

# 5<sup>th</sup> ESTIDIA CONFERENCE

## Hybrid Dialogues: Transcending Binary Thinking and Moving Away from Societal Polarizations

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(Conference)

UNIVERSITY OF NAPLES 'L'ORIENTALE'  
NAPLES (ITALY)

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# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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EDITED BY

Emilio Amideo  
Michele Bevilacqua  
Antonio Fruttaldo

International Conference

**5<sup>TH</sup> ESTIDIA CONFERENCE**

**HYBRID DIALOGUES:  
TRANSCENDING BINARY THINKING AND MOVING AWAY FROM  
SOCIETAL POLARIZATIONS**

**BOOK OF ABSTRACTS**

Edited by

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 CONTENTS
**PLENARIES**

- Conflict on Blogs: Trying to Make Sense of Different Positions in Comments ..... 1  
*Marina Bondi*
- Doing, Undoing and Counter-Doing Fake News: False Statements as Political Manoeuvres ..... 2  
*Cornelia Ilie*
- What Is Legitimate? (De)Constructing Binaries in Transgender Youth Discourse ..... 4  
*Lucy Jones*
- Techno-Discursive Dynamic, Social Media and Contemporary Populism ..... 6  
*Majid KhosraviNik*

**METHODOLOGICAL WORKSHOPS**

- Tools for the analysis of argumentative interactions ..... 11  
*Antonio Bova & Francesco Arcidiacono*
- Critical Discourse Studies and Digital Practices: Theory, Methods and Techniques..... 11  
*Eleonora Esposito*
- Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis: Methodology, Analysis, Interpretation ..... 12  
*Antonio Fruttaldo*
- Perspectives on Multimodality: Foundations, Research and Analysis ..... 13  
*Sole Alba Zollo*

**PANELS**

- Global Discourses (and Counter-Discourses) of Hostility in the Social Media Age..... 17  
 Convenor: *Eleonora Esposito*
- De/Constructing Gendered Identities ..... 29  
 Convenor: *Eleonora Federici*
- Populism and New/Old Media: The ‘Populist Turn’ in Western and Emerging Postcommunist Democracies..... 33  
 Convenors: *Daniela Roventă-Frumușani & Adriana Stefanel*
- Languaging in Lingua Franca Interaction: Beyond the Classroom -Workplace Dichotomy ..... 43  
 Convenor: *Hiromasa Tanaka*
- The Cyberdiscourse: A Hybrid of Polarized Stances ..... 50  
 Convenors: *Andra Vasilescu, Adriana Ștefănescu & Rodica Zafiu*

## Contents

---

### CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

The 2019 State of the Union Address – Trump’s Presidential Rhetoric vs Fact Check in our Poly-Cross-Media Environment .....	61
<i>Lucia Abbamonte</i>	
A Hybrid Approach to Sentiment Analysis: Tweets in the Brexit Era .....	62
<i>Giuseppe Balirano &amp; Marcella Corduas</i>	
A study on German Surface and Deep Rhetorical Strategies .....	63
<i>Heiner Böttger, Laura Ickinger, Deborah Költzsch &amp; Georgios Ypsilantis</i>	
The Representation of Gender in French Legal Discourse .....	64
<i>Giuditta Caliendo &amp; Océane Foubert</i>	
Male vs. Female Resources for Care and for Dialogue on Concrete Care .....	65
<i>Rafael Jiménez Cataño</i>	
Moving Away From ‘Good’ vs ‘Bad’ Contradictions – ‘Sanità District’ in Tripadvisor Reviews.....	66
<i>Stefania D’Avanzo</i>	
Funny Insults .....	67
<i>Michel Dufour</i>	
Social Media, Transparency and Dialogue in Government Communication .....	68
<i>Elena Farcas</i>	
A Visual Framing Analysis of Image of President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda in Online and Offline Discourse.....	69
<i>Katarzyna Gajlewicz-Korab &amp; Joanna Szytko-Kwas</i>	
L’“Interesse Nazionale” e il “Racconto Personale”. Un Approccio Contrastivo sulle Caratteristiche Linguistiche del Discorso ad Argomento Privato nelle Interviste Politiche.....	70
<i>Anamaria Gebăilă</i>	
Réseaux Sociaux et Interactions en ligne/hors ligne. Cas des Jeunes Turcs en France.....	71
<i>Catherine Ghosn &amp; Belgin Bilge</i>	
IN OTHER WORDS. How Otherness is (Re)Produced and How it Can be Problematized.....	73
<i>Paola Giorgis</i>	
Refugee Crisis and White Anxiety in the Digital Era: The Australian Case .....	74
<i>Arianna Grasso</i>	
Experts vs. Non-Experts, Polarisation and Persuasion in the news media: the Thai cave boys’ rescue .....	75
<i>Kim S. Grego</i>	
The Language of Power in University Student Digitally Supported Discourse: Cyberbullying from a Bulgarian Perspective.....	77
<i>Tsvetelina Harakchiyska</i>	
Using Social Media in The Electoral Context. Lessons from Romania 2014 Presidential Campaign .....	77
<i>Francine Jaomiasa</i>	
Linguodisursive Potential of Social Media .....	78
<i>Veronika Katermina</i>	
Languaging in Digital Practices in Intercultural Project-Based Learning Among University Students .....	79
<i>Takanori Kawamata</i>	



---

Fake News and Post-truth on Online Media in Bulgaria .....	80
<i>Ivanka Mavrodieva</i>	
Flipped Out: Student Voice and Choice in Course Design .....	81
<i>John McKeown</i>	
Migration in an Electoral Context: The Case of Italian Media Discourse in the 2018 Parliamentary Campaign .....	81
<i>Cătălina Meiroșu</i>	
Polarization in Chilean Educational Debate. Polarización en el Debate Educativo Chileno .....	82
<i>Violeta Montero &amp; Cristián Santibáñez</i>	
An Analysis of Medical Discourse: Cosmetic Surgery and Signs of Age(ism) .....	83
<i>Roxanne Holly Padley</i>	
Polarización Entre Sordos y Oyentes: Caminos de la Educación de Sordos en Brasil.....	84
<i>Cleide Emília Faye Pedrosa</i>	
‘So Torn About Vaccines’... Parental Dialogic Responsiveness to Vaccine Hesitancy in Online Parenting Forums .....	85
<i>Anna Franca Plastina</i>	
Trial by Social Media vs. the Traditional Courtroom. A Cross-Cultural Study of Legal Argumentation.....	86
<i>Douglas Mark Ponton &amp; Marco Canepa</i>	
Media Evidence for a Polarized Societal Debate in Bulgaria on Gender Otherness Issues .....	87
<i>Juliana Popova</i>	
“You are just a Hufflepuff...”. Polarized Discourse in the Harry Potter Fan Community .....	88
<i>Angelo Riccioni</i>	
Communicating Normative Assumptions on Same-Sex Couples .....	89
<i>Carmen Serena Santonocito</i>	
“ <i>La Donna è Mobile</i> ”: Hostile and Benevolent Sexism in President Trump’s Tweets .....	90
<i>Giuseppina Scotto di Carlo</i>	
Polymedia and a Hybrid Dialogue from the Standpoint of the Theory of Complex Adaptive Systems .....	91
<i>Olena Semenets</i>	
A Pragmatic View Upon the Hybrid <i>Offline-Online</i> Artistic and Social Discourse of Romanian Artist Dan Perjovschi .....	92
<i>Ana-Maria Sezonov (Hanaru)</i>	
Being Successful in the Eyes of Bulgarians: A Comparative Study .....	93
<i>Hristina Sokolova</i>	
The Characteristics and the Uniqueness of the Jewish Joke.....	94
<i>Arie Sover</i>	
Can Political Correctness Settle Conflict?.....	94
<i>Emanuele Stochino</i>	
Complexity of Dialogues on the Net .....	95
<i>Mariselda Tessarolo</i>	
<i>Appraising</i> the Brexit Discourse in Academic Blogs: Evaluative and Polar Meanings .....	96
<i>Girolamo Tessuto</i>	

## Contents

---

The Idea of ‘Misunderstood Tolerance’ - A Sign of Latent Polarization of the Public Bulgarian Discourse?.....	98
<i>Bilyana Todorova</i>	
Rhetorical and Discourse Analysis of Online Media Debate on the Quality of Higher Education in Bulgaria.....	99
<i>Yanka Totseva</i>	
Promoting counter-stereotypical products on Instagram: The case of cosmetic products targeted to male consumers.....	100
<i>Gelu Olivian Tudose</i>	
Peeling the Labels off: A Case Study of Neuro-Autobiographies in Breaking Away the Binary Thinking .	101
<i>Andrea C. Valente</i>	
Young People Go Public: The Greek YouTube Sphere of Public Speech.....	102
<i>Ioanna Vovou, Matina Peppas &amp; Yannis Stamos</i>	

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# *Plenaries*

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## Conflict on Blogs: Trying to Make Sense of Different Positions in Comments

**Marina Bondi**

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Blogs have often been described as a site for debate, and potentially for disagreement and even open conflict. Academic blogs are no exception, as they often involve debate between different, sometimes opposing positions and approaches. Conflict is often represented initially in the post, or it may emerge and develop in the comments that follow. Starting from the idea that blog comments are mostly characterized by interwoven polylogues involving different types of communities and displaying different types of identities, the talk centres on how a conflict of positions is represented and resolved – or, conversely, reinforced - in these polylogues. Using a small corpus of economics blogs, in particular, the talk looks at interaction within the multiple communities that constitute the community of blogging practice and at their interactional behaviour before potentially conflicting encounters. The analysis aims at identifying different ways of “making sense” of other positions and different ways of opening or closing up space for the acknowledgement of other positions. On this basis, I present some reflections on the potential blurring of many distinctions in the public display of personal disclosures that often characterizes blogging. The multiplicity of identities and communities participating in the activity is seen as both an opportunity and a threat in relation to managing polarized dialogue.

**Marina Bondi** is Professor of English Linguistics at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Italy), and Director of the CLAVIER centre (Corpus and Language Variation in English Research). She has published extensively in the field of genre analysis, EAP and corpus linguistics. Her main interests are academic and corporate discourse, with special attention to language variation across genres, disciplines and cultures. Her approach pays attention to discourse analysis and to corpus linguistics, focusing on the role of genre in language variation and on the importance of phraseology in language choice. Her recent work centres on the language of knowledge dissemination in professional communication, with an emphasis on the discourse of the humanities (history) and social sciences (economics). She is author and editor of more than 20 books and has published over one hundred journal articles and book chapters. Marina Bondi has published in international journals such as *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, *Pragmatics*, *Pragmatics and Society*, *Text & Talk*, *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, *JEAP* and *ESP*.

Her most recent publications include:

- Bondi, Marina 2018. Blogs as Interwoven Polylogues: The Dialogic Action Game. *Language and Dialogue* 8/1, 43–46.
- Bondi, Marina 2017. *What Came to Be Called*: Evaluative *What* and Authorial Voice in the Discourse of History. *Text & Talk* 37, 25–46.
- Bondi, Marina 2016. “CSR Reports in English and Italian: Focus on Generic Structure and Importance Markers”. In Garzone, Giuliana E. / Heaney, Dermot / Riboni, Giorgia (eds), *Language for Specific Purposes: Research and Translation across Cultures and Media*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 168–199.
- Bondi, Marina 2015. “Bridging across Communities: Time Frames and Reader’s Engagement in Popular History”. In Bhatia, Vijay K. / Chiavetta, Eleonora / Sciarrino, Silvana (eds), *Variations in Specialized Genres: Standardization and Popularization*. Tübingen: Narr, pp. 13–35.

## Doing, Undoing and Counter-Doing Fake News: False Statements as Political Manoeuvres

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Wide public access to new social media has radically altered the way in which political leaders communicate with the citizens and the way in which citizens get more engaged in politics, scrutinizing the politicians' public statements. This is why, when politicians make false claims spreading misinformation and distorting the discursive representation of events, their trustworthiness is increasingly called into question and sanctioned by citizens and the media. Untruthful and deceptive statements (whether deliberate or not), may contribute to disseminating fake news, and consequently, they are now being fact-checked, criticised and corrected in the public space. As a confirmation of Austin's (1975) recognition of our capacity to not only *do* but also *undo* things with words, we are now witnessing how a politician's objectionable or offensive discursive doings get exposed and challenged through *undoings*, *redoings* or *counter-doings* initiated by members of the public audience, or even by the statement-deliverers themselves.

While speech act scholars have shown considerable interest for the study of mechanisms used to do things with words, less attention has been devoted to investigating *how to undo things with words*, although this tends to become a rather widespread phenomenon (Krabbe 2001; Langton 2017; Caponetto 2018). The aim of this presentation is to explore how the intersection of incompatible, divergent, or contradictory statements underlying speech act-performed doings, undoings, redoings and/or counter-doings, results in an ongoing hybridisation of political discourse. Opting for an analytical paradigm shift, this investigation challenges binary thinking assumptions and misconceptions about purposefully construed dichotomies (Vickers 1990; Dascal 2008) in order to supersede simplistic polarisations through a more nuanced and multi-layered pragma-rhetorical approach (Ilie 2009, 2018). A major focus of the present analysis is to dispel the myth of a clear-cut distinction between true and false (statements) by pointing rather to a grading scale that allows for a more fine-grained distinction between categories like half-true, mostly true (the facts may generally be correct but presented in an incomplete or biased manner), partly false or mostly false (the facts are not correct but are connected to a small kernel of truthful elements). By examining the politicians' discursive practices, metadiscursive contextualization strategies, keyword framing mechanisms, and processes of speech act performance, reinforcement or cancellation, we can get a deeper understanding of the different levels of falsehood and intentionality of the political manoeuvres displayed by their statements.

**Cornelia Ilie** is Professor of Linguistics and Rhetoric at Strömstad Academy (Sweden) and Visiting Professor at Hellenic American University (Athens, Greece). She was Research Fellow at Lancaster University (UK) and Research Scholar at U.C. Berkeley, and held visiting professorships at universities in Austria, Finland, Greece, Italy, Romania, Spain, and the UK. She is founder and president of ESTIDIA (European Society for Transcultural and Interdisciplinary Dialogue), Board member of IPrA (International Pragmatics Association), and Member of the Reference Group of Experts (Higher Education and Education for All) of the IAU (International Association of Universities).

Her research interests are interdisciplinary and internationally anchored. She has published extensively on institutional pragmatics and discourse practices (particularly political, media and academic discourses), intercultural rhetoric and argumentation.

Her most recent publications include:

- Ilie, Cornelia / Norrick, Neal 2018. *Pragmatics and its Interfaces*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Ilie, Cornelia / Nickerson, Catherine / Planken, Brigitte 2018. *Teaching Business Discourse*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ilie, Cornelia / Garzone, Giuliana E. (eds) 2017a. *Argumentation across Communities of Practice: Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

- Ilie, Cornelia / Schnurr, Stephanie (eds) 2017b. *Challenging Leadership Stereotypes through Discourse: Power, Management and Gender*. Berlin: Springer.
- Ihalainen, Pasi / Ilie, Cornelia / Palonen, Kari 2016. *Parliament and Parliamentarism: A Comparative History of Disputes about a European Concept*. Oxford/New York: Berghahn Books.
- Tracy, Karen / Ilie, Cornelia / Sandel, Todd (eds) 2015. *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction* (3 volumes). Boston (MA): Wiley Blackwell.

## What Is Legitimate? (De)Constructing Binaries in Transgender Youth Discourse

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In this talk, I demonstrate and problematise the continued dominance of binary, essentialist ideology on western conceptualisations of gender, focusing specifically on transgender identities. Through an initial account of how trans people are represented in the press, debated about in politics, and medicalised by the state, I lay out a culturally dominant construct of ‘legitimate’ trans identity and experience. I then move on to analyse two differing sets of data: the gender transition diaries of young trans YouTubers, and moments of interaction between members of a trans youth support group. Through discourse analysis which draws on sociocultural, linguistic theory and queer linguistics, I show that the identity construction taking place in both datasets reveals the dominance of heteronormative, cisnormative ideologies regarding transgender identity. I argue that these ideologies, which shape what is ‘legitimate’, are ultimately restrictive and potentially damaging for young people exploring their gender identity.

Trans youth are often a particularly vulnerable group in society, requiring compassion and specialist support in understanding their gender identity, yet they often don’t have access to the help they need. Young people often turn to YouTube, as a result, to learn from the experiences of other trans and/or non-binary people who log their transitions in video diaries. These ‘vlogs’ therefore play a potentially significant role in the production of salient discourses surrounding transgender identity and practice. In the first dataset in this talk, I analyse identity constructions in the gender transition diaries of two such vloggers, both young Americans. I show how the vloggers use their videos to construct a coherent ‘expert’ persona, one that is achieved, in part, by authenticating their *own* experiences and positioning them as typical. Specifically, I argue that they reproduce essentialist assumptions of binary gender and heteronormative sexuality, reinforcing archetypal, medicalised ideas of authentic trans experience.

In the second dataset, I show how members of a British support group for trans young people also construct legitimate identities. I analyse interactions between four young people who work collaboratively to construct a mutual identity as members of a community of practice, despite differences between them in terms of their gender, age, and experience. Like the vloggers, their identity construction is also achieved through the foregrounding of their relative expertise in, and experience of, transgender issues. In this case, however, this positionality enables them to challenge and resist the ignorance and transphobia of those in their lives who ‘other’ them via essentialist, cisnormative discourse. The young people thus mutually construct an active, resistant identity – which *they* frame as legitimate – rather than a victimised or submissive one.

Via these analyses, I highlight the continued salience of constraining gender ideologies, while also demonstrating how young trans people may push back against dominant ideas of trans legitimacy. The data also reveal the enormously important role played by support groups and other agencies in helping young people to construct a positive sense of self in the face of heteronormative, cisgender society.

**Lucy Jones** is Associate Professor in Sociolinguistics at the University of Nottingham. Her research makes use of ethnography and discourse analysis, and is concerned with the construction and representation of gender and sexual identities. Her publications include studies of: lesbian identity construction; media representations of the UK same-sex marriage debate; homonormativity in young lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people’s identity constructions; the discourse of transgender YouTuber video diaries. She is currently conducting research with LGBT youth groups in a range of sociocultural contexts; this project uses intersectionality to analyse how varying experiences impact on young queer people’s identities. She is also working on a project using corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis to explore British newspaper representations of HIV-preventative drugs being introduced by the National Health Service. Lucy sits on the Editorial Board of the journal *Gender and Language* and the Advisory Boards of *Journal of Language and Sexuality* and *Journal of Language and Discrimination*. She is an Advisory Council member of the



International Gender and Language Association, and a Board member of the British Association of Applied Linguistics Special Interest Group in Language, Gender and Sexuality.

Among her recent publications, we can acknowledge:

- Jones, Lucy 2019. Discourses of Transnormativity in Vloggers' Identity Construction. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 256/2, 85–101.
- Jones, Lucy 2018. "I'm Not Proud, I'm Just Gay": Lesbian and Gay Youths' Discursive Negotiation of Otherness. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 22/1, 55–76.
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- Jones, Lucy 2016. "If a Muslim says 'homo', nothing gets done": Racist Discourse and In-Group Identity Construction in an LGBT Youth Group. *Language in Society* 45/1: 113–133.

## Techno-Discursive Dynamic, Social Media and Contemporary Populism

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The paper examines the links between technological design of Social Media Communication (SMC) (KhosraviNik 2014, 2018a), the post-politics-affective turns in contemporary (Western) societies and the rise of populism. Populism has been discussed in terms of its discursive content, anti-establishmentarianism, and its affective rather than argumentative characteristics. In other words, it has been studied both as a political ideology/discourse as well as a style of communication. Right wing populism has particularly been on the rise in the West in recent years (Wodak *et al.* 2013) evidenced by various electoral and political gains. As far as the politics on the ground is concerned, the rise of populism should be associated to hyper-normalisation of neo-liberal rationality (KhosraviNik 2017, 2018b) e.g. extreme individualism, competitive (rather than deliberative) persuasion and preference for relatability over rationality. This translates to rise of personality politics, triumphant of affect over argumentation and reduction of democratic project to media(tised) performance. The paper elaborates on the Techno-Discursive dynamic of populism and digital communication i.e. the intersection of SMC mediation technologies and the discursive consequences of such paradigm shift in society. This is to explore the links between *the digital* in relation to *the political* in contemporary discourses e.g. around collective identity (KhosraviNik/Esposito 2018, KhosraviNik/Sarkhoh forthcoming).

Social Media Communication has been hailed in terms of its democratisation of access with an appeal to a form of democratic practice with claims to empowerment of the ordinary citizens, re-connection with politics, grass-root mobilisation etc. Incidentally, these constitute the core characteristic claims of new media technologies which work with the logic of regimes of popularity building through engagement of *prosumers* (Ritzer/Jurgenson 2010). The appeal of affective political engagement and the rise of Social Media personality politics is, on the one hand, predicated on internalisation of the equation of visibility-as-popularity-as-legitimacy and, on the other hand, works as a revolt against the perceived monolithic nature of traditional mass media/politics. Both these elements overlap with the populist vociferous attacks on the perceived media and political elitism. The design values and processes at work in Social Media technologies, their political economic model, their starting assumption of post-ideological status of contemporary societies and obsolescence of critical structural politics are constructively in line in promoting an affective-driven, anti-establishment, anti-elite, anti-expert populist politics. In a similar vein, the extreme individuation and the corporate algorithmic manipulation of news and information paves the way for normalisation of a populist perception of public communication and collective identity. The main argument here is that hyper-normalisation/triumph of neo-liberal rationality together with new media design/affordances have created a specific Techno-Discursive dynamic which facilitates the growth of haphazard populist politics (KhosraviNik 2018b).

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- Wodak, Ruth / KhosraviNik, Majid / Mral, Brigitte (eds) 2013. *Right-Wing Populism in Europe: Politics and Discourse*. London/New York: Bloomsbury.

**Majid KhosraviNik** is Senior Lecturer in Digital Media and Discourse Studies at Newcastle University, UK. He works at the intersection of discourse, media and society and has published widely on theory and practice of CDS methods, immigration, populism and self/other representations etc. Majid teaches Digital Discourses and Identity, and Politics of/in Communication while supervising a number of post/doctoral projects including digital discourses of terrorism. He is specifically interested in digital media discursive practices in global contexts by investigating the impact, dynamic and challenges of Social Media technologies within a Social Media Critical Discourse Studies (SM-CDS) approach. Majid has published more than a dozen journal articles, chapters and books on various theoretical and applicational aspects of digital discourse studies in addition to exploring algorithmic regimentation, affective visibility, echo-chambers etc. He is the guest editor of a Special Issue on digital discourses of identity and politics for journal of Critical Discourse Studies. His next monograph project elaborates and expands the SM-CDS approach and implications of new mediation technologies. Majid is a founder of Newcastle Critical Discourse Studies, sits on editorial board of *Critical Discourse Studies* (Routledge) and *Journal of Language & Politics* (John Benjamins) while acting as an expert evaluator and rapporteur for a range of international publishers and research grant organisations including the EU commission research actions e.g. Marie Curie Grants and Combating Hate Speech Online.

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*Pre-Conference  
Methodological Workshops*

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## **Tools for the analysis of argumentative interactions**

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### **The workshop topic and goals**

Argumentation is an essential dimension of communication at different levels (individual, interpersonal, intra- and inter-group, organizational, communitarian, cultural, institutional). It plays a unique role, not only because it is a relevant competence to deal with contradictions, doubts, and complex decisions, but also because argumentation can be used to sustain or foster reasoning, helping people to distinguish between real and unreal, true and false, genuine and fake. In this vein, argumentation is not intended as limited to formal debate but includes as well interpersonal everyday efforts to engage in discussions with others, to co-construct knowledge and meaning and to better understand how to make decisions and to negotiate positions.

This workshop is intended to offer a complete view of different tools for the analysis of argumentative interactions occurring in various contexts (e.g. in the family contexts, in the classroom, in professional workplaces). In particular, through the presentation of examples of analysis as well as a series of exercises realized during the workshop, we will introduce the participants to the tools for analysis of argumentative interactions developed over the last two decades by the pragma-dialectical school of argumentation at the University of Amsterdam (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004; van Eemeren, 2010) and by the Lugano Group at the Università della Svizzera italiana (Rigotti & Greco Morasso, 2019).

### **Intended audience**

postgraduate students, early career scholars, experienced researchers and lecturers in linguistics, psychology, rhetoric, political science, pedagogy and philosophy.

## **Critical Discourse Studies and Digital Practices: Theory, Methods and Techniques**

**Eleonora Esposito**

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### **Overview**

Across the Social Sciences, the value of investigating Social Media as a site for the (re-)formation and consumption of information, values and worldviews is widely recognised. At the same time, using digital data in social research requires new and adequate analytical models which are currently still under development.

This workshop will offer an introduction to an emerging critical paradigm for the investigation of Social Media data, namely the Social Media Critical Discourse Studies (SM – CDS) approach.

### **Aims**

The workshop will first introduce the theoretical implications of a critical, multimodal and context-dependent approach to Social Media, discussing key readings and authors in the field as well as paying particular attention to gaps in the existing literature.

Secondly, the workshop will highlight the main methodological challenges posed by Social Media platforms as sources of data, such as: selecting and collecting representative data from the cybersphere; performing

systematic observations to account for media and genre specific contexts of communication; dealing with the fleeting nature of both data and platforms and with the inherent non-linearity of the participatory web.

Lastly, the workshop will provide an overview of free-to-use and commercial tools and software for the analysis of Social Media data, providing examples of their application in previous research.

### **Intended Audience and Materials**

This workshop is open to anyone interested in collecting and analysing Social Media data for social research purposes. Postgraduate students and early career scholars with an interest in Linguistics, Social Media, and Communication may find the workshop particularly useful. No specific background in Critical Discourse Studies is required.

The workshop will be set up interactively, with ample time for questions, discussion, and exercises. Digital course material will be made available before the workshop. It is advisable to bring your own laptop to the event.

## **Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis: Methodology, Analysis, Interpretation**

**Antonio Fruttaldo**

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### **Overview**

The workshop will offer a basic introduction to corpus linguistics to anyone interested in working with linguistic corpora and other large collections of text. The workshop aims to give a hands-on introduction to corpus linguistics with particular attention to those who are new to corpus methods. First, the workshop will illustrate how to access online/offline corpora and discuss the main corpus linguistic output methods (concordances, frequency lists, and collocation displays) that can be used in analysing the data. Different concordance tools will be illustrated (i.e. AntConc, Lancsbox, CQPweb, WordSmith Tools, Sketch Engine) for the hands-on part. An overview of existing corpora will also be provided. Lastly, the workshop will discuss some examples of previous research that showcases how corpus-based discourse analysis can be used in analysing given forms of discourse.

The workshop will be set up interactively, with ample time for questions, discussion, and exercises.

### **Competences**

By the end of this course, participants:

- will have learned about basic premises and tools in corpus linguistics;
- will have learned to generate and analyse frequency lists, concordances and collocates using different software;
- will have learned some basic statistical measures in the interpretation of the data.

### **Previous knowledge**

This course is open to anyone interested in analysing large bodies of text, either for specific linguistic purposes, or with the idea of mining the contents of texts for more general purposes. No background in corpus linguistics is required.



### **Study material**

Digital course material will be distributed before the start of the workshop. You can bring your own laptop (PC, Mac or Linux).

