Roxanne Barbara Doerr, *Communicating Professions via Blog. An Applied Linguistics Approach* (Munich: Grin Verlag, 2019), 105 pp., ISBN: 978-3346074652

Reviewed by Santo Michael Orefice

Roxanne Barbara Doerr's *Communicating Professions Via Blog: An Applied Linguistics Approach* offers a great contribution to the fields of applied linguistics with regards to a well-known and widespread type of digital channel that is used in the workplace: professional blogs.

Doerr, in the introductory chapter of the volume, starts by observing that we are living in an increasingly digital and globalized world where the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is usually required in workplaces, since the professional profiles are changing. In addition, the so-called phenomenon of the "domestication of technology" (5) that David Barton and Carmen Lee defined consists in the use of digital technology in everyday life and domestic contexts and has led to the "dematerialisation of the workplace" (6). Thanks to this process, individuals can discuss work issues on social media.

In this introductory chapter, the scholar continues by providing an ongoing definition of blogs and their main features. Blogs, a term attained by shortening the word "weblogs", are digital spaces in which a writer or group of writers share their views on a topic with an audience. Blogs are distinguished by some rather recognizable features: they are digital "containers", personal Internet pages that occasionally invite readers to comment and are usually organized in reverse chronological order and may be enriched with various material such as links to other sites, articles, images and videos that are available on the net, as well as pdf files, references, essays, slides and manuals (8-10). Based on the findings of Granieri, Doerr defines professional blogs as democratic spaces "for alternative perspectives that allow marginalized and displaced professional figures to become aware of the weight of their role" (11). As a result, a blog, according to the author of the volume, is a dynamic digital space characterized by maximum freedom of expression and "a widely accessible point of reference and knowledge dissemination for developing fields and issues" (6).

Doerr devises a theoretical framework based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA) in order to produce a collection of applied linguistics studies on professional blogs that was presented at and expands on the discussions that took place at three international conferences By means of a methodological framework combining analyses on multimodal, textual, discursive, linguistic and rhetorical levels of professional blogs in three very different sectors, the aim of the studies is to understand how professional discourse and blogs have adapted in order to express the evolving needs of certain professions and categories, since the mobility of employees and professionals follow the technological innovations in communication. Each chapter

of the volume deals with a different online professional community not only to analyze trends and developments in the professions behind these online communities, but also the bloggers' interaction with their audiences in communicating professional content.

The first chapter of the volume begins with a description of how the profession of office workers has undergone a change in image, thus becoming a sort of "office worker 2.0" (19), thanks to technological innovations that allow professionals to share their thoughts, ideas and resources about work issues on social networks. Drawing on CDA and MMDA, Doerr offers a qualitative and empirical three-level analysis of four blogs written for and by office workers, a professional category that is often perceived as being stale and unexciting. Two of these professional blogs, written in English by native English speakers, relate to the fields of employee health and safety, while the other two focus on office life and lifestyle. Doerr firstly focuses on the use of visual images and colours, multimedia content and social network connections by these professional blogs in order to trace the image of empowered office workers that they convey and the ways in which they connect to other social media to spread their content. Secondly, the scholar describes how textual coherence is realized in bloggers' bios and introductions by means of specific linguistic devices that allow office workers to present themselves both as professionals and as individuals. Thirdly, Doerr emphasizes the difference between the language of the bloggers' posts and that of the comments that are written by the audience with the clear intent of revealing how bloggers communicate their will "to create and empower the online community and/or contribute to the dissemination of its knowledge" (37).

The second chapter concerns the branch of media psychology, which is difficult to define due to its high level of interdisciplinarity. Media psychologists, in Doerr's words, have skills in so many fields that they are comparable to teachers, researchers and managers. Through professional blogs, they disseminate scientific information not only on the presence, but also the potential dangers, of the use and abuse of social media. This chapter adopts CDA to analyze the bloggers' self-presentations and the title of their posts in four different media psychology blogs. Although all these divulgative blogs use colloquial language to demonstrate that the bloggers have been through the same experiences as their readers, Doerr argues that the bloggers have assumed different views on media. These range from being hopeful and positive, thus considering blogs a modernized form of therapeutic practice capable of spreading messages and ideas that encourage the development of society, to having a negative approach to media because of the harmful effects and the control they exert over society, to taking a more professional stance and exploring media's potential for "professional activities that are not strictly connected with media psychology" (70), such as online teaching and business. In outlining such differences in attitude, the study in this chapter emphasizes the interdisciplinarity that is typical of the branch of media psychology.

The third chapter, dedicated to the online military community, opens with a research question "regarding the US military community's conception of communication, identity and reputation and how it diverges from civilian institutions" (80). Doerr points out that the military is an exclusive community made up of many members that follow a unique "military culture" and have to adapt to different places and situations. The exclusivity that is typical of the military community is mirrored in

its particular relationship with civilians, who generally know little or nothing about the activities of the military. A comprehensive textual, discursive and linguistic examination of four online military communities therefore allows the scholar to reveal that these professional blogs have the underlying intention of promoting positive values and practices and disseminating knowledge within the military community. Moreover, Doerr analyzes how the bloggers employ linguistic, discursive and rhetorical devices in order to foster the military community's reputation and organizational identity. The scholar concludes by shedding light on the existence of other possible lines of research in the field of military community discourse.

Doerr's volume concludes by delving into the development of these blogs in the years and its connection with changes within the analyzed professional communities. The study argues that blogs, as spaces with extensive freedom of expression, are a popular and adaptable online genre that can appeal to a wide range of viewers, whether they are experts or not. First of all, through the analysis of the professional blogs of office workers, the scholar draws attention to the change in meaning of the term "office", which cannot be merely considered a confined working space in the contingent era of "coworking" and "workshifting". As regards the second study, Doerr concludes that, since almost all of the analyzed blogs are still active, they are still considered popular and reliable sources in the field of media psychology. Finally, Doerr points out how the graphics of the milblogs have changed, especially in the greater attention to the presentation of bloggers and guest bloggers, whose presence is justified by the credentials of their profile. Unlike the office worker blog or the media psychologists' blogs, the military blogs and its reputation represent a perfect mixture of the values of each individual member and the unity of the team of bloggers. The military community has also started using forums to allow professionals to better adapt their advices to non-experts' specific situations.