

BOOK REVIEWS

decolonisation of sociolinguistics. It remains my hope that in the wake of such decolonial efforts, sociolinguistics can reckon with its own colonial heritage and thereby also address structural inequalities that exist in our discipline, such as the dominance of English or the fact that many European researchers go and study languages in Africa, while it is uncommon for African researchers to conduct research on European languages.

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CAMILLA VÁSQUEZ (ed.), *Research methods for digital discourse analysis*. London: Bloomsbury, 2022. Pp. 352. Pb. £26.

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The internet has constituted a digital world in which digital practices have become normal, and this edited collection provides crucial insights into the process of doing digital discourse analysis. Each chapter presents theoretical and analytical implications on how our contemporary realities shape and are shaped by online texts and digital practices. Readers will find useful references including research designs such as ethnography and mixed methods, topic/genres such as political discourse, religious discourse, dating profiles, tutorial videos, and business communication on varying platforms (e.g. YouTube, Reddit, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Snapchats), and analytical approaches (e.g. conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis, multimodal discourse analysis, and narrative analysis). The most valuable and fascinating aspect of this volume is that each chapter author has tried to ‘pull back the curtain a bit’, revealing the complicated process of doing digital discourse analysis, including the ‘sticking points, dead-ends, and moments of researchers discomfort or confusion’ (3).

Adding to previous introductory books on digital discourse analysis, the volume is rich in content. The first half (chapters 2–7) focuses on questions that any digital researcher may need to address. Chapter 2 begins with the question of how to apply theory in digital discourse analysis. Alla Tovares suggests scholars, particularly novice researchers, engage with prior research during initial stages of a research

project, ‘model’ a research project on a relevant previous study, use applicable theoretical frameworks, and ultimately advance academic discussion (23). Tovaes reveals the story of how she turned a general interest in the Russia-Ukraine relationship into a theory-informed examination of trolling discourses in newspaper articles, illustrating the process of choosing the right toolkit to analyse a new context. The chapter presents a useful theory checklist. In chapter 3, Scott Kiesling discusses how to apply theoretical constructs that are used in the analysis of face-to-face/spoken interaction to the analysis of texts and interactions on the digital realm. He provides a case study on the operationalization of stance in analyzing Reddit threads. His advice is that when applying theoretical constructs in digital discourse analysis, the constructs must be clearly observed and recorded. Some useful strategies when operationalizing concepts include checking the efficacy of the concepts through iterations, collaboration with other researchers to gain more specific and precise definitions, and being creative.

Chapters 4 and 5 address the somewhat less discussed questions of data sampling, collection, and management in doing digital discourse analysis. As Stephen Pihlaja states, ‘there are no simple answers to how much data should be collected for research in online or technologically mediated spaces’ (68). He advises researchers to follow their research purposes when deciding data sampling and collection process and use representative sampling of the target population or focus on individual or unique experiences. Given the fluid and dynamic feature of digital discourse which is constantly built on and modified by its creators, Ramona Kreis suggests that researchers need to consider the way to save and store data and attend to the privacy and anonymity of the data. As she shows in her case study on right-wing discourses and counter-discourses, a piece of social media post can become private if the post author changes the privacy setting.

In chapter 6, Caroline Tagg & Tereza Spilioti touch on the thorny issue of research ethics. They propose that research ethics should be approached as ‘a contextualized process of decision-making ... [which] takes place at various critical junctures of the research process’ (92). Researchers should not only attend to the ‘macro’ principles of ‘protecting participants and doing no harm’ but also consider the ‘micro’ aspects of ethics, particularly ‘ethical literacy’. They suggest researchers ‘reflect on research practices, pose and address critical questions, and (re)assess risks through ongoing dialog with research participants, peers, and other stakeholders’ (93). The chapter ends with insightful interviews with Daria Dayter, Sofia Rüdiger, & Sarah Atkins on ethical decision-making when investigating potentially offensive or distressing discourse. As they suggest, sharing the research burden and relying on support networks are helpful measures to mitigate stress.