## **Perspectives on Multimodality: Foundations, Research and Analysis**

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### **Overview**

The workshop aims at introducing participants the main tools for multimodal analysis and provide practice in using them, analysing a broad range of different genres. Firstly, we will explore the key concepts of Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotic approach to multimodality and show how they can be applied to the analysis of visual meaning. The main meaning functions of the visual mode are introduced: representational, interpersonal and compositional. The second part of the workshop will focus on multimodal texts used in particular contexts (institutional, political and educational) and for specific purposes (persuasive, pedagogical, narrative etc.) Our focus will be on the meaning potentials of composition or layout. Lastly, we will also discuss some of the limitations of this approach and how it can be strengthened by drawing on other theories and academic disciplines.

The workshop will take a practical, interactive approach with ample time for discussion.

### **Competencies**

By the end of this workshop, participants:

- will have learned about basic theoretical concepts and tools in multimodality;
- will have learned to analyse different text-types from a multimodal perspective.

### **Previous knowledge**

This course is open to anyone interested in analysing texts from a multimodal perspective. No background in multimodality is required.

### **Study material**

Handouts will be distributed before the start of the workshop.



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# *Conference Panels*



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## Global Discourses (and Counter-Discourses) of Hostility in the Social Media Age

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### Convenor

**Eleonora Esposito**

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The fast-emerging technologies of the participatory web have transformed the way we communicate, explore and connect to the world forever. The new range of indigenous genres, contents and practices, situated at the intersection of mass and interpersonal communication, fosters the pursuit of personal interests in a shared scenario as well as the creation and maintenance of global relations that validate and support identities and behaviours. Not simply grounded in the incessant sharing of information content, the social media communication paradigm is characterized by a limitless potential for *ordinary* (rather than *élite*) media performance, with an ever-growing number of *bottom-up* discourse formations and disseminations.

Unfortunately, one of the most significant and complex drawbacks of this unprecedented proliferation of user-generated content is the acutely increasing incidence of *cyber-hate*. Hostility is a complex social, cultural and psychological phenomenon: motives behind people's hate are various, different and often obscure, and the fluid nature of the cybersphere adds to further complicate an already thorny matter. In fact, the very global, immediate and interactive nature of the social media communication paradigm has somehow contributed to make the participatory web a breeding ground for the expression and dissemination of a range of exclusionary, intolerant, and extremist discourses, practices and beliefs.

In light of the above, this panel discussion brings together a number of scholars from across the world to discuss the latest empirical findings, methodologies and theoretical frameworks to understand the phenomenon of online hostility. On the one hand, this panel represents an arena to share and discuss insights on how embedded social and power relations are organized through digital technologies and how online hostility is impacting on equality and participation in the cybersphere. On the other hand, it provides room for research on the many emerging counter-discourses and grassroots counter-measures enacted by individual actors and communities against hateful and exclusionary behaviours in the cybersphere.

### List of contributors:

## Critical Perspectives on Semiotic Violence Against Women in Politics

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The fast-emerging technologies of the participatory web have been saluted as an empowering tool to facilitate and increase women's participation in political and institutional processes, allowing them to bypass the much-criticised gendered frames in 'traditional' media and to achieve a greater degree of visibility. At the same time, digital media affordances have opened up new channels for the proliferation of misogynous hate (Mantilla 2015; Jane 2017; Powell & Henry 2017), especially against those women advancing their way in a political public sphere traditionally associated with power, authority and hegemonic masculinity. The established misogynous phenomena of objectification (Nussbaum 1995; Langton 2009) and defamation (Nussbaum 2010) of women in politics seem to be enhanced by the informational and reputational cascades (Sunstein 2010) proper of digital virality. A new form of digital divide, this "semiotic violence" against women in politics (Krook and Sanín 2019) has implications for both present and future engagement of women in politics.

This paper draws attention to the potential of a critical approach to semiotic violence against women in

politics, at the intersection of digital media scholarship, discourse theorization and critical feminist explication. Exploring online discourse as social practice, and steering clear of any trivialization of cyberhate as a ‘recreational’ internet phenomenon, a critical approach allows to highlight and problematize the existing link between the misogynous discursive practices proliferating online and the socio-political context of the offline world and its gendered power relations. In particular, this paper aims to enrich the current state of the art by mapping and investigating semiotic violence against politicians across Europe from the point of view of Social Media Critical Discourse Studies (SM-CDS). A recent theoretical development (Unger, Wodak & KhosraviNik 2016; KhosraviNik 2017; KhosraviNik & Esposito 2018), SM-CDS represents a socially committed, problem-oriented, textually-based, critical approach to social media discourses, combining Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) with tenets in New Media and Computer Mediated Communication (CMC).

The epistemological considerations presented in this paper are grounded in the emerging results of a multi-lingual study currently being conducted in the context of a H2020-MSCA-IF-2017 project (<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/215403/factsheet/en>). The project investigates phenomena of online misogyny (such as gender-based hate speech, rape threats and image-based sexual harassment), against highly visible, political and institutional female figures in Europe. More specifically, it maps the multimodal discursive strategies of online hate against women in the public sphere by collecting and analysing a corpus of user-generated content on Social Networking Sites from three different linguistic landscapes and political cultures in Europe, namely Italy, Spain, and the U.K.

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## On the Right to Public Space in the Age of Algorithms

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Online violence became a much-debated topic in the Portuguese media around May 2017, during the traditional academic festivities (Queima das Fitas, or Ribbon Burning) of graduating university students. The most salient episode covered by the media in this regard concerns the allegedly non-consensual video recording, disseminated on social media, of a young male student genitally manipulating a young female student, apparently unconscious due to excess drink, in a public transport bus especially chartered for the event, while a multitude of students watched, laughed and clapped. The video was disseminated by the online version of the *Correio da Manhã* populist newspaper as well as its TV channel. Although the paper attempted to distort

the image of the alleged victim, the dissemination of this video was severely criticised by various sectors of Portuguese society, namely the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG), the Deontological Council of the Journalists' Trade Union as well as the Portuguese Regulatory Entity (ERC). The director of the *Correio da Manhã*, Octávio Ribeiro, defended that, by distributing the video, the newspaper was contributing to disseminating "a relevant and controversial fact, whilst protecting the identity" of those involved, adding that "without news, there is no reflection" (Lusa 17.05.2017). As such, the *Correio da Manhã* invoked the public interest in disseminating the video, which it alleges to have been intended to mobilise society around a cause, namely that of collective indignation against possible sexual abuse.

This episode will be analysed with the objective of understanding how the Net, as an integral part of an expanding public sphere, has come to redefine the classical division of public and private. As such, the contexts in which the collective understanding of sexual rights (with emphasis on the reframing of 'privacy') is being visibly challenged and redefined in light of online publics and digital publicity (Albury 2017: 714) will be explored. Ultimately, I intend to sustain the claim that the concepts of public space and publicity become interconnected due to the impact of an algorithmic culture that extends voyeuristic capacity. By privileging topics and images that cater to the highest number of people (and often the lowest common denominator), social media facilitate the conversion of women into objects of surveillance through the dissemination of images of a sexualized and depersonalized nature. In this process, gendered dichotomies, based on relations of power, are reinforced through the threat of 'intimacy made public through the transgression of boundaries' (Alvares 2018: 5). Disciplinary effects are thus exercised through the production and reproduction of women as 'out of space' (Fanghanel / Lim 2017: 3) or out of context, with images that violate intimacy acting as technologies of control over female behaviour. Online misogyny thus operates by displacing or expelling signs of embodied femininity (Sadowski 2016: 108) onto a realm of virtuality where women tend to experience loss of control, due to loss of context (Butler 1997: 4).

**Keywords:** *digital publicity, public space, privacy, surveillance, online violence, misogyny*

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## **"I voted Leave! So, why are you still here?": The Rise of Hate Speech on British Mainstream Websites in the Context of Brexit**

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Brexit is widely perceived as leading to radicalization within British (mainstream) discourses. History shows that debates on political and economic transitions that have massive implications for the respective in-group usually serve as a catalyst for negative emotions such as hatred, fear or hostility leading to an increase in instances of hate speech.

In my current postdoc project, I examine the impact of Brexit on current conceptualizations of different out-groups on British mainstream news websites. My interest lies in how these concepts (which can be characterized as being exclusionary or even hateful) are verbally constructed. Have these concepts already

reached the status of ‘socially acceptable’, resulting in such explicit verbalization? Does the British mainstream already represent a forum for explicit discrimination? And if so, how do other web users react to its presence?

In recent years, my research focus was on verbal antisemitism in both the German and British mainstream. In my PhD, I conducted a mixed methods analysis on antisemitic speech acts found in the readers’ comments section of center-left newspapers The Guardian and Die Zeit. My focus here was on statements (by authors seeming to exhibit a common understanding of political positions of the corresponding medium) that gave vent to antisemitic stereotypes and demonizing historical analogies (such as Nazi or colonialist analogies) in a way that does not conflict with prevalent social standards.

In my current research project, I seek to expand this framework by examining how in the UK hate speech as a concept is both explicitly and implicitly conveyed with regard to Jews, Muslims, and immigrants from different European states, but also toward the EU itself. The database consists of articles, readers’ comments and posts on respective Facebook outlets of British mainstream media. In my analysis I follow a mixed methods approach. I start with a qualitative analysis, then continue my study measuring current trends with the help of quantitative tools – also conducting a comparative study across the aforementioned media and Facebook sites. As a third step, I use NLP in order to enable the automatic detection of implicit hate speech online. The basis for the latter has been developed with the help of Artificial Intelligence experts.

This project, linguistically examining antisemitism and other hate ideologies in British mainstream society, is the first of its kind. It will shed light on current trends of cyberhate based on extensive sets of authentic texts as well as a pragmalinguistic understanding of hate speech combined with the use of the newest technologies.

**Keywords:** *antisemitism, racism, nationalism, media platforms, corpus linguistics, pragmalinguistics, artificial intelligence (NLP)*

## **Digital Discourses of Perfect Femininity, Disablism and New Affordances for Representation and/or Hate Speech**

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This paper aims to deconstruct the complex relations between hate speech, social media discourses and disabled girls’ digital self-representation practices as an under researched group. A growing body of academic studies address young women as active creators of, and participants in socially mediated digital media landscape (Holmes 2017; Kearney 2011). Postfeminist girl power and “the shift from objectification to subjectification; an emphasis upon self-surveillance, [and] a focus on individualism, choice and empowerment” (Gill 2007: 147), has encouraged young women to ‘brand’ (Banet-Weiser 2012: 56) their self-representations and make their “authentic voices highly visible in public” (Harris 2004: 125). However, disabled girlhood challenges the normative beauty as a defining source of women’s identity (Projansky 2014) in online-media culture, especially within the typically feminine popular culture domains of fashion and beauty. Discourses of disability construct disability as “a problem or lack” that often leads “to silence other experiences of disabled women, such as those of sex and gender” (Stienstra 2015: 54). This discourse has been positioned disabled women outside discourses of beauty because they have been thought of as being unwilling and/or unable to ascribe to cultural standards of beauty (Ellis 2015). One of the concentrated digital discourse foci on disabled girls’ self-representation practices on online is Karolyn Gehrig’s series of #Hospitalglam, launched in 2014 on Gehrig’s Instagram account. She takes glamorous Selfies in hospitals and other medical environments to draw attention to her illness i.e. what it means to be a disabled but still ‘girl’. This has started a trend for manifestations of discourse of identity and self-presentation among disabled young women around #Hospitalglam. In line with conceptualisation of social media affordances as new realms of (potential) discursive power and performance of niche identities (Ghaffari 2018), while Instagram has facilitated this much needed discursive visibility for these girls, it has also become an effective media space for re/constructing and communication of gate discourses and extreme Self/Othering based on normative beauty ideals,



heteronormativity, idolisation etc. By drawing on the characteristics of the new dynamics of communicative content and practices on participatory web platforms (KhosraviNik 2017, 2018) and the Discourse-Historical Approach (Reisigl / Wodak 2001) to CDA, this study investigates the discursive strategies and digital meaning making practices in 2,000 user-generated comments attached to #Hospitalglam posts on Instagram within the first six months of 2018. By integrating systematic observation and textual analysis and taking into consideration that the construction, perception and communication of hate is primarily a social construct, i.e. constituted in the socio-cultural, socio-political and socio-economic context of the society (KhosraviNik / Esposito 2018), this study critically explores the digital affordances, normative beauty ideals and discourses of hate speech within an intersectional gender framework (whiteness, normative (augmented) beauty, social class and dis/able-bodiness).

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## Can the Testimony Counter Online Homophobia? The Example of a Prevention Campaign of the Association Le Refuge

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In its 2018 annual report, the French association SOS Homophobie points out the increased number of hate speech online: “Facebook and Twitter alone account for 64% of messages received in 2017 by SOS Homophobie [...]. Widely integrated into everyday uses, they facilitate an uninhibited expression, which is challenging because of its virality” (2018: 60 [our translation from French]). In recent years, social networks have caused a major change in the organization of public and private discursive spaces. Freedom of expression, of which they are the symbol, is perceived in an ambivalent way by many associations who fight for the LGBTI

people rights. Faced with the recrudescence of homophobia on the internet (Tin 2003), LGBTI associations try to react by proposing tools and devices capable of countering these hate speech.

So does *Le Refuge*, a French association, created in 2003 to help young people between 18 and 25, rejected by their family because of sexual and identity orientations. It offers young people temporary shelter but also a social, psychological, medical and legal support. For a prevention campaign in the fall of 2018, the association has produced and broadcast on the internet new testimonial films where the floor is given to the youngsters Le Refuge has hosted. It is the testimony as discursive genre that will interest us here.

The narrative of a traumatic experience is widely used to allow the transmission of a memory, to facilitate the resilience for the victims (Torner 2001; Torterat 2017), but also to prevent hate speech. It is then not a question of confronting the arguments of these hate speeches, but of trying to change the representations, to propose another point of view on the events, to explain them differently, to give food for thought, the ultimate goal being to promote “new ethical rules” (Rinn 2015 : 2).

Question is, by what discursive and argumentative strategies can a testimony reach its goal of prevention? To try to bring some answers, we will take the example of the last online campaign of Le Refuge against homophobia, consisting entirely of testimonials. We will focus in particular on the place of pathemic processes in this online video, i.e. how are the emotions mobilized in discourse and aroused in the viewer?

Through analysis that borrows largely from Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 2003; Blommaert 2005; Amossy 2012), we will try to show that the testimonials do not directly confront the homophobic argumentation. In that sense, the testimony as a discursive genre does not respond to the linguistic features of a counter-discourse, but rather to those of an “alternative discourse”. The narratives proposed in Le Refuge’s online prevention campaign bring another perception of homosexuality that does not give in to prejudices and preconceptions, it may therefore offer a new object of reflection capable of modifying perspectives.

**Keywords:** *testimony, homophobia, online prevention campaign, alternative discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis*

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## Online Misogyny in a Quarantined Community of Practice: Representations of Men and Women across the Manosphere

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Over the past five years, a number of men, such as 22-year-old Elliot Rodger, have committed violent acts against women in the name of sexual entitlement and misogyny, after voicing their hatred of women in the online manosphere. The manosphere is a loose online community for mostly white, heterosexual men whose identity is constructed in opposition to feminist ideals, and they believe that men are a disadvantaged group in Western society. The manosphere spans across various websites which are characterised by their

denouncements of feminism, and their essentialist views about men and women. Additionally, these websites have included references to figures in the alt-right movement in the past (Anti-Defamation League 2018), which could signal that the manosphere is part of a wider online social movement as opposed to being an isolated community.

As it manifests on the Red Pill section of the special interest forum website Reddit, this anti-feminist community is made up of three main sub-groups: men's rights activists (who want socio-political changes for men such as father's rights), men going their own way (who distance themselves from women to varying degrees), and pick-up artists (who use tactics known as "game" to sleep with as many women as possible). As this community is made up of anonymous members of the online public, it can be considered a bottom-up discourse. Additionally, as the community has been quarantined by the Reddit administration for its "highly offensive or upsetting" content (Reddit, 2019), the Red Pill forum can only be found by people who already know its name.

My research adds to a growing body of literature (Schmitz / Kazyak 2016; Ging 2017) where researchers have conducted thematic analyses across various manosphere websites, but have not yet applied a discourse analytic and corpus linguistic approach to the data. Thus, I compiled a 220,000-word corpus of posts from the online anti-feminist site The Red Pill on Reddit from the three subsets of the community mentioned above. Across these sub-communities, I analysed the gendered social actor keywords woman/women, man/men, guy(s) and girl(s) using social actor roles (van Leeuwen, 2008) and Appraisal Theory (Martin / White 2007) to determine how in-group men, and out-group men and women are discursively represented.

Preliminary results show that women and girls are more often collectivised than men and guys, are appraised in terms of aesthetics as opposed to having their actions as people evaluated, and that frequent negative capacity judgements frame women and girls as being unable to think for themselves (e.g. "women have no self-awareness"). Thus, the desires of women and girls are prescribed by the in-group. Despite these negative capacity judgements, the in-group perceive women as wielding both material and social power over them in society, due to the assistance of out-group men. Thus, in-group men are characterised by feelings of antipathy, fear, and insecurity as a direct result of these out-groups, and out-group men are not judged in the same way as out-group women and girls. I will then conclude by discussing how dangerous we can consider the Red Pill community on Reddit, considering its quarantined status.

**Keywords:** *online misogyny, critical discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, the red pill, toxic masculinity*

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## Megaprojects and Discourse Analysis from a Symbolic-territorial Approach

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On the one hand, communities impacted by megaprojects of infrastructure in the Global South have used digital spaces to speak-up, building counter-narratives in relation to official discourses and traditional media. On the other hand, these communities experience confrontation with colonial and patriarchal structures that do not exist just offline, but also online. Based on a Discourse Analysis from a multidimensional and relational approach that understands territory as a category to be explored as a part of symbolic power – not separated from process of accumulation by dispossession, this research reflects on two cases in Brazil: the hydropower dam São Luis do Tapajós, Amazon area, and the Bus Rapid Transit Corridor built for the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, analysing traditional media discourses and counter-discourses in a local dimension.

## The Pleasure of Hating: Charles Gross Being Exposed. Investigating Hate Speech Online

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Online platforms have now become a *proscenium* for everyone who wants to spread their darkest feelings protected by the right of a borderline ‘freedom of expression’ concept. As a matter of fact, there is not a clear, unanimous and shared definition about the meaning and identification of the so-called ‘hate speech’ since the difficulty of successfully reporting the web comments that do not contain undeniable derogatory words. In the YouTube case, if from one hand the social platform constantly continues to update its guidelines to reassure sponsors and outlines more specific definitions of hate speech to YouTubers and what kinds of content/words wouldn’t be entitled for monetization, on the other one the comment section has turned out to be a wild battleground for cyberbullying an individual for the content, life and ideas he/she shares with people. In addition, if certain user-generated comments can be cancelled by the very YouTuber, the hateful group finds its censor-free shelter in forum communities like Reddit or Gurugossip. The object of this study will be the investigation of the Charles Gross case, a gay latino-adopted New Yorker who has been uploaded his videos almost every single day since 2015. The comment threads under scrutiny reveal themes and conflicts that re-emerge with interesting regularity. The quantitative methodology has the intent to demonstrate that a linguistic study of online conflicts can disclose important aspects of communication models and group dynamics. In addition, the discourse examination has the purpose to deconstruct online comments on the basis of negative associations and stereotypes of the ‘others’, which could lead people to hate in the digital language era.

**Keywords:** *HSO, homophobia, hate speech, communities of speakers, cyberstalking*

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## **Underlying Systemic Patterns of *Oppressors-Oppressed* in Climate Change Denial Theories**

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Climate change impacts people and communities on an international and local level. Globally, the countries least responsible for emissions are those now being hit the hardest as they do not have the resources to address the problem and deliver effective results. Locally, climatic changes affect the population more severely and for a longer period of time. This could regard small-scale farmers who are being overtaken by industrial agriculture and are then hit by climate catastrophes or, even more so, the general public who experiences the daily effects of climate change but is often uninformed and thus unaware of its risks (Mearns, R. / Norton, A. 2010).

Yet, as climate change is becoming a more recognised and apparent threat, denial theories are likewise gaining increased attention. Indeed, this study poses that the discussion on the ideological underpinning of denial theories, recently inflaming many political and institutional controversies (Schmidt *et al.* 2013), merits closer linguistic scrutiny in order to take proper measure of its discursive impact on constructing environmental stakeholder stance. By referring primarily to the US and UK contexts, the aim of this investigation is to expose the ongoing controversy between power structures that deny the phenomenon, and climate science which incessantly warns humans of the realities of climate change. Specifically, the focus is on the extent to which climate skeptics, in collaboration with major and diverse media outlets, are at work in shaping and affecting science and policy discourse, thus instrumentally intensifying public vulnerability by destabilizing the understanding of anthropogenic repercussions on the environment especially regarding greenhouse gases triggering global warming (Powell 2016; Cook 2016).

With the purpose of revealing what lies behind these climate-related power relations and policy implementation, the study draws on data provided by the well-documented *DeSmogBlog* website, a project whose ambitious goal is to provide “accurate, fact-based information regarding global warming misinformation campaigns” (<https://www.desmogblog.com/about>). The resulting *DeSmogCorpus* comprises linguistic instantiations extracted from articles and interviews regarding denial scientists, self-professed experts, industry associations and their think tanks intent on disseminating doubt concerning anthropogenic agency through media interference (Hoffman and Woody 2008). In order to operationalize the study’s aims, both quantitative and qualitative means of analysis will engage with the critical perspective of intersectionality as it generates a set of questions to reach a more complete and accurate understanding of the social and political conditions for climate governance (Cho, S. *et al.* 2013). Specifically, quantitative analysis will make use of corpus-based tools (McEnery and Gabrielatos 2006; Baker 2006; Baker *et al.* 2008), while qualitative-based approaches will draw on Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough / Wodak 1997; Weiss / Wodak 2003; Wodak 2007) supported by Appraisal Theory (Martin / White 2005) and van Leeuwen’s Social Actor Network (1996).

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### ***Illegal is not a noun: Pejoration through adjectival nominalization***

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Research on nominalized adjectives (Wierzbicka, 1986) suggests when meanings shift from having one property to becoming a kind with associated properties the noun form often encodes stereotypical attributes:

- (1) “Her hair is *blonde*.” (hair color)
- (2) “He married *a blonde*.” (female, sexy, dumb)

Likewise, the linguistic phenomenon of genericity makes reference to classes or kinds (Carlson & Pelletier, 1995). Different grammatical structures reflect properties in different ways (Lawler, 1973). In (1-2), the shift from adjectival *blonde* to indefinite NP *a blonde* moves the focus from the definitional characteristic to the prototypical. Similarly, adjectival *gay* (3) is definitional, but the nominal form (4) adds socially-based conceptions of the “average” *gay*.

- (3) *jesus christ i make a joke and now im a gay man?* (sexuality) [constructed]
- (4) *jesus christ i make a joke and now im a gay? ...* (flamboyant, abnormal) [Twitter, 2016]

The definite plural (5) was recently brought to public attention through use by Donald Trump. Acton (2014) argues that this construction signals distance and non-membership.

- (5) *Ask the gays what they think and what they do, in, not only Saudi Arabia, but many of these countries, ...* [Donald Trump, 2016]

This paper documents the role of these aspects with *female*, *illegal*, *poor*, and *gay* and explores the grammatical processes and semantic impact of innovative ways to categorize individuals through adjectival nominalization. To investigate this phenomenon we compiled a corpus of 3,782 nominal and adjectival instances of these four forms from Twitter, Reddit, news interviews and commentary, and written and video blogs. We coded the

corpus for linguistic form – indefinite singular, definite singular, bare plural, and definite plural – to analyze whether variation in form has a semantic impact as well. Each instance was also annotated for pejorative or non-pejorative meaning. We applied an automatic part-of-speech tagger (Owoputi *et al.*, 2013) to the data and corrected the output using a pattern-based filter (Palmer *et al.*, 2017). When we compare part-of-speech labels to annotations of pejorative meaning, we note that 66.8% of nominal instances are labeled pejorative and 13.0% labeled sarcastic/satirical. Nearly all of the adjectival instances (99.0%) are labeled non-pejorative. A subset of the corpus (N=121) was annotated for pejoration by two additional linguists following the same guidelines as the original annotator. The agreement between these annotators reaches Cohen’s kappa of 0.72 and 0.46. In a second corpus from Twitter, 800 instances were annotated using crowd-sourcing, and again we find a correspondence between nominal status and pejorative meaning.

Studying pejorative meaning in innovative forms is a complex task, and applying these various methods of analysis takes us a step closer to understanding this semantic shift. Our corpus studies provide strong empirical support for the hypothesis that certain adjectives take on pejorative meaning when nominalized and used in marked constructions, which can then reference individuals or groups in a derogatory way.

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## In Search of Interdisciplinarity to Stimulate a Network of Counterspeech Researchers

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The utopian view of the internet as a virtual public sphere (Papacharissi 2002), that facilitates extensive and instantaneous communication between people around the world, quickly came into contestation following the rapid rise of online aggression, hostility and a range of negative online behaviours. A great deal of research has focused on these behaviours in its various forms - from online extremism, cyberhate, cyberbullying and trolling to the subtler “information laundering” (Klein 2012: 431). However, the notion of counterspeech that “encompasses any speech that counters a message with which one disagrees” (Strossen 2018: 158) has received minimal attention in comparison. While the panel theme of *Global Discourses (and Counter-Discourses) of Hostility in the Social Media Age* highlights the importance of counter- voices, -narratives and -measures, this paper questions how academics across disciplines might draw together their various approaches to build a solid body of counterspeech research that will lead to emancipatory outcomes. To address this question this paper is divided into two parts.

First, as a critical discourse analyst interested in social interactions in digital contexts, I present two examples of my own counterspeech research to show the contribution that critical discourse studies approaches (Wodak / Meyer 2016) can make. I discuss my investigation of the discursive strategies and linguistic features of counterspeech comments that were in response to the racist discourses that appeared on one particular YouTube platform. This analysis was conducted against the current debate about regulation of the internet that questioned whether the deletion of abusive or offensive content is in breach of the right to free speech, and whether counterspeech offers an appropriate alternative to deletion. My findings show a mix of counterspeech initiatives enacted by the commenters which served to deligitimise the racist ideologies and their purveyors, though some worked counterproductively. I emphasise the need, therefore, for commenters to develop better

counterspeech skills that work effectively in a free speech environment. In the second example of my research I present my analysis of an image that went viral as a counter response to the terrorist massacre in two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand in March this year. After considering the visual grammar (Kress / van Leeuwen 1996) and the powerful message of this artwork showing two New Zealand women embracing – one a muslim wearing a hijab – I go on to examine its recontextualization – moving back and forth between the online and offline worlds. I argue for the effectiveness of this image as a counterspeech initiative that took advantage of the affordances of the internet and social media platforms.

For the second part of this paper I highlight the challenges I encountered with my research above due to the paucity of scholarly literature in this area and the divergent methodologies used in other studies on counterspeech that came from areas such as computer science, sociology, psychology and linguistics. My observations also lead me to suggest that research into online counterspeech is, at present, theoretically ‘anaemic’. The objective of this paper, therefore, is to stimulate robust discussion about the ways in which academics can successfully build counterspeech into a cohesive area of interdisciplinary research.

