. Buyer: *How much, you dey sell am?/* How much do you sell it?

Trader: *Na six thousand naira./* It is six thousand naira.

Buyer: *No be five thousand naira?/* Is it not five thousand naira?

Trader: *No, na the price. You go like another type? /* No, that is the price. Will you like another type?

From the conversations in numbers 15 and 16 above, one can see that the buyer and the trader used the strategy of questioning and answering.

The buyer used questioning in number 15 to find out from the trader whether he had a particular type of herbicide called 'Dogbara', as shown in his speech: "... *you get Dogbara herbicide?*" The trader answered his question as it is in his speech, "*yes,...*" In number 16, the strategy was also used where the buyer asked the trader a question, "*how much, you de sell am?*" to know the price and the trader answered, "*na six thousand naira.*" When the buyer negotiated to buy it for five thousand naira, the trader disagreed and also adopted the strategy of asking the buyer whether he would like to buy another type of herbicide, which might be sold for that five thousand naira.

A critical look at the conversations in nos. 15 and 16 above reveal that the conversation participants adopted a two-part, simple-sentence turn construction unit. One can see the question and answer adjacency pair in the organization of sequence as in no. 15, "Buyer: ... *you get Dogbara herbicide?* Trader: *Yes, ...*" The speeches of the trader and buyer in no. 16 is also organized as a question-and-answer sequence through a series of turn-taking in a coherent order at the various relevant turn-transition places (the end of each turn), which leads to a commonly shared meaning.

4.2. Factors that guide the traders and buyers in using the conversation strategies

Based on the data, the researcher observed that some sociological factors, like the purpose of the speech, the setting, and the participants, guide the conversational partners in the choice of conversation strategies and, in that way, help them to engage in collaborative conversation in order to achieve their conversation goal(s). These factors are discussed below:

- *Purpose of the speech*

The purpose of speech influences the conversation strategy. In advertising their products, traders are observed to use strategies such as repetition and code alternation. Examples are:

17. Trader: ... *The beans dey rise well well.* (The beans rises very well).

18. Trader: *E dey hot well well, ...* (It is very hot.)

19. Trader: *I no know money, nwa obere ego, nwa obere ego.* (I do not know money, small money, small money.)

In examples 17, 18, and 19, structures like “well, well, and *nwa obere ego*” are repeated, respectively, for the purpose of emphasis.

Furthermore, the data also portray that the use of promises by the traders is to make the buyers believe in them and their products, and then buy their products. Examples:

20. Trader: *Come ..., I go use better cup measure am for you. I no go cheat you.* / *Come..., I will use a good cup to measure it for you. I will not cheat you.*

21. Trader: *I go do jara for you.../ I will give you extra as a gift....*

In examples 20 and 21, the traders used the strategy of promise, as in “... I go use better cup measure am for you. I no go cheat you.” and “I go do jara for you...”, to convince buyers to buy their products. This strategy, according to the data, makes the buyers develop trust in the traders and agree to buy their product, as evident in this

22. Trader: *I go do jara for you.*

Buyer: *Oya, measure am.* (signalling)/ *Okay, measure it.* (signalling)

In no. 22, based on trust, the buyer instructed the trader to measure the product: “*Oya, measure am.*”

- *Setting as a factor*

The researcher also observed that the setting influences the conversational strategy traders use in their business transactions. Within the markets used for this study, there are supermarkets (Superite, Favour, Next2next, Nice, Daily Needs, Rogi, Ped, God First, Phil Onward, and Harmony) and non-supermarkets (other stores/shops within the market arena). In the supermarket setting, the strategy is more instructional, delivered in

writing, about where to keep bags, product prices, and payment points, unlike in non-supermarkets, where explanation, repetition, promises, and pleading are usually used. Examples from the non-supermarket:

23. Buyer: *Customer, you get Dogbara herbicide?*/ Customer, do you have Dogbara herbicide?
Trader: *Yes..../ Yes....*

24. Buyer: *How much, you dey sell am?*/ How much do you sell it?
Trader: *Na six thousand naira. / It is six thousand naira.*

In the above data from a non-supermarket, one can see that the participants used question and answer, and there is equal negotiation of prices between the trader and the buyer.

- *The factor of participants*

The participants' age and sex also influence the strategies traders use. In cases where the buyers are elderly, strategies such as explanation and promise are observed. When the participants are female, the use of such addresses as "mummy and sister" abounds, unlike the male counterparts, which demand the use of "oga" and "brother" and daddy.

4.3. The sociolinguistic implications of appropriate use of conversation strategies during business transactions

In the study area, the appropriate use of conversation strategies by conversation participants has some sociolinguistic significances as identified and discussed below:

- *It creates an environment for peaceful business transactions.* As evident in the analysed data, the use of pleading, promises, and explanations creates a peaceful atmosphere for business transactions to flourish. It is observed that, through these strategies, traders and buyers reached agreements on price and payment terms peacefully.

- *It prevents conflict/crises.* Appropriate use of the strategies helps to prevent quarrels and misunderstandings in trading. By preventing quarrels and misunderstandings among the traders and buyers, conflicts/crises are usually averted.
- *It helps to maximize profits in business.* As businesses flourish in a crisis-free environment, more sales and profits are usually recorded when traders use effective communication strategies to convince buyers to purchase their products. Moreover, buyers who use effective strategies sometimes purchase high-quality products at lower prices.

5. Summary, conclusion, and recommendations

In this section, the researcher summarizes the findings from this study, gives a conclusion, and also gives some recommendations.

Based on the study, some findings are evident. It is observed that traders and buyers adopt some conversation strategies such as the use of pleading, request, promise, explanation, repetition, code-alternation, and questioning/answering in carrying out their business transactions. The research also shows that, in a particular business transaction, one or more conversational strategies can be applied by the interactants to achieve effective, successful communication. Factors such as the purpose of the speech, the setting, and the participants are also considered when choosing conversation strategies among traders and buyers. The study also reveals that the appropriate choice of conversation strategies results in such sociolinguistic significances as creating a peaceful business environment, conflict/crisis-free transactions, and maximum profit.

Equally evident in the study is that conversational participants are aware of when, where, and how to organize and take a sequence of turns coherently and also carry out proper repairs of utterance where necessary during conversations. Apart from these, business conversations as studied exhibit features of adjacency pair structures such as question and answer, request and decision, offer and acceptance, pleading, and acceptance/consideration/rejection.

Turn allocations are observed to be through prosodic turn yielding signal of eye-gaze and hand signal by the current speaker. Turn constructions and allocations are properly done, and consequently, cases of minimal overlapping of talk-turns abound, implying that the interlocutors in their conversations understood the requirements of their pair parts and treated the conversations as collaborative affairs.

In conclusion, the right choice of conversation strategies and proper co-ordination of actions through a series of turn organization, allocation, and taking by traders and buyers during business transactions in Yenagoa leads to successful communication. This success usually results from the collaborative efforts of the interlocutors, which lead to maximized profit in business.

This study, in relation to previous studies as evident in the reviewed literature, has shown that apart from achieving maximum profits in business through appropriate use of conversation strategies, which are based on some sociological factors such as age, gender, purpose of speech, and setting, social relationships are also achieved and maintained among the conversation partners. Moreover, through conversation strategies during business transactions, the inhabitants of Yenagoa portray their culture in terms of what they grow, produce, rear, eat, sell, the way they talk, take talk-turns, and even the contents of their speeches.

The researcher recommends that traders and buyers should always consider factors such as setting, purpose of the conversation, and participants, and equally follow the principles of conversation carefully during business transactions, as these help to achieve the purpose(s) of communication. Further studies are equally recommended on the conversation strategies in formal settings.

REFERENCES

- Ambakederemo, B. and Kalu, S.E. (2018). Rural markets and Nigeri's economic development: A case study of selected markets in Bayelsa State. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research/Social & Management Sciences*, 4(4), 16-28.

- Caputo, R. (2024). Effective communication in business transactions: The brokers' role. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/effective-communication-business-transactions-brokers-roberta-caputo-lhwe>.
- Ekpe, M.B. (2010). *National Open University of Nigeria, faculty of arts and social sciences, Eng 353: The English language in Nigeria course guide*. <https://www.nou.edu.ng>.
- Grice, H.P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J.L. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics: Speech acts* (pp. 41-58). Academic Press.
- Gonzalez-Lloret, M. (2010). Conversation analysis and speech act performance. In A. Martinez-Flor & E. Usó-Juan (Eds.), *Speech act performance: Theoretical, empirical and methodological issues* (pp. 57-74). John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/llt.26.04gon>.
- Heritty, J. (2024). 12 important negotiation skills (with definition and tips). *Career development: Skills and steps to take your career to the next level*. <https://www.indeed.com/career>.
- Hodder, B.W. & Ukwu, U. (1969). *Markets in West Africa: Studies of markets and trade among the Yoruba and Ibo*. Ibadan University Press.
- Horton, W. (2017). Theories and approaches to the study of conversation and interactive discourse. In M.F. Schober, A. Britt & D.N. Rapp (Eds.), *Handbook of discourse processes* (2nd ed., pp. 22-68). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315687384>.
- Hudson, R.A. (1980). *Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Jefferson, G. (2004). Glossary of transcript symbols with an introduction. In G.H. Lerner (Ed.), *Conversation analysis: Studies from the first generation* (pp. 13-31). John Benjamins.
- Kaptiurova, O. (2014). Speech tactics in mass media discourse. *Proceedings of the National Aviation University*, 1(58), 90-95. <https://doi.org/10.18372/2306-1472.58.6700>.
- Kasper, G. (2009). L2 pragmatic development. In W.C. Ritchie & T.K. Bhatia (Eds.), *New handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 259-283). Emerald.
- Kuzhevskaya, E.B. (2019). Politeness strategies in business English discourse. *Training Language and Culture*, 3(4), 36-46. <https://doi.org/10.29366/2019tlc.3.4.4>.
- Ljungbo, K. (2010). Language as a leading light to business cultural insight: A study on expatriates' intercultural communication in central and

