

BOOK NOTES

Language in Society 47 (2018)
doi:10.1017/S0047404518000106

MARIZA GEORGALOU, *Discourse and identity on Facebook: How we use language and multimodality to present identity online*. London: Bloomsbury, 2017. Pp. 336. Hb. £95.

Reviewed by LILIAN LEM ATANGA
Department of Linguistics and African Languages
The University of Bamenda
P.O. Box 39, Bamili, North West Region, Cameroon
ngwebin@yahoo.com

Identity construction has been a focal point in discourse analysis. In virtual social-media spaces like Facebook, however, identity construction has not received an in-depth and detailed study. This book examines how identity is constructed, performed, and experienced on Facebook. These identities are typed, uploaded, shared, managed, and protected within such online contexts. Facebook is not just a mere technology but a vibrant sociocultural arena that gives users opportunities for self-presentation through the interplay of language and other semi-otic means.

Mariza Georgalou seeks to examine how users construct themselves on Facebook and are co-constructed by their friends. She examines multimodality and types of textual constructions. The book posits that Facebook discourse is inherently constitutive of identity, allowing for participants to reflect and determine how they wish to represent themselves and how other users co-construct these identities. Meaning is orchestrated through an ensemble of modes, often in new intersemiotic relationships with one another. Users adopt certain textual practices to present these identities online. Georgalou notes that performing identity is not a matter of articulating a single identity, but of mobilizing a whole repertoire of momentarily positioned identity features. These identities are constructed in practices that produce, enact, or perform identity; thus, they are a product of socially conditioned semiotic work (e.g. symbols, narratives, and textual genres). Identities can exist long before an interaction starts and can condition the course of interaction. Georgalou uses online ethnographic methods that include engaging in the lives (or in selected aspects of the lives) of real subjects, that is, of those being studied, usually for long periods of time involving the research subject's perspective on the issues in question. She engages through interviews and access to their Facebook profiles and timelines.

In analyzing the data, different approaches are used within discourse analysis and each approach is adopted and adapted for the analysis of specific sets of

data. The approaches are therefore data driven. Georgalou examines place, time and age, professional and educational identity, stance taking, and privacy in identity construction. Place is not just a position in space; it is the location plus everything that occupies that location, that is, tasks, practices, routines, everyday life, seen as an integrated and meaningful phenomenon. It is marked in profile information and in users' posts. She measures time using different indices that she calls *senses*. In examining professional and educational identities, the author refers to a constellation of activities, tasks, roles, groups, memberships, interactions, motives, goals, orientations, attributes, beliefs, values, and experiences in terms of which individuals define themselves in a professional role. Georgalou adopts Alexandra Jaffe's (2009:10) argument that 'linguistic stance can be read as a more or less direct sign of a position, identity, or role with which an individual wishes to be associated'. In the last analytical chapter, how users negotiate their personal privacy is analyzed.

In this book, Georgalou has aptly theorised online identity construction and production and introduced methodologies for the collection and analysis of data. She has defined what exactly can be data for online (Facebook) studies. In all, this book has concisely presented a methodological frame for the study of online identity construction, extending it from previous theorisations that generalised online identity studies without detailing analytical methods.

(Received 28 September 2017)

Language in Society 47 (2018)
doi:10.1017/S0047404518000118

RUTH FINNEGAN, *Where is language? An Anthropologist's Questions on Language, Literature and Performance*. London: Bloomsbury, 2015. Pp. x, 165. Pb. £18.99.

Reviewed by YAJUAN CAO
School of Foreign Language Studies
Ningbo Institute of Technology, Zhejiang University
Ningbo, Zhejiang, 315100, China
nokidding971@sina.com

This pioneering work, which is based on the author's comparative studies and decades-long fieldwork experience in Africa and Great Britain, offers a unique insight into the multi-modality of language that leads scholars to rethink the fields of language, literature, and performance. It should prove to be of particular value to those interested in the fields of social linguistics, pragmatics, and linguistic anthropology.

After a general introduction in Chapter 1, Finnegan examines the role of language in the development of human history in Chapter 2, highlighting the