**Keywords:** *counterspeech, critical discourse analysis, interdisciplinary research, social media*

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## **#WontBeErased: Fighting Hate on Twitter**

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As the right-wing agenda of politicians worldwide keeps growing stronger bigotry, discrimination and tensions are increasing. Some of the political campaign, which have been flooding the media, explicitly violate basic human rights, and more often than not the lives of people belonging to specific minority groups are being put at risk. More specifically, gender and sexual identities have been the target of many politicians, from Trump in the USA to Salvini in Italy, to Bolsonaro in Brazil.

The transgender community in the USA has been repeatedly attacked since president Donald Trump was elected in November 2016. In February 2017, the Trump administration revoked the guidance that allowed transgender students in public schools to use toilets matching their gender identity. In March 2018, president Trump signed a memorandum banning transgender people from serving in the military forces. In late October this year, a new change concerning gender identity was announced. The administration is considering narrowing down the definition of gender as a biological and immutable condition determined by the gender assigned at birth, that is to say based on the genitalia each person is born with.

As a response to this explicit and fast-growing hostile behaviour, the National Center for Transgender Equality organized a protest launching the hashtag #WontbeErased, a catchphrase which represents the way transgender people were feeling following this announcement. The hashtag immediately became very popular on social media and a symbol of the fight against gender identity discrimination. This study analyses a corpus of tweets containing the hashtag collected from October 21st 2018 onward. It aims at identifying the linguistic and semantic patterns used by transgender people and allies using this hashtag to articulate counter-discourses to hate and hostility and construct agency.



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## De/Constructing Gendered Identities

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The panel wants to offer reflections on language, gender representation/perception and verbal violence across different media (social media, the world wide web, cinema, TV and the Press). Feminist scholars such as Caldas-Coulthard (1996), Cameron (2003, 2007) Litosseliti (2006), and Sunderland (2004, 2006, 2010; Sunderland & Taylor 2003), have analysed the media as a key site for the discursive construction of gendered identities and maintenance of dominant gender ideologies. Societal gender stereotypes and bias have been reverberated in the online world through cyber violence and hate-speech, and categories such as gender race, age and sexual orientation have become the starting point for offensive behaviours across the web. The contemporary extreme verbally heated reactions across the media and over the web have underscored how important and timely it is to think about language use and gender equity in many domains. Recently, in Italy the topic of non-sexist language has made a come-back on the political agenda and in the media thanks to the former president of the Chamber of Deputies, Laura Boldrini, who has become a principal victim of hate speech and verbal violence across the web and social networks. Language remains the most powerful means through which sexism and gender discriminations are reproduced and a non-binary and non-dichotomic representation of masculinities and femininities in cultural products (movies, TV series, advertising, comics, video games) could prevent gender inequalities and societal polarizations while promoting a non-sexist perception of gender roles and identities. We welcome proposal on: cultural representations of femininities/masculinities; linguistic representations of gender stereotypes; language and gender; translation and gender; gender representations in media; women and cyber-violence; LGBT issues and hate-speech

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#### **Gender Translation in Disney Animated Movies. Prince Charming? No Thank You!**

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After the spread of the big screen the female empowerment history has been shown by means of new forms of entertainment. If the role of women in contemporary society is well outlined in audiovisual products which are addressed to a specific target group, specifically children, an interesting example from a diachronical perspective is the development of the 'princess' character in Disney movies. A clear transition can be seen from the prototype of the 'traditional' princess such as Snow White to a different type of character shown as a heroine rather than a weak and fragile girl waiting for her prince. The paper intends to observe the use of specific strategies in translating elements related to the concept of gender for functional and communicative needs implicit in the adaptation/dubbing into Italian. Various case-studies will be shown in order to outline the main differences/similarities between the English and the Italian version.

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## Characters in Search of the Author. Metalepsis, Corporeity and Gender in *Westworld*

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Franco Moretti – following Georgy Lukacs's aesthetological theories – affirms that “aesthetic forms are structured responses to social contradictions” (2013: 14, n. 27), thus a specific aesthetic form represents a reply or a contradiction in our society. A ‘problem’ of our social-cultural context finds an indirect response in an aesthetic, linguistic, narrative form, for example, a mass product can represent a ‘deviant’ discourse, a controversial discourse, within the same production system where it is collocated. My case-study is *Westworld* (HBO, 2016-present) an American science fiction TV series created by Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy (2 seasons, 20 episodes). *Westworld* shows a technologically advanced Wild-West-themed amusement park populated by android “hosts”, the caters to high-paying “guests” who may indulge their wildest fantasies within the park without fear of retaliation from the hosts, who are prevented by their programming from harming humans. The hosts follow a predefined set of intertwining narratives but have the ability to deviate from these narratives based on interactions they have with guests. The hosts repeat their multi-day narratives anew each cycle. At the beginning of each new cycle (typically following the host's “death”), each host has its memories of the previous period erased. This continues hundreds or thousands of times until it is decommissioned or repurposed for use in other narratives. For guest safety, hosts' programming prevents them from physically harming human guests; this allows guests nearly unlimited freedom to engage without retribution in any activity they choose with the hosts, including rape and murder.

I will show how the dissonance in *Westworld* can be analysed as a narrative metalepsis (Genette 2004) which insinuates a critical response to the production logic of TV series. This is even more evident focusing on the two female characters and the representation of body transformation.

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## BECOMING MICHELLE From the South Side Chicago to The White House

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The intertwining nexus among peoples and/or socio-cultural groups has always been represented through images (Pestell / Palazzolo 2016). In particular, through archetypal and mythological representations human beings have symbolically embodied both their own ancestral fears and wishes. This is why, by construing mythological representations and narrations, mankind has managed, throughout history, to trace back the different ideals, aspirations, taboos generated *in* and *by* different socio-cultural scenarios (von Franz 1978). Yet today the reading of the languages of new myths (both verbal and/or non-verbal) can convey the key to an understanding of the historical period we are living in. Nowadays one of the most popular cultural icons is Michelle LaVaughn Robinson, better known with her husband's surname, Barack Obama, 44<sup>th</sup> and former president of the U. S.A. Michelle is still serving as a highly influential role-model, as this sentence – repeatedly posted on social media – “A sign of the times is that the most famous man in the world is a woman, Michelle Obama” (Devesconi 2019), clearly witnesses. Mrs Obama's recently published autobiography, *Becoming Michelle* has immediately become a best-selling record book. Thorny issues such as racism and gender are dealt with, while Michelle goes back over her difficult *journey* from the South Side of Chicago, where she was raised “in a conventional house”, to the White House, where she became the first Afro-American FLOTUS. By drawing on the theoretical approach of Appraisal Framework (Martin / White 2007) we intend to investigate how her ‘becoming Michelle’ has been accomplished.

The Appraisal Framework explores the way language is used to evaluate, to construe textual personas and investigates how affective involvement can be conveyed through a set of indicators including exclamation, repetition, intensification and attitudinal lexis, and so on. Accordingly, qualitative examples will be analysed in order to show how, in Michelle's autobiography, the lexico-grammar options are significant to the process of making her own *persona* and in the shaping of her status of modern cultural icon.

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**Issues of Gender, Translation and Narrativity in the Representation of Refugee Women Victims of GBV**

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Migration involves the intense circulation of peoples, goods and cultures as well as, less explicitly, hierarchical and hegemonic power relations between territories and their inhabitants. Languages, and the borders they establish, are essential to such movements and relations. But no language is innocent or neutral, because it reflects and structures our ideology and worldviews. This is particularly easy to observe when taking into consideration the practice of language mediation across the Mediterranean routes where migration flows and transnational interests are leading to new models of contacts between people with different linguistic and cultural heritages thus problematizing our traditional understanding of language as a social projection of territorial unity held together by shared behavioural norms, beliefs and values.

More specifically, this study proposes a twofold aim: on the one hand, to explore the extent to which refugee women, victims of gender-based violence (GBV) are portrayed by the media; on the other hand, to provide a reflection on the practice of language mediation for refugee women, victims of gender-based violence (GBV) by challenging the concepts of ethics, belonging, community, religion, class, sex and gender. To this end, a range of issues concerning the discursive representation of gender identity, verbal and visual violence, trust, empathy, solidarity, hospitality, abuse, conflict, denial, testimony will be discussed through several case-studies.

**Bionote**

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## Populism and New/Old Media: The ‘Populist Turn’ in Western and Emerging Postcommunist Democracies

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‘Emanation’ of the People and expression of its will, populism witnesses a tremendous expansion all over Europe. From the *Independence Party*, in Great Britain to *Podemos* in Spain or *Movimento 5 Stelle* in Italy, (to cite only a few,) parties and social movements are presenting themselves as challengers of the current system and ruling actors. Invested with hope by disappointed citizens (Euroskepticals, Brexit adepts etc.), no longer trusting traditional institutions, populism changes the balance of power and the rhetoric of discourse all over the world. Moreover, populist discourse exerts a contagious influence on parties and leaders (on the right and the left), on discourses and practices in Western Europe, Southern Europe and Eastern Europe as well.

We propose the questioning of this problematic following several axes:

- The ‘populist turn’ in Western and emerging postcommunist democracies.
- Populism in/and old and new media
- Populist leaders/parties and populist discourses
- The Rise of Populism in emerging democracies
- Media Populism, populist narratives, populist policies?

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Emanation du Peuple et expression de sa volonté, le populisme connaît actuellement une expansion exponentielle dans tout le monde. De la Grande Bretagne -*Independence Party* à l’Espagne -*Podemos*, l’Italie-*5 Stelle* pour ne citer que quelques uns, les partis et les mouvements sociaux se présentent eux-mêmes comme des *challengers* du système actuel-*establishment* et de ses acteurs. Investi avec l’espoir des citoyens déçus (eurosceptiques, partisans du Brexit), pas confiants dans les institutions traditionnelles, le populisme change le rapport des forces et la rhétorique du discours partout en Europe et pas seulement (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2012 inter alii). Ce qui plus est le populisme exerce une influence contagieuse sur les partis et les leaders.(a droite ainsi qu’a gauche) en ce qui concerne les discours et les pratiques politiques en Europe Occidentale, du Sud, Centrale et Orientale.

C’est pourquoi nous proposons le questionnement de cette problématique à partir des focalisations suivantes

- Le ‘populist turn’ dans l’Europe Occidentale et les démocraties postcommunistes émergentes ;
- Le populisme dans/et les anciens et nouveaux medias ;
- Leaders populistes/partis populistes et discours populistes ;
- La montée du populisme dans les démocraties postcommunistes émergentes
- Populisme des medias, populisme des politiciens/politiques, populisme des discours/narrations

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In the actual economic and political turmoil and the rapid changing *mediascape* the study of populist political communication has never been more important. The purpose of this text is to provide information about the conditions that give rise to the presence of populist political communication in different European democracies in general and in Romania in particular.

At the turn of the new millennium, Cas Mudde (2004) argued that the growing success of populist parties had triggered the emergence of a “populist Zeitgeist” in Western Europe, a development consisting of the increasing adoption of populist messages, or rhetoric, by mainstream parties and politicians. In fact, almost all liberal democracies are affected by some sort of populism either in *discursive style* (Jagers / Walgrave 2007; Mudde 2007; Moffitt 2016; Herkman 2015; Wodak 2018) or as ‘*thin ideology*’ (Mudde / Cristobal 2013; Stanley 2008, Pirvulescu 2018).

Our analysis aims to reveal in what measure new media and the virtual public sphere contribute to consolidate the populist discourse in the Romanian politics.

We intend to analyze how traditional parties (The Social Democrat Party at the left and the National Liberal Party at the right) modify their electoral discourses in order to include manicheistic elements of the populist rhetoric (also present in the discourses of the new parties such as USR -The Union Save Romania and of a new very important actor-the street).

**Keywords:** *populism 2.0, post communism, populist rhetoric*

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#### Bionote

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Specialist in semiotics, gender studies and discourse analysis, she authored and coauthored 13 books (*Gender Mass Media, Representations. Social Realities and Media Representations*, Ed Universitatii din Bucuresti 2014; *Gender and Discourse in Organizations* Bucuresti Tritonic, 2013; *Concepts fondamentaux pour les etudes de genre*, Paris, Editions des Archives Contemporaines, 2009 *Argumentation. Models and Strategies*,

Bucharest, All,2000 etc.); over 100 studies and articles in the above mentioned fields, published in *Quaderni, Communication, ESSACHESS, Réseaux, Degrés, Kodikas-Code, Poetics, Revue Roumaine de sciences sociales, Revue roumaine de linguistique, Canadian Journal for Communication, Media Development, Kodikas-Code*. She is member of the ISA-RC14 board, since 2010, of the SFSIC (French Society of the Information and Communication Sciences), IPrA (International Pragmatic Association), of the team of AUF experts of Central and Eastern Europe and of the scientific committees of *Recherches féministes, Communication, Essachess, Styles of Communication, Interstudia, The International Journal of Cross-Cultural Studies and Environmental Communication*.

She worked in 12 media and gender project teams (director and member of the project team), organized over 30 summer schools, international conferences on gender, discourse, media, and evaluated over 100 projects within AUF (Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie)

**Adriana Ștefănel**, PhD, is Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Journalism and Communication Studies, University of Bucharest. She holds a PhD in Sociology and is interested in electoral behaviour in the society overwhelmed by the media (according to Bernard Miege), methodology in communication studies, social representation theory, nationalism and populism as styles of political communication, the political imaginary, and discourse analysis. In the last three years she has become interested in new media and the usage of new technologies in political communication and in electoral campaigns. In 2015, she won a postdoctoral scholarship from ICUB–University of Bucharest Research Institute to conduct research on populism and political discourse. Since 2005, she has published more than 15 articles (single author and co-author) in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, and conferences proceedings; she has participated in more than 30 international conferences. Her PhD thesis was published by a highly esteemed Romanian publishing house.

## **Populism in an Emerging Post-Communist Democracy. The Case of Parliamentary Debates in Romania**

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The paper aims at bringing forward some specific forms of populism which are quite active in the present-day debates in the Romanian Parliament. It is based on current definitions of populism (Laclau 2005; Mueller 2016) and takes into account some parameters, such as ideas, policies, and especially style (Ruzza / Fella 2011), which make possible to evaluate the degree of populism.

One can notice both important changes over time in the populist discourse in Romania, and important differences in the targets of this discourse, as compared to Western Europe and even to some other former communist countries (like Hungary). These aspects are due to the specific evolution and configuration of the political forces in Romania. Nationalistic parties, which had a strong position after 1989, are no more represented in the Parliament or even disappeared. Accordingly, nationalistic rhetoric, which nowadays marks important points in Western Europe, is dramatically declining in Romania: national disaster scripts, nationalistic slogans, insults directed to some ethnic minorities, which were quite frequent after 1989, nowadays became rather exceptional. They are felt as connected with the communist past of the country.

The analysis will focus on the populist strategies used by the MPs representing some important political parties: Social-Democratic Party (PSD), National-Liberal Party (PNL) and the Union Save Romania (USR).

PSD, the party in power, sticks to the idea of fulfilling its governing program. Its rhetoric – quite monotonous, sometimes reminding the wooden language of the communist discourse and some older slogans like “with the people, for the people” – insists on the prompt measures of the government to improve everyday life of ordinary citizens, as well as on the remarkable economic growth of the country.

The strategy of the PNL, the main opposition party, is to reject any proposal coming from the majority in power, usually without conclusive arguments. PNL MPs consider governmental policies as having hidden grounds, which are detrimental for the simple citizens. They assume for themselves the role of alerting people about the dangers involved in the poisonous governing policies.

Finally, the USR MPs, representatives of the new generation of politicians, have a different strategy, based

mainly on a staged boycott of the parliamentary debates. They use unconventional means (loud musical records, slogans, banners, badges and other distinctive signs). USR organizes protests outside the Parliament building, cooperating with the anti-PSD movement #Resist. Their favorite slogan is “PSD – ciuma roșie” (“PSD – the red pest”).

The picture which emerges from this short description is that in Romania the roots and forms of populism should be looked for mainly in the competition for power between the left-wing and the right-wing parties, which are in an open and irreconcilable conflict.

**Keywords:** *populism, parliamentary discourse, populist rhetoric, staging, conflicting stances*

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### Bionote

**Liliana Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu** is a Professor Emerita in the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Letters, at the University of Bucharest. She was Fulbright Professor (1990-1991), at the University of Washington, Seattle, and Visiting Professor (1996-1999), at the University of Vienna. Her teaching and research interests include pragmatics, discourse analysis, rhetoric, argumentation. Her main publications are: *Narațiune și dialog în proza românească. Elemente de pragmatică a textului literar (Narrative and Dialogue in the Romanian Fiction. Elements of a Pragmatics of Literary Texts*; București: Editura Academiei, 1991); *Conversația: structuri și strategii. Sugestii pentru o pragmatică a românei vorbite (Conversation: Structures and Strategies. Suggestions for a Pragmatics of Spoken Romanian*; București: All, 1995, 2nd edition 1999); *Limba și comunicare. Elemente de pragmatică lingvistică (Language and Communication. Elements of Linguistic Pragmatics*; București: All, 2003).

She is the editor of several volumes, including: *Cooperation and Conflict in In-group and Intergroup Communication. Selected Papers from the Xth Biennial Congress of the IADA* (București: Editura Universității din București, 2006); *Dialog, discurs, enunț. In memoriam Sorin Stati (Dialogue, Discourse, Utterance: In Memoriam Sorin Stati*; București: Editura Universității din București, 2010); *Parliamentary Discourses across Cultures: Interdisciplinary Approaches* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012); *Limba – discurs – stil. Omagiu Mariei Cvasnî Cătănescu (Language – Discourse – Style. Homage to Maria Cvasnî Cătănescu*, București, Editura Universității din București, 2017); *Discursul parlamentar românesc (1866-1938). O perspectivă pragma-retorică (Romanian Parliamentary Discourse. A Pragma-rhetorical Perspective*, București: Editura Universității din București, 2018). She was a member of the board of IADA (2005-2012) and coordinator of several projects, among which a corpus of verbal interaction in present-day Romanian, and the project on Romanian parliamentary discourse (CNCSIS grant 2136/2008).

## Agriculture and Populism in Romanian Media: The Case of EU Campaigns from 2019

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Agricultural issues are not typically analyzed in relation to populism, despite the fact that economic debate is at the center of populist discourse. Discourse is understood as the meanings given to phenomena (both social



and physical) and the practices associated with those meanings. This paper will focus on two areas of agriculture in relation to populist discourse and ideology. First, we discuss the media coverage of african pigs pesta in 2017 and 2018 and examine whether this reconstruction of the topic have already set the basis of a populist discourse about agriculture for the Europarliamentary Elections from 2019. Second, we investigate the coverage of agriculture issues in media presentation of electoral campaign for the EU Parliament in 2019. Analysis of media coverage reveals distinctive meanings and metaphors concerning the role of agriculture in the general economy and in the conceptualisation of its nature along with elements of co-construction.

**Keywords:** *agriculture, media coverage, populism, EU campaign, Romania*

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## Manifestations of Populism on Online Media: The 'Populist Turn' in Postcommunist Democracy in Bulgaria

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Populism has had its specific manifestations on traditional and online media over the past 30 years of Bulgarian society changes. The assumption is that these changes are the result of political, social, media, and marketing factors. On the one hand, the changes during the transition from socialism to democracy in Bulgaria determinate new manifestations of populism. On the other hand, online media, social networks, and the convergent media environment, as well as the dynamics of the media market are factors for spreading populist messages quickly. Bulgarian political spokespersons make unreasonable comparisons between modern politicians and heroes from different periods of Bulgarian history. Political orators try to attach a halo to the image of other political leaders and statesmen, while actually following a conjunctive behaviour in terms of personalities rather than serving ideas and causes. Bulgarian politicians present the desirable as real and make unrealistic promises. The aim is to identify the features of populism in online environments through the methods of discourse and rhetorical analyses. The hypothesis is that online media contribute to the faster spread of populist promises, they are predominantly verbal and non-original and they create opportunities for post-truth in the current Bulgarian society.

**Keywords:** *populism, online media, Bulgaria, transition, post-communism, post-truth*

## **Populism – from Strategic Communication Style to Political Ideology. The Romanian Case**

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When Donald Trump won the US elections and the Leave side defeated Remain in the BREXIT voting, the key-assets for winning were the populist speeches of leaders like Boris Johnson or Nigel Farage, as well as the participation of marginalised categories of voters who had previously refused to vote because they felt ignored by the political elite. According to Cas Mudde and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser, populism appears to be in conflict with liberal democracy. In line with the two researchers, I believe that in order to comprehend this conflict between populism and liberal democracy, it is necessary to shift from the theoretical dimension of the debate to empirical studies able to prove – through practical examples – the ways in which populism and the populists stand as a threat for contemporary democracy. Mudde stressed out that populism is “a rarefied ideology, considering that society can be divided into two antagonistic groups: the virtuous people versus the corrupt elite, arguing that politics should express the general will of the people”. Many pundits still believe that populism is a kind of rhetoric of the demagogue politicians.

My hypothesis is that populism is a political ideology, not only a style or a strategy of discourse. Authors like Koen Abts and Stefan Rummens suggest that, since populism focuses on concepts such as “the people” or “democracy”, “populism provides a thin-centered ideology concerning the structure of power in society”. This is the reason why some researchers like Takis S. Pappas (Populism and Liberal Democracy, A Comparative and Theoretical Analysis) are describing the populist regimes (in Greece – Syriza, Hungary – Fidesz, and Poland – The Law and Justice Party) based on a populist ideology. I will verify my hypothesis on whether the candidates with Eurosceptic messages, conveying illiberal topics on social networks (hatred towards foreigners, migrants, and the Western businessmen and companies), are only using a populist speech during the Euro-parliamentarian campaign or are promoting a populist ideology.

Using the content analysis method, I shall verify the extent to which the official Facebook pages of the Social Democratic Party (PSD, the direct successor of the Romanian Communist Party), the Liberal and Democrats Alliance (ALDE, the government partner of PSD), the National Liberal Party (PNL), the Save Romania Union (USR), and the new-comer party called PLUS reflected the antagonism of the “virtuous” people versus the “corrupt” elite, and I shall reveal which of these parties are using a populist discourse or promoting a populist ideology only during the European campaign.

**Keywords:** *populism, ideology, illiberalism, communication style*

### **Bionote**

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In 2000 he graduated the Faculty of Journalism and Communication Sciences, where a few years later he obtained a Master in Communication Sciences. He has a degree from the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Bucharest since 2002. In 2005 he graduated a Master in Political Sciences at National School of Political Sciences.

During October 2010 – March 2013, he had an EU postdoctoral research scholarship studying in Rome at LUISS University the relationship between neo-populism and new media. He conducted his post-doctoral research in Italy; he lived in Rome in 2012. He studied at LUISS “Guido Carli” University with Michelle Sorice, Leonardo Morlino and Sergio Fabbrini.

In 2013 (July-August) Momoc had a Summer United States Institute scholarship on Journalism and Media in Athens, at University’s Scripps College of Communication, Ohio University. The Summer Institute was funded by a grant from the Study of the U.S. Branch in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the United States Department of State. In Athens Momoc researched under the coordination of US professors Yusuf Kalyango, Mary Rogus, Hans Meyer, Bill Reader and Robert Stewart.

Selected publications include: *Web 2.0 Communication. New media, Participation and Populism* (Iași: Ed. Adenium, 2014); *The Political Traps of Interwar Sociology. Gusti's School between Monarchy and Legionary Movement* (București: Curtea Veche Publishing, 2012); *Petty Communist Activists. Life-stories* (with Zoltán Rostás, București: Curtea Veche Publishing, 2007); *The Black Marketers, the Ones who Managed, and the Survivor* (București: Curtea Veche Publishing, 2013).

## **Le leadership populiste en Roumanie à l'ère de la communication 2.0.**

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Le populisme est une étiquette appliquée à certains partis et leaders politiques, tenant compte de leur vision et programmes. Dans Webster Dictionary de 1999, un «populiste» désigne «une personne qui croit aux droits, à la sagesse et aux vertus du peuple» ... «Le trait d'union de ces mouvements est une certaine mise en scène du peuple, assis à la fois sur un fondement politique (demos) et un fondement ethnique (ethnos) de la nation, dont la double nature serait méconnue par le système politique officiel» (Raynaud 2017 : 11)

Notre étude se propose une incursion heuristique qui vise les programmes politiques lancés par les partis et les mouvements populistes récents qui essaient de se frayer chemin sur la scène politique roumaine, dans une année électorale (élection parlementaires européennes et élections présidentielles en Roumanie), ainsi qu'une analyse de l'impact des plates-formes de ces partis sur Facebook.

Notre corpus de recherche est focalisé sur les sites, les programmes politiques et les commentaires sur Facebook des leaders de ces formations politiques, des citoyens protestataires, des influenceurs et d'autres catégories de publics. Nous avons pris dans l'échantillon de la recherche les partis DEMOS «Le Parti de la Démocratie et de la Solidarité», PAD «Le Parti Vérité et Justice», PLUS «le Parti Liberté, Unité, Solidarité» et le parti Pro-România.

Les principales questions de recherche de notre étude visent les aspects suivants:

- Quelle est l'évolution du leadership populiste dans les conditions de la communication 2.0?
- Dans quelle mesure les nouveaux médias favorisent-ils la montée du populisme?
- Quelle sont les effets des messages populistes sur les citoyens?

En conclusion, vu le rôle de catharsis que FB pourrait remplir auprès des citoyens mécontents ou frustrés, j'estime qu'un discours non violent et non radicaliste des leaders populistes pourrait, éventuellement, conduire à une diminution de la violence en termes réels.

**Mots clé:** *populisme, leadership, communication 2.0, Facebook, influenceurs*

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**Debating the Populist Turn in the Bulgarian Media Ecosystem**

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Transformation processes in the technological, economic, and social spheres characterize the contemporary developments of mankind. These transformations impact the political environment and the media ecosystem as well. The challenges of the economic crisis, as well as the migration processes strengthen the positions of Euro-skeptics and revitalize the development of populism. The process of mediatization of politics and politicization of media has become a nourishing ground for the populist turn.

Populism as a political concept and rhetorical style is nowadays an object of multi-faceted social discussions. The strong critical attitude of populists towards the status quo is generally intertwined with the function of the media as a corrective factor of government authorities. The prevailing approach to populism is as a threat to democracy. However, it is also viewed as an expression of democratic shortcomings. Positioned between the people and the elite, the nourishing elements of the performances of the populist actors are the media. Today changes in society are catalyzed not only by the functioning of traditional media, such as press, radio and television, but also by the opportunities of the blogosphere and the social networks, as well as of the mobile electronic connections, i. e. by the contemporary media ecosystem.

There is no consensus in academic circles regarding the types of populism present in society. In resting upon the four types of populism (*complete, excluding, anti-elitist, and empty populism*) outlined by Jagers & Walgrave (2007), it may be concluded that all of these types exist in Bulgaria, although they have not been classified in the terminology used by these two authors. The conceptual schemes of Margaret Canovan (1981) and Cas Mudde (2007) have been also used as keys to understand and explain the phenomenon, as well as to define populism in the country. Following the reasoning of Jacques Rupnik, it may be concluded that Bulgarian populism is a typical example of post-communist East European populism, and is highly imitative.

