

CLICK, SHARE, DISCOVER: DIGITAL SCIENCE COMMUNICATION IN ROMANIAN HIGHER EDUCATION. THE CASE OF OVIDIUS UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANȚA

Diana HORNOIU¹
Costin-Valentin OANCEA²

Abstract

This corpus-based paper reports research findings emerging from an online survey and ten interviews conducted within Ovidius University of Constanta, as part of the Digital Language and Communication Training for EU Scientists (DILAN) Erasmus project. The aim of this paper is to identify sustainable strategies and transformative practices employed in professional and public communication of science in digital environments. It also assesses whether competence in communicating science online to expert and broader audiences needs to be a transversal skill to be taught/learned in higher education institutions. The analysis of our data revealed that digital communication is an emerging yet uneven practice among researchers at Ovidius University of Constanța who clearly distinguish between communication with peers and communication with the general public. OUC researchers tend to favor traditional, peer-oriented dissemination (journal articles, open-access platforms) for professional visibility, while adopting more accessible formats (blogs, Facebook, institutional websites) when reaching lay audiences. This reflects an awareness of genre adaptation to context and audience, a key feature of digital genre competence.

Keywords: ethnographic research; digital communication; genre-based learning; citizen science.

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1. Introduction

Genre has been analyzed from diverse perspectives, including linguistic traditions like English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which view genre as a communicative tool and a cultural purpose, respectively. Other significant approaches include rhetorical genre studies. According to the New Rhetoric School, genres have been defined as “recurring rhetorical situations” (Miller 1984: 152) and as frames for social action that shape

¹ Diana Hornoiu, Ovidius University of Constanța, Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, dianahornoiu@gmail.com

² Costin-Valentin Oancea, Ovidius University of Constanța, Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, oancea_costin@yahoo.com

“the thoughts we form and the communications by which we interact” (Bazerman 1997: 19). On the other hand, approaching genres from the perspective of English for Academic and Professional Purposes and Languages for Professional Purposes makes regularities in communicative purposes, functional moves and linguistic features as the most salient coordinates of genre analysis (Swales 1990; Bhatia 1993). It has been underscored in the literature that genres are “ways of recognizing, responding to, acting meaningful and consequentially within, and helping to reproduce recurrent situations” (Bawarshi and Reiff 2010: 3) and not mere “text types”.

Genre is central to empirical research, particularly in analyzing scientific and research writing. Researchers use genre to understand the structural elements and common features, known as genre-conventions as well as their specific register and style. Key figures like Paltridge (1995) and Biber and Conrad (2009) have contributed to this understanding, emphasizing the importance of empirical observation and analysis in identifying and explaining the patterns within different genres.

More recently, digital genres are a growing area of academic study, with Biber and Gray’s (2012) work on empirically-based, corpus-driven theories of specialized registers serving as an example of this critical interest. Moreover, genre theory has also been instrumental in the analysis of computer-mediated communication (CMC). Recent literature on digital genres has highlighted the need to revisit and expand the concept of genre to include media elements and accommodate new online forms which pre-digital conceptualizations lacked (Askehave and Nielsen 2005; Miller and Shepherd 2009; Heyd 2016).

Until the advent of the Internet, scientific discoveries reached the public through such conventional channels as print publication, lectures, and, occasionally, television, often mediated by writers and editors who translated sophisticated material into form accessible to a wider public. Web 2.0 technologies and widespread digital media have significantly transformed traditional genres, as noted in the literature by Pérez-Llantada (2016) and Luzón and Pérez-Llantada (2019). This transformation involves the evolution, innovation, and overall change in these established forms of communication and expression. Nowadays, the Internet affords opportunities for scientists to “disintermediate” their work, turning it “inside out” for more direct communication with public audiences (Trench 2008), as well as among academics in various disciplines who do not always share the same specialized discourse.

Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) and the Web have revolutionized academia by providing researchers with tools for data management, collaboration, and dissemination. Platforms like GitHub enable sharing and reuse of research objects (e.g. software, code, data sets) while scholarly social networks

like ResearchGate foster professional connections. The Web facilitates access to vast online resources for literature reviews, allows for new forms of scholarly discussion and networking, and supports citizen science initiatives, ultimately enhancing the reach and credibility of research outputs. Some examples of these forms of communication, which are an inseparable part of open science, include online papers and enhanced publications, online pre-prints, blogs, Twitter, research group websites, academic homepages, academic social network sites, online videos, open notebooks, webinars, or discussion forums.

