

**Diana Hornoiu. 2016. *Trends in Spoken Romanian. Corpus Design, Data Analysis and Findings*. Constanța: Ovidius University Press. 248 pp.**

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The book at issue is published by Ovidius University Press, and it includes six chapters, two appendices and Bibliography.

Chapter 1 “Designing the Constanța Corpus: from tape to print” (pp. 7-38) starts with a discussion of the size of the corpus. The author describes several corpora as well as the data that are found in the corpus. Concepts such as the *observer’s paradox* are introduced and discussed at length. The discussion moves to the research ethics, sampling and data collection involved in conducting a first-hand sociolinguistic interview. The second part of this chapter is devoted to conversation analysis and its relevance to the study of gender-related as well as age-related linguistic variation.

Chapter 2 “The empirical data” (pp. 39-158) addresses participant framework and topic with a special focus on the number of participants who took part in this research project, the sociological variables (i.e. gender and age) and the setting in which the recordings were performed. The conversations that make up the corpus come from twenty-four speakers (twenty females and four males), with ages between 12 and 64. They are divided into four different age groups: “early adolescence (10-14), late adolescence (15-19), young adults (20-29) and older adults (30+)” (p. 39). The author provides a brief description of the teenage and adult conversations which includes relevant tables (Table 2.2, p. 41; Table 2.3, p. 42; Table 2.4, p. 42; Table 2.5, p. 42) showing the people involved in the conversations and the topic(s) of discussion. The rest of the chapter (pp. 46-158) contains samples of conversations which tackle four different categories: adult Romanian women (pp. 46-74), adolescent Romanian women (pp. 74-104), adult Romanian men (pp. 104-120), and adolescent Romanian men (pp. 120-132). The last part of this chapter delves into service encounters.

In chapter 3 “The use of vague expressions in the assignment of entities, events and experiences to categories” (pp. 159-179), the author proceeds to a discussion of *general extenders*, *downtoners* and *placeholder words*. These concepts are presented in an easy-to-grasp manner and illustrated through relevant examples, which are followed by an in-depth analysis.

Chapter 4 “Overlapping talk, anticipatory completion and collaboratively built sentences” (pp. 180-198), introduces the reader to the intricate field of overlapping talk. A qualitative analysis of overlapping talk in the speech of teenage girls is offered, which demonstrates that “getting the floor does not appear to be particularly problematic” (p. 181). The chapter also focuses on *anticipatory completion* and *collaboratively built sentences* which are illustrated and analysed. The author reaches the conclusion that collaboratively built sentences are “practically nonexistent among Romanian teenagers living in Constanța” (p. 196).

Chapter 5 “Gendered narratives in Romanian conversational discourse” (pp. 199-209) tackles the construction of gender identity through narratives in Romanian. The analysis relies on two conversations which illustrate how a conventional gender identity can be achieved by means of narratives describing day-to-day family events (e.g. a birthday party, household activities, etc.). The chapter concludes that identity is far from being categorical or fixed.

The last chapter “Intra-group differences and inter-group similarities in Romanian gender-related conversational discourse. The quantitative analysis” (pp. 210-234) provides a quantitative analysis of Romanian conversational discourse. The chapter commences with a discussion of female adolescent talk vs. female adult talk. It is shown that adult Romanian women living in Constanța display a preference towards the use of positive politeness strategies

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(Brown and Levinson 1987) in friendly talk. They use language not only to obtain information, but to “establish, nurture and develop personal relationships” (p. 210). Another interesting finding is that in-group membership is achieved through a consistent use of in-group identity markers (i.e. slang, jargon, address form, collaboratively built sentences), results which are corroborated by other studies (Eckert 1989, 2000, Eisikovits 2006, Holmes 1995, 1998) and more recently (Oancea 2015, 2016).

In Romania, sociolinguistics is a poorly represented area of research, therefore, such a book is a more than welcome contribution. The author succeeds in presenting a detailed description of corpus design and data analysis of Romanian spoken discourse. Due consideration is given to the complex interplay of social factors in the conversational strategies of Romanian teenage girls and adult women. Interesting issues and less well documented facts are discussed in a remarkably objective way. The book is written in an engaging style, which makes it accessible to neophytes as well as well-established academics.

The conversations that lie at the core of this book are transcribed using the conventions proposed by Ochs, Schegloff and Thompson (1996), with some slight changes. They are presented in a lively manner, are easy to follow and can be used in future research projects. The corpus could be further extended by adding more conversations among male speakers, as they are poorly represented, a fact also acknowledged by the author.

In conclusion, *Trends in Spoken Romanian. Corpus Design, Data Analysis and Findings* represents an excellent description of a hitherto under-researched area of Romanian sociolinguistics and pragmatics, enriching our understanding of Romanian conversational strategies employed by women, for which the author is to be commended.

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