The paper is focused on the developments of political populism in Bulgaria and their media reflections. As part of a study undertaken by the member-countries of the *COST Action IS 1308: Populist political communication in Europe: Comprehending the Challenge of Mediated Political Populism for Democratic Politics* (2014-2018) qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with Bulgarian politicians and journalists to provide an insight into their perception of populism. The paper presents the results of these interviews with the aim to compare the opinions of the interviewees on five key areas: their understanding of the concept of populism; the perceived consequences of the populism for the country and for democracy; the reasons for the popularity of populist leaders and parties; the issues most related to the rise of populism and whether the media are supportive, critical or behave in a populist manner. The national debate on the populist turn in the country has also been addressed.

The paper has been developed within the framework of the research project of the National Scientific Fund of Bulgaria: DCOST 01/25-20.02.2017 supporting *COST Action CA 16211: Reappraising Intellectual Debates on Civic Rights and Democracy in Europe of the European Commission and the Program Young Scientists*

and Post Docs of the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science.

**Keywords:** *media ecosystem, political populism, mediatization, politicization, Bulgaria*

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## L'implicito e lo stile populista. Un confronto Italia/Germania

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Il nesso tra mass media e politica è un fenomeno ormai ben consolidato e con le nuove tecnologie questo legame va man mano sempre più rafforzandosi. Basterà infatti dare un'occhiata ai vari social network (Facebook, Twitter ecc.) per rendersi conto del fatto che quasi tutti i maggiori leader politici si servono delle nuove piattaforme online per tenersi costantemente in contatto con i propri sostenitori, per fornire aggiornamenti sugli ultimi eventi che li riguardano, per esprimere la propria opinione su fatti e notizie del momento. Attraverso il web i soggetti politici, nei messaggi dei quali risulta evidente la compresenza di comunicazione verticale e orizzontale (Bentivegna 1999), parlano direttamente ai e con i cittadini, marginalizzando la tradizionale mediazione giornalistica.

Il presente contributo si baserà sull'analisi di Tweet di alcuni politici italiani e tedeschi; lo scopo sarà di analizzare come Twitter abbia influenzato gli aspetti pragmatici della comunicazione politica. Verrà dunque eseguita un'analisi di tipo contrastivo del linguaggio politico italiano e tedesco su Twitter, che mira a far emergere oltre le singole specificità, anche i punti di convergenza delle strategie pragmatiche adoperate. Nella lingua della politica vengono impiegati sì argomenti razionali, ma attraverso l'emotività, ricorrendo a strategie persuasive non sempre esplicite. Spesso il non detto assume connotati molto più persuasivi del 'detto'. Si risconteranno, infatti, in diversi post, implicature conversazionali utilizzate principalmente con funzione di attacco e/o di critica. Tali strategie derivano sia dalle caratteristiche peculiari di Twitter sia dalle scelte comunicative individuali del politico. Sebbene sia riscontrabile sia in Italia che in Germania una perdita di identità linguistica dei singoli esponenti politici, un livellamento del discorso politico, rinforzato dalle opposizioni semantiche, verranno esaminati in questa sede tweet di politici che utilizzano uno stile, una retorica di stampo populista che si adatta e coincide, secondo diversi studiosi (Taguieff 1995; Moffitt 2016), alla logica dei nuovi media. Si prenderà spunto da alcune ricerche del linguista Martin Reisigl che considera il populismo come *modus retoricus* dell'articolazione del discorso politico, che si manifesta soprattutto in tempi di crisi.

**Keywords:** *Twitter, pragmatic strategies, implicit, populism*

## Peuple et populismes au temps présent

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Les temps changent, les catégories d'analyse aussi. Notre objectif est de remettre à jour le sens des mots peuple et populisme, à partir des analyses de cas récents.

### **1 Le peuple. Mais quel peuple?**

Au vingtième siècle, avec l'industrialisation massive, le mot peuple référait au prolétariat, à la classe ouvrière. Dans les années 1950, le peuple désignait les gens avec des revenus modestes. Depuis les années 1980, la société libérale et libertaire, qui cultive la promesse d'un progrès incessant, a changé le sens du mot peuple. Le cas des « gilets jaunes » en France, mouvement de rue en 2018 et 2019, met en évidence la confrontation entre les privilégiés et les moins nantis (salariés, chômeurs, retraités). Le mot peuple désigne notamment les oubliés de la croissance. Le peuple est porteur des frustrations, suscitées par des aspirations déçues. Le pouvoir d'achat devient un véritable mot d'ordre dans le duel entre peuple et l'État social dé-tricoté.

### **2 Les populismes. Mais quels populismes?**

Dans le monde d'aujourd'hui on peut parler d'une montée des populismes (Aalberg *et al.* 2016; Wiewiorka 2017). Le populisme est devenu un style politique ; on évoque le peuple pour légitimer le discours. Qu'il s'impose « par le haut » dans les régimes autoritaires ou qu'il se manifeste « d'en bas » comme *people power* (le peuple qui conteste par le vote, la grève ou des manifestations de rue), la société du spectacle exige des populismes qui se déclinent avec popularité médiatique. Cette popularité se construit notamment sur les réseaux sociaux et dans les nouvelles télévisées.

### **3 Le profil du chef populiste. Comment les dirigeants accèdent à la popularité ? Quel est leur profil ? Quel est le type du discours ?**

Deux analyses de cas qui décrivent le concours de popularité des dirigeants. Traian Basescu, Président de la Roumanie (entre 2004 et 2014) et Donald Trump, milliardaire, et actuel Président des États-Unis. Leur popularité médiatique (à la télévision dans le premier cas et par twitt dans le deuxième cas) passe par une convergence, une communion avec les attentes des électeurs, lesquels se retrouvent dans les propos et dans le profil de ces dirigeants (cf aussi Momoc 2014).

### **4 Quel est le poids de la conversation démocratique dans la balance du pouvoir?**

Quelles sont les limites des mouvements de contestation?

**Mots clé:** *peuple, populisme(s), chef populiste ou populaire, conversation démocratique, balance du pouvoir*

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## Languaging in Lingua Franca Interaction: Beyond the Classroom -Workplace Dichotomy

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The workshop “Languaging in Lingua Franca Interaction: Beyond the classroom-workplace dichotomy” aims to explore the concept of languaging, a distributed view of language in the discourse(s) of lingua franca interaction. In communication using lingua franca, interactants use drawings, gestures, laughter, and languages other than the lingua franca; along with other strategies, as non-native speakers constrained by their limited command of the language. Thus, lingua franca users’ social interaction is multimodal and multi-sensory. For example, observations of lingua franca English communication in the classroom show speakers’ strategic use of multimodal interactional resources. Furthermore, lingua franca can be viewed as a situated and socially constructed practice, not as a system governed by a single syntax. The term ‘languaging’ is used to show this emerging perspective of language as practice. Lingua franca used among native and non-native speakers is regarded as a heterogeneous phenomenon rather than as a system reducible to orderly syntactical parts. The concept of languaging can address the debates over reductionism and holism, challenging existing dichotomies such as native speaker/non-native speaker, verbal/non-verbal, socio-cultural and cognitive. Framing lingua franca using the concept of languaging may inspire studies from diverse perspectives; as examples, studies about communication issues between native and non-native speakers as well as among non-native speakers, multi-modal semiotics, and negotiations around meaning, identities, and constraints among lingua franca users. Since lingua franca communication is inherently intercultural and the participants are multilingual, studies on intercultural communication issues and lingua franca in various locations could become an important part of this workshop.

The other focus of this workshop is on pedagogical issues. Globalization has made lingua franca communication more important than ever, particularly in academic and business settings. Various studies not only in linguistics but in management and organizational studies report successful incidents or cases of lingua franca communication. People urgently need to learn how to participate in and lead lingua franca communication. However, so far, traditional language instruction has its limitations. How can lingua franca users learn to use the common language situationally chosen at a site? How can they gain competence in communicating using the lingua franca? Can that be taught in the classroom? Studies describing speakers’ constraints, learning in lingua franca settings or classrooms, and the application of workplace data to education are an important part of this workshop. This workshop aims to go beyond the traditional classroom workplace dichotomy. We expect various perspectives not only from the educators, but also from the learners. Presentations could well go beyond the boundaries of both the researcher and the researched.

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**Crossing the Wall. A ‘Six-months-in-the-life’ Study of Online Discourse Practices of a Workteam in Multilingual Settings**

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Modern organizations increasingly depend on instant communication multimodal systems to enhance inter- and intra-organizational teamwork for a more effective collaboration. This is particularly true for companies which, in the restless drive for internationalization are facing the challenges of a dispersed multilingual workforce with fast and continuous connectivity needs.

The present study is based on the analysis of empirical evidence collected by the author through fieldwork over an observation period of six months during which she was part of a trial team operating on a multimodal communication platform in a multinational company. It aims to provide a qualitative insight into real-world (quasi)synchronous interactions within the conversation flow of a workteam composed of native and non-native speakers of English. It is argued that the inherent features of multimodal instant messaging (IM) allow for a ‘direct’ use of the language framework both by natives and non-natives, which privileges the effectiveness of communication over accuracy and a constraint-based use of language. For this reason, in IM teamwork contexts where English is the lingua franca, language is perceived by discourse participants more as a tool for interpersonal exchanges and interactional negotiation, rather than a means hindering or limiting members’ interactions. Indeed, our analysis shows that the affordances of cyberdiscourse enable participants to create a sense of open conversational context, an ‘emotional space’ bridging between the online and offline world, the workplace and private life. This contributes to the construction of a shared sense of belonging and the maintenance of a collegial, friendly atmosphere.

Insights based on the observation of natural occurring data in English as lingua franca online communication at the workplace are much needed for two reasons. Firstly, because they contribute to remediate the paucity of research focused on what actually takes place in a real interactional environment at workplaces where English is not the sole L1 spoken. Secondly, real-life data provide pedagogically useful information about the flow and interconnection of workplace text and talk, thus helping to close the workplace/classroom divide with more engaging activities that reflect real-world business language.

**Problems of Lingua Franca Communication and a Way to Solve Them**

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The workshop *Problems of Lingua Franca Communication and a Way to Solve Them* aims to explore the problematic aspect of lingua franca communication and ways to solve them. Firstly, we will discuss different ways of defining and describing lingua franca communication with different problems that occur during the process. The central problem of this issue is miscommunication, where the discussion of the explanations proposed by different researchers will be provided. Finally, this workshop will provide concluding remarks regarding the new approach that could potentially solve the miscommunication occurring in lingua franca communication.

According to Seidlhofer (2004) there are two central definitions of lingua franca. One is formulated by Firth (1996) and states that a contact language between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication. The other is formulated by House (1999) and states that ELF interactions are defined as interactions between members



of two or more different lingua-cultures in English, for none of whom English is the mother tongue.

According to Meierkord (2000) there has been two main approaches of studying and analyzing lingua franca conversation. The first approach involves individuals with European background and the other is more international. Both approaches studied the ways individuals tried to achieve the goal of their conversation. This study shows that lingua franca communication is cooperative, where individuals try to work for achieving the goal of their conversation. They try to build common ground in terms of the understanding of different terms they are employing, which creates a very positive foundation with which they work on achieving the positive result of their negotiation (Meierkord 2000). However, there is a problem of miscommunication among the individuals using lingua franca for communication.

Due to the globalization of the world, communication becomes more of a problem of linguistics than of technology and distance. Individuals have a chance to instantly communicate with a person in another part of the world, however, there is another limitation that poses a threat to a beneficial and successful communication between individuals – linguistics. Based on David Hume's definition of human nature, it is very important for a person to be able to understand the psychological background of the individual one tries to communicate through lingua franca in order to minimize miscommunication. In order to achieve this, new approach should be incorporated at schools where students, while learning a lingua franca, also learn the characteristics of different cultures, peoples and behaviors around the world. This means a holistic incorporation of anthropology in the learning process. This could be achieved through teaching English language using anthropological findings and knowledge of different cultures and peoples. Furthermore, we will discuss this issue in regard of Georgia and the accepted ways of solving them.

**Keywords:** *globalization, communication, technology, approach, lingua franca, knowledge*

## Conveying Meaning in Students' Interactions: The Modena-Meisei Project

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In all instances of communication we express meaning through signs produced in a variety of semiotic modes. This is true not only for face-to-face communication, but also and increasingly so for different types of texts. Writing, for instance, relies both on the typical resources of verbal language, vocabulary and syntax, as well as on visual-specific tools, such as spelling, punctuation and paragraphing/pagination. Images convey meaning through framing, modality, camera angle, colour, size, symbols, shape etc. (Kress / van Leeuwen 2006). In fact, Kress (2010) concluded that all communication is multimodal.

Multimodality is a concept introduced and developed to account for the different resources used in communication to express meaning. Multimodality defines the combination of different semiotic resources, or modes, in texts and communicative events, such as still and moving image, speech, writing, layout, gesture, and/or proxemics. Within the field of "multimodal studies" (O'Halloran / Smith 2011), the phenomenon of multimodality is approached through different theoretical perspectives (Jewitt 2009; O'Halloran 2011), which all rest on four fundamental assumptions (Jewitt 2014): namely that i) all communication is multimodal; ii) analyses focused solely or primarily on language cannot adequately account for meaning; iii) each mode has specific affordances deriving from its materiality and from its social history; iv) modes concur together, each with a specialised role, to the meaning-making process.

Modes such as gesture, sound, image, colour and layout, for example are conceived as sets of organized resources that have been developed to make meaning and to express and shape values, ideologies and power relations. When in combination with speech and/or writing, they are not a mere accompaniment of, or support to verbal language; rather, each concurs with a specific functional load to the meaning made by the overall text.

The present contribution reports on a project jointly developed by the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia and Meisei University – Tokyo. The project saw the students collaborate together to create a series of videos which would be used to introduce and promote the city of Modena to a Japanese audience.

When interactants coming from different countries get together, they need a lingua franca in order to be able to communicate. However, sometimes this lingua franca is not enough, or at least it is not the only available meaning-making resource, as a multiplicity of other strategies can also be deployed.

In particular, the present study will focus on the video realised by the Italian and Japanese students to illustrate the agro-food excellences of the Modena area. Accordingly, a selection of frames of the video will be analysed using the theoretical framework devised by Baldry and Thibault (2006).

The preliminary results confirm that the relations among modes are key to understand every instance of communication. Moreover, it is clear that all modes shape the affordances deriving from their materiality and from their social history to fulfil given communicative needs.

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## Languaging in Lingua Franca Interaction: Beyond Classroom Workplace Dichotomy

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In communication using Lingua Franca English, interactants use gestures, laughter, languages other than English, as well as various strategies, as non-native speakers being constrained by their limitation of the language command. Observation of Lingua Franca English communication in classroom shows speakers' use of multimodal interactional resources strategically in classroom (Matsumoto 2018). Interactants on a job site might possibly use available communication resources and strategies differently from the ways learners use in classrooms. However, there has been little empirical investigation into what communication through ELF might mean for an understanding of the relationships between languages and workplace communication. The presenters draw on the notion of the distributed view of language to analyze the empirical data. The term 'languaging' is used to show this emerging perspective of language as practice. English observed in the research site is regarded as heterogeneous phenomena rather than system that is reducible to orderly syntactical parts (Thibault, 2011). This study attempts to explore factors of lingua franca English used in project-based learning sites, Modena, Tokyo, and Tashkent. Referring to past research on business communication variables that affect communication in workplaces (Handford 2012; Gomez 2009), our research pays a special attention to the participants' shared notion of time, temporality, and strategies to negotiate meaning (. To guide our analysis, three research questions are put forth and they are:

1. What strategies the lingua franca English users employ for negotiate meaning;
2. How participants temporality affects their communication;
3. How the participants' cultural and linguistic background affect their communication.

The data were collected in three project-based learning sites. The participants consist of local residents, university students from various cultural and disciplinary backgrounds and officials from local municipalities. Taking an interpretive and qualitative approach, recursive phenomena in the participants communication are coded framed by the notion of languaging. Since lingua franca English communication is inherently

intercultural, the issues seen on the surface, seem to derive from national cultural differences. However, in examining the data in an emic perspective, our analysis demonstrates the cultural effect that is not confined by traditional reductive, closed, view of national cultures that derives from single-cause analysis. Rather our interpretation indicate that cultural boundaries are not drawn between nationalities but also between specific groups of the people who have different sense of time and use of strategies.

Finally, our presentation involves the researcher's perspective as well as the researched perspectives. Part of the researched students in the projects were researchers at the same time. As action researchers, the students observe how their intended action in the project. Rather than being confined by observer's paradox they attempt to influence communication. Their perspectives may also challenge the dichotomy of researcher/researched.

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## Escape from Monolingualism by Using Lingua Franca English

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There is increasing concern that Practical English Education is truly important and required on a nationwide effort in Japan. It has aspect of corresponding to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Moreover, improving for Japan's competitiveness in the global business market. The challenge is escaping from Monolingualism.

This study aims to investigate the effects of building confidence of speaking different language, developing relationship with colleagues by using Lingua Franca English. Meisei university in Japan offers English Classes which children in the neighbourhood are able to learn English for a whole week during summer vacation. Students operates English classes with international students from other countries. All participants speak English as second language, some are fluent, some are introductory or intermediate, different level of competence are mingled. Students seek the way of communicating each other by their verbal English and, facial expression, prosody, gestures, all kind of non-verbal language in order to integrate abilities for interpretation.

Learning through experience is the great opportunity to gain much growth rather than listening to a lecture in the classroom which students tend to remain passive. Participants of this project learn Lingua franca English communication, moreover how to develop the organizational relationship as staffs who create English class for children. Therefore, this learning environment could be seen as a workplace of an enterprise, the interaction among student and international students are viewed as business discourse. The research data is from video recorded and audio recorded conversation during course, meetings and English classes. By employing qualitative modes of enquiry, this study attempts to illuminate the tactical use of all possible measures enhancing Lingua Franca English communication.

For instance, backchannels are short response made by the listeners, showing they are listening. With backchannels interlocutors successfully navigate speech. Vague language, such as 'and stuff like that' 'or whatever', also attracts the interest of researchers. Vague language in the context of negotiations relate to competitive ('win-lose') or cooperative ('win-win') strategies respectively. It enables the speaker to obfuscate personal or professional stance on or commitment to the issue in question, thus conveying at least part of the responsibility for its interpretation to the listener (Handford 2010).

Furthermore, this research has expectation of challenging to dichotomy. As a general overview of course, the course is designed three parts of preparation, pre-session class for 15 weeks, intensive preparation, and English class itself. From mid-April until mid-August, there are sufficient time to socialize for participants. Meanwhile organizational relationship is constructed in continuum, situation is always dynamic. Various phenomena are observed in working groups. Who is a leader? Are others followers? These sorts of examples are follow, close and open, exclusive and inclusive, giver and recipient, guest and host, audience and performers. Practical English Education let learners overcome the state of monolingualism and bring innovative solutions to become plurilingual and achieve goals successfully in the new economy.

**Keywords:** *English as Lingua Franca, backchannels, vague language, plurilingual*

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## **BELF in Mainland China: What Challenges Are Faced by Business Professionals?**

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China's expanding collaboration with the rest of the world entails an urgent need of numerous talents with excellent intercultural communication skills. However, according to Guo and Gallo (2017), regardless of China's enormous pool of university graduates (7.4 million in 2016), less than 20% of graduates have been actually suitable to work in a multinational setting. Guo and Gallo informed that language and culture challenges are the determining factors affecting the success of graduates working in MNCs. To bridge the gap, the present study aims to investigate what language and culture challenges that Chinese business professionals encounter in BLEF communication at work. For BELF users, both native speakers and non-native speakers of English would encounter challenges from language and culture issues, which implies that we may have to rethink about the dichotomy between native and non-native.

Adopting the triangulation of the research method, the data of the present study consists of both quantitative and qualitative data so as to offer a multifaceted while complementary outlook on issues examined in the study. The quantitative data, derived from 227 online questionnaires, focuses on the challenging tasks Chinese business professionals face at work. The qualitative semi-structured interview data were gathered from 11 interviewees to further explore the challenges encountered, the reasons behind, and the strategies used to meet the challenges.

As for the language challenges, two features were identified from the tasks regarded most difficult. First, the tasks (e.g. letters) are usually used for external communication, which requires a large degree of formality and an awareness of audience. Second, the tasks (e.g. legal documents) require unfamiliar specific-field knowledge that is beyond professionals' expertise. Also, Chinese professionals remarked that they can handle communication well in professional genre but poorly in relational genre (e.g. social talk). Because of the complexity of challenges occurring at workplace communication, statistical analysis showed that no positive linear correlation was found between one's language proficiency and one's confidence in having challenge-free communication.

As for the culture challenges, four issues were found to concern Chinese business professionals. Firstly, different working styles across countries and organizations often lead them to the challenges, such as different working time between organizations, and different attitudes between Chinese and foreign staff to working overtime, to superiors' orders, and to signed contracts. Secondly, without knowing each other's social customs, hardly can Chinese staff initiate or keep a casual conversation with foreign staff except discussing work. Thirdly, people from different cultures may use the same language (English) in different ways to deliver their

meanings. Thus, even if Chinese professionals can understand the English used, they cannot figure out the meaning it expresses. Lastly, being aware of the importance of cultural sensitivity and behavior adjustment at the intercultural communication, Chinese professionals usually feel muddled about how to suit their verbal and non-verbal behaviors to their foreign counterparts, because the foreign staff come from a large range of different cultural backgrounds. It is too hard for Chinese professionals to learn thoroughly the specific knowledge of each culture.

**Keywords:** *BELF, intercultural business communication, culture, communicative challenges*

## The Cyberdiscourse: A Hybrid of Polarized Stances

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The workshop deals with a unitary object of investigation: the online comments which are considered a new, hybrid discourse genre, with specific features. The content of the studies is complex and diverse with respect to theoretical ideas, hypotheses, methods of analysis, and conclusions. The eclectic nature of cyber discourse favored various approaches, from sociolinguistic and anthropological ones to critical and critical discourse analysis or pragma-rhetorical and argumentative insights.

The papers highlight the subclasses of this genre as determined by the topic of the e-comments, the platform on which they are posted, the situational context which spurs them, their argumentative vs. conflictive and divergent vs. empathic and convergent nature, the responsive character to a textual stimulus or the initializing communicative nature they have.

The studies describe the specific and multiple discourse functions each subclass of online comments might have: building an online identity, narcissistically exposing one's opinion, constructing consensus or disagreement, etc. These functions are the result of posters' communicative intentions coupled with recurrent and often polarized stances.

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## Mansplaining in Romanian Online Discourse

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The paper relies on the concept of mansplaining (< man explaining) (Floyd 2011; Solnit 2014; DeVito 2015) and analyzes the aggressive discursive strategies adopted by men in online interactions with women on social media platforms, in Romanian. It focuses on how man's dominant attitude is enacted in written to correct and evaluate women's opinions if topics like politics, economics, education, ethics, etc. are under debate.

The dataset analysis demonstrates that several dysfunctions occur during the online interaction on social media and video channels, like Facebook and Youtube, due to the fact that men use aggressive linguistic strings to downgrade women's opinions.

The corpus is made of 100 posts and comments extracted from Facebook and Youtube, where men's attitude towards women's posts or statements are characterized by unnecessary corrections and explanations, insults, manipulation of the discussion, unjustified disagreement, labeling, bias and judgemental conclusions.

The research concludes that the argumentative orientation of men in socio-political debates with women is shaped as deliberate attacks on the public image of the female counterpart, conflictual interactions and even cyberbullying. The principles of cooperation (Grice 1975) and politeness (Brown / Levinson 1987) are deliberately not observed.

**Keywords:** *mansplaining, manipulation, gender, cyberbullying*

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## Conflictual Communication on Facebook

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The paper aims at analyzing conflictual communication and its forms of manifestation on Facebook. In this research I will try to determine the extent to which verbal conflict improves the involvement of individuals in communication. According to the American sociologist Lewis Coser (1964), “a conflict can sometimes help individuals and members of a group grow and develop their identities”, the same being applied to conflictual communication on Facebook. Therefore, it remains to investigate the catalytic role of conflict in communication. Another general objective of my work is to illustrate the communicative differences triggered by the interactants' level of education in the same type of virtual communication. Besides the discursive analysis, the work aims to draw conclusions of sociological and cultural nature regarding human stereotypes.

I analyzed a corpus of 10 posts, approximately 150 comments, taken from Facebook. The retrieved texts are authentic conflictive posts, pointing out themes like politics, sports, healthcare, education, fashion, commercials, and cultural life from various people with or without higher education. The analysis reveals a variety of conflictual communication's manifestations (*irony, sarcasm, insults* etc.). Also, I will focus on conflict management, specifically: *negotiation, mediation and arbitration*.

In the vein of Rubin, Pruitt and Kim (1994), I will analyze interactants' concern for each other, from indifference to maximum interest. Using their Model of Bilateral Concern, I will also highlight the ways of responding to conflict: *conflict, escalation, stalemate, and settlement*.

**Keywords:** *interpersonal communication, conflict, conflict approach, outward conflict behavior, model of bilateral concerns, conflict resolution strategies*

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### **Bionote**

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## **Two-dimensional Ethos within Motivational Discourse in Cyberspace**

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The aim of this paper is to investigate the dichotomous attitude of the speaker that emerges in the motivational discourse: i) the emotional/authentic attitude and ii) the rational/strategic attitude. To motivate the audience, s/he takes these two complementary stances. Firstly, s/he must take a stance which conveys an honest, vulnerable, credible, therefore authentic self-image. This stance constitutes the emotional, authentic ethos which helps the speaker create a close relationship between her/him and the interlocutor. This closeness will make the latter vulnerable. Secondly, s/he takes a strategic stance and uses her/his authenticity as a rhetoric tool to persuade the interlocutor.

In motivation, the emphasis is placed, primarily, on the speaker's attitude, so s/he must build a self-image that denotes honesty and vulnerability in order to sustain his/her credibility. The dimension of ethos derives from the speaker's need to present an ideal, maybe fabricated, self to the public (Barthes 1970: 212). Typically, within a motivational discourse, the speaker uses a set of communication practices trying to improve the mindset of the receiver.

We analysed the occurrence of these two dimensions through one of the central discursive practices used in motivation – self-disclosure, which means the speaker reveals her/his true self (Jourard / Lasakov 1958; DeVito 2002; Masur 2017). S/He does so in order to, firstly, connect to the interlocutor and, secondly, to inspire her/him. In addition, self-disclosure is a practice used for the purpose of instilling empathy, an emotion that can make the receiver feel vulnerable too.

These observations derive from the analysis of two texts, oral and written, together with the online responses of the audience. The study led to the following conclusions: (a) the online comments and reactions can function as a confirmation for the speaker's self-image and can emphasize the complementary dimensions of the speaker's attitude; (b) the speaker uses her/his self-image as a pragma-discursive instrument to motivate the public.

This research is one of the first pragma-discursive and rhetorical approaches of the motivational discourse pointing to a two-dimensional ethos: authentic and strategic.

**Keywords:** *motivational discourse, ethos, self-disclosure, communication practices, stance*

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Masur, P. K.. 2017. *Situational Privacy and Self-Disclosure*. Sweden: Springer International Publishing.