There is a strong scientific consensus supporting the removal of intermediaries in various processes, making public engagement in science a “normative commitment” (Stilgoe, Lock, and Wilsdon 2014) to foster trust and advance research (Marincola 2006, Pham 2016). The concept of disintermediation in science means to bypass traditional gatekeepers, allowing scientists to connect more directly with the public to improve transparency, understanding, and public trust in scientific endeavours.

An American Association for the Advancement of Science survey reported by the PEW Research Center found that 87% of 3,748 scientists agreed with the statement “Scientists should take an active role in public policy debates about issues related to science and technology” (Rainie, Funk, and Anderson 2015). Yet, despite such feelings and opinions, the general public is still strongly dissociated from the inner workings of scientific research. In an attempt to involve citizens in scientific inquiry and not just give them facts and information, such organizations as the Citizen Science Alliance (<http://citizenscience.org>) and the Citizen Science Association (<https://www.citizensciencealliance.org>) are drawing on “distributed communities” of citizens as collaborators in the pursuit of scientific inquiry, partly to collect crowdsourced information but also to promote broader understandings of science.

Although recent research has explored both the theoretical dimensions and the practicalities of the relationship between scientists and the general public, we still lack a full understanding of the complex, contextually-situated processes involved in the creation, dissemination and communication of scientific inquiry to public audiences. Thus, the aim of this paper is to bridge this gap in understanding by examining the online science communication practices of researchers and academics affiliated with the Ovidius University of Constanta (OUC). The analysis blends quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate the extent to which digital technologies are employed to transition from a unidirectional, strategic approach to science communication towards a more dialogic and engaging approach with the broad public. Specifically, this corpus-based paper reports research findings emerging from an online survey and ten interviews conducted within Ovidius

University of Constanta³ with a view to assessing the use of communication tools, content, target audience, knowledge flows, and contextualization of communication activities. Our ethnographic analysis seeks to determine if online science communication skills to both expert and general audiences should be a core, transferable skill in higher education by examining sustainable strategies and transformative practices in professional and public digital science communication. The ultimate goal is to understand the landscape of science communication online to raise awareness whether universities should integrate these abilities as transversal (cross-disciplinary) competencies.

2. Language and communication dimension

The analysis presented in this section draws on data collected in October 2023, via a semi-structured questionnaire. At Ovidius University of Constanta we used the Romanian version of the questionnaire, which is an accurate translation of the original version in English, with a view to ensuring comparability of data among surveys. We decided to translate the questionnaire into Romanian to ensure its optimal comprehension, taking into account that respondents interviewed may not be proficient in English.

A Google form was used as an instrument for collecting data anonymously. Thus, respondents' identities were not in any way disclosed. The questionnaire was distributed among academics, researchers and PhD students in all of the sixteen faculties of Ovidius University of Constanta and the Doctoral School of OUC, covering a wide range of research and teaching fields, i.e. Medicine, Dental Medicine, Economics, Pharmacy, Humanities, Civil Engineering, Mathematics and Computer Science, Applied Sciences and Engineering, Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Law and Administrative Sciences, Mechanical, Industrial and Maritime Engineering, Psychology and Educational Sciences, Physical Education and Sports, History and Political Sciences, Arts, Theology. Overall, 146 respondents filled out the questionnaire. The respondents' research profile is detailed below:

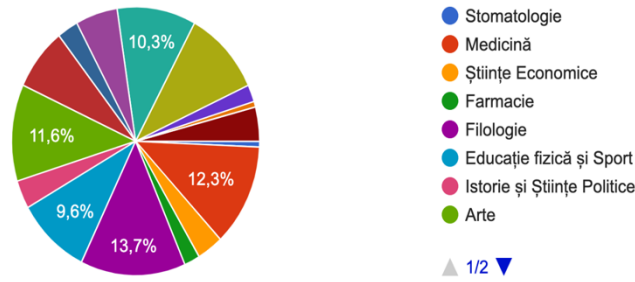
Overall: 146 respondents

- Economics, Law and Administrative Studies: 8 (5.5 %)
- Pharmacy, Medicine, Dental Medicine: 22 (15.1%)
- Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences: 48 (32.8%)
- STEM: 43 (29.5%)
- Other (Theology, Physical Education and Sport): 25 (17.1%)

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Care este domeniul dumneavoastră de cercetare?