The first half of this volume ends with a chapter on utilizing digital tools in doing digital discourse analysis. Based on the narrative analysis of GoFundMe medical campaigns, Trena M. Paulus illustrates the process of using qualitative data analysis software packages to facilitate the analysis of larger data sets. The second half

(chapters 7–14) encompasses more specific topics and approaches. Carmen Lee in chapter 8 provides a comprehensive review of researching multilingual digital discourse. She suggests researchers ‘further investigate the interplay between multilingual discourse and multimodal affordances of digital media’, pay attention to ‘the interaction between online and offline multilingual practices’, and consider ‘how multilingual practices play out across digital media platforms’ (155–56). Multimodal interactions in social media contexts are also addressed in chapter 9. Ruth Page suggests that researchers should consider ‘the range of other visual, aural, haptic, and audio-visual resources’ (160), given that language is only one of the many semiotic resources. Studying group selfies and snapchat featured stories, Page revisits the issues of data collection, sampling, management, analytical categories, and ethical decision-making, and proposes eight steps of doing multimodal discourse analysis that may be applicable to any data set.

In chapter 10, Aditi Bhatia demonstrates the process of analysing online videos through a case study on YouTube makeup tutorials. She proposes ‘an integrative approach to the critical analysis of vlogs’ (183), combining a sociocognitive model of discourse analysis, critical genre analysis framework, and lexicosyntactical and semantic analysis of language. Her case study reveals the interdiscursive performance of makeup-tutorial YouTubers as both professional experts and authentic influencers (‘amateur experts’), showing that in digital space, traditional genres of learning and teaching are gradually challenged by new technologies and social media platforms. In chapter 11, Marie-Louise Brunner & Stefan Diemer take readers on a less explored area of cross-platform analysis. Their case study on customer communication on different social media platforms shows that each platform has its unique features and affordances. For business organizations, it is important to make use of the advantages and pitfalls of social media marketing. Some hands-on guidelines for setting up a cross-platform analysis study are provided.

The last three chapters introduce three approaches to doing digital discourse. Ursula Lutzky & Andrew Kehoe in chapter 12 detail a corpus linguistics approach to studying online data through a case study on customer service interactions on Twitter. The insight they share is how to compile a corpus from a large amount of data, such as through using a list of seeds (e.g. twitter hashtags and keywords) to construct a corpus. Both authors stress the importance of combining quantitative and qualitative methods in investigating word frequencies and collocation patterns. Brook Bolander in chapter 13 presents an extensive literature review on approaching online practices through ethnography and emphasizes a blended approach to online ethnography which combines ‘online observation and contact to users’ (242). Her case study on the negotiation of power through language in personal blogs illustrates the process of analysing online data and gaining insights from interviews with participants. In the last chapter, Riki Thompson engages readers with reflective approaches to analysing digital discourse. Similar to Bolander, Thompson argues that an ethnographic approach allows a flexible and adaptive method


that can cater to different communicative environments. For her case study on dating profiles, she employs reflective and ‘dialogic action interviews’ to not only explore the object of study (i.e. online dating profiles) but also dig into the social meanings of people, such as why online daters create the profiles they do. Thompson stresses that a reflexive approach provides researchers varying degrees of researcher intervention, especially when such intervention benefits the community.

Overall, the book provides rich perspectives on doing digital discourse analysis. Given the scope of this review, I can only highlight some aspects that I feel to be most significant. First, although researcher reflexivity is not an explicit theme in the volume, each chapter author has discussed or implied how their positionality, such as political stances, identities, social values and/or simply personal interests in social media, have shaped their research projects and decisions in choosing where to collect data, what to analyse, and how to analyse data. This aspect is important since it encourages novice researchers not to be afraid of telling their research stories. Second, the case studies, theories, practical guidelines, and suggestions presented in each chapter are engaging and answer many less discussed questions. Structuring the book with case studies, however, is both a strength and a weakness since these case studies have not fully represented digital practices particularly from the Global South, nor have they covered digital practices on other popular social media platforms, such as short-form video platform TikTok/Douyin and video sharing site Bilibili with danmu features (messages that are overlaid on the video). Moreover, English data appears to be the majority when in fact many netizens do not speak or use English on the internet. Nonetheless, I find the volume useful in providing helpful research directions and topics in new contexts, including researching multilingual and multimodal digital discourse, conducting cross-platform analysis, and doing digital ethnography.

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‘Thanks to the Great Leader’ is a ubiquitous utterance regularly repeated throughout North Korea. Reserved for Kim Il Sung, the recondite country’s revered founder, this official state-sanctioned sobriquet is recited in reference to any