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**Romanian Political Communication and the New Media****Răzvan Săftoiu**

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The development of online political communication has been facilitated by the emergence of new media platforms, including Facebook, leading to big changes in political communication. With the development of new media platforms, the internet has become a decisive instrument in political communication, determining the outcome of electoral campaigns in many parts of the world, regardless of the type of society or culture. Barack Obama was the politician who imposed the ideal model for running an online political communication campaign. The main idea of online political branding is to increase visibility of political programs, to encourage participation, and to build consensus. In other words, a technological tool – the Internet – can and should be used to make citizens rediscover what they have always had: the desire “to participate and interact, not to be merely passive observers but to be actively involved” (Giansante 2015: 10).

Using critical discourse analysis as the theoretical framework and corpus linguistics as the methodology, my aim is to put forward an analysis of two Romanian politicians’ (Klaus Iohannis and Victor Ponta) communicative strategies used to build an online political identity. The analysis is based on the messages posted by the two politicians on their official Facebook pages between November 2014 and December 2015. The chosen period represents the year after the presidential election (when the two politicians were opponents) as well as a year full of difficult issues such as an increased level of terrorist attacks in the European Union or the tragedy at the Romanian music club “Colectiv”.

In the first part, I will identify and discuss the similarities between the electoral campaigns of Obama and Iohannis, with a view to highlight that Romanian politics goes through a process of professionalisation. In the second part, I will focus on the online political activity of the two selected politicians, with a view to highlight the different styles in building their identity, which further leads to the creation of well-individualized political brands based on these identities.

Although the two politicians under scrutiny seem to resort to completely different ways of building their messages on their official Facebook pages, in fact, they call for the same topics and values such as family, safety or freedom. Since such topics and values are deeply rooted in each individual’s subconscious, they can be successful strategies to move a large number of people’s minds.

**Keywords:** *online political communication, new media, identity, values*

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## Cyberbullying in Online Comments: A Case Study

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Online news comments are short value judgments that express opinions about a body of news or in response to other comments (Pérez-Granados *et al.* 2012). They have been shown to be rather negative in nature (Pérez-Granados *et al.* 2012), and to contain several themes of social interaction, such as tolerance for hostility, the encouraging of quality debate or the valuing of information exchanges (McMillen 2013). From a contextual point of view, if we were to take into account only the speakers' unrestrained use of language, online comments, which are a form of language socialisation (Ochs / Schieffelin 2012), are incomplete and differ from face-to-face communication.

Although this form of computer mediated dialogue is essentially considered a communicative opportunity (Madianou / Miller 2012), an open and democratic form of verbal exchange, we believe that it is more egalitarian than democratic in nature, due to the fact that the speakers' ethos préalable (Amossy 2010) is unknown in the conversation. It is also a rather untrustworthy and misleading form of communication because, often, fabricated speakers with biased opinions interfere with the genuine conversationalists involved in the exchange.

We analyse a polylogue which comprises hundreds of online comments posted in one single day on the electronic platform of the Romanian newspaper *Gândul*. The comments were triggered by the declaration of a controversial businessman turned politician, in the social context of a heart-breaking event dubbed by the Romanian mass media the “Colectiv” tragedy.

In this polylogue the relationship between the participants takes the form of an ongoing ‘self-generated’ form of cyberbullying, characterized by the excessive use of uncensored forms of impoliteness, verbal violence, hate speech and disagreement. In this situation, could we speak of a form of time-consuming language socialization, which is almost totally agonistic and conflictive, or of a hybrid entity, which is, in part, a ‘linguistic product’ lacking some of the fundamental characteristics of face-to-face communication and, in part, a form of technologically empowered verbal exchange?

Our theoretical framework comprises the following main concepts: emotion (affect), evaluation (appraisal) (Martin / Rose 2007), values (Perelman / Olbrechts-Tyteca 1958; Fahnestock / Secor, among many others), stance (the speaker's self-positioning) (Du Bois 2007), ethos (Amossy 2010), practices of communication and stance-taking practices (Duranti / Ochs / Scieffelin 2012).

Emotion, appraisal, socio-cultural values, and the speaker's stance are inherent to all linguistic communication and can be explicitly or implicitly expressed in the discourse. They might be oriented towards the (co)-participants in the act of communication, the referents or the other ideational entities present in discourse, they might be intensified and shaped according to a range of discourse criteria (Martin / Rose 2007).

The relationships between affect, appraisal and the speakers' tacit system of shared socio-cultural values are permanent and can be represented in the form of a pyramid, in the sense that each evaluation contains a certain implied emotion, and the values presuppose a recurrent evaluation. The Speaker's stance is the outcome of intricate explicit or implicit combinations of emotion, appraisal and values which enrich the utterance (the online comment in our case), or the discourse sequence.

Individuals are made up of multiple selves (Cook 2012). The Speaker's ethos – a concept initially introduced in classical rhetoric and lately adopted by discourse analysis – is an ‘elaborate’ notion that ranks as a

superordinate to the concept of stance, coalescing into an overall image the multitude of stance-taking acts the speaker deploys as the discourse unfolds.

Social interaction develops through the Speaker's signalling and reliance on stance (Cook 2012), in other words, through stance-taking (self-positioning), and – we might add – through the construction of a certain ethos. Stance-taking acts are dialogic, create intersubjectivity and finally amount to mutual understanding. Stance-taking practices are important in the process of language socialization. Each online comment reflects or instantiates one or several types of communication practices.

In this study we start by analysing the participation framework; we identify the clusters of comments and we analyse the linguistic practices of affiliation, dissociation and exclusion of an interlocutor; we diagram the advocated opinions and the social, cultural and religious stereotypes present in the comments; we identify the major emotions and attitudes.

We analyse the most prominent stance-taking practices at the level of clusters of comments with a focus on cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is a cover term for a whole class of discourse strategies. The linguistic practice of shaming (by the use of insults, ad hominem attacks, depreciation of the referents), or the practice of exposing one's attitude towards the bad language of the interlocutor are just two of the numerous strategies of cyberbullying.

The comment itself may contain several intermingled linguistic strategies, such as the strategy of expressing an opinion and that of offending a previous commenter. Usually, in the case at hand, the offence tends to be more elaborate than the opinion. We take a closer look at this disproportion and the viral nature of a certain positioning across different clusters of comments. We inventory the discourse resources used in the most frequent stance-taking practices.

The conclusions aim to explain and account for the large amount of aggressive language present in these comments and try to advance an answer to the following questions: what is the social impact of such a cacophonous and unleashed type of communication?; what kind of mutual understanding appears during this type of conversational experience, and what are the perlocutionary effects of cyberbullying?; is this conflictive dialogue 'voicing' the social problems of the current Romanian society?; is this huge chain of online comments a verbalization of collective emotional intelligence (Goleman); is it the unwanted outcome of a rather 'savage' use of a technological means meant to empower communication?

**Keywords:** *cyberbullying; linguistic practices of communication; stance-taking acts*

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### Bionote

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## Speakers' Corner in the Cyberspace

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Our existence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is split between real life and virtual life, which interfere in various ways and generate hybrid practices, identities, and discourses. The cyber community seems to replicate all offline forms of interaction, but technological affordances and limitations reshape them and create new ones. For instance, face book communication is both less and more than interpersonal communication, public communication or institutional communication; e-mails are neither letters, nor telephone calls, meetings or debates but may stand for each of them up to a certain point; blog posts are neither intrapersonal communication, nor interpersonal or group communication but share features with all of them; vlogs are neither media productions properly, nor genuine self-disclosures but the author is in the position of a self-centered text-image creator. So, the cyber space hosts cyber discourses whose main feature is that they have intelligent technologies inbuilt in the most human attribute: speech (be it oral or written).

Pragmaticians have noticed this major turn in communication, so a new field of research has emerged: computer mediated communication/internet pragmatics/cyber pragmatics (Giltrow / Stein 2009; Yus 2011; Herring / Stein / Virtanen 2013; Hoffmann / Bublitz 2017, among others). The present paper in cyber pragmatics proposes a discourse analysis of the comments posted by virtual readers of some Romanian online newspapers (*România liberă, Adevărul, Hotnews, Evenimentul zilei, Cotidianul, Știri pe surse*). Are these comments a dialogue between readers? Or hasty monologues of readers who take the opportunity of having a space to make their voice heard? Do they function as genuine feedback or instruments of self-assertion? What is the structure (if any) of such posts? What is the relationship between posts to the same article? What are the variables which shape these cyber texts?

The research hypothesis is that comment posts on the Internet are a distinct cyber discourse genre. Hence, the aim of the analysis is to discover and present the inherent features of cyber comments, their functions and the variables which shape them, at the same time opening the way to cross-cultural approaches.

**Keywords:** *cyberspace, online newspapers, cyber discourse genres, comment posts*

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## **Evaluation, Self-expression, and Argumentation in Readers' Comments on News Websites**

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Online newspapers and news websites favour a special type of interactivity (Yus 2011: 76-85), offering space for the comments of their readers. Compared to other types of cybercommunication, these comments, which are typically reactive, short, and asynchronous (Reagle 2015), are less shaped by the construction of social identities and communities. By posting comments, users seem to be especially interested to self-express, to communicate opinions and evaluations, which are implicitly polemic and persuasive, being based on values and ideologies. The hybrid nature of the online comments may consist in the tension between the apparently informative and persuasive pattern of communication and the ultimate self-sufficient aim which is to self-display oneself and one's personal opinions.

In order to investigate this hypothesis, I propose a case study on a cultural news with a controversial potential: the announcement about the Nobel prize assigned in 2016 to Bob Dylan. The news content selects its readers and produces less offensive and more argumentative comments. In addition, it can be presumed that the absence of an immediate political interest ensures the genuine involvement of the commenters, reducing to a minimum the risk of biased contributions. I used a text provided by a press agency and reproduced in a quasi-identical form in the online version of the newspaper *The Independent* (Great Britain), and in translation by *Le Monde* (France) and *Corriere della Sera* (Italy), and by the news website *Hotnews* (Romania) on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October, 2016. (For Romania, I have chosen a website instead of a newspaper because of the severe lack of quality of the local newspapers). The international and cultural nature of the stimulus-text allowed the creation of a (small) cross-cultural corpus, made by 74 comments in English, 140 in French, 54 in Italian and 82 in Romanian. The comments were analysed in a discourse analysis and rhetorical perspective, with elements taken from the appraisal theory (Martin / White 2005).

The results of the analysis show a surprising similarity of the comments, despite the cultural diversity of the sources. Users' contributions are clearly polarized and mainly based on acts of evaluation (of facts and agents, and only to a small extent of the text itself); the values (especially the moral and aesthetic ones) are implicit, but often explicated, as well as their ideological backing. The strategic manoeuvring in argumentation (Eemeren 2011) makes extensive use of irony and *reductio ad absurdum*, and relates less on examples and analogy. There are also differences between the four national subsets of comments, mainly consisting in the varied burden of arguments, the selection of some specific arguments, the rate of positive/negative judgements. The specific textual stimulus can be considered only a pretext for self-expression, iteration and reinforcement of the personal values (in this case, conservative vs. non-conformist attitude, appraisal for the high vs. popular culture).

**Keywords:** *online comments, evaluation, self-expression, cross-cultural variation*

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# *Conference Abstracts*





## The 2019 State of the Union Address – Trump’s Presidential Rhetoric vs Fact Check in our Poly-Cross-Media Environment

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The fast-paced development of converged communication technologies across the porous space of the World Wide Web has several implications for the ‘ways interpersonal communication is enacted and experienced’ at socio-affective and emotional levels, as Madianou and Miller (2012) showed in developing their theory of polymedia as an integrated structure. Furthermore, the increasingly rich affordances of our media environment critically engage the cognitive levels of human interaction and information exchange. To locate trustworthy information through the multiplicity of sources, embedded links and channel convergence has become a daunting task. As more information has migrated online, a process of ‘disintermediation’ has forced individuals to evaluate vast amounts of online information on their own (Metzger and Flanagin 2013; Solomon and Westwood 2012), without the guide of traditional experts. In seeking to find an optimal balance between cognitive effort and desired outcomes, one form of bounded rationality has emerged – *satisficing*, which is when Internet information consumers resort to cognitive heuristics (Tversky and Kahneman 1982) to minimize their cognitive effort and time. CH can lead us to ignore a number of problematic aspects and, eventually, to form cognitive biases, e.g. self-confirmation bias, expectancy violation, persuasive intent. Not infrequently, people navigate the media environment to reinforce their own realities/biases to the neglect of a shared reality.

Against this fluid, multi-faceted background, the research purpose of this study is twofold. Firstly, to gauge the novelty of presidential rhetoric in the 2019 *State of the Union Address* (delivered on Feb. 5, 2019, in the House of Representatives, and widely broadcasted), aimed at projecting a renovated image of desired and pursued unity of values and goals at national level. Secondly, to consider the cross-media impact of this rhetoric in adversarial confrontation with powerful official print media, such as *Time Magazine*, which also has exciting online versions with relatively recent video affordances that enable the vision of the *Address* (SOTU) interspersed with fact checks. The ensuing research question is to assess how effective/persuasive Trump’s announced effort to ‘*break decades of political stalemate, ... bridge old divisions, heal old wounds, build new coalitions, forge new solutions*’ has been considered in the news. A major analytical focus will be on the data retrieved on SOTU global online news coverage through the GDELT database for open research.

The theoretical approach mainly relies on Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (Van Leeuwen 2013; Stinson 2012; Kress 2010; Liu and O’Halloran 2009) with additional resources from the Appraisal Framework (White 2015) for specific discursive features and insights from media studies. The provisional findings suggest that Trump’s SOTU was successful in turning the media narrative from the shutdown towards other domestic issues. The final findings will be discussed in the context of contemporary societal, cultural and cognitive implications.

**Keywords:** SOTU, pursued unity, confrontation, media convergence/environment/affordances, Multimodal CDA, Appraisal

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## **A Hybrid Approach to Sentiment Analysis: Tweets in the Brexit Era**

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The increasing role played by Social Networking Systems (SNSs), such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, has attracted the interest of researchers in many fields of study, including linguistic, political and social sciences. While SNSs empower individuals' freedom of expression, they additionally enable and foment anti-social behaviour, online harassment, cyberbullying, and hate speech. Indeed, SNSs may be regarded as not actually showing users the world out there; instead, "they construct a world to your liking and as such they are breeding ground for echo chambers, and constructions of filter bubbles where all like-minded people get together and reinforce their own perception of the realities and priorities rather than engaging with other views" (KhosraviNik 2018: 440). The main objective of this contribution is to propose an analytical tool combining discourse analysis with an innovative statistical model in order to study the overtime evolution of online-generated hate tweets addressing the UK decision to leave the European Union. In particular, the corpus under scrutiny is a collection of tweets collated using the seed words 'Brexit\*' and/or 'remain\*' and posted by users residing in the UK over a time span ending on March 29, 2019, that is, the first deadline Britain had to face in order to divorce from the EU. We expect that the textual content of the collected tweets will be polarized around positive/negative sentiments. In order to study the evolution of the sentiment about this upcoming change, we combine tools of critical discourse analysis with an innovative statistical model that is able to capture the dynamic patterns of ordinal data distribution. Specifically, sentiment classification is often referred to binary classes (concerning positive/negative textual content). In the present work, instead, we consider the degree of polarity (that is, the degree of positivity or negativity) of tweets by classifying them according to an ordered scale. At a given time point, we can estimate the distribution of such scores. Then, we apply a dynamic CUB model in order to describe how the distribution of such scores changes along the time. The model is characterised by two-time varying parameters that can be interpreted. The first one is a measure of polarization, and the second one is a measure of uncertainty associated to the expression of opinion. The study of the pattern of the estimated time-varying parameters allows the assessment of the evolution of the degree of linguistic polarity, the detection of sentiment changes along time, and the investigation of the way those changes are related to occurring events.

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### A study on German Surface and Deep Rhetorical Strategies

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The study of rhetorical strategies is expanding in recent years, due to the increased mobility of individuals and communication between institutions. In the academic field, several professional and academic mobility programs are on offer for candidates to pursue, through the process of writing a letter of application (often referred to as a cover or motivation letter) in addition to a cv.

This small-scale study investigates rhetorical strategies in a semi-authentic, cross-cultural, letter of applications for a scholarship, context and it is part of a longer investigation on German rhetoric. It is hypothesized that a number of strategies would be directly transferred from the native language culture and would constitute occasions of possible pragmatic pitfalls to native speakers of English. 22 letters of application were collected concerning a travel scholarship, written by German speakers in English, addressed to an American Committee. Data were initially analyzed in terms of the three Aristotelian rhetorical strategies of logos, ethos, and pathos by a three-member committee of linguists. A mixed qualitative and quantitative analysis with frequencies of the dependent variables (the strategies used) followed, and the few independent variables were recorded (i.e. gender, experience with other languages, experience in writing application letters, etc.) to be tested for associations.

It appeared that most of the subjects spoke more than one foreign language (other than English, which was spoken by all of them), with Spanish and French coming first in their preference. Only two subjects declared to have been trained how to write a letter of application, while half of the subjects (10) declared to have experience in writing a letter of this type, which depicts the increasing need for this skill to be included in the foreign language teaching curriculum. Frequencies of the dependent variable (quality of strategy used according to the Aristotelian framework) were equally distributed between the 3 Aristotelian categories. Logos argumentation followed logical reasoning for applying while ethos strategies involved predominantly identity construction and sharing common values with the recipient. Pathos argumentation involved charged language, and claims of financial inability in very rare cases. An equal number of mixed strategies was also registered. These involved strategies appearing, on the surface, to relate to one of the afore mentioned categories though belonging to another at a deeper understanding. In this light, an equal number of mixed strategies were also registered. This reveals that the German rhetoric, often accounted to be related to logic (logos), includes several ethos and pathos arguments hidden in its discourse, expressed in a different manner. Associations tested among

the dependent variables showed no statistically significant correlations between them. In conclusion, the German rhetoric seems to be expressed through the use of all the registered categories, however in a different mode than the ones registered in previous studies, using the exact same procedure. A number of pragmatic pitfalls, violating maxims of politeness, would be expected to take place, similarly to those registered in previous studies.

**Keywords:** *rhetorical strategies, cross-cultural, Aristotelian rhetorical strategies, pragmatics*

## The Representation of Gender in French Legal Discourse

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Gender is at the heart of current social matters, and the centrality of such question can be seen through the prism of language. The interest for the notion of gender in language can be illustrated by the numerous guidelines suggested to make language more inclusive, strongly encouraged at the institutional level, for example by UNESCO. The aim of this ongoing study is to analyse how gender is addressed in French legal discourse.

The question of the representation of gender in language has triggered vivid discussions in France. French is a grammatical gender language: every noun has a gender and the gender of personal nouns *tends* to match the gender of the referent (Sczesny *et al.* 2016). The typical case for which the gender of the personal noun does not correspond to the gender of the referent is when the masculine form is used for female referents, as it was the case few years ago when female ministers were called “**le** ministre”. Using masculine forms to refer to both men and women is often justified by the fact that they are neutral forms: they are called *male generics*. However, recent studies have shown that they are not understood as generic, but as male specific, thus leading to an over-representation of men in language (Chatard *et al.* 2005; Gaucher *et al.* 2011).

The feminisation of language, for example in occupational titles, is one of the two main strategies used to make language more inclusive (Sczesny *et al.* 2016). It consists of using feminine forms for female referents, and both the masculine and feminine forms to refer to both men and women or when the referent’s sex is unknown, as in *le directeur ou la directrice*. Abbreviations can also be used as in *directeur-ric*, these forms are now associated with the *écriture inclusive* (inclusive writing). The second main strategy is to neutralise language, which is to privilege neutral forms over their gendered counterparts, such as using *salesperson* for *salesman* or *saleswoman*.

In France, the question of inclusive language is rather controversial. But recent change has occurred at institutional level. Feminine forms, especially of occupational titles, are encouraged when the referent is a woman, and both masculine and feminine forms are to be used when the gender of the referent is unknown. However, forms associated with inclusive writing are discouraged. The slow progress towards a more inclusive language shows that the encouraged forms at the institutional level tend to present a binary representation of gender in language. Moreover, the two sides of this binary representation are not presented equally. As mentioned above, language could also be made more inclusive by using neutral forms. These forms are not particularly common in French, given that the masculine form is still regarded as the generic and neutral form.

Despite the numerous guidelines published to encourage inclusive language at the institutional level, this question remains in the background in legal discourse. The aim of this research is to analyse how gender is addressed in French legal discourse, more specifically in legal texts in which the notion of gender is essential, by looking at which strategies are adopted: a male, binary, or neutral representation of gender.

**Keywords:** *gender, inclusive language, legal discourse*

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## Male vs. Female Resources for Care and for Dialogue on Concrete Care

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The philosophy of care has developed on the basis of a sharp distinction between the aptitudes of women and men to care for others and to perceive what has to be done. Appropriate nuances have gradually appeared in the same thinkers of care philosophy and in their critics. The subject has also been enriched by the use of different models to define care.

This paper is an argumentative dissertation that puts together care philosophy and pragmatics (particularly theory of politeness) through the bridge of fundamental rhetoric (*fundamentalrhetorische Anthropologie*, see Oesterreich 1990) and is part of the project *Rhetoric & Anthropology*, that looks for an anthropological deepening of themes of rhetoric and linguistics (Jiménez Cataño; Gil 2018)

Starting from these resources, we will try to understand to what extent the difference between women and men in caring is so sharp, developing the notion of care in two directions. On the one hand, under the light of politeness (Jiménez Cataño 2014), that can be seen as care of the image through choices in the use of language. On the other hand, in the light of the history of the concept of care, going backwards beyond the years in which the philosophy of care was born and grew. This topic—little present in the philosophers of care—is very rich in suggestions, both in the ancient period of the philosophy and in the medieval one; a little less in the modern period that precedes the birth of the care philosophy.

From the maternal model (Gilligan 1982, Ruddick 1989, Held 1993) the concept of care went to other very essential profiles of taking care such as teachers (Nodding 1984) and nurses (Kittay 2014). An important transformation of the speculative approach has been to move from denouncing the male appropriation of “important” jobs to reporting a higher relevance of jobs traditionally covered by disadvantaged profiles—women, foreigners, lower classes, marginalized races (Tronto 1993). Another evolution seemed necessary to break the too direct link between the good person and the person who cares (López Alonso 2011).

The confrontation with the Kohlbergian moral theory (Kohlberg 1984) could leave to the idea that everything in the past had been of the same way. Actually it does not represent the entire past of moral thought. There is a long history of terms in Greek and in Latin that could be translated as “care”, traceable in philosophers and writers and in the Bible (López Alonso 2011). The most complete of such concepts is probably *epiméleia*.

This historical consciousness of the concept of care offers a new light to soften the polarisation of female and male morals (or maybe simply sensitivities), between a moral of care and a moral of justice. As a matter of sensitivity, the difference in perceiving determinates different abilities to dialogue. After this softening, it could become possible to recuperate the link between the good person and the person who cares, as expression

of the relationality of person (Donati 2017).

**Keywords:** *care, politeness, female morality, epimeleia*

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## Moving Away From 'Good' vs 'Bad' Contradictions – 'Sanità District' in Tripadvisor Reviews

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"Sanità district (so-named because of its "healthy" location outside the city walls) offers an insider's take on one of Naples' most evocative neighbourhoods. [...] En route, you'll pass narrow lanes crisscrossed with washing lines, lively street markets and glorious but dilapidated palaces and will come away with a sense of having seen something a bit different. Nicky Swallow- Sat 19 Dec 2015"(<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2015/dec/19/naples-italy-city-guide-hotels-bars-restaurants>). As can be observed in the quotation above, dichotomy based on 'bad' vs. 'good' qualities applied to the famous district in Naples is usually found in media discourse due to both negative stereotypes related to this place and criminal actions and events usually occurred there. Notwithstanding, the recovery of the huge heritage of this district as since 2000 onwards due to a process of redevelopment and enhancement of the its historic, artistic and human heritage has increased positive viewpoints in the media (<http://www.catacombedinapoli.it/en/places/information-rione-sanita-naples>). Starting from this assumption, the study is aimed at investigating Tripadvisor reviews about 'Sanità' district' from a chronological perspective. According to Sunstein (2007), new forms of communications are needed in order to move beyond some conflictual dichotomies. Moreover, these forms could be considered as new forms of recontextualization, defined as '[...] the dynamic transfer-and- transformation of something from one discourse/text-in- context

(the context being in reality a matrix or field of contexts)’ (Bhatia 2016). In the study, recontextualization is conceived as ‘knowledge’ re-formulated by people in terms of new concepts and opinions applied to the famous Neapolitan district. Methodology will imply a corpus based approach along with studies on Evaluation (Baker 2006; Stubbs 2001; Hunston / Sinclair 2000). In short, the final aim will be to focus on the existence of new evaluative language moving away the stereotyped dichotomy traditionally implicit in thoughts by people from all around the world.

**Keywords:** *recontextualization of knowledge, dichotomies, evaluation, stereotype*

## Funny Insults

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Insults have recently been the focus of numerous studies that show an impressive diversity of uses and stakes (J. Neu, 2005; W.B. Irvine, 2013; L. Rosier, 2006). This is certainly correlated with the difficulty to give a general and sharp definition of the concept of insult which is often vague. It overlaps several close notions that different languages will separate or not, although family resemblances between slur, injury, contempt, humiliation, slights... seem easily acknowledged. Furthermore, the fact that “insult” has both a verbal and a nominal form in several different languages suggests that the distinction, but also the proximity, between process and product is easy to establish in the field of insult. All this confirms the complexity of the phenomenon and its high pragmatic and interactional diversity. This is why after a brief recall on some general characters of insults we will focus on aspects of their dialogical use. So, we will mostly consider them as complex speech acts between insulter and insulted.

It seems difficult to study the form of an insult without also paying attention to its matter or content that targets the insulted person, directly or indirectly. This is typical feature of insult, among other forms of verbal aggression. We will more specifically pay attention to cases where its status is acknowledged by all the interlocutors, and so leave aside the case of insults that are not acknowledged as such by both parties and also the use of unconventional words or expressions.

We have said that the content of an insult is usually identified as aggressive. Yet, it is not always the case. We shall discuss this kind of situation that seems quite common but makes a sharp contrast with the prototypical case we have just described. Sometimes people do exchange insults – i.e apply insults to their interlocutor – without insulting each other. The phenomenon of insults contests, formal or not, is already well identified and sometimes supposed to be funny. In many places or countries, a common practice is to insult one’s friends or pairs just to play or have fun. In the *Rhetoric* (1378 b 25), Aristotle already stressed that satisfaction and the ordinary use of insults (*hubris*) can go together. What is at stake in the seemingly deviant context where insults – a most serious way to communicate – seem not to be serious, a situation sometimes difficult to explain to outsiders?

**Keywords:** *insults, fun, aggressive speech, speech acts*

## Social Media, Transparency and Dialogue in Government Communication

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Economic globalization, the globalization of culture, and the digitalization of communication have led individuals, groups and institutions into an unbridled search for ‘presentation of self’(Goffman),” mobility, and innovation” (Boltanski and Chiapello, 1999).

Visibility is more and more important as public exposure has proved to be the mechanism for affirming identity and the path to recognition (Voirol, 2005 ).

All the actors become strategists in favor of the professionalization of communication and the growing need to attract attention in a world where the citizen / consumer is subject to the hyper-competition of messages

Numerous authors (Bonson *et al.* 2017, 2018, Nitschke *et al.* 2014, Holzhausen & Zerfass 2013 etc) have highlighted the potential contribution of the internet to enhance interactivity, transparency, and openness of public institutions and to promote new forms of accountability. The search for new styles of government communication (in our research Romanian ministries) which promote higher levels of transparency is viewed as a way of improving citizens’ trust in governments.