146 de răspunsuri

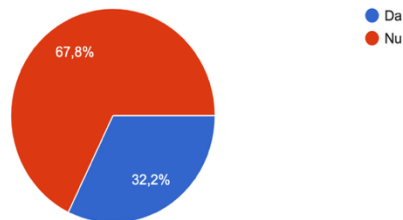


Graph 1. The respondents' area of expertise/research domain

Out of the total number of OUC respondents, **47 (32.2%)** are PhD Students.

Sunteți student-doctorand?

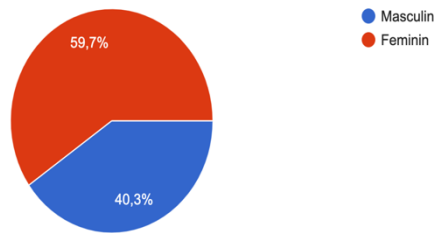
146 de răspunsuri



Graph 2. The percentage of doctoral students who took part in the research project

With regard to gender, **59.7%** of the respondents were female and **40.3 %** were male. All the respondents in the OUC data set declared their gender group membership. The percentages are presented below in Graph 3:

2. Genul
144 de răspunsuri

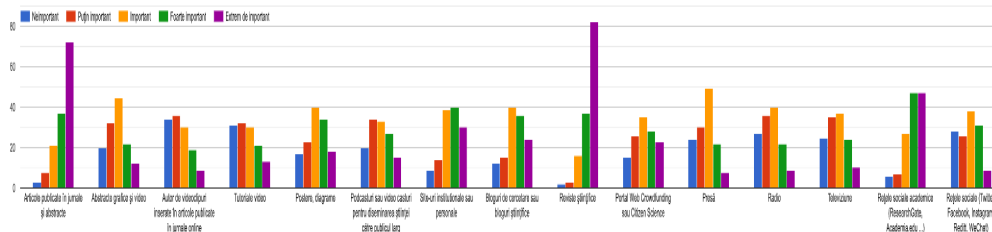


Graph 3. The participants' gender

In what follows, we focus on each question that was included in the questionnaire and present the results obtained. The graphs appear in Romanian since the team translated the questionnaire into Romanian, and used the Romanian version, as mentioned above. Above each graph the question translated in English is provided, as well as the options that the participants had to choose from.

Q3. Select the importance of the following genres and media to disseminate your research work

3. Vă rugăm să selectați importanța următoarelor genuri și media pentru diseminarea cercetării dumneavoastră



Graph 4. The importance of genres and media to disseminate research work

In Graph 4, the charts contain the following: *Articles published in journals and abstracts; Graphic and Video Abstracts; Author of videos included in articles published in online journals; Video tutorials; Posters, diagrams; Podcasts or videocasts for disseminating science to the wider audience; Institutional or personal websites; Research blogs or scientific blogs; Scientific journals; Crowdfunding and Citizen Science web portals; Media; Radio; Television; Academic Social Networks (ResearchGate, Academia.edu...); Social Networks (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Redit, WeChat).*

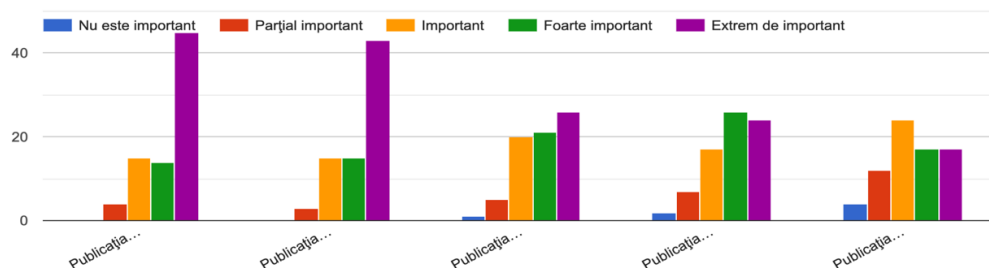
In the OUC data set, the genres and media considered most important for research dissemination are as follows:

- a) **Science magazines** ('very important' - 83%, 'extremely important' - 37%)
- b) **Journal articles and abstracts** ('extremely important' - 73 %; 'very important' - 37%)
- c) **Academic social networks** ('extremely important' -47 %; 'very important' - 48 %)
- d) Institutional or personal websites ('very important' - 30%, 'extremely important' - 40%)
- e) Research blogs & science blogs ('very important' - 24%; 'extremely important' - 37%) and
- f) Social networks - Twitter, FB, Instagram ('very important'- 9%; 'extremely important'- 31 %)
- g) Crowdfunding and Citizen Science web portals ('very important' - 23; 'extremely important' - 28%)

Q4. Rate the importance of the following aspects when disseminating your research work

- a) The publication goes through a peer review process and/ or is indexed in prestigious databases (ISI, JCR, Scopus, ...)
- b) The publication is Open Access, peer reviewed and is indexed in prestigious databases (ISI, JCR, Scopus, ...)
- c) The publication is Open Access
- d) The publication targets researchers in multidisciplinary fields
- e) The publication targets non-specialist audiences

4. Evaluati importanța fiecăruia dintre aspectele următoare în momentul diseminării muncii dumneavoastră de cercetare



Graph 5. Important aspects taken into consideration when disseminating research work

Graph 5 presents the results obtained to question 4 (Q4), mentioned above. The bars are in the order presented above, under Q4, options (a-e). The OUC data set

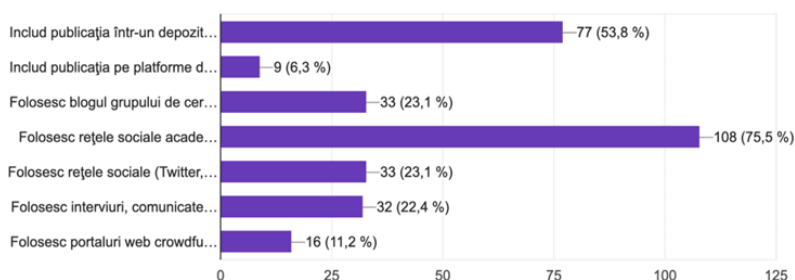
shows a marked preference for the first two options, followed by (c) (open access publishing) and d) (publication targeting multidisciplinary fields).

Q5. How do you disseminate at present your research work so that it reaches other researchers and peer colleagues? Please select up to THREE options

- I include the publication in an institutional repository or open Access (PubMed, CiteSeer, ArXiv, PMC, RePEc, ...)
- In digital platforms such as YouTube
- I use the research group blog or my personal blog or my research institute website
- I use academic social networking sites (ResearchGate, Academia.edu, ...)
- I use social networks (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Reditt, WeChat, ...)
- In interviews, press releases, ... and mass media communication (magazines, press, radio, TV)
- In crowdfunding and Citizen Science web portal

5. Cum diseminați în momentul de față munca dumneavoastră de cercetare astfel încât să ajungă și la alți cercetători și colegi de breaslă? Vă rugăm să selectați cel mult TREI opțiuni.

143 de răspunsuri



Graph 6. Ways of disseminating research

Graph 6 displays the results obtained to question 5 (Q 5). The bars are in the order presented above, under Q5, containing the options provided (a-g). Preferred options among OUC respondents: **(d)** and **(a)**, followed by **(c)** and **(e)**, at a considerable distance. Options (c) and (e) score the **same percentage**.

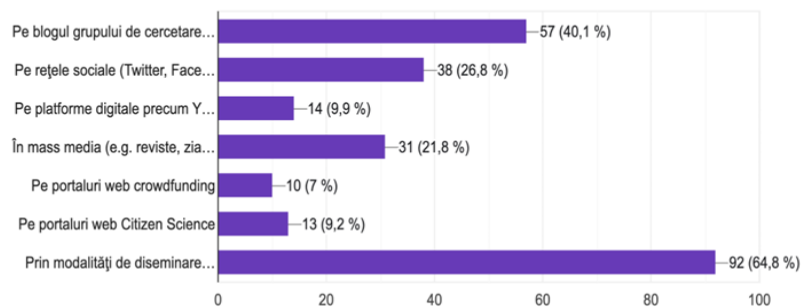
Q6. How do you disseminate your research work at present so that it reaches the general public? Please select up to THREE options.