- eastern Europe [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Stockholm University. <https://su.diva-portal.org/smash/person.jsf?pid=authority-person%3A92029&dswid=-1819>.
- Malveholm, M., & Nilsson, M. (2008). Communication in international purchasing a study of communicational influences on the purchasing process [Unpublished dissertation]. International business and economics program bachelor dissertation Kristianstad University. <https://researchportal.hkr.se/sv/studentTheses/communication-in-international-purchasing/>.
- Mba, S.A., Obienusi, E.A., & Obikwelu, M. C. (2019). Examination of the functions of markets in the rural areas of Anambra State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Geography and Regional Planning Research*, 4(2), 16-27.
- Murmann, J. (2015). The idiolect of fitness professional Ewa Chodakowska in the context of communication with a target group within the physical activity marketplace. *Baltic Journal of Physical and Health Activities*, 7(4), 103-116. <https://doi.org/10.29359/BJHPA.07.4.10>.
- Ogunbona, M.D. (2021). Generic structure potential of local market strategy in Nigeria. *JOSOL*, 9, 42-58.
- Prezi, G.O. (2014). Strategies of Igbo address system: A sociolinguistic investigation of greetings and rhetoric [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria. <https://freeresearchproject.com.ng/research/strategies-of-igbo-address-system-a-sociolinguistic-investigation-of-greetings-and-rhetoric/>.
- Purwanto, E, Shahreza, M., Oktarina, S., Yana, K.E., & Rahmah, A. (2023). Developing life skills through effective communication. *International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Technologies (IJPSAT)*, 39(1), 467-473. <https://doi.org/10.52155>.
- Rosida, S., & Losi R.V. (2022). The sociolects of antique merchants in the Ular market Medan *IJEAL (International Journal of English and Applied Linguistics)*, 2(3), 361-368. <https://doi.org/ijeal.v2i3.1765m>.
- Ryabova, M. (2015). Politeness strategy in everyday communication. *Procedia-social and Behavioural Sciences*, 206, 90-95. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.10.033>.
- Sacks, H. (1984). Notes on methodology (edited by Gail Jefferson from various lectures). In J. M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structures of social action* (pp. 21-27). Cambridge University Press.

- Salaudeen, A.O. (nd.) The role of traditional markets in Nigerian society: From ancient trade centers to modern hubs. Rex Clarke adventures. <https://rexclarkeadventures.com/the-role-of-traditional-markets-in-nigerian-society/>.
- Sheikh, A.M., Teli, S.A. & Khursheed, S. O. (2022). Role and importance of English language in business and communication: An appraisal. In E. Sefiyeva, M.S. Bhatti, & T. Firat (Eds.) *5th International congress on life social and health sciences in changing world* (pp. 408-412). BZT Academy Publishing House.
- Toomaneejindaa, A., & Saengboonb, S. (2022). Interactional sociolinguistics: The theoretical framework and methodological approach to ELF interaction research. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 15(1), 156-179.

Conversations from selected markets in Yenagoa***Agudama market***

1. Trader: *Sister, abeg come follow me buy naa! Sister, please!!* Sister, please, come and buy from me (politely). Sister, Please!
Buyer: (Going towards the trader) You go give me better price?
Trader: Yes, come, my love!
2. Trader: *Sister, abeg, buy from my hand today. I go do am well for you.* / Sister, please, buy from me today.
Buyer: Okay, bring better cup. / Okay, bring a better cup.
Trader: (Showed him a cup)
Buyer: (Observed the cup.) Oya, measure. / Okay, measure it.
3. Buyer: ... *Abeg, put jara for me.* / ... Please, put an extra as gift for me.
Trader: No problem
4. Trader: *I go do jara for you. Follow me buy na./* I will give you extra as a gift. Buy from me (politely).
Buyer: ... (After the buyer puts a small quantity of rice with hand)
Put better jara for me na. (Put a better extra for me (politely).

Igbogene market

5. Buyer: *Customer, I hope se, this your pepper dey hot well well?*
Trader: ... *I dey hot well well, taste and see, sister./* ... Sister, taste and see, it is very hot.
6. Buyer: *Customer, you get Dogbara herbicide?/* Customer, do you have Dogbara herbicide?
Trader: *Yes, e dey./* Yes, it is available.

7. Buyer: *How much, you dey sell am?/ How much do you sell it?*
Trader: *Na six thousand naira./ It is six thousand naira.*
8. Trader: *Sister, abeg, follow me buy. I no go cheat you.... / Sister, please, buy from me. I will not cheat you.*
Buyer: *Mummy, abeg, comot small money for that price. Help your daughter na./ Mummy, please, give me a discount. Help your daughter (politely).*
Trader: *Oya, take am for five thousand eight hundred. I don comot two hundred for you. / Okay, take it for five thousand eight hundred, I have discounted two hundred naira for you.*
Buyer: *Abeg, leave am for five five. (Smiling) / Please, leave it for five thousand five hundred naira. (Smiling)*

Tombia market

9. Buyer: *I hope this rat poison no de make the rat to smell when e die? / I hope, this rat poison does not make the rat to smell when it dies?*
Trader: *This rat poison, na kill and dry. I no de smell. No nyama nyama. Go u... / This rat poison kills and dries the rats. It does not smell. No dirt. Go ...*
Buyer: (Started talking when the trader was still talking (overlapping of turn)) *The one wey I buy last time no kill lai lai. / The one I bought last time did not kill at all.*
Trader: (Completing his turn) *Go use am. This one dey kill well well./ Go and use it. This one kills very well.*
10. Trader: *Come buy from my hand, I go use better cup measure am for you. I no go cheat you. / Come and buy from me so that I will use a good cup to measure it for you. I will not cheat you.*
Buyer: *Wee the cup? Make I see am. / Where is the cup? Let me see it.*
Trader: (Showed her the cup)
Buyer: (Observed the cup)
11. Trader: *... Go cook this beans, you go come thank me next market. The beans dey rise well well. / ... If you go and cook this beans, you will return to thank me in the next market day.*

The beans rises very well.

Buyer: *Customer, full am well well.* / Customer, make it to full very well.

Trader: No worry. / Do not worry.

12. Buyer: *How much for this potato?* How much is this potato?

Trader: *Na one one thousand naira.* / It is one thousand naira each set.

Kpansia market

13. Trader: *Mummy, buy from my hand naa, I no go cheat you, onye nke m* (an Igbo phrase used to show 'mine' among lovers). / Mummy, buy from me (politely). I will not cheat you, mine/my own person.

Buyer: *I Know say you go cheat me, but leave am for that amount wey I price am.* / I did not say that you will cheat me but leave it for the price I said.

Trader: *Okay, add five hundred naira make I give you, mumsy* (a pet name used by a child to address the mother). / Okay, add five hundred naira so that I will give you mummy.

14. Trader: *Come buy from my hand, I go use better cup measure am for you. I no go cheat you.* / Come and buy from me so that I will use a good cup to measure it for you. I will not cheat you. (Gloss)

15. Buyer: *Wee the cup? Make I see am.* / Where is the cup? Let me see it.

Trader: (Showed her the cup)

Buyer: (Observed the cup)

16. Trader: *Na correct ogbonge shoe. Na pure leather. If you use am, you go like am.* / It is a correct strong shoe. It is made of pure leather. If you use it, you will like it.

Buyer: (Observed it keenly.)

Swali market

17. Trader: ... *One bag of okro now, na ten thousand naira, e cost well well. I dey sell to know whether something go enter for me. Abeg, na the same thing everywhere, make you buy from my hand. I shade my own big pass other people own. I no go cheat you my sister.* /
 Trader: ... The cost of one bag of okra now is ten thousand naira. It is very costly. I am selling it to know whether I can make little gain. Please, it is the same everywhere, so, buy from me. The quantity I kept is bigger than other people's own in the market. I will not cheat you, my sister.
 Buyer: *I know say you no go cheat me, but e too small.* / I know that you will not cheat me but it is too small.

18. Buyer: *Customer, you get Dogbara herbicide?* / Customer, do you have Dogbara herbicide?
 Trader: *Yes, e dey.* / Yes, it is available.
 Buyer: *How much, you dey sell am?* / How much do you sell it?
 Trader: *Na six thousand naira.* / It is six thousand naira.
 Buyer: *No be five thousand naira?* Is it not five thousand naira?
 Trader: *No, na the price. You go like another type?* / No, that is the price. Will you like another type?

19. Trader: *This oil de red well well....* / The oil is very red.
 Buyer: *No problem. I go buy, make I test am today.* / No problem, I will buy and test it today.

20. Trader: *nwa obere ego, nwa obere ego. Na chunkiri mone, chunkiri money. Brother, sister, I dey repeat wetin I dey talk, make you know say I mean am.* / Small money, small money, very small money, very small money, Brother, sister.