In this context, the big challenge public institutions face is the change in communication strategies, from one way communication – press releases and/or press conferences – to a more interactive way – live events and/or active posting on social media platforms. The main objective of this study is to determine the means by which Romania’s central institutions fulfill their commitments : information production and people connection in the online environment.

Using identity models for online organizational communication, content analysis, netnography and qualitative visual analysis of the content present on websites and facebook pages of 21 Romanian ministries (July- December 2016), we answer the following research questions: (1) *How do public institutions manifest online transparency and accountability?;* (2) *What are the communication strategies used by public institutions for the construction of online identities?;* (3) *What kind of content of Facebook posts from ministries attracts the greatest number of users’ feedback?.*

Our results show (in line with previous researches) that governments are using Web 2.0 and social media tools to enhance transparency but, in general, the use of Web 2.0 to promote e-participation is still at the beginning (What dominates is the ‘ showcase’ model for the websites and a dialogue initiation on Facebook).

**Keywords:** *social media, transparency, websites, Facebook, content analysis, netnography*

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## A Visual Framing Analysis of Image of President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda in Online and Offline Discourse

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The image of a politician, and in particular the head of state, is an extremely important element of political communication. Both in terms of its mediatization and decentralization (Brants and Voltmer 2011, 3-11), in which communication is being done between the media and their representatives, political institutions and their representatives and recipients, including voters, this image plays a strategic role. The media exert a decisive influence on the perception of the head of state as a person with specific characteristics. They are selected in such a way that, at a selected time of their presentation (before elections, during the term of office, during important political events, etc.), potential and real voters can see those features that are important for achieving the assumed goals.

The proposed paper is an analysis of the framing of the President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda photos published on the official website [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl) and collected there in the album entitled *Andrzej Duda. Two Years of Presidency* and published materials in the traditional press on the first pages of two daily newspapers: *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Gazeta Polska Codziennie*. Each of the selected newspapers is characterized by different political inclinations, which allowed for a broad look at the presentation of the image of the head of state by the Polish media.

The research method is based on the theory and practice of visual framing and takes into account the rhetorical potential of such elements as album publishing format, composition, framing and subject matter of photos. The obtained results present different degrees of saturation with such interpretation frames as the frame of “authority”, “human interest”, “ordinary man”, and “morality”, which imposed on the recipients an externally controlled view of the person of the president. The distinguished frameworks helped to discover different strategies for presenting the image of the head of state in online and offline communication and showed a different narrative depending on political inclinations.

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## **L’“Interesse Nazionale” e il “Racconto Personale”. Un Approccio Contrastivo sulle Caratteristiche Linguistiche del Discorso ad Argomento Privato nelle Interviste Politiche**

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In un ambito teorico pragmatico nel quale si intrecciano una dimensione cognitiva del discorso e la caratteristica interattiva nella costruzione discorsiva (Burger 2006: 46-47), questo contributo analizza le particolarità linguistiche – dalle strategie di costruzione dell’ethos politico attraverso le scelte linguistiche (Reyes 2015) e fino agli inserti metadiscorsivi (di Pace / Pannain 2016), alla stilistica, all’attenuazione e all’intensificazione – nei brani di discorso ad argomento privato presenti nelle interviste di alcuni politici.

Il corpus è costituito da sei interviste rilasciate nell’arco temporale 2009-2016 da tre rappresentanti, allora ai massimi livelli della politica, il cui discorso è costruito sullo sfoggio di un ethos nel quale il peso dell’argomento privato è notevole: per la Francia il Presidente della Repubblica Nicolas Sarkozy, per l’Italia il Presidente del Consiglio Matteo Renzi e per la Romania il Presidente della Repubblica Traian Băsescu. Il corpus rappresenta un ampio ventaglio di situazioni, dalla crisi economica alla ripresa e al progresso, in un tentativo di descrivere gli adeguamenti del progetto comunicativo alle realtà in questo intervallo temporale

così ricco di situazioni potenzialmente dannose per l'immagine dei protagonisti in carica. Per ciascuno dei tre politici sono state selezionate due interviste: una rilasciata nel palazzo sede della Presidenza, l'altra in studi televisivi, per individuare eventuali differenze sia nel discorso del politico, sia in quello dei giornalisti intervistatori, condizionate dal contesto extralinguistico nel quale si svolge l'intervista. L'analisi contrastiva in tre ambiti politici viene proposta ai fini di mettere in risalto delle caratteristiche determinate dalla situazione comunicativa analoga e dal disegno discorsivo di ciascuno degli intervistati piuttosto che dalle particolarità di ciascuna delle tre lingue.

L'obiettivo principale del contributo è di indagare l'influenza che il passaggio da argomenti riconducibili alla sfera pubblica verso quelli della sfera privata cambia l'assesto comunicativo e determina la frequenza di procedimenti linguistici come l'attenuazione proposizionale o degli atti linguistici (Fraser 2010), spesso utilizzate come strategie di evasione a una domanda che potrebbe danneggiare l'immagine del politico. Un altro obiettivo è quello di individuare le figure retoriche di immagine, utilizzate con piena consapevolezza dello statuto figurato e interpretate come tali dai destinatari del messaggio (Croft / Cruse 2010) adoperate per sfruttare in prospettiva espressiva il momento del discorso privato.

Per quanto riguarda la base cognitiva condivisa nelle interviste politiche, in genere, gli argomenti riguardanti la vita privata contraddicono le attese del pubblico rispetto al disegno imposto dalla comunicazione formale nell'ambito delle interviste televisive ai più importanti rappresentanti politici in carica, e perciò su di essi si concentra maggiormente la negoziazione pragmatica tra intervistatori e politici intervistati.

Di solito, gli argomenti della sfera privata sono inseriti dai giornalisti intervistatori – e vengono a volte rifiutati dagli intervistati –, in un tentativo di “spettacolarizzazione” della comunicazione, perlopiù all'inizio o alla fine dell'intervista, con domande mirate che portano su scandali di attualità o semplicemente sulla presentazione dell'ethos “umano” del politico. Non mancano però i casi nei quali è il politico stesso a ricorrere ad argomenti privati per interrompere dei discorsi specialistici difficili da amministrare con effetti positivi per la propria immagine.

Infine, la dicotomia tra discorso su argomenti di interesse pubblico e discorso sulla vita privata, ancora molto netta e manifesta anche nelle domande degli intervistatori, viene a volte rivisitata in inserti di esempi di vita privata per presentare in una maniera più comprensibile per il pubblico temi specialistici di difficili, adattando il discorso alla competenza pragmatica dei partecipanti alla comunicazione.

**Keywords:** *discorso privato, assesto comunicativo, ethos, attenuazione, stilistica*

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## Réseaux Sociaux et Interactions en ligne/hors ligne. Cas des Jeunes Turcs en France

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Notre proposition se rattache à l'axe demandant s'il existe des preuves empiriques montrant qu'il existe une plus grande tendance à vouloir communiquer avec des personnes connues lors d'interactions en ligne ou hors

ligne. Nous répondrons à cette question en l'intégrant dans une problématique identitaire, telle qu'elle a pu l'être traitée ces dernières années (Amri, Vacaflor, 2010; Junger-Aghababaie, 2014; Livingstone *et al.*, 2011). Notre travail propose ainsi deux principaux volets.

Le premier procède d'une approche théorique des "réseaux sociaux", de "l'identité numérique" et des "jeunes". L'objectif vise à convoquer de manière sélective la littérature scientifique issue de la sociologie des médias et des sciences de l'information et de la communication pour en synthétiser les principales approches et les confronter ensuite à notre propre analyse empirique.

Pour le concept d'identité, nous nous appuyons sur les travaux de Brubaker et Junka (2001) qui portent sur le sujet un regard critique car ils relèvent l'imbroglio sémantique dont il est l'objet. Nous confrontons leurs travaux à celui de Nowicki, (2005) qui dépasse cette critique d'ordre sémantique pour relier la construction identitaire au concept de *multiculturalisme*, de *communication interculturelle*, ou encore de *diversité culturelle*, approche qui nous intéresse particulièrement pour notre analyse empirique.

Le concept des "jeunes" s'est avéré complexe à analyser. En effet, il est établi dans la littérature scientifique qu'il échappe à une définition officielle, le rendant ainsi adaptable à toute analyse.

Nous rappellerons la définition donnée par M. Dagnaud (2011) pour qualifier les "jeunes", soit la « génération Y » désignant les « natifs numériques », âgés de 15 à 30 ans qui ont baigné dans l'ère de l'internet, des réseaux sociaux et des jeux vidéo. Le travail d'Annabelle Klein (2016) permet d'investir davantage le lien entre "jeunes" et "réseaux sociaux" et celui de la place occupée par les écrans dans leur environnement. Les différents types de média et les dispositifs d'auto-publication sur internet rendent ainsi complexe la question de l'identité.

Les travaux menés sur les réseaux sociaux ont fait l'objet d'études pléthoriques en sociologie et en sciences de l'information et de la communication. Dans le cadre de notre travail, nous retenons surtout la recherche menée par D. Cardon (2010) et N. Chaouni (2018) pour leur complémentarité.

Dans cette première partie, nous convoquons les travaux qui portent un regard critique sur les concepts relevés et qui questionnent les principes établis pour les remettre quelquefois en cause, voire pour les actualiser et en compléter les définitions. La confrontation de ces études nous permet à notre tour d'y apporter *in fine* les modifications que nous jugeons pertinentes à la lumière de l'analyse proposée dans la deuxième partie.

Le deuxième volet de notre travail procède d'une approche empirique. Il consiste à analyser les échanges menés par de jeunes Turcs en France. Nous analysons les échanges d'une vingtaine de jeunes Turcs vivant en France, par l'intermédiaire de deux techniques : questionnaires et entretiens semi-dirigés en cours de réalisation (2019). Notre enquête par questionnaire sert à produire des données « explicatives ». Cette procédure a pour ambition de rechercher « la cause efficiente » (Singly, 2016). La méthode d'entretien semi-directif qui a ses origines dans les sciences sociales, notamment en sociologie et en anthropologie (Fontana et Frey, 1998), est également privilégiée (Giordano, 2003). Ces jeunes investissent les réseaux sociaux car ils ne se sentent pas représentés dans l'espace public et médiatique ; ils ne trouvent pas non plus de réel motif d'identification dans leur environnement. La question consiste par conséquent à savoir si les résultats des travaux cités précédemment sont valables dans notre cas d'étude précis. Elle consiste aussi à savoir s'il existe des preuves empiriques montrant qu'il existe une plus grande tendance à vouloir communiquer avec des personnes connues lors des interactions en ligne ou hors ligne.

**Mots-clés :** *jeunes, Turcs, identité, réseaux sociaux, interactions*

## IN OTHER WORDS. How Otherness is (Re)Produced and How it Can be Problematicized

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In the last decades, encounters with different forms of Otherness have intensified mainly due to globalization and global migrations which, together with the transformation in technological communications and in the new media, have altered the face of social, cultural and linguistic diversity in societies all over the world (Blommaert & Rampton 2012: 7-9). While some of these encounters have led to new reconfigurations of individual life-trajectories and to new forms of socializations, they have also largely generated new forms of exploitation, discrimination and rejection – if not fierce contrasts.

We are indeed witnessing an unprecedented resurgence in some political debates and in the social media of the re-construction of a polarization which disseminates dichotomic representations and divisive narratives on individuals, groups and social facts, often converting hate speech in hate crime (Müller & Schwarz 2018). I assume that such ideological polarization results in a deliberate construction of the cultural conceptualization of Otherness, a process of categorization which can easily fall into the stereotyping of cultural features as static and homogeneous traits of some groups.

In my presentation, I will analyse some of the linguistic features which contribute to the cultural conceptualizations of Otherness, also showing how they are historically, culturally and geographically situated, and the much too short a step between the cultural conceptualization of the Other and the cultural conceptualization of the Enemy.

I will then present the paradigm of Critical Cultural Linguistics (CCL), which I believe is a promising field of inquiry to analyse how language can (re)produce or challenge such conceptualizations. As a branch of Cultural Linguistics (Sharifian 2017) which analyses the mutual influence between language and cultural conceptualizations, CCL sustains that if cultural conceptualizations are encoded and embodied in language, they are by no means neutral or accidental (Giorgis 2017). CCL views cultural conceptualizations as shaped by contexts, conditions, power relations, unequal access to cultural and natural resources, as well as by socio-cultural and historical factors. Being critical, CCL looks at interdisciplinarity as one of its most prominent features, as it is only by interconnecting elements and perspectives, as well as research and practices, that phenomena can be read in their complexity. CCL can therefore become an exercise in interdisciplinarity, possibly developing a new methodological paradigm where scholars, researchers, educators, and practitioners from different fields can work together.

A profitable interdisciplinary collaboration which I envision for CCL is that with Foreign Language Education (FLE). I will then present an actual activity made with my students in an English Language classroom in Italy, showing how a critical approach to the foreign language allowed them to develop a meta-linguistic awareness of how far linguistic and cultural features and conceptualizations are situated and constructed. I will conclude my presentation introducing an ongoing project which vindicates a specific critical mandate for Foreign Language Education. Being one of the most prominent experiences of the encounter with Otherness, an-other language can problematize meanings, roles, and attributions which are usually taken-for-granted, thus offering new perspectives on both the self and the others.

**Keywords:** *interdisciplinarity, otherness (the construction of), critical cultural linguistics, foreign language education, intercultural education, critical pedagogies.*

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## Refugee Crisis and White Anxiety in the Digital Era: The Australian Case

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With the advent of the Digital Era, Australia, like many other technologically advanced countries, has witnessed a noticeable shift in the way politicians and citizens interact among each other, particularly by using certain social networks (Westerman *et al.* 2014). Since then, political information has become ever more accessible and shareable by both political leaders and potential voters, who have been increasingly involved in homophilous political discussions within the so-called 'echo chambers' (Brummette *et al.* 2018: 498). In this respect, recent research has shown that the virtual reconfiguration of political arenas has a pivotal impact on the veracity and the quality of media content produced online and, above all, on the construction and perception of reality in offline settings (Sulaiman-Hill *et al.* 2011: 346). However, what is not immediate to grasp in the current 'post-factual age' is that truth is frequently distorted with the purpose of serving the political goals of demagogues, in particular with regard to hot issues, which are dangerously oversimplified by binary forms of reasoning and polarized representations (Fuller 2008). As a case in point, with the intensification of the global migratory crisis, Australia has been increasingly challenged by influxes of refugees and asylum seekers coming from the Middle East and the Horn of Africa and, consequently, these media phenomena have intensified. Especially in the aftermath of 9/11 terrorist attacks and the subsequent Western declaration of 'war on terror', populist propaganda has escalated and contributed to the production of xenophobic and anti-Muslim feelings among citizens of the Australian society, thus generating unrestrained reactions of 'white anxiety' and 'paranoid nationalism' (Hage 2003). As a matter of fact, in this hysterical context, populists have opportunistically ridden the wave of 'moral panic' (Martin 2015) and fomented nationalist and sovereign discourses, aiming to gain electorate and reaffirm an incorruptible version of the White Australian Society, suddenly in need of protection from an (imagined) outer invasion (Devetak 2004). The purpose of the study is

therefore to analyse, from a linguistic and semantic perspective, what and how forms of white anxiety are discursively constructed when divulged on the social media platform of Twitter by selected populist leaders. The research relies on a mixed methodology that combines: Corpus Linguistics to elicit and analyse quantitative data from the research opportunistic Twitter corpus; the mapping of the interactive environment of Twitter through methodologies of Social Network Analysis; Political Discourse Analysis and approaches of Critical Metaphor Analysis to single out thematic patterns and occurring metaphors that emerge within narratives and counter narratives produced by the populist leaders, with the ultimate scope of unveiling the ideological substratum underlying the political discussion. The outcomes of the study will hopefully encourage social media users to become aware of the manipulative discursive practices circulating online and, ultimately, spur them to oppose an indiscriminate accreditation of untruthful information.

**Keywords:** *refugee crisis, post-factual age, Australian populism, white anxiety*

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### Bionote

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## **Experts vs. Non-Experts, Polarisation and Persuasion in the news media: the Thai cave boys’ rescue**

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### Background

On 23 June 2018, a football team of 12 boys between 11 and 17 and their coach ended up trapped in Tham Luang cave in the North of Thailand, after entering it for a short walk and being surprised by an unexpected flood. As the water filled the cave, for several days the world followed in suspense the fate of the imprisoned team, an emotionally engaging story especially for the young age of the people involved, who were all

eventually rescued alive from the cave 22 days after. The worldwide media coverage of the news was immense, and unprecedented as regards speleological accidents.

### **Aims**

While the rescue operation required a very complex effort, necessitating professional knowledge and experts of multiple disciplines, including geology, hydraulics, medicine to name some, on top of caving and diving, a heated debate among professionals as well as lay people ensued on the possible ways of saving the boys. This study aims to analyse the positions that emerged in the debate as to what the best way to rescue the boys was, comparing expert and non-expert proposals, as well as the different solutions proposed by specialists. These apparently tended to be presented by the press in dichotomic pairs, as polarised positions: the public's vs the experts' and, among the latter, the local experts' vs the international experts', the British experts' vs the Americans experts', and so on. How is this sort of polarisation in the press constructed linguistically and realised discursively?

### **Corpus and methods**

The analysis will be carried out on a collection of texts from English-speaking news media sources worldwide, including Thai local ones (e.g. *The Bangkok Post*), collected between 23 June and 31 December 2018, using *SketchEngine* (Kilgarriff & Rychlý 2003) for the quantitative treatment of the data. The interpretation will be attempted from the perspectives of science popularisation (Garzone 2006, Gross 2006), and linguistic studies on evaluation and persuasion (Hunston & Thompson 2000, Waddell 2009, Briñol & Petty 2011), especially in the media (Martin & White 2005, Walton 2007).

### **Results**

This investigation intends to explore polarisation in the media, when stories of high emotional impact are involved and discourses of science and technology are encompassed, thus making the popularisation of expert knowledge also necessary or at least expected. In particular, the role of persuasion in convincing global mass audiences is investigated, to extract possible linguistic strategies and patterns that may recur in similar contexts of communication.

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## **The Language of Power in University Student Digitally Supported Discourse: Cyberbullying from a Bulgarian Perspective**

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Cyberbullying is a problem that is being intensively investigated by researchers. Although, most of the works focus on the ways in which school students interact in social media, cyberbullying has entered the worlds and lives of higher education students. Recent developments on the topic (Minor, 2003; Smith, 2012; Early, 2014; Faucher, 2014; Watts, 2017 among others) provide insights on student behaviour in digitally supported discourse in a variety of cultural and linguistic contexts by placing an emphasis either on describing victimization experiences and identifying the impact of cyberbullying on students' emotions, health and well-being or on highlighting effective intervention or prevention practices. Little information, however, is available on the effects of cyberbullying among Bulgarian university students. This paper fills in the gap in research literature by presenting the results of a study performed with 125 Bulgarian higher education students. The empirical evidence collected from an online questionnaire with the study participants reveals their experience with cyberbullying, their perceptions and opinions about it, as well as their solutions to the problem. The overall findings show that 10.5 % of the students have been victimized, while 7.2 % have bullied others over the last six months. An essential aspect in the analysis is the discussion of gender differences and the power and control exerted through the language used in the online exchanges. The implications provided by the study can be used as a trigger to policy reforms and intervention programmes on national level which would address the need for taking a target action to cyberbullying in university contexts.

**Keywords:** *cyberbullying, university students, gender differences, power, impact*

## **Using Social Media in The Electoral Context. Lessons from Romania 2014 Presidential Campaign**

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In the current troubling European context when the new “enemy” of free and democratic elections seems to be the use of “fake news” and the “disinformation” by populist movements and other actors having a more in depth look on what populism is and how social media is used in its expansion during an electoral context has become of critical importance.

The current paper intends to shed some light on this worrisome phenomenon from a local point of view, having the Romanian political scene as the subject of analysis. Starting from my research experience focused on the way Facebook was used in the 2014 Presidential electoral campaign – a campaign that took place in the same year as the elections for the European Parliament – a situation that is recurrent also this year in Romania – the document would use qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to present the way in which Facebook was used by the now Romanian President Klaus Iohannis and provide some possible clues on way in which Social media tools would be used in the upcoming electoral campaigns. As regards the quantitative methods used I would analyze the number and the frequency of Facebook posts from the second half of 2014 – before, during and immediately after the electoral campaign for the two main competitors, then PM Victor Ponta and the current President Klaus Iohannis. That would allow me to see the frequency and to correlate the number of posts with various phases of the electoral campaigns.

Regarding the qualitative aspect of the research the posts shall be divided on topics in accordance with their subject (personal issues, political aspects, campaign stories, etc.). Thus I would see each candidate what topics

of interest it has and check the way they relate with their intended audiences.

Starting with a review of the current theories on the use of social media, the paper would present the Romanian political landscape and how it was affected then by the use of Facebook. It would provide empirical examples on the use of social media in political context while trying to see what are the Romanian specificities in this area.

The 2014 electoral campaign came to be known in Romania as the campaign where Facebook changed the rules of the game as it helped the opposition candidate, Klaus Iohannis, to change the tide between the two elections rounds. Having been regarded as a second chance candidate Mr Iohannis used Facebook to spread his campaign message. The most important usage was between the two electoral rounds where he sent mobilization messages to his followers in order to ask them to vote.<sup>1</sup>

**Keywords:** *social media; Romania; Presidential campaign; Facebook*

## Linguodisursive Potential of Social Media

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The beginning of the XXI century was marked by the intensive development of information and communication, network technologies and their active use by the society which led to the creation of a new reality – social media. They have become the main daily “entry point” to the Internet and an important operational source of information for users.

Social media is an “online communication in which an individual smoothly and flexibly changes his role acting either as an audience or as an author. For this, social software is used that allows anyone without coding expertise to post, comment, move, edit information and create communities around shared interests” (Thornley, www). Social media appeal to a sense of belonging to a particular community.

In social media different levels of users can receive messages aimed at a mass audience, comment and express their opinion about the communicator’s actions ultimately influencing the audience’s perception of the media message. Modern information and communication technologies allow users to participate more actively in the communication process within the information and communication space (Shesterkina 2017, p. 23).

Social networks are viewed as media in the context of “new media” or “social media”. The most popular sites that are usually classified as social media (Facebook, Twitter, LiveJournal, Wikipedia, YouTube) have a unique interface and work on the basis of a certain set of technologies that make this site a good means of communication.

The main method of this research is the descriptive method; methods of cognitive science were also used – the method of cognitive analysis, categorization, observation, comparison, generalization, the method of conceptual and taxonomic analysis; interpretation method; functional method; cognitive modeling method; data integration method.

“Women’s March” is a worldwide social protest movement that arose on January 21, 2017 to articulate, protect and promote human rights law and policy: women’s rights, immigrant rights, reproductive rights, health care reform, racial inequality issues, environmental issues, workers’ rights, etc. Today, “Women’s March” is the largest and most powerful social network mobilizing people to carry out active social and political actions both online and offline, with actions that change the field of public policy.

The existence of value criteria in the society is considered to determine a certain attitude of the subject to the object of speech. The evaluation may be of a purely individual character but most often it relates to the system of values inherent in the society. The evaluative aspect of the interaction between reality and a person is reflected in the language in various ways. This means that an evaluative meaning is manifested through language means which fix the result of a person’s evaluation of the facts of reality. Language at all levels has

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<sup>1</sup> This is an ongoing research project as it is a part of my PhD research thus it represents work in progress. All the opinions are my own and do not represent the institutional opinion of my university.

the means that enable the speaker to adequately express his or her evaluative attitude towards objects and phenomena of objective reality (Katermina 2015).

Linguodiscursive analysis of political content produced and reproduced by the members of the Women's March network allowed us to identify lexemes with various kinds of evaluations: modal verbs to attract additional attention to movement problems as well as an anaphora aimed at enhancing impact combined with capitalization which creates additional emotional attitude

An important discursive element is the sentence-appeals and the possessive pronoun *our* which performs the function of combining efforts to achieve a common goal.

Thus, the study of the linguistic discursive features of the political content of social movements allows us to see new trends in the development of modern communication space.

**Keywords:** *online space, social movement "Women's March", social media, linguodiscursive potential, evaluation*

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## Languaging in Digital Practices in Intercultural Project-Based Learning Among University Students

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This research investigates how Information and Communication Technology (hence, ICT) facilitates participants' languaging (sense-making practices that include linguistic and affective elements [Jensen, 2014]) in intercultural project-based learning program. Intercultural settings are not straightforward assumptions that categorise entire processes of actions, issues, or conflicts, or form relationship among participants. Intercultural settings regard as multi-faceted, multidimensional and dynamic discursive practices (Tanaka & Bargiela-Chiappini 2013), therefore, it is hard to depict the reality of intercultural settings as etic view (Zhu & Bargiela-Chiappini, 2013). A discussion of languaging (Jensen, 2014) is one of the key concepts necessary to understand the complex and dynamic phenomena among programme participants. Thus, this descriptive study aims to observe and to report findings of a languaging in intercultural project-based programmes by emic view.

The data of this research were collected by Belarus Meisei Fieldwork, which is a destination-marketing project. Participants of this project were Meisei University and Belarus State Economic University students. Students discussed and created a promotional video for Minsk using discussions on a Social Networking Service (hence, SNS) application from May to July in 2018. At the end of August, Meisei students visited Minsk and met with their teammates; they also discussed the Minsk promotion video through face-to-face interaction. The participants made decisions, exchanged ideas, and searched for solutions to achieve successful results in a real-world setting, using English as a lingua franca. They used SNS discussions before and after the actual programme where they worked together in a face-to-face setting. Ramondt (2008) argues that online communities of practice have the ability and tools to help students achieve authentic learning outcomes.

This presentation explains how students' digital practices facilitated their decision making and fostered good relationships amongst members on an intercultural team. Jones, Chik, and Hafner (2015) argue that digital practices are "tools associated with digital technologies, which have come to be recognised by specific groups

of people as ways of attaining particular social goals, enacting particular social identities, and reproducing particular sets of social relationships (p. 3)”, therefore, digital practice is one of the important asset for intercultural working team in order to understand their work and relationship. Intercultural working team sometime encounters the issues of geographical distance and time difference to work with certain tasks. To address of the issues above, digital practice is critical because it has potential to go beyond geographical distance and time difference. Data shows that digital practice is one of the representations of languaging among the Belarus Fieldwork participants. The analysis of both SNS and face-to-face interactions highlighted different perspectives in functions, thus facilitating changes in communication styles. SNS chat and video recording, and student’s narrative data indicates that students’ perceptions of the SNS were transactional, however, the function of SNS gradually shifted to an interactive one through their digital practices. The results of the study illuminate the critical role of ICT, which can foster the development of a lingua franca in users in project-based learning and help them to envisage languaging in educational settings.