- In the research group blog, personal blog or research institute or department website
- In social networks (Twitter, Facebook, Reddit, WeChat, Instagram, ...)

- c) In digital platforms such as YouTube, blogs, ...
- d) In the mass media (magazines, newspapers, radio, television)
- e) In crowdfunding web portals
- f) In Citizen Science web portals
- g) Other

6. Cum diseminați munca dumneavoastră de cercetare în momentul de față astfel încât să fie accesibilă publicului larg? Vă rugăm să selectați cel mult TREI opțiuni.

142 de răspunsuri



Graph 7. Ways of disseminating research to the general public

Graph 7 displays the results obtained to question 6 (Q 6). The bars are in the order presented above, under Q6, containing the options provided (a-g). With regard to disseminating research to the general public, the OUC respondents show a preference for option **(g)**, followed by **(a)** and **(b)**.

When comparing responses to Q5 (dissemination practices when communicating with peer researchers) **with those to Q6** (dissemination of research work to the general public), in the OUC data set, the following clear differences emerge:

(i) strong preference for **academic social networking sites (ResearchGate, Academia.edu)** and including the publication in **institutional repositories or open Access (PubMed, CiteSeer, ArXiv, PMC, RePEc...- 53.8%)**, when communicating with **peer researchers – 75.5%**. On the other hand, 64,8% selected option (g) Other means of dissemination.

(ii) a clear preference for **research group blogs, personal blogs or research institute or department websites (40.1%)**, as well as for **social networks (Twitter, Facebook...)** for dissemination of the research work to the **general public – 26,8%**

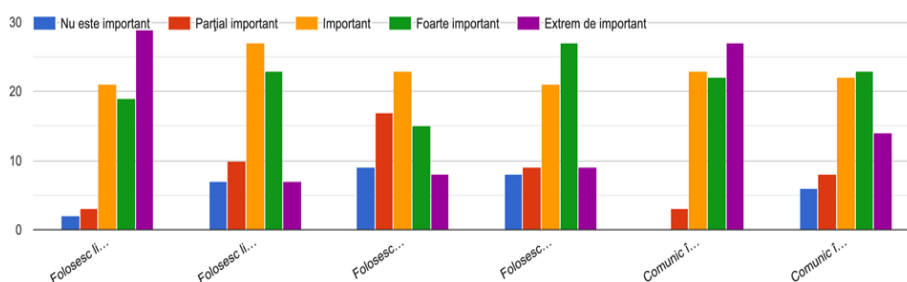
The data show that OUC researchers adapt their dissemination practices according to the targeted audience. Switching between different channels/means of

communication is indicative of the OUC researchers' awareness that research results should be disseminated differently when targeting peers, as opposed to when targeting a lay audience.

Q7. Rate the importance of the following aspects when communicating your research work on the Internet

- Using English as a Lingua Franca for scientific communication
- Using the language of my local context to communicate science to general publics
- Using several languages to communicate science locally and globally
- Knowing how to use tools for creating and editing videos and treating images. Templates for posters, science dissemination resources, educational resources and so on
- Knowing how to communicate persuasively the social impact of science to the general public
- Knowing how to communicate persuasively with the general public to engage them in scientific research (data collection, classification, ...)

7. Evaluați importanța fiecăruia dintre aspectele următoare atunci când prezentați munca dumneavoastră de cercetare pe Internet



Graph 8. Important aspects when communicating research on the Internet

Graph 8 displays the results obtained to question 7 (Q 7). The bars are in the order presented above, under Q7, containing the options provided (a-f). With regard to disseminating research to the general public, the OUC respondents show a preference for option (g), followed by (a) and (b).

The graphical representation of responses to Q7 indicates that the majority of the Romanian respondents, in the OUC data set, consider *English as a lingua franca* to be 'extremely important' (29%) or at least 'very important' (19%). On the other hand, using the language of the local context (b) or using several languages to communicate science locally or globally (c) was rated as 'somewhat important' by a significant number of respondents, i.e. 28% and 24% respectively. It is

significant that very few considered options (b) and (c) as ‘extremely important’ (7% and 8% respectively).