21. Trader: *Buy your okpa* (an Igbo (people from the South Eastern region of Nigeria) native food made from bambara groundnuts' flour).
 Buyer: *How you dey sell am?* / How much do you sell it?
 Trader: *These ones na two two hundred naira* (pointing at them) *while these big ones na five five hundred* (pointing at the big ones).

Trader: These ones are two hundred naira each while these big ones are five hundred naira each. (pointing at them)

Buyer: *Put one five hundred naira own.*/ Put one that costs five hundred naira.

Trader: Take. (Giving it to the buyer)

All links were verified by the editors and found to be functioning before the publication of this text in 2025.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

FUNDING

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this paper.

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0>

SEKAR DIVA PARASDYA¹
EDI SANTOSO²
MITE SETIANSAH³

REPRESENTATION OF VULNERABILITY OF FEMALE WORKERS IN THE FILM *SLEEP CALL* (2023) – A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS

Abstract. Film is a projection of the realities that grow and develop in society. In the current industrial revolution era, film practitioners increasingly highlight societal problems, for example, those related to economic issues. The film *Sleep Call* (2023) depicts many societal problems, ranging from the current reality of vulnerability to the trap of online loans to meet economic needs to the issue of how women can experience multi-layered vulnerability due to economic problems. This research aims to analyze and describe the representation of female workers' vulnerability through the main character, Dina, a former flight attendant who is trapped in an online loan-debt cycle while caring for her sick mother. Using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, this research examines the denotative and connotative meanings in the film across its visual, verbal, and audio aspects. The results show that the film *Sleep Call* (2023) represents three main forms of vulnerability: economic vulnerability through online loan debt traps, social vulnerability through job stigmatization, and psychological vulnerability due to past

¹ <http://orcid.org/0009-0004-9203-3527>, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Purwokerto, Indonesia, diva.parasdya@mhs.unsoed.ac.id

² <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8178-5740>, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Purwokerto, Indonesia, edi.santoso@unsoed.ac.id

³ <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7623-5581>, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Purwokerto, Indonesia, mite.setiansah@unsoed.ac.id

trauma and current circumstances. Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis of the film reveals how it serves not only as a reflection of social reality but also as a critical medium that addresses various issues in the contemporary socio-economic context. Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of gender representation studies in Indonesian film media. In practice, the findings of this research can inform policymakers in designing regulations to protect women workers.

Keywords: film analysis; female vulnerability; gender studies; media representation; workplace issues

1. Introduction

Films, as a form of mass media, serve not only as a medium for entertainment but also as a tool for propaganda, education, and the conveyance of cultural values within society (Gan, 2017). With their power to reach diverse social segments, filmmakers can influence or alter audience perceptions through the messages conveyed in films (Jayanti *et al.*, 2023; Sobur, 2009). Essentially, films are projections of realities that grow and develop within society (Asri, 2020; Wibowo, 2019). Filmmakers are increasingly addressing societal issues, such as economic challenges.

The film *Sleep Call* (2023) portrays various societal problems, including the current reality of individuals becoming entangled in online loans to meet economic needs and the layered vulnerabilities faced by women due to economic struggles. Through the main character, Dina, this film tells the story of a woman who becomes the family breadwinner and faces various forms of vulnerability as she is trapped in online loans.

Dina is a woman who serves as the family breadwinner. She works to support herself and cover her mother's medical expenses at a nursing home. In addition, Dina must pay off her debts, which ultimately trap her in a cycle of online loans. This situation led to her being fired from her previous job. Her superiors exploit Dina's powerless condition at the online lending company where she borrowed money. Dina is allowed to work at the company, but she must comply with all of her superior's orders. Dina experiences multiple instances of sexual violence by her superior, but she is unable to refuse or report the abuse due to her financial situation. Both Dina and her mother suffer from severe trauma due to the violence Dina endured from her father when she was a child.

Dina's mother also couldn't resist or report the abuse from her husband, as she believed her husband held too much power. At one point, Dina's mother even attempted suicide, urging Dina to join her in ending their lives. This traumatic experience led to Dina's mother being placed in a nursing home, as no other family member could care for her.

In the modern era, awareness of gender equality between women and men has grown significantly. Women, previously confined to domestic roles, now actively participate in economic activities and public spheres (Syafuruddin *et al.*, 2022; Triana & Krisnani, 2018; Tuwu, 2018). This is evident in Indonesia's female labor force participation rate, which reached 53.41% in 2022 (Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia, 2022). Although still relatively low, this figure has shown growth over the past five years. Many women now hold strategic positions in the workforce (Haris *et al.*, 2019; Komari *et al.*, 2023). Academically, much research focuses on gender mainstreaming (Subagya *et al.*, 2013). This condition enables opportunities for women to fulfill their roles. Through empowerment initiatives, women can achieve economic independence and self-reliance (Purnama, 2018).

Women not only strengthen family and community economic resilience but also contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth (Mutmainah, 2020; Pahlevi & Jauhariyah, 2022; Setyawati & Priyo Siswanto, 2020). This underscores their pivotal role in development and economic improvement. However, women working in the public sector are often linked to the economic conditions of their households. Economic reasons and poverty are frequently cited as key factors (Aeni, 2019; Triana & Krisnani, 2018; Tuwu, 2018).

Working women can increase their income, but they may also face injustices (Aeni, 2019; Hana & Oktavianti, 2023). The injustices experienced by women in the workplace include violations of labor rights such as unilateral termination of employment, lack of severance compensation, denial of maternity leave, violations of maternity rights, wage discrimination based on gender, and sexual harassment (Shabrina, 2022; Tuwu, 2018). These injustices stem from power imbalances, policies that fail to accommodate women's needs, and patriarchal cultures that legitimize male dominance over women (Dwiyanti, 2014; Subagya *et al.*, 2013; Suprihatin & Azis, 2020; Zulfa & Widaningrum, 2023).

According to Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan, workplace violence ranked third among various forms of violence against women, with 115 reported cases (Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan, 2023). The reported cases included sexual harassment and assault in private companies and the media industry (Catatan Tahunan Komnas Perempuan 2023, 2023). The impacts of sexual harassment experienced by victims include unsafe working conditions, disrupted work processes, psychological pressure, and decreased work productivity (Hanim, 2018; Novianti & Rakhmad, 2020).

This research analyzes and describes the representation of women workers' vulnerability in the film *Sleep Call* (2023), with the research question: How is the vulnerability of female workers represented in the film *Sleep Call* (2023)? The aim of this study is to describe the representation of female workers' vulnerabilities in the film *Sleep Call*.

2. Literature review

This literature review examines previous research on the vulnerability of female workers, economic empowerment, and gender discrimination in the workplace, as well as the use of semiotic analysis in the representation of women in film.

Research by Mamun and Hoque (2022) titled *The Impact of Paid Employment on Women's Empowerment: A Case Study of Female Garment Workers in Bangladesh* found that economically empowered and independent women have high confidence in their life choices (Mamun & Hoque, 2022). Conversely, Bosmans *et al.* (2023), in *Experiences of Insecurity Among Non-Standard Workers Across Different Welfare States: A Qualitative Cross-Country Study*, highlighted that non-standard workers in countries such as Belgium, Canada, Chile, Spain, Sweden, and the United States experience insecurity in health and welfare (Bosmans *et al.*, 2023).

Furthermore, a study by Zulfa and Widaningrum (2023), titled *Analysis of the Capacity and Vulnerability of Women Seaweed Workers in Border Areas during the Covid-19 Pandemic Crisis*, found that female seaweed workers (*mabbetang* women) experienced vulnerabilities and capacities in conducting *mabbetang* activities during the Covid-19 crisis. The identified

vulnerabilities included limited access to health services, infrastructure, and capital, as well as the burden of dual responsibilities (Zulfa & Widaningrum, 2023).

A study by Hanim (2018), titled *The Role of Single Parent Women in Fulfilling the Economic Function of the Family (Case Study: Single Parent Women Workers at Tosyma Reflexology, South Jakarta)*, stated that women who serve as heads of households and primary breadwinners experience multiple vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities include unmet economic needs, reduced interaction and disrupted communication with their children, and psychological problems that negatively impact family function fulfillment (Hanim, 2018). In line with this research, a study by Novianti and Rakhmad (2020) found that female workers can also experience gender-based vulnerabilities. Their research revealed that women working in the television industry, particularly at TVRI, have faced discriminatory treatment from male colleagues and supervisors. This treatment includes manifestations of inferiority, subordination, stereotypes, marginalization, and sexual harassment (Novianti & Rakhmad, 2020).

Furthermore, the study by Lamapaha et al. (2022), titled *The Social Reality Construction of Gender Discrimination Against Female Heads of Households in the Film Ola Sita Inawae (A Semiotic Analysis by Ferdinand de Saussure)*, explored gender discrimination faced by female heads of households as depicted in the film *Ola Sita Inawae*, using Ferdinand de Saussure's Semiotic Theory. The film's social reality depicts patriarchal culture and traditional customs that lead to various social problems. These problems limit women's freedom and violate the rights they should have, particularly for female heads of households (Lamapaha et al., 2022).

Unlike the research by Lamapaha et al. (2022), research by Jayanti et al. (2023) titled *Representation of the Meaning of Women in Self-Respect (Semiotic Analysis of the Film Imperfect by Ernest Prakasa)* used Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis to identify signs that depict women in self-respect. In line with this research, a study by Jayanti et al. (2023) suggests that the issues raised in this film are experienced by many women in Indonesia, where the prevailing beauty standards in society often cause women to lose their self-confidence (Jayanti et al., 2023).

