

Foreword

BEATA KARPIŃSKA-MUSIAŁ
KAROLINA JANCZUKOWICZ

Although methodological and epistemological cross-disciplinarity in the humanities and social sciences seems to be the *sine qua non* of all contemporary research, its application is often only declarative and depends to a considerable extent on the socio-political and cultural context of a specific time and place. Reconstructing and reinterpreting these liminal areas between close, but still discipline-specific research areas is a dynamic, complex, and always contextualized process that needs the development of a new language of scientific discourse.

That is why, as editors, we decided to meet this challenge and call for papers for an interdisciplinary, thematic volume of *Beyond Philology* entitled "**Communication and Identity in Times of Crisis**". Finding a theme that would initiate discussion among representatives of various disciplines was not an easy task. We hoped to create space for voices from literary studies and linguistics, as well as philosophy, pedagogy, sociology, psychology, anthropology, history, or studies related to education, culture, or communication. We were particularly, but not exclusively, interested in contributions discussing the categories of **communicative awareness, discursive identity** and those related to studying new "**languages of research**", all regarding the post-anthropocentric cultural turn, the performative turn and poststructuralist methodological approaches. As a theoretical framework we proposed, as one of the viable options, Jürgen Habermas' *theory of communicative action* and the category of *communicative rationality*, as well as *narrative theory*

(McIntyre 1981, Fisher 1984). We trusted that despite (and even due to) the contemporary geopolitical situation and multidimensional aspects of the global crisis experienced at the present time, we would manage to invite researchers to share their perspectives in relation to the above-mentioned areas.

Our goal has been achieved. Authors of different institutional and disciplinary affiliations sent in articles. As a result, this edition of *Beyond Philology* contains six texts, each of which, in a unique way, addresses the leading theme of communication and identity in times of crisis.

The volume opens with an article by **Ewa Bińczyk** entitled ***The extraordinary discourse of the Anthropocene***. This well-known and eminent philosopher and researcher of the Anthropocene epoch, introduces us to the complexity of discourses surrounding the crisis in the relationship between nature and human beings in the context of their individual agencies, their interdependence and the objectification of nature by culture. The author poses many important questions about our understanding of the concept of *nature* and recalls the dichotomy of the *preservation vs restoration* of nature, already existing in the anthropocentric debate. She draws attention to the validity of the latter, as well as focuses on post-anthropocentric propositions related to the reorientation of the concept of 'geo-historic time.' Post-anthropocentric scientific discourse, as the scholar emphasizes, calls for a better understanding of the ever decreasing time-frame for planet Earth, taken as a complex organism made up of humans and non-humans, which takes into account their mutual agency and not simply the one-sided agency of man.

Another look at the meaning of the discursive building of reality, this time educational, is presented by the author of the next article, **Martin Blaszk**. In his text entitled ***An infelicitous agreement – the writing of education in relation to its practice***, the educator draws attention to the importance of the way in which education is described discursively (*the writing education*) in connection to its practice. This dependence is ambi-

guous and reciprocal, but also carries certain risks. The author attempts to show the power of the linguistic description of educational reality, first invoking *the ideal speech situation* of J. Habermas as a particular type of communicative pattern, a model whose application to educational reality is, to his mind, open to question. The author also questions Bloom's taxonomy, which is widely used to indicate the mechanics of the educational process. Learning and teaching situations are neither schematic nor hierarchical, as the author points out by analyzing various educational paradigms and emphasizing that only the behaviorist-functionalist approach proposes a mechanics of predictability and pre-ordered structuring for students' cognitive processes. He argues that the educational situation is *infelicitous* (in accordance with J.L. Austin) in the sense of references to ideal schemata.

The next text in the volume entitled ***Professional identity shifts of academic teachers in response to recent (g)local critical incidents – preliminary research results*** addresses the idea of building academic identity in the context of specific socio-cultural, critical circumstances. These have been caused, among other things, by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and the administrative and political transformation of universities in Poland. **Beata Karpińska-Musiał** and **Jarosław Jendza**, like Martin Blaszk, locate learning and teaching within constructivist and socio-humanistic paradigms, while in their empirical research they follow the idea of *narrative theory*. The focus of the authors is on the changes and shifts in the professional identity of Polish academics related to the need to respond to critical, external circumstances, such as the intensification of requirements imposed on researchers and educators due to the transformation of academic policy. As a result, the multiplicity and diversification of demands on academics means the concept of *an individual nexus of multimembership* takes on a unique meaning and capacity. In connection with this, the article reviews the demographics of recent years and provides a brief overview of institutional changes leading to the current situ-

ation. In addition to this, the authors present selected results of a longitudinal study carried out among scholars of the University of Gdańsk in 2011 and 2022, from which they draw interesting conclusions about the (g)local reasons for 'shifts of identity' in Academia.

