ICA Annual Conference, Prague, 24-28 May 2018

Conference theme: 'Voices'

Accepted Panel: **Voices of and on Right-Wing Populism in Mediated Political Performance**

Panel Abstract

This panel explores the theme of 'voices' in relation to the performances and representations of right-wing populism in the media across Europe and in the US. Using sociolinguistic discourse analyses the four panel papers offer a language-based account of populism. The papers focus on diverse aspects of populist voices and their mediated representations in different sociocultural contexts, more specifically *a.* the rhetorical style and claims to representing the 'authentic' voice of the people in Donald Trump's electoral campaign discourse, *b.* the distinctive blend of voices characterizing far-right political discourse in Greece, *c.* the representation of peoples' voices in news discourse in the UK, France, Greece, and Sweden, and, finally, *d.* Citizens' voices and their meta-discursive constructions of populism in response to on-line news in the UK and the Czech Republic.

Paper

Trump's voice and speaking style: Orality, and vernacular folksiness

Martin Montgomery

During Donald Trump's campaign, when he reached the peroration of his speech to the Republican National Convention accepting the nomination to run for President, he announced a pledge to the crowd *'I'm with you – the American people.'* To which he added *'I am your voice'.* (Trump, Speech at the Republican National Convention, 21/07/16). This paper will explore the rhetorical style that he used to assure his electoral base that he was the authentic voice of the people. It will focus particularly on his speaking style at successive rallies during the campaign and delineate some of the defining features of his voice, in particular his use of lexical repetition, conversational modes of direct address, a narrow range of modifiers and intensifiers and an elliptical and paratactic style which combine together to make up a restricted language of vernacular folksiness.

Blending voices: heteroglossia in far-right populist discourse in Greece

Marianna Patrona

This paper explores populist voice in the mediated performances of far-right populist politicians in Greece, with the aim of discovering the micro-linguistic features that make up the hearably unique voices and distinctive performative style(s) of the far-right Golden Dawn (GD) party. While current research has outlined the general characteristics of populist discourse, there is a marked absence of analytical precision when it comes to the performative repertoires of populism. It is argued that a

discourse-analytic approach can advance our understanding of far-right populist voices, by unveiling the often heterogeneous linguistic resources and strategies deployed in the course of populist performances. More specifically, it shown that a distinctive plurality of voices or, in Bakhtin's term, 'heteroglossia' characterizes the televised performances of GD. Finally, populist voice is shown to be sensitive to the mediated environment at hand, as it is differently enacted across different mediated settings.

Populist constructions of the voice of 'the people' in news discourse: a cross-cultural study

Mats Ekström, Georgia Aitaki and Joanna Thornborrow

The constructions of antagonistic relationships between 'the elite' and 'the people'; and the related homogenization and fictionalization of peoples' voices have been defined as characteristic for of populist discourse. Detailed analyses of such discourses are however missing. Drawing on discourse- and conversation analysis, this paper contributes to a comparative cross cultural study of how citizens' voices are homogenized *and* diversified on the news. More specifically we analyze two generic practices: (1) The *contextualization of vox pops;* how citizen´s voices are categorized and made meaningful through headlines, voice overs and edited soundbites. (2) The *third party references* to citizens in the design of questions in political interviews. Data includes radio and television news from France, Greece, Sweden and UK in election campaigns in 2014 and 2017. The study shows generic patterns as well as significant differences in how peoples' voices are represented in the context of the prevalent populist discourses across Europe.

Metadiscourse on populism and contesting voices in online news discussions

Jan Chovanec

The paper deals with metadiscursive construction of populism in reader comments in news discussion forums. It focuses on how readers of mainstream British and Czech online news sites engage with the notion of populism, deconstructing its meaning and contesting its appropriateness in given contexts. Adopting the perspective of qualitative discourse analysis, the paper identifies several ways in which the concept is entertained by readers, distinguishing between echoic and non-echoic references. The data suggest that users demonstrate their metapragmatic awareness in connection with this term, relativizing its meaning and pointing out its inadequacy. Crucially, they claim to see through the media's use of the term: not only do they express their dissatisfaction with this evaluative category label, which is increasingly used to explicitly delegitimize opponents and implicitly legitimize one's own position, but they also turn its use against the media, thereby deconstructing the mainstream media's myth of objectivity.