Based on a review of previous research, it is clear that the forms of vulnerability experienced by women intersect. These vulnerabilities

include economic vulnerability for female heads of households, gender discrimination in the workplace, and limited access and participation in decision-making. Although research has examined the vulnerability of female workers and semiotic analysis in films, several gaps remain. Previous research has tended to focus on only one aspect of vulnerability, not yet exploring in depth the intersection between economic and gender vulnerabilities in the context of female workers. Additionally, previous studies using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis in Indonesian cinema have focused more on cultural symbol analysis. However, applying Barthes' analysis to examine the intersections of economic and gender vulnerabilities in Indonesian films poses limitations. Furthermore, previous research has not comprehensively explored the connotative meaning systems and social myths surrounding the representation of female workers in film media.

Therefore, the researcher will explore this reality through a film and describe its representation in *Sleep Call* (2023). The theoretical approach used in this study differs from that of previous research, which employed Ferdinand de Saussure's Semiotic Theory. This study will utilize Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory to analyze the connotative meaning system and the social myths surrounding the representation of female workers. It is hoped that this research will provide valuable insights for the broader community on the importance of fulfilling female workers' rights to ensure workplace justice.

Table 1

Literature Review

Year	Authors	Research Focus	Method	Key Findings	Relevance to Current Study
2018	Hanim	Single-parent women workers	Case Study	Economic vulnerability leads to layered impacts on family functions.	Demonstrates economic vulnerability patterns.
2020	Novianti and Rakhmad	Women in the television industry	Qualitative Analysis	Gender discrimination manifests in multiple forms, including sexual harassment.	Show workplace vulnerability patterns.
2022	Mamun and Hoque	Female worker empowerment	Qualitative Analysis	Paid employment has a significant positive impact on the economic, social, and psychological empowerment of women workers in the garment sector.	Demonstrates the impact of economic empowerment on women's welfare.
2022	Lamapha <i>et al.</i>	Gender discrimination in film	Saussure's Semiotics	Patriarchal culture influences the social construction of female heads of households.	Provides a film analysis perspective.
2023	Zulfa and Widaningrum	Women seaweed workers	Qualitative Analysis	Multiple vulnerabilities, including health access, infrastructure, capital, and dual burden.	Illustrates intersecting vulnerabilities.
2023	Jayanti <i>et al.</i>		Roland Barthes' semiotics	Women in self-respect go through several phases of self-acceptance.	Provides a film analysis perspective.
2023	Bosmans <i>et al.</i>	Non-standard workers' security	Qualitative Analysis	Health and welfare insecurity across different contexts.	Demonstrates universal vulnerability patterns.

3. Theoretical framework

Semiotics is the study or method of analyzing signs. It involves the study of various types of signs, how these signs convey meaning, and how they relate to the humans who use them (Barthes, 2017). A sign is a human construction and can only be understood in the context of the humans who use it. Semiotics studies how humanity assigns meaning to things. To assign meaning means that objects do not only carry information, but also constitute a structured system of signs (Sobur, 2009).

In this study, Roland Barthes' semiotic theory is used to analyze the signs found in the film *Sleep Call* (2023). Barthes' semiotics emphasizes three key elements in understanding signs: denotative meaning, connotative meaning, and myth (Barthes, 1988; Jadou & Ghabra, 2021). Denotative meaning reveals the clear, visible meaning, also known as the literal or actual meaning. Connotative meaning reveals the deeper meanings embedded in signs. Meanwhile, myth refers to the beliefs that develop within society due to the influence of the culture and social norms surrounding certain concepts (Monanda & Wilyanti, 2023). This involves observing and interpreting the correlation between what is visibly apparent (denotative) and the deeper meaning within the signs (connotative) (Sobur, 2009).

In Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, the researcher analyzes three types of signs: visual, verbal, and audio (Jadou & Ghabra, 2021). These signs will then be interconnected to derive their denotative and connotative meanings, ultimately leading to the identification of myths and ideologies (Barthes, 2017). The researcher chose Barthes' semiotic method because it is particularly suited for this cultural studies research and aids in analyzing the visual, verbal, and audio signs present in the film *Sleep Call* (2023). By applying this method, the researcher will be able to extract both denotative and connotative meanings, thereby revealing the myths and ideologies conveyed in *Sleep Call* (2023).

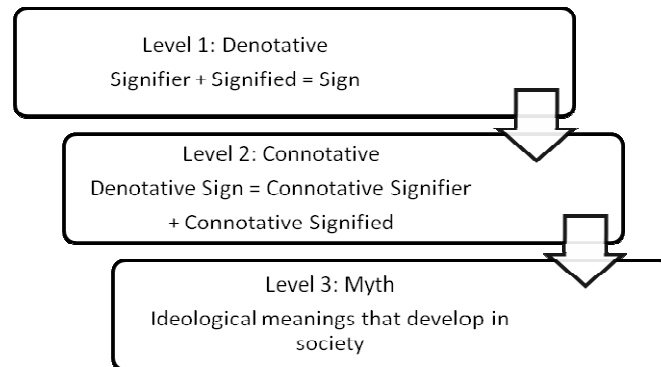


Figure 1. Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis (West & Turner, 2007)

Figure 1 illustrates the three levels of meaning of the sign in Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. At the first level, denotation, a sign is formed through the relationship between the signifier – the physical form of the sign, which can be a word, image, sound, or symbol – and the signified – the concept or meaning referred to by the signifier – thus producing a direct, literal, and objective meaning (Jadou & Ghabra, 2021). Next, at the second level, connotation, the denotative sign that has been formed can become a new signifier, constructing another meaning. At this level, the meaning is deeper, no longer merely literal, but influenced by social, cultural, and emotional context (Barthes, 2017). At the third level, myth, the connotative meaning further develops into a representation of ideology that is alive and considered natural in society. At this level, signs are used to naturalize particular values or perspectives (Barthes, 2017; Jadou & Ghabra, 2021). Thus, Figure 1 demonstrates how a sign evolves from its basic meaning into a myth imbued with ideological significance.

4. Methodology

This study uses a descriptive qualitative research method. The result of this study is descriptive data in the form of written words from the observed objects (Moloeng, 2016). The research process involves important efforts such as formulating research questions and procedures, gathering specific data from the research object, analyzing the data inductively, and interpreting the data (Creswell, 2019). The object of this research is

the 2023 film *Sleep Call*, a production by IDN Pictures, directed by Fajar Nugros. The researchers chose *Sleep Call* (2023) because it is believed to effectively portray societal realities, particularly the vulnerabilities experienced by female workers due to economic issues. The data collection techniques in this study will involve observation and documentation. The research will be conducted by observing and analyzing the meanings and symbols present in the film *Sleep Call* (2023) (Creswell, 2019). The data analysis used in this study will employ Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. In this research, Roland Barthes' semiotics aims to provide an understanding and a comprehensive view of the meanings (denotative and connotative) embedded in *Sleep Call* (2023) through the film's visual, verbal, and audio forms (Sobur, 2009).

For the purpose of analysis, this study uses signs found in scenes from the film *Sleep Call* (2023). Within a single theme about the vulnerability of working women, there may be several signs across different scenes. Signifier 1, 2, etc., refers to the first, second, etc., signs found in several scenes that depict the theme of working women's vulnerability. This marker includes visual elements, dialogue, symbols, and situational context that consistently appear across various scenes and will be analyzed through denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings based on Roland Barthes' semiotic theory.

The conceptual framework for this study begins with the release of *Sleep Call*, a 2023 production by IDN Pictures, directed by Fajar Nugros. The film portrays several societal issues, including the current reality in which individuals are vulnerable to online loans to meet their economic needs, as well as how women can experience multiple layers of vulnerability due to economic challenges. The researcher will then select scenes from the film that reflect the vulnerability experienced by female workers. These selected scenes will be examined through Roland Barthes' Semiotic theory, analyzing the signs of denotation, connotation, and myths. Based on this analysis, the study will reveal how the vulnerability of female workers is represented in *Sleep Call* (2023). The analytical procedure in this study follows these steps:

1. Scene selection: selecting several scenes relevant to the representation of working women's vulnerability. The scene focuses on the vulnerability experienced by female workers in the film *Sleep Call* (2023).

2. Sign categorization and thematic grouping: grouping the signs found in scenes according to the similarity of types of vulnerability experienced by female workers. Then naming the thematic groups.
3. Signifier identification: identifying signs that appear in scenes to be categorized according to the predetermined theme of female workers' vulnerability.
4. Scene description: providing detailed descriptions of each scene containing the markers to be analyzed.
5. Semiotic analysis: analyzing the denotative and connotative meaning of each signifier. Revealing the social myths contained in the representation of each marker.
6. Conclusion: concluding the representation of working women's vulnerability in the film *Sleep Call* (2023) based on the analysis of signifiers found across various scenes.

5. Results and discussion

5.1. Film Scene Analysis of *Sleep Call* (2023)

Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis in this research is focused on the representation of women workers' vulnerability in the film *Sleep Call*. As an analytical framework, Barthes' semiotic theory is applied to identify three levels of meaning: 1) denotative (what appears), 2) connotative (cultural and personal meanings), and 3) myth (ideological values). This section analyzes key scenes that depict the various forms of vulnerability experienced by female characters in the film.

Theme 1

Double Burden: Supporting a Sick Mother. This scene depicts the conflict of women's dual roles: working while caring for a sick mother. Visual and verbal cues indicate emotional stress, gestures of exhaustion, and dialogue that expresses the dilemma between family responsibilities and work.