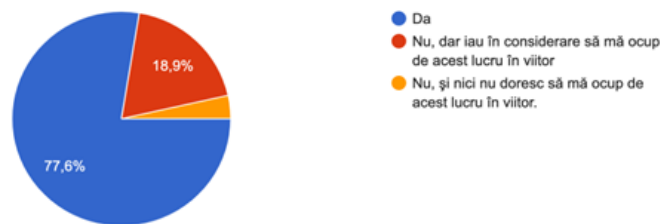
On the other hand, another aspect of research communication which was rated higher is option (e), knowing how to communicate persuasively the social impact of science to the general public. This option was viewed as ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’ by 28% and 22% of OUC respondents, respectively.

As compared to (a), (b), and (e), the other two aspects - (d) *Knowing how to use tools for creating and editing videos and treating images*, and (f) *Knowing how to communicate persuasively with the general public to engage them in scientific research*, were rated a bit lower. Options (d) and (f) were considered ‘extremely important’ by 10% and 14% of respondents respectively.

Q8. Do you do science dissemination at present?

- Yes
- No, but I am thinking of doing it in the future
- No, and I don’t plan to do it in the future

8. Sunteți implicat în momentul de față în diseminarea științei?
143 de răspunsuri



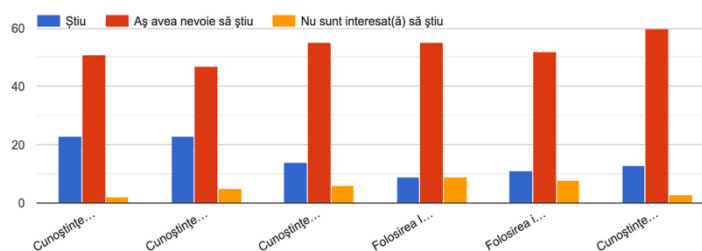
Graph 9. Involvement in disseminating science

Graph 9 presents the results obtained to question 8 (Q8) above, *Do you do science dissemination at present*. The three options provided were: *Yes* (77,6%), *No, but I am thinking of doing it in the future* (18,9%) and *No, and I don’t plan to do it in the future* (3,5%). The OUC data set indicates our respondents’ high involvement in science dissemination. **77.6%** of OUC respondents declared that they are currently engaged in science dissemination. Moreover, roughly one fifth expressed their intention of doing it in the future. The percentage of those who do not intend to do it in the future is so low (only 3.5%) that it can be considered insignificant in comparison to the rest of the OUC sample.

Q9. Please indicate what you know or need to know to use Citizen Science

- Knowledge of what Open Science is and its impact on society
- Knowledge about scientific culture and its impact on society
- Knowledge of the web portal (types of texts, hyperlinking options, interactivity, ...)
- Use of ICT (tools for video editing, audio, ...)
- Use of images and multimedia elements that can be embedded in the web portal
- Knowledge of strategies for communicating clearly and effectively

9. Vă rugăm să indicați ce știți sau ce trebuie să știți pentru a utiliza Citizen Science



Graph 10. Citizen Science

The data show OUC respondents' interest in and desire to learn more about Citizen Science. The great majority of the respondents declared that 'they would need to know' about the aspects listed in Q9 in order to use *Citizen Science*, as follows. Thus, OUC respondents would need to know about:

- Open Science is and its impact on society – 52%
- scientific culture and its impact on society – 48%
- web portal (types of texts, hyperlinking options, interactivity, ...) – 56%
- use of ICT (tools for video editing, audio, ...) – 56%
- use of images and multimedia elements that can be embedded in the web portal – 53%
- strategies for communicating clearly and effectively – 61%

Graph 10 presents the results obtained to question 9 (Q9) above. The options, matching the bars are presented under Q9, (a-f). Overall, there was a minority (less than 5%) who indicated lack of interest in *Citizen Science*.

The questionnaire was perceived as **highly useful** and it gave rise to **sixteen** comments, given below in the English version as well. We take the view that translating the questionnaire into Romanian facilitated not only a better understanding of the questions, but also our respondents' feedback.

3. Language and communication training needs as emerging from the ten interviews

The data reported above and collected through a semi-structured questionnaire were necessarily enriched by data collected through ten interviews, audio-recorded in November-December 2023.