Yet another perspective and a unique representation of identity is proposed by **Agnieszka Dul**. In her article entitled ***A few words about dignity: An introspective study of a person with disability***, the author focuses on issues such as the dignity of the disabled person, that person's acceptance by society, as well as philosophical approaches to the category of *presence* and *absence* in relation to the realities of the life of a person with disabilities. In this volume, the text presents a unique voice on identity in crisis, as Dul makes an autoethnographic analysis of her own physical and mental states in confrontation with selected aspects of her life story, being herself a person with disability. She touches upon the existential crises she has been through, the support she received from a significant person, and at the same time the lack of support in other institutional contexts. This text is a strong, emotional manifesto about the social empowerment of people with disabilities, and at the same time a personal testimony to the extraordinary individual strength it takes to overcome the problems inherent in the activities of everyday life. Beyond this, it calls attention to the fact that the presence (authentic, not apparent) of people with disabilities in society is an important cultural and educational factor to be incorporated into the mental framework of all its members.

The authors of the last two articles take up an interdisciplinary approach to the field of educational practice. First, **Ryszard Wenzel** in the article entitled ***Science Fiction and Fantasy in general education*** discusses the potential of SF and fantasy literature as a point of reference for not only second language didactics, but general education within the domains of human cognition, creativity and coexistence. In this context, samples from SF or fantasy literature become something more than teaching materials. Discussing them with students can

provide an opportunity to trigger critical thinking, creativity, and can even be a source for understanding social relationships, something that the author calls 'decent behaviour'. The author presents this potential assuming the possibility of activating various motivational processes with the help of appropriately selected elements of original literary texts, thus going beyond purely instrumental didactics. At the same time, however, the didactic process itself is no longer confined to teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), but to an interdisciplinary approach to general education. The overall aim of this is to raise the degree of our awareness and knowledge of ourselves and the world around us, in Wenzel's words, to increase the *intensity of consciousness*.

Cognitive processes as a principal element of human existence are also the focus of the last text in the volume, by **Grzegorz Grzegorzcyk**. In his article, ***Languaging and interactivity in the self-scaffolding space. How cognitive change happens in one coaching dialogue***, the author analyzes not so much educational and didactic discourses at school, but the symbiotic relationship of communication through language (a complex process called *languaging*) with the identity of interlocutors, including its biological aspect. Grzegorzcyk draws attention to the organic nature of communication, which does not occur without considering the other factors of human existence, including body language, the ability to contextualize meanings, as well as the implementation of other mental processes unnoticeable in traditional Conversational Analysis. With this symbiotic, linguistic-biological approach, the author presents an empirical case study: an example of a coaching conversation between a client and a coach. Grzegorzcyk's text returns, in a sense, to Ewa Bińczyk's concerns in the article that opens this volume. It addresses the discourse of biodiversity in language, which is viewed in broader terms than just a structuralist, abstract system of signs. It shows it as a holistic human activity related to the ecology of communication and its 'biology', going far beyond the pure symbolism of the language code. Indeed, in

this article, it may be stated that human communication is shown as going “beyond philology.”

To conclude, all the articles in the volume entitled ***Communication and Identity in Times of Crisis*** shed a new light on the categories in question. Each makes references to the discursive realities of the present time – be they social, educational, cultural, or scientific – and, as such, the authors have contributed to an understanding of where the ‘new discourses of science’ may appear. This may happen on the borders between philosophy, educational studies, linguistics, pedagogy, psycholinguistics, and communication. Discourses may be formal and informal, encoded in research or educational practice, or even in one’s own autoethnographic meta-reflection. One thing is certain, however: they all intertwine and help us to understand the “pressing problems” of the contemporary world.

We would like to thank all the authors for their invaluable contributions to this volume.