Signifier 1: Mother Dina holds a sunflower in her wheelchair. Mother Dina mistakes Dina for Bella, Dina's friend. Mother Dina feels that

Dina has been visiting her less frequently. Then Dina, mistaken for Bella, replies that she cannot visit her mother because she is busy working to cover her mother's medical expenses. Mother Dina validates this response, acknowledging that Dina is a good child and a hard worker.

Signifier 2: Dina is putting all the money from her wallet into an envelope and writing "mother's medical expenses" on the front. Narration (Dina's voice): "The medical and hospital costs made me eventually have to leave behind what I've always wanted to fight for."

Signified: The sunflower in this scene symbolizes courage and resilience. It signifies that Dina and her mother have faced numerous challenges in their lives. This scene portrays Dina as a working woman who must also financially support her sick mother. Dina also expresses her feelings, revealing that she has sacrificed her dream of becoming a flight attendant in order to work and provide for her family.

Myth: Women's workforce participation is often portrayed as a result of economic pressure. Women's contribution to earning income is frequently seen as an additional effort to improve the family's welfare. However, the role of women as the primary breadwinners challenges this view. Their position as the backbone of the family demonstrates women's capability to shoulder economic responsibilities.

Theme 2

Verbal Abuse from the Boss. This scene highlights a power dynamic through the use of harsh or demeaning verbal language by a superior. The analysis focuses on word choice, intonation, dominant gestures, and the victim's nonverbal responses that indicate an unequal position within the workplace hierarchy.

Signifier: In this scene, Bayu, as the manager, is giving a morning briefing to the workers. Bayu instructs the workers to practice different

facial expressions – smiling and frowning – while talking to clients or potential clients. Several times, Bayu scolds the workers who fail to do it correctly, using harsh words such as "angry, like you're yelling at your illegitimate child" and "your smile is not pure enough, Nur. You're acting all holier-than-thou." However, when Bayu addresses Dina, his tone softens, saying, "Your smile is a bit less sweet, Bella, good."

Signified: During the morning briefing, it is evident that Bayu uses degrading language towards the female workers. Meanwhile, Bayu treats Dina differently due to personal feelings. Bayu is also seen making gestures that invade personal space.

Myth: In the workplace, women often experience various forms of violence, ranging from harsh words and unpleasant treatment to rules or policies that disadvantage them. This occurs due to the deeply ingrained societal view that perceives women as inferior to men.

Theme 3

Dina Harassed by Debt Collectors. The scene depicts the intimidation and psychological pressure the female character experiences from debt collectors. Audio cues include loud tones of voice, verbal threats, and coercive dialogue.

Signifier: Dina is receiving a call from a debt collector. While crying, Dina explains that she is unable to pay the debt because she has just paid for her mother's medical expenses. The debt collector responds harshly, using vulgar language and threatening to spread Dina's number to others.

Signified: Dina explains that her circumstances forced her to take online loans, and now she is unable to repay them. Dina was eventually fired from her previous job as a flight attendant. Dina's helplessness becomes a vulnerability that allows her superiors to exploit her for their personal satisfaction.

Myth: Economic difficulties and the vulnerable position of women are interlinked in an endless cycle. When women face financial hardship, they are often forced to accept various unfair situations. The pressure to meet basic needs makes it difficult for them to resist or fight against the unjust treatment they receive.

Theme 4

Pressure from the Boss Due to Dina's Helplessness. This scene depicts abuse of power within the workplace hierarchy, where a superior exploits a subordinate's economic vulnerability. Visual cues include a closed setting (private office), positioning that reflects a power imbalance, and intimidating body language contrasted with the victim's submissive posture. Verbal cues involve commands that enforce compliance and implicit threats to job security.

Signifier: Mr. Tommy calls Dina into his office because she defied Bayu's orders. Mr. Tommy says that Dina should be able to follow Bayu's instructions, even if it means doing anything necessary. Dina should be grateful for having been given the job to pay off her debts. Mr. Tommy also tells Dina that she must obey Bayu. As he moves closer to Dina, Mr. Tommy instructs her not to tell anyone about the special treatment she is receiving. Dina can only comply with his orders and apologize.

Signified: Mr. Tommy exploits Dina's helplessness for his own pleasure. Dina, feeling powerless due to her growing debt, is unable to resist the sexual harassment she faces from her superior.

Myth: When facing workplace harassment, many women choose to remain silent for fear of losing their jobs. Especially if the perpetrator is a superior or a colleague, they feel too intimidated to report the incident.

Theme 5

Double Burden: Women Workers and Motherhood. The scene depicts the conflict of fulfilling dual roles as a worker and a mother.

Signifier 1: Bella and Dina are chatting in the office pantry. Bella invites Dina to join a birthday party for Mr. Tommy. Bella persuades Dina to come, explaining that this is an opportunity for her to hang out again, just like before she had a child and got married. Dina feels that she doesn't need to attend, as there will be many other friends there, so Bella won't be lonely. Dina expresses that Bella has distanced herself from her after having a child and getting married. Bella explains that she hasn't had the chance to visit Dina's mother because she unexpectedly had a child, then quickly got married, and feels trapped in this new situation.

Signifier 2: Bella and Dina meet at a café. Bella apologizes to Dina for interrupting their conversation to take care of her child. Bella says that her husband cannot take care of the child.

Sign 3: When the news of Mr. Tommy's death reaches the office employees, Mona cries because she has lost her job and is worried about the future of her child.

Signified: Bella is having a child out of wedlock, which is why she has to get married quickly. Bella feels that life after marriage and having a child has made her less free than before. In contrast to Bella's situation, Mona is a single mother who must support her child.

Myth: Many women bear dual roles within the family. In addition to working to meet economic needs, they still face domestic responsibilities, such as caring for the house and children.

Theme 6

Women's Powerlessness and Lack of Authority. The scene portrays women's powerlessness in decision-making.

Signifier 1: Ibu Dina says she is powerless because Dina's father holds significant authority.

Signifier 2: Ibu Dina pours insecticide into two glasses and asks young Dina to drink it with her. Young Dina throws the glass she's holding away and hugs her mother.

Signified: Ibu Dina experiences domestic violence from her husband, Dina's father. Throughout the years, Ibu Dina has remained silent. When she could no longer bear it, she chose to commit suicide together with Dina. However, Dina prevented her and comforted her. This incident caused deep trauma for both Dina and her mother.

Myth: Women, as heads of households and primary breadwinners, face not only economic burdens but also significant psychological pressure.

5.2. Identification of female workers' vulnerabilities

Based on Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis of scenes in the film *Sleep Call* (2023), three main forms of vulnerability can be identified: economic, social, and psychological, as shown in Figure 2. These three forms of vulnerability are interconnected and impact the lives of female characters in the films. Economic vulnerability is evident in online debt traps and the double burden borne by female characters, especially Dina, the family breadwinner. Social vulnerability appears in the form of workplace harassment, verbal violence, and unequal power relations. Psychological vulnerability emerges as a result of past trauma and pressure from various parties.

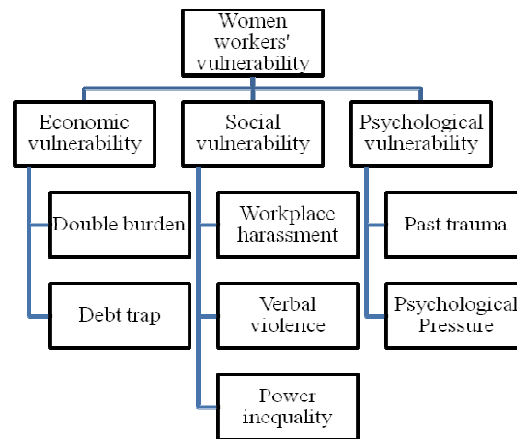


Figure 2. Representation of Female Workers' Vulnerability
(Source: authors' own elaboration)

The film shows how these vulnerabilities reinforce one another, creating a cycle difficult for female characters to break. The significance of these findings underscores the importance of policies that protect women workers and strengthen social support systems for those in vulnerable positions.

The vulnerability of female workers is depicted through the violence they experience in the workplace. Women in the work environment often face complex forms of violence, including verbal, non-verbal, and structural violence (Eriyanti, 2017). Psychological and economic factors play a significant role in maintaining the cycle of violence. The majority of women choose to remain silent in the face of discrimination and harassment due to fear of professional consequences. The position of the perpetrator – whether a superior or a colleague – further complicates the process of reporting and resolving conflicts (Novianti & Rakhmad, 2020; Suprihatin & Azis, 2020).

Powerlessness and poverty have a reciprocal relationship in the context of women's experiences. Limited access to economic resources and opportunities to participate in productive activities push women into a state of dependence (Aeni, 2019; Triana & Krisnani, 2018; Tuwu, 2018). The lack of social and economic capital forces them to accept various forms of injustice as survival strategies. This unequal social structure creates a cycle of poverty and vulnerability. Women who lack adequate skills and

resources become further marginalized in the patriarchal economic system (Eriyanti, 2017; Jondar *et al.*, 2022). They are forced to accept low-paying jobs, poor working conditions, and are at risk of facing various forms of exploitation (Shabrina, 2022; Tuwu, 2018). The fundamental transformation needed to break this cycle of discrimination involves systemic changes in education, economic opportunities, and cultural understanding of gender equality (Hadiyanti *et al.*, 2023; Junaidi & Pynanjung, 2023).