The interview participants were seven women and three men. With regard to the senior vs. junior distinction, four were senior researchers and six were junior of which two are currently doing their PhD. They all publish regularly.

Media used to share research results other than research articles

Infographics and graphical abstracts emerged as preferred media for science communication alongside research articles.

- 4 infographics
- 2 videos
- 1 videographs
- 4 graphical abstracts

Sharing research with peers

All use open access and ResearchGate

- 1 ArXiv.com
- 2 Institutional webpages
- 2 LinkedIn

Social media

- 3 Twitter/X
- 8 Google scholar
- 5 Facebook

Outreach

- 2 Youtube

Languages

All use English for research purposes (two use English on a daily basis to communicate with peers in their lab). Most of them use the local language, Romanian, for outreach. One uses Portuguese and one uses French for outreach. Most of them use automatic translators such as DeepL or Google translate when writing articles and some also get help from foreign colleagues who re-read. Two use Grammarly. One occasionally uses Chat GPT when scientific language is not involved arguing that it is generally useful for communicating science to non-specialists.

Training

Most said training in English for research would still be beneficial. On the other hand, all mentioned that they would benefit from training in outreach to the general

public, as well as training programs designed to help them create videos, blogs, research podcasts, graphics, cartoons and to adjust their discourse to appeal to a wider audience. **Four** have a preference for a blended course (asynchronous modules + synchronous group sessions), whereas **six** are interested in synchronous group sessions. **Five** are interested in DILAN training, willing to be tracked by Kampal, and also willing to take part in the video testimonial.

Attitudes to language use

The interviewees are academics working in the fields of engineering (chemical and civil engineering), biology, medical sciences, mathematics and physics. All participants are active researchers who publish on a regular basis and are involved in disseminating their research findings to their peers, being at the same time aware of the importance of communicating research to a wider general public. For the vast majority, research dissemination is done within the scientific community, through scientific articles published in specialized Open Access journals, and presentations delivered at workshops, conferences, symposia. Some consider that their main duty as a researcher is to publish as many articles as possible and to the highest standard they can achieve. An equally important criterion with regard to research dissemination is the impact factor of the journal. Hence, there emerged a general preference for the so-called “traditional” means of science dissemination and communication through articles indexed Thompson Reuters/Web of Science and ESCI (Emerging Sources Citation Index), as well as Open Access articles indexed in other international databases. The reason behind this choice is that it targets a specialized audience and the chances for the article being cited are higher, consequently the impact, from a scientific point of view, is significantly greater. On the other hand, 8 reported using platforms for research dissemination such as ReserchGate and Google Scholar. Those who haven’t mentioned using ReserchGate and Google Scholar are the two PhD students.

With regard to the use of newer digital forms of research dissemination all reported being aware of outreach practices. The most widely used are infographic posters and graphical abstracts. Video summaries, podcasts, videocasts are rarely used, either because such forms of communication are too time-consuming or because the interviewees are not at ease with video editing. They believe that the use of such newer digital forms requires a longer time to familiarize themselves with. Another factor which discourages researchers from using video summaries, graphical summaries, podcasts, videocasts is that the journals to which they send their articles for publication do not have as an option forms of research dissemination other than scientific articles.

With regard to communicating research findings on such social media networks as Instagram or Twitter/X, the great majority are reluctant to use them. Half of them, however, reported using Facebook to disseminate research findings to the general public. Interestingly enough, some also mentioned they would like to know how to

use platforms such as YouTube, and that they consider communicating their research findings in mass media in the future. With regard to the target audience, it is generally believed that research should address a multidisciplinary and/or non-specialist audience.

Most of the interviewees have a good command of English and some reported being multilingual. They are all at ease with using English for both research and publication purposes. They have positive attitudes towards English, referring to it as a *lingua franca*, an *international language* and they reported feeling comfortable when communicating in English. They all used the local language (Romanian) for outreach when a Romanian audience is targeted. Other languages mentioned include French and Portuguese.