**Keywords:** *languaging, digital practice, intercultural project-based learning program*

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## Fake News and Post-truth on Online Media in Bulgaria

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Fake news and post-truth are current topics and they have their basic and specific manifestations in various states and on various media markets. Fake news have basic and specific manifestations in different countries and media markets. The first hypothesis is that fake news is created and distributed quickly on online media in Bulgaria. The second hypothesis is that Bulgarian citizens are not always able to find out which facts are true, and which are not thus failing to find manifestations on different online and offline groups. The assumption is that politicians are both a source of fake news and as well as a subject of misrepresentation of facts of their professional careers and personal lives. Figurative language, particularly metaphor, hyperbole and litotes as well as argument against authority and an appeal to people are some of the ways to create news and spread news. Digital politicians and digital citizens are both sources and object of fake news. It is necessary to develop Bulgarian digital citizens’ political, media and digital literacy at the same time in order to distinguish fake news and to successfully counter them.

**Keywords:** *fake news, post-truth, online media, digital media literacy*

## **Flipped Out: Student Voice and Choice in Course Design**

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Based on data gathered at MEF University, Istanbul, 2017-2018, this study first delineates different types of undergraduate courses delivered in the MEF Faculty of Education, including online, blended and flipped course design, and then identifies which option was preferred by students. Data included student satisfaction survey feedback on course delivery options, student course results, and online student usage data. The collated data indicates that learners were interested in shifting from a flipped model to a blended model of curriculum delivery. Furthermore, during the data analysis, it became evident that learner adaptations were made in context, with peers, with the content, and with the instructor, face-to-face.

From the resulting efficacy and increased satisfaction levels, it can be shown that students were searching for online learning activities more related to their specific educational interests, personal contexts, and skill levels. Several issues emerged, the first being that students with lower levels of English advanced with the syllabus before mastering the content, while more advanced language learners became bored or frustrated, particularly with other learners. Secondly, following the assumptions of Knowles' Andragogical Model (1984), it may be shown that educational approach of instructional design for online learning needs to align with learning objectives that correspond to learners' needs. Lastly, student feedback provides insights as to whether educational technology is living up to the promise of enhancing learning outcomes, or if a different contextualized paradigm for online instructional design and delivery of content is needed.

## **Migration in an Electoral Context: The Case of Italian Media Discourse in the 2018 Parliamentary Campaign**

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In Italy, the discourse on migrants has increased in the context of the Italian parliamentary elections in March 2018 when the electoral programmes of the anti-system parties were focused especially on stopping migratory flows. During the electoral campaign, the populist public discourse of the North League and Five Star Movement parties has been characterized by a solid anti-migratory rhetoric that increased the distinction between 'we' and 'them' (Antonsich, 2015) through slogans such as "Italians first", "Stop the Invasion". In this paper we analyse how media -through diverse positioning, including those of politicians- situates migration and especially labour (intra-EU) migration in an electoral context. Hence, the research focuses on specific ways in which media re-brought some key topics related to migration in the electoral context which had been previously covered by the Italian press. Considering these premises, the research answers two related research questions: "What types of representations of migrants (in particular of Romanian migrants) are built in the Italian press, taking into account the context of Italian elections?" and "To what extent, by representing migrants, the media makes use of a public memory that include sensitive topics about migrants and labour migration (past representations and contexts) to build claims and types of responsibilities? By relying on these research questions, our claim is that the election context could be understood as a site of discursive struggles in which public issues (such as migration) are reframed by various public actors (especially by politicians and media) and thus, instrumentalized. Therefore, the 2018 parliamentary elections represent a key context of public debate on migration which should be seen within the broader Italian media dynamics. Based on an interdisciplinary analytical framework that links transnationalism (Portes *et al.*, 1999; Levitt&Schiller, 2004; Boccagni, 2012) and media and migration studies (Balabanova, Balch, 2010, Belmonte *et al.*, 2012), this paper focuses on opinion articles from two Italian daily general-interest newspapers: *La Repubblica* (centre-left political stance) and *Il Giornale* (one of the most popular among the right-wing national newspapers). A multi-method research design is developed, covering the month of February 2018 when the debate on elections has

begun to get even more intense. In this period, the public discourse culminated with the attack of the former League candidate Luca Traini on migrants that brought back to public attention the increasingly xenophobic and anti-migratory rhetoric. In this regard, content analysis is used, on the one hand, to identify the extent to which the migration and more precisely labour migration is a topic of debate in the Italian press during the electoral campaign of 2018 and, on the other hand, what type of migration is covered by the Italian press (labour migration, refugee crisis etc). Complementary, tools from Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2003; Van Leeuwen, 2008; Wodak, 2010) is used to highlight media discursive practices of representing migrants especially in terms of building forms of engagement through normative statements and moral assessments (Beciu *et al.*, 2018), inclusion/exclusion and prevailing ways of being and acting.

**Keywords:** *italian elections, labour migration, media representation, transnationalism.*

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## Polarization in Chilean Educational Debate. Polarización en el Debate Educativo Chileno

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The Chilean university education system is under an arduous discussion, in which all the interests that are part of a certain cultural battle about maintaining and/or changing the neoliberal socio-economic system in the country participate. With regard to a reform that provides free university education promulgated in the Government of Bachelet (2014-2018), the actors again take position to support their perspectives and challenge the opponent's, in relation to the way in which they should govern, finance and measure educational institutions.

The discursive context seems ideal for a reasonable discussion to think about the future of Chilean society. However, as in other realities and public discussions, it is necessary to ask whether a growing polarization is observed, in which the positions of the actors tend to be concentrated in pseudo-disagreements, or only

articulate corporate defences of interests, or indeed some partial agreements are observed that allow progress in the discussion.

In this paper, we present evidence of the types of prototypical controversial dialogues that the actors of the educational system show in their public discussions, analysing their arguments, characterizing lexically-metrically the semantic selection that marks the discourse of the positions. The corpus of speeches that we have chosen for this presentation is composed of the opinions expressed in online newspapers of key actors in the public discussion.

**Keywords:** *argumentation, disagreements, public discussion, polarization*

## **An Analysis of Medical Discourse: Cosmetic Surgery and Signs of Age(ism)**

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Medical discourse encompasses variations “deriving from a host of factors such as cultural aspects, community membership, professional expertise and generic conventions” (Gotti, 2015: 5).

An area of medical discourse which has been covered in less detail is that of plastic surgery, or better put, cosmetic surgery. Here, the focus is frequently centred on female identity and the concept that “[c]osmetic surgery [...] is a modern practice located in the context of the ideology of female beauty” (Lirola & Chovenec, 2012: 503). Furthermore, cosmetic surgery discourse is often portrayed as normalising the decision to resort to surgery in order to fit a “cultural ideal of beauty” (Moran & Lee, 2013: 373), particularly through its multimodal representation. Therefore, an analysis of cosmetic surgery discourse encompasses elements of identity, gender and social context to name but a few.

Despite the abovementioned studies, little has been dealt with in terms of age and/or ageism. Recent scientific studies show that there could indeed be a correlation with the concept of social polarisation in terms of ageism and cosmetic procedures, according to patient opinions (Pearl & Percec, 2019). The concept of old and young and no longer being permitted to ‘grow old gracefully’ means that youth, as a polarisation of old age, equals beauty and success, usually for the female sex, and thus women feel pressurised to opt for cosmetic surgery.

The aim of this pilot study is to analyse a corpus of medical discourse (sub-corpus of cosmetic surgery) and analyse linguistic features in terms of lexis while considering the social variable of age (Milroy & Gordon, 2003) and specifically age(ism) in British newspapers.

The corpus will be collected using the online platform LexisNexis<sup>1</sup> defining the search parameters as *cosmetic surgery\**, *plastic surgery\** and *age\** in four British Daily Newspapers: *The Guardian*, *Daily Mirror*, *The Times* and *The Daily Mail*. These newspapers can be broadly classified into two quality newspapers and two popular/tabloid papers. The two former papers have a centre-left political inclination and the latter lean towards the centre-right.

*AntConc* (Anthony, 2014) will be used to analyse the corpus in order to identify and analyse the lexical features and their semantic representation. Results are expected to reveal interesting linguistic patterns in terms of cosmetic surgery representation in the British press and how cosmetic surgery is portrayed in reference to age(ism).

**Keywords:** *medical discourse, cosmetic surgery, age(ism), corpus-based discourse analysis, British press*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://academic.lexisnexis.eu/>

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## Polarización Entre Sordos y Oyentes: Caminos de la Educación de Sordos en Brasil

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Todavía vivimos en sociedades que enfrentan sus extremos dicotómicos, como la brasileña, por ejemplo. Las relaciones de poder establecidas en ellas hacen sus propias víctimas de exclusión (Ortúzar, 2016). Enfrentar estas cuestiones, es una respuesta de práctica de ciudadanía para los investigadores en Análisis Crítico del Discurso (ACD) (Fairclough, 2008; Magalhaes, Martins, Resende, 2017). Según Van Dijk (2008), quien hace estudios críticos debe ser solidario con los grupos vulnerables. Por esta razón, uno de los grandes objetivos de la ACD es estudiar las prácticas sociales por la perspectiva de los grupos dominados. La corriente de la ACD que seguimos es el Enfoque Sociológico y Comunicacional del Discurso - ASCD ([www.ascd.com.br](http://www.ascd.com.br)) (Bessa, 2016, Pedrosa, 2018). Esta corriente brasileña contribuye con los estudios críticos, dialogando con la Sociología para el Cambio Social (Bajoit, 2006), Comunicación para el Cambio Social (Gumucio-Dagron, 2008); y, en cuanto a la tesis textual, trabaja con la Lingüística Sistemico-Funcional (Halliday, 2004). Para esta comunicación, el diálogo será, primordialmente, con la sociología para el cambio social y su subsidio para los estudios de relaciones de poder y cambios sociales. Asumiendo este ámbito, elegimos como grupo vulnerable la comunidad sorda. Este enfoque es el resultado de nuestra experiencia con clases universitarias híbridas de sordos y oyentes como alumnos de la disciplina Lingüística, resultado también de investigaciones desarrolladas, como orientadora, en los niveles de iniciación científica, maestría, doctorado y tutora en el postdoctorado. Y en la actualidad, un proyecto de postdoctorado que comparará los cambios sociales para los sordos en Brasil y Portugal en la Universidad de Lisboa (2019-2020). Históricamente el pueblo sordo ha sido víctima de una sociedad ovinista. El congreso de Milán (1880) es uno de los más mencionados en lo que se refiere a la exclusión del punto de vista de los sordos sobre su educación. Las principales discusiones involucraron preferencia por el método oral y que la voz carecía venir antes de la escritura (Rochele, 1880). Así, no es difícil trabajar con el Análisis Crítico del Discurso (ACD) y Estudios Sordos (ES) en un diálogo social y académico. A partir de esta contextualización, el objetivo de esta comunicación es analizar, lingüístico-sociodiscursivamente, fragmentos de documentos que apuntan a las reivindicaciones de los sordos en cuanto a su derecho por una educación bilingüe, por su cultura y por su identidad. Utilizaremos una metodología aplicada, cualitativa y bajo la perspectiva interpretativista. El uso del análisis lingüístico a través de la Gramática Sistemico-Funcional (GSF) respaldará las interpretaciones, considerando que los análisis en ACD deben moverse entre lo lingüístico y lo social. Los *corpora* serán extraídos de 3 recortes de cada uno de los documentos: Ley de la Libras (Lengua Brasileña de Señales, 2002); Decreto de la Libras (2005); carta reivindicativa de doctores sordos sobre la educación bilingüe (2012). Los resultados preliminares indican que los textos nos ofrecen condiciones de recuperar la memoria discursiva y sociohistórica de la comunidad sorda y su lucha por educación bilingüe, en una arena discursiva de “polifonía social” entre sordos y oyentes.



**Palabras clave:** *análisis crítico del discurso, comunidad sorda, documentos, cambio social*

## **‘So Torn About Vaccines’... Parental Dialogic Responsiveness to Vaccine Hesitancy in Online Parenting Forums**

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The vaccine landscape is currently witnessing a paradigm shift from the long-established dichotomy of accepting or refusing childhood immunization toward more pro-active questioning and indecision among parents. Accordingly, the term ‘vaccine hesitancy’ has emerged to express a spectrum of parental attitudes denoting uncertainty and confusion about vaccines, rather than outright refusal alone (Callender 2016). Hesitant parents frequently turn to the the Internet for vaccine advice, where polarized anti-vaccination discourses prevail more than in other media (Betsch & Sachse 2012; Kata 2012). An increasing polarization of the vaccination debate is especially caused by negative user-generated content in online social environments (Schmidt *et al.* 2018). The resulting echo chamber effect of these countless enclaves of anti-vaxxers has a strong impact on the growth of vaccine hesitancy and on parental decision-making, which is heavily conditioned by the viral spread of unscientific information (Nyhan *et al.* 2014). Nevertheless, vaccine-hesitant parents also appear to seek advice from other parents in online forums open to decision-making discussions. These can thus be considered as constructive attempts to counter the echo chamber effect of anti-vaccination thinking. An in-depth analysis of these decision-making discussions may help shed light on vaccine-hesitant parents’ nuanced opinions, revealing how, perhaps, they redeploy polarized claims, besides highlighting how parental dialogic responsiveness as advice-giving is strategically construed. So far, however, this dialogic practice has received scant attention (Meleo-Erwin *et al.* 2017) as the bulk of research in the area has focused on polarized anti-vaccination discourses online (Kata 2012).

This paper seeks to fill this gap by exploring the strategies employed by parents in the discourse of advice as a core part of decision-making discussions held in online parenting forums on vaccine hesitancy. The study is guided by two main research questions: 1) which main determinants of vaccine hesitancy shape parents’ advice-seeking strategies? 2) which advice-giving strategies are predominantly employed in response to help overcome hesitancy and facilitate decision-making? Drawing on research on advice in discourse (e.g. DeCapua & Dunham 1993; Limberg & Locher 2012) and informed by studies in which discourse is treated as “both constructed and constructive” (Potter 2009: 610; original emphasis), a sample collection of posts on online parenting forums are analysed using a mixed-method approach. A critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1995, 2001) of the threads is theoretically framed by the Vaccine Hesitancy Matrix model (World Health Organization 2014). Posts are thus coded according to three determinants, namely contextual influences, individual and group influences and vaccine/vaccination-specific issues to disclose how vaccine hesitancy is represented in advice-seeking discourse. Posts are further coded following the three essential parameters of advice-giving: helping clarify problems, exploring options and offering directions to take future action (DeCapua & Dunham 1993). Findings highlight how advice-seeking discourse reflects the multi-dimensional nature of vaccine hesitancy; how parental advice-giving may make a contribution to developing public awareness, especially in the light of recent outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. Public health professionals may thus need to reconsider that vaccine hesitancy is not due solely to inadequate knowledge, but to the threat posed by digital misinformation.

**Keywords:** *vaccine hesitancy, advice in discourse, critical discourse analysis, online parental forums, childhood immunization*

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## **Trial by Social Media vs. the Traditional Courtroom. A Cross-Cultural Study of Legal Argumentation**

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Understood as a rhetorical feature, argumentation has a central place in the Aristotelian tradition (Hall 1995). Today it is in evidence both in the traditional courtroom, with its time-honoured discursive practices that sift evidence in order to arrive at a reasoned conclusion (Tarello 1977), and the more spontaneous contexts afforded by Social Media, which may be seen as constituting a kind of public forum for unofficial legal debate.

The two distinct discursive realms give rise to separate generic conventions in terms of degrees of formality/informality and politeness/rudeness, and other distinctions may also be drawn. For example, in the traditional courtroom, participants undergo specific training in the procedures involved, which fashions them into legal specialists, competent to provide expert judgements. In Social Media forums there are no such requirements; members of the public are free to express opinions on current cases with no special training or legal knowledge. Moreover, while institutional participants receive reliable knowledge, in the form of factual information regarding cases, Social Media participants rely on what they glean from traditional media such as television or newspaper, or hearsay in the public sphere (Resta 2009). The institutional context, meanwhile, is essentially characterised by rational thought; by the exercise of forensic rhetoric aiming to demonstrate the truth value of propositions. The feelings of those engaged in trials are not of interest to anybody; Social Media, by contrast, appears to be dominated by more emotional judgements, and the feelings of commentators on the events under discussion are frequently foregrounded (Kleinke and Bös 2015). Indeed, these may become the

focus of discursive attention within discussion groups, as one commentator's opinions/judgements/feelings are applauded or decried in successive posts.

Naturally, too, the discourse events in both contexts differ in perlocutionary terms: in the institutional context they lead to judgements of innocence or guilt that may result in the freedom or imprisonment of the accused. In Social Media there is no decision; however, the unofficial 'court' of public opinion, though invisible, cannot be entirely ignored as those condemned or acquitted in it may face very real consequences (Janoski-Haehlen *et al.* 2011). This consideration lies behind recent legislation to limit the access of institutional figures, engaged in proceedings, to Social Media for the duration of the trial.

From a cross-cultural perspective, our paper explores these issues in the legal discourses of Great Britain and Italy. It is part of an ongoing research project (Ponton and Canepa, in press), and asks whether argumentation, in institutional and Social Media contexts, serves similar functions. From a Discourse-Historical perspective (Wodak 2001), it asks how far it is possible to explain differences by reference to an account of the legal traditions of both countries. We explore instances of argumentation collected from various sources in the two countries: journals and training materials, courtroom contexts, and Social Media sources such as Facebook and Twitter. Our analysis features notions of argumentation (Toulmin 1958), speaker evaluation (Martin and White 2005) and discourse pragmatics (Wilson and Sperber 2012).

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## Media Evidence for a Polarized Societal Debate in Bulgaria on Gender Otherness Issues

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For more than a year there has been an intensive public debate in the Bulgarian public space on the ratification of the Istanbul convention and the issues raised in it about the gender differences. The controversies of the political parties over some texts in the Convention created a division in the Bulgarian public opinions and increased the sensitivity towards the gender issues. The media also raised the degree of public tension by overemphasizing the subject and giving publicity of opposing views.

This paper presents current interpretations of the topic about the gender differences in the Bulgarian society on the basis of structural content analysis of Bulgarian media publications from the period July-December

2018. Key issues in the media discourse on gender issues are identified, such as: social notions about the gender equality in the society; women's opportunities for leadership positions in the public and business sectors, in the educational system and NGOs; the attitudes towards the disclosure of different sexual orientation, towards the family violence and some others.

The value-specific characteristics of the dominating social notions about the gender differences are analyzed in the light of different models of value orientations such as those of Schwarz and Hofstede as well as on the basis of existing research as European Value Survey.

The results of the current study are compared with the data from an earlier monograph of the author presenting a complete picture of the notions about otherness in the Bulgarian society in terms of ethnicity, gender, age, religion and other criteria of social and cultural identification.

In addition, the current public attitudes towards a European survey in the Bulgarian schools (February 2019), devoted to gender issued and reflected in the media discourse, are also discussed in the study.

The main conclusion drawn in the paper is that the political controversies in the society can distort the traditional values like tolerance towards the otherness and can discourage the European identity of some social groups.

## **“You are just a Hufflepuff...”. Polarized Discourse in the Harry Potter Fan Community**

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After the release of a new movie series (*Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them*) and of a play featuring an adult Harry Potter facing challenges generated by his own son (*Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*), the Harry Potter stories are reaching a constantly growing audience around the world. Described by many critics as an unprecedented phenomenon in the history of children's literature, the Harry Potter series has been analyzed through several lenses, ranging from film studies to queer studies, from marketing to psychology. Given the multimodality of the so-called “Potter Universe” (originally described in a series of novels, then adapted into movies and nowadays available as a real-life experience in the Universal themed park dedicated to it), it is not surprising that words taken from J. K. Rowling's works have entered common usage in English: it is the case, for instance, of “Potterhead” (which defines the typical Harry Potter nerd) and of “Hufflepuff” (used as a synonym of “lame” in teenage slang), originally the name of one of the Hogwarts Houses, the living communities into which the students attending the Scottish magical school are sorted. If Gryffindor then is deemed as the “coolest” house of this fictional world, since Harry Potter himself belongs to it, the other houses (Ravenclaw, Slytherin and Hufflepuff) are usually linked with other characteristics, such as cleverness, egotism and loyalty.

My paper aims to investigate how being sorted into these houses affects fans interaction on the web communities related to the Potter World. Studying the way Potterheads relate these values to themselves seems significant in terms of the bond generated by the iconic “Sorting Ceremony”: on Pottermore, the communication platform dedicated to the Potter universe, and on Web Pages such as “Buzzfeed Harry Potter”, the fans have indeed the chance of taking a quiz that will sort them into one of the Hogwarts Houses. As a result, the way Potterheads around the world express themselves in the main social media seems clearly influenced by this affiliation: dissimilarities can be detected for instance between the comments released by “clever” Ravenclaw and “kind” Hufflepuff. My study will investigate these differences, analyzing online confrontations among the houses that in the Harry Potter novels are enemies, Gryffindor and Slytherin first of all. To this aim, videos, pinterest pins and other material created by the Potter fan community will be gathered and studied in order to provide an analysis, significant in terms of polarized discourse, of the attitude demonstrated by J. K. Rowling's readers on the Web.

**Keywords:** *multimodality, social media, polarized discourse, Harry Potter, Hogwarts houses*

## Communicating Normative Assumptions on Same-Sex Couples

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The present study is part of my research for my final dissertation on same-sex unions. It positions itself in the field of corpus-assisted discourse studies devoted to critically explore the reception of same-sex marriage in the institutional discourse of the UK.

Sharing various commonalities with the ESTIDIA conference call, the aim of this study is to evaluate the nature of supposedly diversity-friendly messages delivered by the British government, which is most commonly under the spotlight both at the national and at the international level.

The theoretical and methodological framework is provided by Partington (2009; 2010) and Baker *et al.* (2008), who apply corpus approaches to critical discourse studies. These, in turn, are informed by the three-level framework on the representation of social groups (KhosraviNik 2010; Wodak and Chilton 2005), which is scrutinized under the light of emerging queer theory (Motschenbacher and Stegu 2013) in order to unveil heteronormative and strictly dichotomy-driven assumptions. The combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis gives rise to the cross-disciplinary enterprise of Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Studies, which have proved their consistency against many critical views (Baker 2014; Turner *et al.* 2018). Its merit lies in studying discourse production not only through the quantitative evidence emerging from the corpus, but also through the close reading and critical evaluation of texts informed by the broader macro-context where discourse is embedded. In this respect, the present paper primarily focuses on a linguistic and discursive investigation, based on the assumption that language and discourse cannot be separated from the context where they happen.

Moving from the institutional debate leading to a legal recognition of same-sex marriage in the UK – i.e. *Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013* –, the study explores the discursive representation of same-sex marriage in the official speeches, statements and press releases of UK PMs whose incumbencies correspond to the lively political and social debate at stake. In particular, the research questions are the following:

What are the distinguishing features of UK PMs interventions on same-sex marriage? What kind of evaluation do they convey?

To what extent PMs' gender impacts on the way same-sex marriage is represented to the nation?

The study starts from a close-reading investigation of the material, retrieved via a key-topic search from the official institutional websites of PMs, in this case David Cameron and Theresa May. The time span covers roughly nine years, i.e. from 2010 to present time, being this a historical period seeing same-sex unions on the spotlight of institutional and social debates. The quantitative search in the corpus is aimed to look for word frequencies, collocations and keywords till the gradual individuation of discourse prosody. Thus, proceeding to a qualitative search, the analysis broadens the focus on the investigation of strategies of social group presentation. Finally, the two parallel analyses are contrastively laid bare in order to capture the different discursive strategies enhanced by the two PMs for their institutional reframe of same-sex marriage.

**Keywords:** *language, gender and sexuality, same-sex marriage, institutional discourse*

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### **“La Donna è Mobile”: Hostile and Benevolent Sexism in President Trump’s Tweets**

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The present work is part of a preliminary study concerning the discursive manifestations of U.S. President Trump’s sexist attitudes and practices. It aims to investigate the linguistic strategies utilised by President Trump to represent women by specifically analysing his tweets, which are one of his privileged forms of communication. The purpose of the study is two-folded: drawing upon Mills’ model of sexism (2008) and Van Dijk’s socio-cognitive framework (2006), the first part of the study will analyse a corpus of all Trump’s negative tweets against women since the beginning of his 2016 campaign (July 2015). The second part of the work will focus on Trump’s usage of benevolent sexism, a form of discrimination based on the idea that women are weak and need to be protected, that they should respect traditional gender roles, and that they should be idolised for their sexual availability. Drawing upon Fiske and Glick’s Ambivalent Sexism Theory (1996), the second section will thus analyse Trump’s positive tweets addressing women during the same time-span used for the first corpus. Both sections shed a light on how President Trump’s vocabulary perpetuates a male-centric hierarchy in which women are to be kept away from significant social roles. Tweets conveying hostile sexism depict women as weak, incompetent beings who are mentally instable on one hand, and dishonest dangerous liars on the other, and thus not capable of achieving and keeping significant roles in society. On the other hand, tweets conveying benevolent sexism consider women as generally lacking strength, skills, and ability, and thus they have to be cherished and complimented when capable of achieving something, just like a father would do with his children. Yet, through utterances conveying gender differentiation and intimate heterosexuality, Trump does recognise that women are essential in his work and life, as they are able to verbally, emotionally, and physically support him in ways men do not. His usages of hostile and benevolent sexism are actually two sides of the same coin: they both confirm the idea of women as an inferior sex. Trump’s eventual victory in the 2016 U.S. elections could suggest that his ideologies might be widely shared by part of the American population, and thus the findings of this study may serve as an overview of Americans’ attitudes towards gender discrimination. His political ascendancy speaks to how these ideological beliefs are dangerously ingrained in language and society, and they should not be underestimated as they might have significant consequences for the stability of democracy. Dismissed as jokes played by a public personality, the President’s statements might not be “just words” (Farenthold, 2016), but a mirror of gender discrimination that is difficult to shatter.

**Keywords:** *benevolent sexism, hostile sexism, Trump, Twitter, gender discrimination*

## Polymedia and a Hybrid Dialogue from the Standpoint of the Theory of Complex Adaptive Systems

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The new electronic culture initially captured a person with breadth of opportunities and diversity of new open worlds, then accentuated the crisis of human identity in the postmodern world and increased the antagonism between particular worlds, made it possible to fully reveal natural aggressiveness of a person... But after all this, it raised the question of collecting together a human self and establishing a dialogue in new conditions of communication.

Discourses of culture construct social reality and at the same time they inevitably constitute social differentiations and social boundaries. The postmodern culture has created conditions under which a subject crosses boundaries of discourses easily, “appropriating” them one by one. Especially it concerns virtual digital space. Thus the integrity of a subject turns out to be problematical. The social identity of a subject is transformed as well. A postmodern ‘discursive person’ is a derivative of numerous discourses, is endowed with clip consciousness and mosaic type of thinking. The 20<sup>th</sup> century highlighted the evolutionary type of a person as ‘*divided subject*’ (Jacques Lacan), a person as a ‘*discursive function*’ (Michel Foucault). The postmodern e-culture cherishes the type of a person as *a dependent variable, as a function of discourse, permanently depending on its multiple, every time new arguments*.

Such a transgression of discursive and social boundaries has become one of the leading features of the postmodern culture. Metamorphoses of identity, constant changeover of regimes in diverse, divergent, and contradictory discursive practices are the basis of forming the phenomenon of ‘*protean self*’ (Lifton 1993). Of particular difficulty is the trend that constant crossing of boundaries takes place under conditions of virulent polemics, abusive language, adherence to binary or dichotomous thinking, intolerance and weakening trust among people.