Bella is a close friend of Dina's. Although their relationship grew distant after Bella had a child and got married, due to her busy schedule caring for her child and household, Bella feels she cannot do whatever she wants freely because of her responsibilities as a mother and wife. Meanwhile, there is a character named Mona, an employee at the online loan company where Dina and Bella work. Mona is a single mother who works to support her child. This job is Mona's only source of livelihood.

In this section, the vulnerability of female workers is depicted through the dual burden they face. Poverty drives women to work, triggering complex gender inequalities (Chandra & Fatmariza, 2020). Difficult economic conditions force women to bear a double burden that is disadvantageous. Women, whether as housewives, single parents, or primary breadwinners, face significant challenges in balancing economic and domestic demands (Eku & Adam, 2021; Komari *et al.*, 2023). This double burden includes the responsibility of earning a living while managing household chores and caring for children. Without family support, this burden can negatively impact women's well-being and quality of life (Eku & Adam, 2021).

In their study of the film *Sleep Call* (2023), the researchers present an analysis and interpretation of the collected data. Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis in this study reveals various representations of the social realities faced by women in both work and personal life (Setiawan *et al.*, 2020). By using an analytical approach that examines signs at the denotative and connotative levels, this research successfully identifies how the film portrays the complexity of roles and challenges faced by female workers in contemporary society (Habibah & Mazaya, 2023; Putri *et al.*, 2023). At the denotative level, the film portrays the daily life of women who bear dual roles, facing various forms of violence at work, and struggling with economic difficulties. Meanwhile, at the connotative level, it reveals a deeper meaning behind these representations, showing the power

imbalance, the impact of the patriarchal system, and the structural vulnerabilities that women face in the socio-economic context.

Through myth analysis, this study reveals how *Sleep Call* (2023) challenges various stereotypes and dominant views about women's roles in society. The film demonstrates that women's involvement in the workforce is not merely an effort to earn additional income, but is often a primary responsibility for supporting the family. Additionally, the film explores how forms of violence and exploitation against women in the workplace still frequently occur and tend to remain hidden due to various structural factors.

The results of Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis in this study emphasize how the film functions as a medium that reflects and critiques social reality, particularly the issues faced by women in the contemporary socio-economic context. As Gan (2017) argues, films not only serve as entertainment media but also as a means of propaganda, education, and the conveyance of cultural values within society (Gan, 2017). Through denotative and connotative analysis, this study reveals how the examined film effectively conveys the realities of working women, with their various complexities.

Film, as a mass media product, can reach diverse social segments and influence its audience's perspectives. This is reflected in the study's findings, which demonstrate that the film offers a critique of the social system that perpetuates gender inequality. Through visual representations and the narrative, the film not only portrays surface-level issues but also invites viewers to understand and reflect on the roots of the challenges women face in society.

6. Conclusion

Through Roland Barthes' Semiotic analysis, this research finds that women's contributions in the professional sphere are not merely an effort to earn extra income but often serve as the family's main economic support. This is often linked to economic factors, where poverty is a driving force that "forces" women to work. The lack of social and economic capital forces them to accept various forms of injustice as a survival strategy.

This is in line with previous research that highlighted the economic vulnerability of female heads of households as well as gender discrimination in the workplace. However, this study offers novelty by revealing how these vulnerabilities are represented through the system of sign in film, particularly at the levels of connotation and myth as explained in Barthes' semiotics. The findings of this study provide a deeper understanding of how film media can serve as a medium for critiquing and questioning the social structures that perpetuate gender injustice. Film is not just a passive space for representation but an active instrument capable of uncovering the dynamics of social issues experienced by women in various aspects of life.

Through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, it is revealed that the representation of women in the film not only reflects the existing social reality but also has the potential to encourage critical awareness about the importance of social change to create a more just and equitable environment for women, both in the context of work and personal life. The findings of this research reinforce the understanding of film's strategic role in shaping social awareness and promoting a shift in societal perspectives. As a mass media product with a broad reach, film not only serves as a mirror reflecting social reality but also as an instrument with the potential to drive social transformation towards a more just and equitable society, particularly in the context of gender relations and socio-economic justice.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The study focused primarily on the film's content without exploring audience reception or the filmmakers' intentions, which could provide additional layers of understanding about how these representations impact public perception. Furthermore, the film's cultural specificity may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts where gender dynamics and workplace structures differ. Future research should investigate how different audiences interpret and respond to the representation of workplace gender dynamics in films like *Sleep Call* (2023), with a particular focus on how these cinematic portrayals might influence public understanding of gender issues and shape societal attitudes toward female workers' vulnerability in professional environments.

REFERENCES

- Aeni, N. (2019). Pengambilan Keputusan Menjadi Pekerja Migran Indonesia Perempuan [Decision-making of Indonesian female migrant workers]. *Jurnal Litbang: Media Informasi Penelitian, Pengembangan Dan IPTEK* [Journal of Research and Development: Information Media of Research, Development, and Science and Technology], 15(2), 107–120. <https://doi.org/10.33658/jl.v15i2.151>.
- Asri, R. (2020). Membaca Film Sebagai Sebuah Teks: Analisis Isi Film “Nanti Kita Cerita Tentang Hari Ini (NKCTHI).” [Reading film as a text: content analysis of the film “Nanti Kita Cerita Tentang Hari Ini (NKCTHI).”] *Jurnal Al Azhar Indonesia Seri Ilmu Sosial* [Al Azhar Indonesia Journal of Social Sciences], 1(2), 74. <https://doi.org/10.36722/jaiss.v1i2.462>.
- Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia. (2022). *Tingkat Partisipasi Angkatan Kerja Menurut Jenis Kelamin* [Labor force participation rate by gender]. <https://www.bps.go.id/id/statistics-table/2/MjIwMCMY/Tingkat-Partisipasi-Angkatan-Kerja-Menurut-Jenis-Kelamin.Html>.
- Barthes, R. (1988). The semiotic challenge. *Choice Reviews Online*, 26(02), 26-0811-26-0811. <https://doi.org/10.5860/CHOICE.26-0811>.
- Barthes, R. (2017). The Death of the Author. In *The Continental Aesthetics Reader* (pp. 519–524). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351226387-35>.
- Bosmans, K., Vignola, E.F., Álvarez-López, V., Julià, M., Ahonen, E.Q., Bolívar, M., Gutiérrez-Zamora, M., Ivarsson, L., Kvart, S., Muntaner, C., O’Campo, P., Ruiz, M.E., Vänerhagen, K., Cuervo, I., Davis, L., Diaz, I., Escrig-Piñol, A., Gunn, V., Lewchuk, W., ... Baron, S.L. (2023). Experiences of Insecurity Among Non-Standard Workers Across Different Welfare States: A Qualitative Cross-Country Study. *Social Science and Medicine*, 327. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2023.115970>.
- Chandra, K.Y., & Fatmariza, F. (2020). Beban Ganda: Kerentanan Perempuan pada Keluarga Miskin [Double burden: women’s vulnerability in poor families]. *Journal of Civic Education*, 3(4), 430–439. <https://doi.org/10.24036/jce.v3i4.412>.

- Creswell, J.W. (2019). *Research Design: Pendekatan Metode Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, dan Campuran, Edisi Keempat* [Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches], Fourth Edition. Pustaka Belajar.
- Dwiyanti, F. (2014). Pelecehan Seksual Pada Perempuan di Tempat Kerja [Sexual harassment against women in the workplace]. *Jurnal Kriminologi* [Indonesia Indonesian Journal of Criminology], 10(1), 29–36.
- Eku, A., & Adam, A. (2021). Perempuan Pemecah Batu (Studi Kasus Perempuan Pekerja Pemecah Batu di Kecamatan Galela, Kabupaten Halmahera Utara) [Women stone breakers (a case study of women working as stone breakers in Galela district, North Halmahera regency)]. *Al-Wardah: Jurnal Kajian Perempuan, Gender Dan Agama* [Al-Wardah: Journal of International Relations], 15(1), 15. <https://doi.org/10.46339/al-wardah.xx.xxx>.
- Eriyanti, L.D. (2017). Pemikiran Johan Galtung tentang Kekerasan dalam Perspektif Feminisme [Johan Galtung's thoughts on violence from feminist perspective]. *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional* [Journal of International Relations], 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.18196/hi.61102>.
- Gan, G.G. (2017). Representasi Ketidakadilan Gender Pada Film Uang Panai (Analisis Isi Kuantitatif Ketidakadilan Gender Dalam Film Uang Panai) [Representation of gender inequality in the film Uang Panai (Quantitative content analysis of gender inequality in the film Uang Panai)]. *Jurnal Komunikasi* [Journal of Communication], 2, 2579–3292. www.kaltimoke.com.
- Habibah, S.U., & Mazaya, N.W. (2023). Humanity Values in the video Zain Ramadan 2019 Al-Din Tamam Al-Akhlaq: Roland Barthes' semiotics study. *Afshaha: Journal of Arabic Language and Literature*, 2(1), 1–31. <https://doi.org/10.18860/afshaha.v2i1.20789>.
- Hadiyanti, P., Koeswanto, S., & Mawardi, M. (2023). *Model Pendekatan Kelompok Dalam Pemberdayaan Masyarakat* [Group approach model in community empowerment]. Agree Media Publishing.
- Hana, K.F., & Oktaviyanti, A. (2023). Dampak Kehadiran Pabrik Bagi Pekerja Perempuan: Antara Kesejahteraan Ekonomi dan Perceraian [The impact of factory presence on female workers: between economic welfare and divorce]. *Equalita: Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Anak* [Equalita: Journal of Gender and Child Studies], 5(1), 56–66.