Perceived training needs

All researchers expressed their interest in training to communicate their research findings to a wider general public using new digital forms. They argued that while it is easier for them to communicate on certain aspects from a scientific point of view, it is more difficult to simplify such aspects and explain them in lay terms for public understanding due to specialized terminology. Thus, they felt that training to communicate their research findings to a wider public, of the sort offered by the DILAN course, will be useful. Moreover, some highlighted that in order to adapt the information for the general public, sometimes researchers need to make a greater effort than if they communicated to a specialized public. Therefore, most would be very interested in receiving training in using the new digital forms of research communication mentioned in the interview. In particular, the junior researchers and the PhD students were interested in all forms of training.

Another reason why they consider such training useful is the current context where young people spend a lot of time on social media networks and the use of new digital forms will allow researchers to communicate their research findings in a more attractive way.

There is also a contrasting opinion entertained by a minority that if they are to use these new forms of communication in digital format, they could do it by themselves without any help, whereas others expressed their confidence that the university will help them in this regard.

As far as DILAN training is concerned, there is a preference for synchronous group sessions which are seen as more interactive and attractive and which will maintain their motivation (**six** out of ten). The second option, blended courses (asynchronous modules + synchronous group sessions), was favored by **four** interviewees out of ten. Moreover, **five** interviewees are not only interested in DILAN training, but they are also willing to be tracked by Kampal, and also willing to take part in video testimonials.

4. Conclusions

The questionnaire and the interviews were scientific instruments meant to collect empirical data that would outline the coordinates of designing the online DILAN course. Genre emerges as a living, adaptive system, constantly reshaped by new technologies, audiences, and social practices.

Digital communication is an emerging yet uneven practice among Romanian academics. Researchers at Ovidius University of Constanța are increasingly using digital tools to disseminate their work, particularly through academic social networks (e.g. ResearchGate, Academia.edu) and institutional repositories. However, the use of more innovative digital genres, such as blogs, podcasts, video summaries, or infographics, is still limited and mostly explored by younger or more digitally literate academics. OUC researchers clearly distinguish between communication with peers and communication with the general public. They tend to favour traditional, peer-oriented dissemination (e.g. journal articles, open-access platforms) for professional visibility, while adopting more accessible formats (e.g. blogs, Facebook, institutional websites) when reaching lay audiences. This reflects an awareness of genre adaptation to context and audience, a key feature of digital genre competence.

Respondents view English as the primary lingua franca of science, essential for professional credibility and international engagement. However, communication in Romanian or other languages is considered only “somewhat important,” indicating a potential missed opportunity for broader public outreach and citizen engagement within the local context.

Most respondents are unfamiliar with **Citizen Science practices** and related tools. However, they express curiosity and willingness to learn. This suggests a latent potential for integrating Citizen Science initiatives within the Romanian academia, provided that researchers receive adequate guidance on open science principles, ICT tools, and participatory communication methods.

Interviewees favour synchronous group sessions and blended learning approaches, emphasizing the importance of peer exchange, collaboration, and real-time feedback in communication training. This preference aligns with the goals of the DILAN Erasmus Project, highlighting the value of designing flexible, participatory training ecosystems.

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The authors

Diana Hornoiu is a professor of linguistics in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures and Communication Sciences (Faculty of Letters) of Ovidius University, Constanta. Her research interests include gender-related linguistic variation, turn-taking patterns in conversational discourse, and cognitive pragmatics. Recent publications include: *Understanding Pragmatics. From Theory to Practice* (Constanța: Ovidius University Press, 2021); *Trends in Spoken Romanian. Corpus design, Data Analysis and Findings* (Constanța: Ovidius University Press, 2016); *Language and Gender. An analysis of Conversational Discourse in English and Romanian* (Constanța: Ovidius University Press, 2008), and articles in *Bucharest Working Papers in Linguistics* and *Analele Universitatii 'Ovidius'. Seria Filologie*.

Costin-Valentin Oancea is an associate professor at Ovidius University of Constanța. He holds an MA in Applied Linguistics from the University of Bucharest and a PhD in English Linguistics from the same university. He is currently teaching Contemporary English Language seminars, Contemporary American English, Discourse Analysis, and Sociolinguistics. His publications include several books (most recent one – *Contemporary American English: Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology*, Editura Universitară, 2022), articles published in national and international journals and contributions to conference proceedings. His main research interests include variationist sociolinguistics, dialect writing, varieties of English, and language contact.