How can a modern person learn to live pluralistically, i.e. in plural worlds and cultures at once? How learn to identify “the measurement error” of the truth? How can we restore the integrity of our personality? This is a crux during inevitably endless wandering of contemporary Proteus in miscellaneous and controversial landscape of media world’s discursive practices.

Polymedia and new hybrid forms of dialogue are one of possible ways to overcome dichotomy-based ways of thinking. Polymedia as the new condition of moral responsibility (Gershon 2010; Madianou & Miller 2012) becomes the especially important factor in the conditions of narrowing the private sphere and expanding the sphere of publicity. At the same time, possibilities of verification of messages which are transmitted by various communicative channels, with help of different media, expands.

For a person, nonlinear thinking and their ability to work with so-called voluminous sources and outflows of information that exist at every point of a system becomes especially relevant. That is exactly the thing that will ensure synergistic integration of a person’s cognitive system into the rapidly changing world, including worlds of media.

Investigation of communication in social media from the standpoint of Media Philosophy and the theory of complex adaptive systems can reveal the potential of polymedia in emergence of new constructive forms of dialogue.

**Keywords:** *electronic culture, polymedia, hybrid dialogue, Media Philosophy, theory of complex adaptive systems*

## A Pragmatic View Upon the Hybrid *Offline-Online* Artistic and Social Discourse of Romanian Artist Dan Perjovschi

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Nowadays, the contemporary artists are behaving like social engaged actors in virtual and urban networks (Bourriaud, 2001, Latour, 2005, 2014) investing hybrid complex roles such as ethnographers (Foster, 1996), researchers (Wesseling, 2011) and civic citizens (Elliott, Silverman, Bowman, 2016) and determining controversial political opinions (Latour, 2005) disseminated through traditional and online media spaces.

The artistic and civic contemporary practices could be analyzed using the interdisciplinary frame of the *Actor-Network Theory* - ANT method (Latour, 2005) having in mind that the operational concepts have both artistic and theoretic and epistemological functionalities. These conceptual vectors are connecting hybrid *convergences* (Friedman, 1998, Jenkins, 2006), *networks* (Castells, 2000, Latour, 2005, Joselit, 2013), *dispositive* (Fourmentraux, 2005, Peraya, 2013), *assemblages* (DeLanda, 2016) and *quasi-objects* (Serres, 2007, Simons, 2017), as important interactive issues for both esthetical and sociological pragmatics.

The study case concerns Dan Perjovschi, a Romanian artist, journalist and media influencer who developed a hybrid semiotic, visual and textual *online-offline* political dialogue within an extended discursive social engaged practice (Kwon, 2002). The methodological tools are provided by the analysis of online digital practices (Jones, R. H. Chik A. and Hafner C. A., 2015) and the dispositive and assemblage analysis (Fourmentraux, 2013, deLanda, 2016).

**Keywords:** *hybridity, artistic social engaged practices, ANT, dispositive, quasi-objects.*

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## **Being Successful in the Eyes of Bulgarians: A Comparative Study**

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Bulgarian social studies have focused on perceptions of success since the early 1990s. Being a market economy, Bulgaria has opened up to new ideas of personality development after communism. Bulgarians became eager to take part in business endeavours, especially during our EU membership. Operative programmes of the European Commission have urged local businesses to expand economically. The new culture of perceiving success as a true possibility, as a “dream come true”, becomes more and more prevalent. Both individuals and businesses have become proactive towards their personal and professional goals.

This paper investigates the notions of success and successful people among Bulgarian citizens of the following demographic groups: employed professionals, entrepreneurs/managers and students. The goal of this research is to compare how these groups perceive success as a socio-cultural concept in 2019. Research method is descriptive analysis of lexical units based on a close-ended questionnaire that studies the cognitive aspects of the notions “success” and “successful”. Theoretical paradigm for analysis is based on the following Hofstede’s cultural dimensions: individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, indulgence/ restraint and power distance.

Our goal is to determine these aspects, touching upon issues like fear of success, trust in successful people, social/private success, rational or emotional perceptions of success, economic characteristics of success and successful people, notions of entrepreneurial, academic and professional success in Bulgaria.

Our study outlines the main features of success according to Bulgarian citizens of Ruse region, which takes part in the Danube cross-border cooperation regional policy of the EU. The region is a transport and economic mini-hub of North Eastern Bulgaria, where intercultural contact is prevalent. The locals have had intensive interpersonal and business contacts with Romanians since Bulgaria’s joining of the EU in 2007. This makes Bulgarians from Ruse open to new socio-economic and cultural trends coming from Romania. Hence we find it important to study the perceptions of success among a more open-minded population that favours intercultural dialogue.

The scientific value of the paper is based on the following premises: first, success still isn’t a popular subject in intercultural studies; second, it introduces author’s own approach to success’ theorisation based on Hofstede’s dimensions; third, it compares notions of three different target groups (employees, business people and students); fourth, it uses an interdisciplinary analytical approach.

**Keywords:** *success, intercultural communication, comparative study, socio-cultural, regional development, personality development*

## The Characteristics and the Uniqueness of the Jewish Joke

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The Modern Jewish humor and the Jewish joke developed in the 18th -19th century in Eastern and Central Europe. The study of the Jewish Joke was initiated by Sigmund Freud in his book *The Joke and its relation to the Subconscious* (1905). In spite of his intentions to write a research book regarding the psychological aspect of the joke, the jokes he collected to study the issue were mostly Jewish in origin. This may be attributed either to the richness of Jewish humor, or to Freud's own background as a Jew, but either way, this fact enabled him to refer specifically to the Jewish humor and joke. Following Freud's research, the study of Jewish humor became an important topic in the study of humor. Christie Davies contended that Jews in both Europe and the United States tend to tell jokes more than any other Ethnic group.<sup>1</sup>

What is a Jewish joke? Many researchers have debated this question trying to find the answer. Generally, the accepted answer is that Jewish joke is written by a Jew, deals with Jewish traits, is meant for Jews, and includes a compassionate and loving attitude to the Jewish people and culture.

The uniqueness of Jewish jokes is reflected by three characteristics: (a) Self humor. Jews love to laugh at themselves. Many Jewish jokes are based on such humor. (b) Depth and complexity of Jewish jokes reflect Jewish wisdom. (c) Jokes created by Jews over the years reflect the Jewish people's unique history and survival.

Jewish humor existed and still exist where ever Jews used to live. This research focuses on the three great centers where the majority of the Jewish people lived and where Jewish humor was created and remarkably thrived: Eastern Europe, the United States and Israel. This article reflects the changes that occurred in the Jewish joke according to the sociological and economic changes experienced by the Jews in their places of livelihood.

**Keywords:** *humor, jewish humor, jokes, culture*

## Can Political Correctness Settle Conflict?

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**Aim:** This paper will examine how politically correct language is used when attempting to settle potentially conflictual situations; ones which may cause offence or lead to discrimination regarding gender, religion, ethnic origin and multi-culturalism.

**Description:** In 1908, Israel Zangwill, staged his theatrical work *The Melting Pot*, the protagonist of which, David Quixano, sets about writing a symphony to represent the harmonious mix of ethnicities in North America. According to Zangwill, the work was a metaphor for American Society, a fusion of all the ethnic groups this society consisted of. Through this fusion process, *The Melting Pot* depicted a society in which the racial and political hatred hitherto existent would be eliminated since all new members of society would become *Americans, a New People*.

One must bear in mind that for the first two centuries following the colonization of North America: "for better or for worse, the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant tradition exerted a predominant influence on both culture and American society" (Schlesinger Jr. 1991, p.12). In tune with this tradition, second and third wave migrants entering North America had to conform to the WASP standard, with all the relative difficulties which this entailed.

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<sup>1</sup> Davies, 2011. Pp.113-116; Davies, 1986. Pp.7-13.

In the post Second World War period, ethnic minorities strengthened their identity and this gave rise to the myth of ethnocentrism, a concept which was to develop further in the years to come.

In 1974, based upon the ideology of ethnocentrism, the American Parliament decreed the *Ethnic Heritage Studies Program Act* which was brought out to appease those individuals protesting against Anglo-centric culture. Ethnocentrism was to become a cult capable of undermining the vision of a society which regarded itself as a *single people*.

During the 1980's, with the aim of protecting the self-esteem of those pupils belonging to ethnic minorities, the number of hours dedicated to the teaching of non-European culture in American schools was increased. However, this adaptation of school curricula did not reduce the social inequalities then present.

It would seem that the solution to an issue as considerable as national integration, an attempt to *create* citizens, was a political policy which was formal and insubstantial, one which was unable to lower levels of intolerance present in a given society or group (Hugens, 1993).

In 2014, Malik underlined how attentive modern-day society is to *difference, pluralism* and *political identity*. At the same time, however, the “only differences exalted as inalienable, and therefore allowed, are those which are collective: gender, ethnic origin and, at times, sexual preference: never *the individual* as dissent in respect to *the group*” (Flores D’Arcais, 2018, p.10).

According to some authors, for instance Hugens, gender, ethnic origin, and sexual preference are considered not only as *cultural diversity* but also as *autonomous cultures*.

Conclusion: In the Western World, the quest to present universally accepted values such as pluralism and political identity as inalienable, calls for the recovery of a shared *habitus* (Bourdieu, Wacquant, 1992; Wacquant, 2009; Sassatelli, 2002; Sapiro, 2010), one which is necessary when responding to contingent issues in a way which is concrete and not simply formal.

**Keywords:** *conflict, ethnocentrism, habitus, political correctness*

## Complexity of Dialogues on the Net

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Introduction – Hybrid dialogues are shaped by interconnection and by co-performativity, which allow the staging of private and public identity and on-line and off-line performances. Interpersonal relations are thus built in different environments using dichotomic and polarized slogans, but also making rhetorical “mistakes” that are then conveyed in the political and ideological propaganda, with the frequent repetition of one-dimensional notions.

Topics discussed – Cultures undergo constant processes of hybridization. The modern hybrid coexists with aspects generating modernization both in the technical-economic structure and in the social structure; an example lies in the forms of communication and public debate. Political engagement has often been used as a communication channel for an audience that subsequently adhered to that movement, according to a “top-down” logic, where individual activation mostly responded to “passwords” coming from the top. This is the opposite sense of “grassroots” logic with its hinges on conversational construction and peer discussion. Following the hypotheses formulated by Bimber, Flanagin and Stohl (2005), the distinctive trait of the new phase inaugurated by the spreading of social media and by the fact that these are used in a coordinated way, as compared to more traditional web tools, characterizes the coordination process between individuals and the various groups, which are active on much more flexible and decentralized specific issues and almost completely independent from the presence of a formal organization of the movement itself. These scholars try to reconstruct the modes of collective action by taking as their starting point the communication protagonism of individuals, mostly ignoring the organizational aspects of the movements, with the awareness that one of the primary effects of new technologies of communication and information is precisely public domains more porous and easily crossed. Knowledge of the real trends of information technology consumption aimed at a vote decision, between hybridization and cross-mediality, between the private and the televisual, and the

dynamics of access to new information media is what should guide the action of the authority to protect information pluralism. The form of communication based on social media technologies is defined by Castells (2007, 2009) as “mass self-communication”, underlining the radical element present in this new communicative possibility to be found in the hybridization of the self-generation potential of the contents, self-direction of the emission and self-selection of the reaction – all features of interpersonal communication. A revolutionary consequence of these new media is the destabilization, or at least problematization, of a series of dichotomic categorizations corresponding to our habitual way of classifying socio-economic phenomena: sender/receiver, producer/consumer, private/public, intentional/non-intentional, virtual/real, relational/mediatized. In particular the overcoming of the latter distinction between what regards interpersonal relations and what regards the mediation of communication is a centre point for the social media field.

Conclusions – Hybrid organizations are host to institutional logics that are diverse and often in conflict. Therefore they face the challenge of supporting their hybridity. To successfully meet such a challenge, the process of identifying organizational actors is crucial. We maintain that the power of actors affects their professional identity: an increase or decrease in power, through the control provided to them by such power on the organizational discourse, can increase or threaten the actors’ identity.

**Key words:** *hybrid dialogues, dichotomic slogans, polarized slogans, repetition of one-dimensional notions, mass-self communications*

## ***Appraising the Brexit Discourse in Academic Blogs: Evaluative and Polar Meanings***

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At a time when Web 2.0 environments have evolved for collaborative frameworks (Garzone *et al.* 2007; Herring *et al.* 2013) and the popularity of blogs as a text type or genre (Herring *et al.* 2005; Myers 2010) has ramped up across the board, the multifunctional nature and use of blogging in diverse fields as public relations, marketing, research, and politics, to name a few, have made it extremely easy for anyone to become an online publisher and personalise content by building communities of practice worldwide around their blog niches. When it comes to the take-up of blogging for the communication of research in the academy, there are several different reasons why academics blog, ranging from commentary and opinions to development of social networks (Halavais 2006, Davis/Merchant 2007; Kjellberg 2010, Puschmann 2014), alongside the benefits that their personal or professional life might gain by disseminating crucial information to knowledge-drop among peer and lay readers (Myers 2010), creating an academic identity (Schmidt 2007; Kirkup 2010), or providing information, identity, and relationship management (Schmidt 2007) in popularised and recontextualized spaces (Luzón 2015). Just as the benefits of blogging are plentiful for a range of community groups and professional organisations, so too they determine the style of writing and method of communicating relevant information in the public sphere. Yet, publishing blogs across disciplinary divides is still an ideal anchor for the inquisitive bloggers to forge personal and interpersonal meanings conveyed typically by the evaluative and dialogic aspects of language use (Bondi/Seidenari 2012; Myers 2010; Bondi/Diani 2015; Tessuto 2015; Bondi 2018; Tessuto 2019), and attends to the various labels attached to evaluation via academic discourse analysis, including the models of *evaluation* (Hunston/Thompson 2000) and the ways for construing ideology and organising a persuasive text (Hunston 2000), *stance* (Conrad/Biber 2000; Hyland 2005a; Biber 2006), *metadiscourse* (Hyland/Tse 2004; Hyland 2005b), *appraisal* (Martin/White 2005), as well as the genre-focused argument function of evaluation (Partridge 1997; Swales 2004). And while the ideological function of evaluation leans heavily on the *ethos* of blog writers through discussions of some controversial issues, it also plays a crucial part in “legitimation by reference to value systems” (Fairclough 2003: 98) of the blog writers by giving evidence of how these issues are intended and interpreted in published texts.

This paper is concerned with how evaluative language is employed by British academic writers to uncover their stances towards both the Brexit process they discuss on public-facing blog platforms and the potential

audience base they wish to reach out to and connect with. Using a representative corpus of blog posts on Brexit across a range of core themes, the paper looks at the twists and turns of this process through the *appraisal* system and its subcomponents suggested in Martin and White's (2005) social semiotic framework alongside the incorporation of a Critical Discourse Analysis approach to "reflexive self-representations of the [social] practice in question" (Fairclough 2003: 26), as part of the "personal and social aspects of identity" (Fairclough 2003: 160) and the "ideological square" of discourse (van Dijk 2001). Findings show significant variation in the frequency and function of *appraisal* resources across post samples, with blog writers manipulating various evaluative features to achieve (inter)subjective goals. This kind of variability not only foregrounds the ways in which blog writers align or disalign themselves with the topics and promote their own perspective over another in identity-based ideology of existing discourse, but also squares with their affective polarization of the topics being blogged about (i.e. favourable/unfavourable, right/wrong, win/lose), thus resonating with the equal role that evaluative patterns play in (de)legitimising the discursive reality of Brexit in the published genre.

**Key words:** *discourse and communication, blog, evaluation, identity, ideology*

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## **The Idea of ‘Misunderstood Tolerance’ - A Sign of Latent Polarization of the Public Bulgarian Discourse?**

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As it is known tolerance is a term, closely related to the idea of the dialogue between people with different origin, gender, profession, etc. It may be accepted as a principle which is „essential to the proper functioning of pluralistic democracy and contemporary Western civil society” (Reill 2009: 3). The tolerance of others is one of the main European values and it is a part of many regulations. As in many other countries, Bulgarian government policies for teachers and schools promote values including tolerance and respect of the others.<sup>1</sup>

The aim of the research is to deepen the investigation about the scope and the meaning of the phrase “misunderstood tolerance” according to Bulgarians today. In our previous ESTIDIA presentation, we show the meaning and the pragmatic function of the same phrase in bg-mamma Internet forum discussions (the largest Bulgarian discussion forum). The research shows that the general meaning of the misunderstood tolerance (with few exceptions) is over-tolerance or too much permissiveness towards some people or groups (Todorova 2017).

We decided to enlarge the scope of the research and to prove if the meaning of the phrase is the same out of the dialogue speech. Therefore we made a Google drive survey and we asked 80 volunteers (70 women and 10 men) about the meaning of the investigated phrase. We have collected, classified and interpreted the data, using different methods and approaches - contrastive, sociolinguistic and CDA ones. It is an interesting fact that most of the respondents are well-educated (more than 85% have higher education level), in active age (more than 80% are 27-46 years of age) and they live in different places in Bulgaria and abroad.

The results generally support the previous conclusions that the misunderstood tolerance is mostly seen as a kind of over-tolerance. Indeed, the meaning of the phrase often covers the meaning of the tolerance itself. As *tolerance* means *to endure, to accept the others who are different*, we suppose some people feel endangered and think that some liberties are unacceptable, that tolerance is in fact over-tolerance. It is a widespread opinion that all the people must have the same rights and the same obligations. The objective evaluation of the rights

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<sup>1</sup> < [http://zareformata.mon.bg/documents/nrdb5\\_30.11.2015\\_obshtooobr\\_podgotovka.pdf](http://zareformata.mon.bg/documents/nrdb5_30.11.2015_obshtooobr_podgotovka.pdf) >12.03.2019.

and obligations is very difficult indeed. As a result, the subjective comments will be used in the public sphere representing the sense of existing injustice; indicating some attitudes and positions to some social phenomena. It is important to have these opinions in mind because the language used expresses some social inclinations which may be important for all of us and they may be a sign of the decrease of the social forbearance, of the latent polarization and the lack of the dialogue in the society. That's why we discuss critically the possible reasons for the spread of these definitions according to respondents' explanations as well as the nuances of the phrase meaning.

**Keywords:** *tolerance, human rights, misunderstood tolerance, survey, public discourse*

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## Rhetorical and Discourse Analysis of Online Media Debate on the Quality of Higher Education in Bulgaria

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The paper analyses a case study related to an online debate from the summer of 2018. The descriptive and chronological approaches as well as rhetorical and discourse analysis are main elements of research design. The corpus includes 20 online publication during the online debate held about one month.

The debate was initiated by a journalist – an alumnus of the Sofia University, who makes a personal statement on online publication. He assesses that the University and in particular the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication like a “hole”, in which he has lost four years of his life.

In response to his article a few university professors immediately take part in the debate in different online media with publications in which they defend the reputation of the University with rhetorical, cultural and political arguments.

One of the professors mentioned in the original article writes a post in his personal blog, but then deletes the text a few days after the publication, because his behaviour and argumentation was evaluated as irrelevant. Another online media though records and publishes the same material.

The on-line debate is expanding through social networks by including former graduates of the same university – journalists, historians and PR experts working in Bulgaria and in countries in Europe and the United States. The online debate is then published on the Marginalia site, titled: “Soup of Flies: A Facebook Discussion on Hatereed, Alma Mater and Why We Care about Journalism Education.”

The discussion is moderated by a Bulgarian journalist, who is famous with their positions towards human rights. There are seven men and eight women in the debate. Participants in the discussion share their memories of the times when they were students at the university but also their experience as professionals who are successful mostly outside of Bulgaria. Some of them are professors at prestigious European and American universities or journalists in respected media.

During the discussion other concepts are mentioned - not only the “hole”, but also the “Sacred cow – Sofia University”, “Hollow lectures”, the replacement of the “Dream for European society” with the “Poor chalga (mass culture music style in Bulgaria) of the transition”, “Old dogs”, barricade, “ladybirds”, “beetles” and “butterflies” (The last three are based on a game of words based on the name of a failed government minister which became synonymous for incompetency – Kalina/Kalinka which means “ladybird”). Rhetorical questions were asked such as: “What do we gain from organizing circular defense around the SU fence, and we are looking with a targeted rhetorical bayonet for the “enemy”?!” The positions of the affected university professors are considered as unsuccessful attempts to “Bring water from nine different places to wash their eyes” (A combination of two Bulgarian expressions meaning to unsuccessfully try and pile up supporting arguments and also to come up with a clean image out of a negative situation).

The case is analysed from a rhetorical point of view as a manifestation of digital rhetoric on the one hand and on the other, as the agenda of issues related to the training of specialists in higher schools.

**Keywords:** *online debate, rhetorical and discourse analysis*

## **Promoting counter-stereotypical products on Instagram: The case of cosmetic products targeted to male consumers**

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Moisturizing creams, masks, and cleansers are not usually associated with men. However, cosmetic products for men arguably became more visible over the last years. Although not entirely new, these products can be considered counter-stereotypical, as they are “targeting a group that is opposite to the typical user group associated with the product” (Gill and Lei 2018, 496). Previous studies showed that advertisers use specific discursive strategies to target men in this context, including the emphasis on the (perceived) masculine traits and activities (Coupland 2007; Del Saz-Rubio 2019). This research looks at the way counter-stereotypical products are promoted on Instagram or, more specifically, at the content generated by brands. Instagram was chosen mainly because of its popularity and the focus on the visual. Last year, the platform surpassed the threshold of one billion monthly active users (Instagram 2018). The methodological approach is based on the quantitative content analysis of posts from the profiles created for the male consumers of several global cosmetic brands. It has been argued that some features of the platform, such as the way it evaluates the users’ attention, might contribute to the visibility of normative representations regarding the gender (Carah and Shaul 2016). When interpreting the consumers’ engagement, the analysis takes into account these aspects, but in a manner that does not necessarily imply a paradigm of technological determinism. As various cosmetic products are adopted by men, it can also be argued that the boundaries between the so-called products for women and products for men tend to blur. In this respect, the binary thinking that structures them is challenged, leaving room for developing alternative consumption patterns and representations.



**Keywords:** *gender stereotypes, counter-stereotypical products, cosmetic products, nontraditional gender portrayals, Instagram*

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## Peeling the Labels off: A Case Study of Neuro-Autobiographies in Breaking Away the Binary Thinking

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This paper aims to explore how autobiography written by women with neurological disorders such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and stroke deal with the notion of what is to be 'normal' or 'abnormal' in the everyday. I argue that those narratives can challenge the binary 'abled' and 'disabled', which are terms that usually pave the grounds for discriminatory attitudes or behaviours.

To support this study, I rely on a literature review that offers tools to transcend studies in women autobiography which are traditionally marked by a binary thinking. I take an integral perspective that takes complexity thinking into account to approach women autobiography as a "self-eco-organised system" (Morin 2008) which fluctuates in a continuum between order-disorder. In this view the self represented in the narratives is understood as open systems that are in constant communication with internal and external entities through synergetic movements that are dynamic, non-linear, and 'far from equilibrium' (Prigogine and Stengers 1984; Nicolis and Prigogine 1989). Based on this view, the autobiographical 'self' is seen as a complex entity that interacts with the environment (e.g. other beings and objects) to restructure itself internally and externally based on experiential functioning. For this reason, I argue that the autobiographical self should be seen in a state of becoming (Prigogine 1980; Porush 1991) distancing itself from a binary categorization such as normal and abnormal. As Porush puts it, "Reality is bumpy, grainy, noisy, unpredictable" (370), which demands from an individual a flexible, hybrid mind to build resilience.

Hence, I explore three personal narratives by professional women (Jill Bolte Taylor, Francesca Martinez, and Siri Hustvedt) who reveal their neurological disorders to their readership. I refer to those life narratives as 'neuro-autobiography'. I examine how the self represented in the neuro-autobiography struggles with a push-pull effect stressed by labels of disability and normality. In other words, I identify dichotomies in the narratives that polarize the autobiographers' identities, which can lead to feelings of alienation, difference, and inferiority, with the risk of facing stigma. Thus, I analyze discursive strategies the autobiographers use to deal with those labels as well as the context in which they experience feelings of being less abled in a so-called 'normal world'. Furthermore, I recognize the narrators as an 'experiential self' that is context-dependent (e.g. networked), dealing with internal and external fluctuations, order and disorder, and random situations that demand resilience.

In this paper, I demonstrate the autobiographical self as an agent that is acting and reacting to imposed

dichotomies that restrict their self-concept through a dynamic flow of interactions and information exchange so that they can break away from a binary thinking.

**Keywords:** *women autobiography, complexity thinking, disability studies, discourse analysis, resilience*

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## Young People Go Public: The Greek YouTube Sphere of Public Speech

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Our study aims to explore the public expression of young people on YouTube departing from two different starting points: On the one hand, the fact that modern mediated public speech does not follow the traditional public/private dichotomy, instead makes its boundaries redrawn by redefining their meaning. The same applies to categories of dichotomies such as serious/entertaining, quality/trash, etc. On the other hand, the -misleading-idea that new media constantly break with traditional narrative practices obscures, in fact, any effort to readapt the analytical tools of social science to the study of new objects.

On the basis of these two starting points, the aim of our analysis is to examine through specific cases the ways in which young Greek YouTubers redefine the public discourse. In which way and to what extent the audiovisual productions made by the Youtubers differ from other media expressions of public speech? What are the elements and mechanisms discerned in these video productions that communicate the idea of 'authenticity', sincerity ('speaking the truth'/'being truthful'), as well as that of *originality/creativity* and/or *newness*? How this state of "visibility" (see Heinich, 2012) becomes a *total social fact* in the way Marcel Mauss (1922) defined it, which touches all aspects of collective life?

In order to illuminate these questions that occur in the Greek YouTube public sphere -going beyond national boundaries though- we propose an analysis of several YouTubers' channels in Greece, based on three crossed methodological approaches:<sup>1</sup>

- a) a media archeology approach which aims at understanding contemporary media contents by recognizing elements that may refer to pre-existing forms of public expression or combine elements from other media, considering all aspects of *remediation* (Bolter, Grusin, 2000).
- b) a narrative approach: Youtubers' productions are constantly stimulating narrative forms whose degree of innovation and / or creativity needs to be explored.
- c) a semiopragmatic approach: the analysis of the Youtubers' videos does not take place in an isolated context. On the contrary, we need to take into consideration a larger frame analysis in order to consider the 'promises' of the audiovisual productions (see Jost, 2007, 2009, 2011), creating expectations to

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<sup>1</sup> This methodological procedure finds its roots within the work and seminars of the research team of the *Centre d'Etudes des Images et des Sons Médiatiques*, Université Paris III-Sorbonne Nouvelle.

the public as well and in order to analyze them also as *practices* (Couldry, 2014) or as the result of communication strategies.

In a recent large-scale research on the political socialization of young people in the United States that gathers the findings of a large group of American researchers, it is noted that “an updating of previously accepted models of political socialization is particularly needed as our once ‘traditional’ environment of official news sources for political information has drastically changed.” (Thorson, Mickinney, Shah, 2016: XIV). In a similar vein, Jenkins (2006) has underlined that the skills we acquire from all our media activities (whether it is in an entertaining or a serious mode of implication) have an impact on the way we learn, work, participate in the political process and in the way we create social bonding with other people.

In that context, our main objective is to examine the various intersectionalities, the continuities and the ruptures regarding media narratives in a media-saturated world, in the context of hybrid, mash up cultures that redefine public expression in the intermedial sphere.

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