- Hanim, H. (2018). Peran Perempuan Single Parent Dalam Pemenuhan Fungsi Ekonomi Dalam Keluarga Studi Kasus: Perempuan Single Parent Pekerja di Pijat Refleksi Tosyma Jakarta Selatan. [The role of single-parent women in fulfilling the economic function of the family (case study: single-parent women working at Tosyma Reflexology, South Jakarta)]. *Jurnal Ilmu Dan Budaya [Journal of Science and Culture]*, 41(60), 7081–7100.
- Haris, D., Jendrius, J., & Afrizal, A. (2019). Kesenjangan Gender dalam Industri Media: Studi Mobilitas Vertikal Karir Pekerja Perempuan di Riau Televisi. [Gender equality in the media industry: a study of vertical career mobility of female workers at riau television]. *Kafa'ah: Journal of Gender Studies [Kafa'ah: Journal of Gender Studies]*, 9(2), 163. <https://doi.org/10.15548/jk.v9i2.265>.
- Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan. (2023). *Annual Report (CATAHU) 2023: Opportunities to strengthen response systems amid increasing complexity of violence against women*. Jakarta: Komnas Perempuan. <https://komnasperempuan.go.id/catatan-tahunan-detail/catahu-2023-peluang-penguatan-sistem-penyikapan-di-tengah-peningkatan-kompleksitas-kekerasan-terhadap-perempuan>.
- Jadou, S.H., & Ghabra, I.M.M.M.Al. (2021). Barthes' Semiotic Theory and Interpretation of Signs. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities*, 11(3). <https://doi.org/10.37648/ijrssh.v11i03.027>.
- Jayanti, A.F., Riza, F., & Harahap, S. (2023). Representasi Makna Perempuan Dalam Menghargai Diri Sendiri (Analisis Semiotika Pada Film Imperfect Karya Ernest Prakasa). [Representation of women's self-respect (semiotic analysis of Ernest Prakasa's Film Imperfect)]. *JISOS Jurnal Ilmu Sosial [JISOS Journal of Social Sciences]*, 2(1). <http://bajangjournal.com/index.php/JISOS>.
- Jondar, A., Widodo, A.P., De Fretes, J., Hakim, L., Susanto, S., & Sujud, M. (2022). Johan Galtung's Concept of Peace Culture and Its Implementation in Indonesia. *Lire Journal (Journal of Linguistics and Literature)*, 6(2), 230–252. <https://doi.org/10.33019/lire.v6i2.163>.
- Junaidi, J., & Pynanjung, P.A. (2023). Peran Pemerintah Daerah Dalam Pemberdayaan Perempuan Melalui UKM di Kota Singkawang. [The role of local government in women's empowerment through

- SMEs in Singkawang City]. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat [Proceedings of the National Seminar on Community Service]*, 3(1), 179–192. <https://doi.org/10.33086/snpm.v3i1.1246>.
- Komari, N., Sulistiowati, S., Kurniawati, S., Daud, I., Afifah, N., & Giriati, G. (2023). Menciptakan Keseimbangan Antara Pekerjaan dan Keluarga bagi Pekerja Perempuan (Focus Group Discussion dengan Dharma Wanita Persatuan Kabupaten Mempawah). [Creating work-family balance for female workers (focus group discussion with the Dharma Wanita persatuan of Mempawah Regency)]. *Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat [Journal of Community Service]*, 14(1), 64–69. <https://doi.org/10.26877/e-dimas.v14i1.6735>.
- Lamapaha, A.M.S., Wutun, M., & Liliweri, Y.K.N. (2022). Konstruksi Realitas Sosial tentang Diskriminasi Gender Perempuan Kepala Keluarga dalam Film Ola Sita Inawae (Analisis Semiotika Ferdinand de Saussure). [Social construction of gender discrimination against female heads of families in the film Ola Sita Inawae (Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic analysis)]. *Jurnal Mahasiswa Komunikasi [Student Journal of Communication]*, 2(1), 111–121.
- Mamun, M.A.Al., & Hoque, M.M. (2022). The Impact of Paid Employment on Women's Empowerment: A Case Study of Female Garment Workers in Bangladesh. *World Development Sustainability*, 1, 100026. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wds.2022.100026>.
- Moloeng, L.J. (2016). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif [Qualitative research methodology]*. PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Monanda, D., & Wilyanti, L.S. (2023). Kajian Semiotika Roland Barthes Pada Cerpen Tamu Karya Budi Darma [Roland Barthes' semiotic study on Budi Darma's short story "Tamu."]. *Aksara: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia [Aksara: Scientific Journal of Indonesian Language and Literature Education]*, 7(1), 44. <https://doi.org/10.33087/aksara.v7i1.491>.
- Mutmainah, N. (2020). Peran Perempuan Dalam Pengembangan Ekonomi Melalui Kegiatan UMKM di Kabupaten Bantul [The role of women in economic development through MSME activities in Bantul Regency]. *Jurnal Kajian Pemerintah, Politik, Dan Birokrasi [Journal of Government, Politics, and Bureaucracy]*, 6(1), 1–7.

- Novianti, M.C., & Rakhmad, W.N. (2020). Perempuan Dalam Dunia Kerja (Coping Strategy Perempuan Pekerja di TVRI Ketika Mengalami Diskriminasi) [Women in the workforce (coping strategy of female workers at TVRI when facing discrimination)]. *Interaksi Online [Interaksi Online]*, 8(2).
- Nugros, F. (Director). (2023). *Sleep call* [Film]. Indonesia: IDN Pictures.
- Pahlevi, R., & Jauhariyah, N.A. (2022). Analisis Peran Partisipasi Perempuan Secara Ekonomi dan Sosial di Pesisir Pantai Muncar Banyuwangi. [Analysis of women's economic and social participation roles in the coastal area of Muncar, Banyuwangi]. *Jurnal Ekonomi Syariah Darussalam [Darussalam Journal of Sharia Economics]*, 3(1), 104–120. <https://doi.org/10.30739/jesdar.v3i1.1373>.
- Purnama, A. (2018). Pemberdayaan Wanita Rawan Sosial Ekonomi Melalui Peningkatan Kesejahteraan Keluarga [Empowerment of socio-economically vulnerable women through family welfare improvement]. *Jurnal Penelitian Kesejahteraan Sosial [Journal of Social Welfare Research]*, 17(4), 319–328.
- Putri, A.F., Inayah, A., & Wageyono, W. (2023). A semiotic analysis of Aladdin movie by using Roland Barthes' Theory. *LUNAR*, 6(2), 376–386. <https://doi.org/10.36526/ln.v6i2.2453>.
- Setiawan, M.P., Yoanita, D., & Wahjudianata, M. (2020). Representasi Peran Gender Dalam Film The Incredibles 2 [Representation of gender in the film The Incredibles 2]. *Jurnal E-Komunikasi [E-Komunikasi Journal]*, 8(1).
- Setyawati, E.Y., & Priyo Siswanto, R.S.H. (2020). Partisipasi Perempuan Dalam Pengelolaan Sampah Yang Bernilai Ekonomi dan Berbasis Kearifan Lokal [Women's participation in waste management with economic value and base don local wisdom]. *Jambura Geo Education Journal [Jambura Geo Education Journal]*, 1(2), 55–65. <https://doi.org/10.34312/jgej.v1i2.6899>.
- Shabrina, D. (2022, March 24). *Komnas Perempuan: Kekerasan Berlapis Kerap Dialami Perempuan Pekerja [Komnas Perempuan: layered violence often experienced by female workers]*. Media Indonesia.
- Sobur, A. (2009). *Semiotika Komunikasi [Communication semiotics]*. PT Remaja Rosdakarya.

- Subagya, S., Indria, S., & Budiati, A. C. (2013). Pengarusutamaan Gender dan Optimalisasi Peran Serikat Pekerja Sebagai Upaya Perlindungan Berbasis Gender Bagi Perempuan Buruh Pabrik di Kabupaten Karanganyar [Gender mainstreaming and optimization of labor unions' roles as gender-based protection efforts for female factory workers in Karanganyar Regency]. *Forum Ilmu Sosial [Forum of Social Sciences]*, 40(1), 44–55.
- Suprihatin, S., & Azis, A.M. (2020). Pelecehan Seksual Pada Jurnalis Perempuan di Indonesia [Sexual harassment of female journalist in Indonesia]. *PALASTREN Jurnal Studi Gender [PALASTREN: Journal of Gender Studies]*, 13(2), 413. <https://doi.org/10.21043/palastren.v13i2.8709>.
- Syafruddin S., Ilyas, M., & Novi Suryanti, N. (2022). Bias Gender dan Pemberdayaan Pekerja Perempuan Pada Destinasi Wisata Kawasan Ekonomi Khusus (KEK) Mandalika Lombok [Gender bias and empowerment of female workers in tourism destinations of the Mandalika Lombok Special Economic Zone (SEZ)]. In *Konferensi Nasional Sosiologi IX APSSI 2022 Balikpapan [National Conference on Sociology IX APSSI 2022 Balikpapan]*.
- Triana, A., & Krisnani, H. (2018). Peran Ganda Ibu Rumah Tangga Pekerja K3L UNPAD Dalam Rangka Menunjang Perekonomian Keluarga [The double role of female household workers in the K3L Division of UNPAD in supporting family economy]. *Prosiding Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat [Proceedings of Research and Community Service]*, 5(2), 188. <https://doi.org/10.24198/jppm.v5i2.18370>.
- Tuwu, D. (2018). Peran Pekerja Perempuan Dalam Memenuhi Ekonomi Keluarga: Dari Peran Domestik Menuju Sektor Publik [The role of female workers in supporting family economy: from domestic roles to the public sector]. *Al Izzah: Jurnal Hasil-Hasil Penelitian [Al Izzah: Journal of Research Findings]*, 13(1), 63–76.
- West, R., & Turner, L.H. (2007). *Pengantar Teori Komunikasi: Analisis dan Aplikasi [Introduction to communication theory: analysis and application]*. Penerbit Salemba Humanika.
- Wibowo, G. (2019). Representasi Perempuan dalam Film Siti. [Representation of women in the film Siti]. *Nyimak (Journal of Communication)*, 3(1), 47. <https://doi.org/10.31000/nyimak.v3i1.1219>

