Editorial

Massimiliano Demata and Natalia Knoblock

Welcome to issue 5(2) of the *Journal of Language and Discrimination*. As the fifth year of life of the journal draws to a close, we are happy to present an exciting line up of research articles, a thought-provoking interview, and several book reviews. Indeed, the range of topics addressed by the articles in issue 5(2) (not to mention the many papers that have been submitted to the journal and the articles that are in the pipeline for the issues to be published next year) show that, unfortunately, the social, cultural, and political motivations at the basis of discrimination which have led to found the *Journal of Language and Discrimination* in the first place are getting stronger rather than weaker. In fact, for one thing, it appears the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to distress multiple areas of the world and affect millions of people has added extra challenges, many of them linked to discrimination. The extraordinary pressure the pandemic has exerted on individuals, groups, and societies exposes inequality and prejudice even more starkly than in 'normal' times. For example, differences and discrimination regarding age and nationality, emphasised by uneven access to health service, welfare and communication, is an increasingly serious issue which has created new forms of marginalisation, or expanded older ones. In fact, in order to address the specific topic of age discrimination, we are glad to announce that our next special issue, to be published in early 2022 and edited by Kim Grego and Alessandra Vicentini, will be dedicated to 'Discriminating', i.e. a critical exploration of how people can be and are discriminated socially as well as in the health and medical fields on the basis

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of their age, and how such discrimination is displayed in the discourses expressing or surrounding it.

As for each issue, in line with our commitment to bringing to the academic and broader community research that is rigorous, socially significant and current, the articles, the interview and the reviews reflect the various shapes in which discrimination can present itself through language. In the opening article, Felberg addresses a problem particularly exposed by the COVID-19 epidemic in Norway. The article highlights the need to face the problem of alienation of immigrant communities and the insufficient communication between minorities and the institutions, a problem whose severity was exposed in all its urgency by the recent epidemiological emergency. The article addresses what the author calls crisis communication, but also, if we can paradoxically revert the elements of the phrase, highlights the communication crisis that COVID19 has caused in certain marginalised groups within Norwegian society.

The issue of discrimination in terms of grammatical gender in German is discussed by Nübling and Lind. On the basis of the historical development of the gender system in German, the authors focus on the way manipulation of grammatical gender is used as an instrument of degradation of women. They demonstrate that the use of neuter articles and pronouns instead of feminine ones serve as a discursive tool to dehumanize and denigrate women whose gender performance does not conform with hegemonic patriarchal concepts of femininity.

The analysis by Thomas exposes testimonial injustice as a type of secondary victimisation of crime victims based on their identity. It calls for detection and condemnation of the prejudice endured by the victims from marginalised social and linguistic groups that skews public reception of their testimonials, denies them sympathy, objectifies them, and leads to a credibility deficit of the victims.

Licata's paper investigates former Republican representative Ted Yoho's highly offensive remarks directed to Democrat representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Yoho's slurs, his 'non apology', and the general dismissal of the whole incident at the media and political level demonstrate how gender-oriented discrimination is often normalised. The study is another testimony of the right-wing populism emboldening white supremacy and toxic masculinity in political discourse.

The study by Lucek addresses the deficit linguistic ideology toward local varieties of Dublin English in contrast of the high-prestige variety of Irish English. As classroom observations and focus group interview data demonstrate, the students' knowledge and application of the prestige is highly nuanced, and they successfully switch between language varieties

depending on the context, while their principal reinforces linguistic discrimination based on social class.

As in every issue of the *Journal of Language and Discrimination*, this issue also contains some book reviews. Two edited volumes, Balirano and Hughes's *Homing in on Hate* and Clements and Petray's *Linguistic Discrimination in U.S. Higher Education*, together with Zottola's *Transgender identities in the press*, reflect the fact that the many different facets of discrimination are raising very strong interest in academic circles and beyond.

Finally, the current issue also contains Lorena Carbonara's interview with Gordon Henry, who is an enrolled member of the White Earth Anishinaabe Nation in Minnesota and is a scholar, an author and a college professor. He shares insights about his Native American experience, research, activism and creative work.

We hope that you enjoy reading and engaging with the papers included in this issue, and we encourage you to consider the *Journal of Language and Discrimination* as a potential publication venue of your own work. One of our special aims is to promote the publication of articles by authors from the areas of the world other than those traditionally considered 'the West' because these authors often face greater challenges and continue being underrepresented in the linguistic and academic landscape. We specifically encourage scholars from the East and the Global South to submit their research to the journal. We also welcome controversial views, new topics, and new outlooks on well-studied problems. Finally, if you are interested in serving as a guest editor of a special issue, please contact one of the editors, and we would be happy to discuss your ideas.