Zulfa, M.T., & Widaningrum, A. (2023). Analisis Kapasitas dan Kerentanan Perempuan Pekerja RUmpu Laut Perbatasan Selama Krisis Pandemi Covid-19 [Analysis of the capacity and vulnerability of female seaweed workers in border areas during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis]. *Jurnar Inada [Inada Journal]*, 6(1), 53–75.

All links were verified by the editors and found to be functioning before the publication of this text in 2025.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

FUNDING

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this paper.

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0>

BOOK REVIEWS

IONEL BARBALAU¹

JOSÉ VAN DIJCK, KARIN VAN ES, ANNE HELMOND, FERNANDO VAN DER VLIST (EDITORS). 2025. *Governing the Digital Society Platforms, Artificial Intelligence, and Public Values*. London, New York: Routledge. 264 p.

The 2025 volume “Governing the Digital Society: Platforms, Artificial Intelligence, and Public Values” examines how digital societies can be effectively governed to safeguard public values (like safety and transparency) against the profit-driven power and pervasive misinformation spread by digital platforms and AI systems. It aims to offer an interdisciplinary analysis, as well as actionable insights for scholars and policymakers working to embed public values into algorithmic systems and strengthen institutions in data-driven democracies.

Building further on José van Dijck’s well-established critical approach of digital platforms, social media, and datafication, this book is an edited volume that brings together a range of scholars to analyze the complex challenge of governing a society increasingly shaped by digital technologies, particularly online platforms and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

As the editor presents it, “the authors position themselves at the forefront of their disciplines, offering perspectives from law, critical data studies, urban studies, science and technology studies, computational linguistics, and the political economy of media” (p. 265). To enrich the discussion, the volume incorporates in-depth conversations with specialists,

¹ <http://orcid.org/0009-0001-2497-4286>, University of Bucharest, Romania, <ionel.barbalau@fjsc.ro>.



shedding new light on current policy initiatives designed to tackle the complex issues surrounding the regulation of digital communities

The authors emphasize that governance extends far beyond mere technical or legal mechanisms; it represents a multifaceted social process that weaves cultural norms, ethical principles, and moral considerations into the fabric of our institutions and everyday existence (p. 265). The volume clearly acknowledges that digital technologies – now deeply embedded in our communities and societies – offer both substantial benefits and significant challenges. That said, throughout its 15 chapters, the discussion leans more toward exploring the risks and concerns rather than equally highlighting the opportunities. Topics like “misinformation, disinformation, online polarization, discrimination, and widening inequalities” have drawn the volume authors’ discerning attention. In response, they adopted a perspective that foregrounds institutional power over individual agency or technological determinism. Users are not seen as free agents; they are instead trapped and “governed”, “co-constructed” by platforms, which are engineered by private interests, inherently antagonistic to public values, and they desperately need saving... from themselves, thus the need for constant and paternalistic platform policing and censorship (*content and user moderation*) via powerful institutional oversight.

However, what such vision ignores deliberately is: individual agency (users do negotiate, resist, or subvert platforms – *e.g., privacy tools, alternative networks*); technological determinism (some platform effects are emergent – *e.g., viral memes, network effects*); entrepreneurial innovation (platforms solve real problems – connection, access, efficiency); user complicity (people voluntarily trade privacy for convenience).

Section 1 of the book focuses on governing online platforms, while Section 2 addresses the governance of AI. All sections, but particularly Section 3, emphasize the role of public values in decision-making processes that involve both humans and machines, as van Dijck, van Es, Helmond, and van der Vlist put it in their Introduction chapter (p. 16). The rationale the volume proposes is this: “while human users are *governed* by online platforms, state actors attempt to govern the digital platforms in return”, using analog governance mechanisms (such as new laws, norms, and limitations) to make them fit for the digital age. Moreover while doing it, a golden opportunity arises: “to negotiate public values and subsequently

embed these values into online mechanisms for organizing trust", under the umbrella of a new powerful tool, which is *digital (good) governance* (pp. 16-17).

However, as the editors argue in the same introductory chapter, aligning these new digital world frameworks with "accepted standards and mechanisms for democracy" is a challenging task, especially when *the standards* are not... universally accepted (p. 17). Thus, the need for this book is to combine a diverse range of perspectives and approaches to serve the cause better. Therefore, the chapters in this volume "alternate between scholarly analysis and academic reflection, and they shift between argumentative and conversational discourse", as it features also three expert interviews: C. Goanta, principal investigator of the HUMANads project at Utrecht University (legal insight into digital advertising done by influencers and content creators); N. Helberger, one of the leading Dutch experts on the EU AI Act (legal insight on EU digital governance, fundamental rights and role of tech giants); and J. Gerards, professor of fundamental rights law at the same Utrecht University (insights on the development of FRAIA - Fundamental Rights and Algorithms Impact Assessment project of the Dutch Government).

The first section of the volume focuses on the organization of social media platforms. Authors present the case of the decentralized online social networks (DOSNs), praising the "good governance" they managed to implement, opposite to mainstream digital platforms. Where they failed was to acknowledge the profound (radical) left-wing political bias platforms such as BlueSky have had at their inception, which further translated to the "public values" they upheld. Another sensitive issue addressed was platform content and user moderation using computational linguistics means with the intention of banning content and users, while allowing only "constructive comments" on the five top international progressive news outlets. However, the reality call comes in the next chapter, where van de Kerkhof, a legal scholar, is stressing out eloquently the conflict between the so called "trusted flaggers", entities entitled to police and censor the digital platforms, under the banner of 'good governance', the new EU legal frameworks (such as *the Digital Service Act*, which formalizes this practice in Article 22), and the pre-existing national and international legislation upholding fundamental rights, such as the Right to Freedom

of Expression – the Article 7 of the *Dutch Constitution* and the Article 10 of the *European Convention on Human Rights* (pp.83-96).

The second section of the volume further focuses on AI regulation in the European Union, examining high-risk domains, including the military, alongside the broader societal consequences of generative AI and the implications of its risk-based regulatory framework. As highlighted by the volume editors, the contributing scholars in this section share a unified perspective: generative AI systems should be regarded not as unavoidable technological destinies, but as flexible constructs shaped by politics and open to negotiation (pp. 19-20). It is the EU AI Act that would provide such a framework for democratic oversight and control of digital systems.

The third and last section of the volume focuses on “the negotiation of norms and values in specific digital environments”. As commented by the section’s authors (Zeng & van Es), “the critical issue to consider is who holds the authority to define these values? Additionally, does this authority allow the existence of diverse values within a society?” (p. 178). While conducting a comparative analysis of ChatGPT and ErnieBot as contrasting case studies in the global landscape of large language models, the opening chapter of the section investigates moral agency as a dual construct – simultaneously technological and political – exposing the deeply contested character of determining morality and immorality, a process profoundly influenced by power struggles among diverse societal actors – a vision shared also by the volume editors (p. 21). The following chapters adopt a critical neo-Marxist perspective, asserting that the impact of datafication and AI disadvantages citizens by favoring a select few and exacerbating systemic discrimination based on race or gender. But such approach, especially in the chapter analyzing the Rotterdam welfare fraud algorithm case, exhibits multiple empirical, methodological, logical, and practical failures: from empirical overreach (*historical norms ≠ algorithmic bias, the study confuses correlation with causation and retrofits history to explain a technical failure; the Rotterdam algorithm (as revealed by Lighthouse Reports and follow-up investigations) was biased due to flawed data pipelines, not ideological design*); to methodological flaw – category analysis without code or data access (*researchers never accessed the algorithm’s source code, training data, or feature weights, Rotterdam refused to release them*); logical error: conflating disparate impact with

discriminatory intent (*predictive models optimize for accuracy, not fairness; if fraud is slightly higher in certain groups (due to poverty, reporting gaps, etc.), the model will learn that pattern – not because it “believes” in racial inferiority*); to finally ignoring the real problem: bad engineering, not ideology.

However, despite its (ideological) limitations, this volume presents a selection of several valuable interdisciplinary studies, anchored primarily in Dutch (and EU) realities, that can be used for further academic references in the field of critical analyses of digital platforms, social media, and datafication.

All links were verified by the editors and found to be functioning before the publication of this text in 2025.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

FUNDING

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this paper.

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0>

Tiparul s-a executat la Tipografia
Editurii Universității din București – Bucharest University Press

tipografia.unibuc@unibuc.ro
tel: 0799 210 566
