



University of Catania
Department of Humanities

Language, Heart and Mind 5
Emotions, Cultures, Discourses

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ABSTRACTS



Keynote Lectures

Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (State University of Applied Sciences in Konin) & Piotr Pęzik (University of Łódź)

Emergent Impoliteness and Persuasive Tactics in the Media

The focus of the paper is to study impoliteness connected with political and social events, as represented in the media and internet comments and a range of discourse strategies represented in English and Polish media which lead to the phenomenon of *emergent impoliteness* (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and Pęzik 2019). This is particularly frequently observed with reference to linguistic elements which acquire the negative connotational value in some contexts. The materials are drawn from large monitor corpora - www.monitorcorpus.com for English and monco.frazeo.pl - for Polish, and from English and Polish internet comments to a selection of online papers. The analysis is conducted in terms of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The concepts of culture and cultural dimensions and knowledge background are discussed in terms of political framing and ideology. Special attention is paid to the axiological evaluation of people, objects, events, revealing the media judgments and opinions, also by means of the use of language expressions and visual materials which are not offensive outside of particular contexts but acquire an impolite sense in other, ideology-enriched contexts with a perlocutionary aim of the persuasive character.

References

Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, B, and P. Pęzik (2019). Emergent impoliteness in media discourse. Paper delivered at SymPol12 Conference. Cambridge 2019.

Roberta Facchinetti (University of Verona)

Language in Public Diplomacy

My speech will delve into the role of language in public diplomacy, with special focus on English as the working language of international relations. In the first place I will briefly overview the world of diplomacy and its practitioners; to do so, I will illustrate some key features qualifying diplomatic negotiators and will focus on their final goal of seeking consensus and facilitating dialogue at all levels. Secondly, I will ponder on the relationship between language and culture in diplomatic negotiations, bearing in mind that language impacts both on cultural identity and on cross-cultural relations. Aspects like directness vs indirectness, individualism vs collectivism, and degree of power distance will be touched on. Finally, I will illustrate and linguistically exemplify the different phases of a diplomatic negotiation, particularly with reference to the framing of arguments and the mitigation of disagreement.

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Silvia Bruti (University of Pisa)

Emotion and Innovation in Teen Talk: An Investigation into Popular TV Series

This paper investigates teen talk in TV dialogue with a view to showing how the language of teenagers revolves around two main features, creativity and emotions.

The language spoken by teenagers has been recognized as peculiar and different in that it represents an instrument that allows them to differentiate themselves from adults. Adolescence, both linguistically and otherwise, is a transition stage in which young people experiment with constructing identity and finding a voice of their own is certainly a first step towards self-definition. In Eckert's words (1997: 52), teenagers are "the linguistic movers and shakers ... and as such, a prime source of information about linguistic change", always at the forefront of new trends, especially in big cities, from where the changes generally propagate. In other words, their vernacular reflects their search for autonomy and affiliation with peers.

In general, teen talk does not obtain broad consensus partly because it is experimental in nature, partly because it makes ample or excessive use of specific forms, such as pragmatic markers and borrowings (Palacios Martínez 2011), and most of all, slang, taboo language and swearing (Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulou 2003; Stenström 2014: 9). The latter elements, Stenström underlines, range from simply irritating and unnecessary linguistic habits to inadequate and offensive language use.

In this contribution I will show how media language, and the language of television series in particular, offers viewers models to follow, to reject, and to elaborate on for different purposes and in different circumstances. Sometimes media texts give a spur to linguistic spread, especially promoting innovative variants that reflect the language that is spoken and heard in various groups, but they can also be a source of innovation and disseminate novel usages and spread trends that are employed in order to achieve effective characterization (see for instance Mandala, 2007).

The topics that will be focused upon have been selected on the basis of previous studies by Tagliamonte (2016), Tagliamonte and Roberts (2005) and Bednarek (2018, 2019b), who have pinpointed and described typical markers of teen talk. In particular, innovation and emotionality are investigated for some typically juvenile expressions (e.g. *fuck*, *shit* and *dude*), which belong to a list of frequently employed 'emotional' words in recent media language, to the two phonologically reduced semi-modals *wanna* and *gonna*, which have been described as fluctuating and informal, and the intensifier *totally*, also signposted as an element that has recently undergone an evolution, especially in American English (Aijmer, 2011).

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Presentations

Paul A. Wilson (University of Łódź) & Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (State University of Applied Sciences in Konin)

The Role of Devirtualization from Online to Offline Spaces in the Honour-Killing of Qandeel Baloch

The overarching aim is to analyze the honour-killing of the Pakistani social media star, Qandeel Baloch, by her brother, Waseem, in terms of the role of shame in online versus offline realities and the border between them. Qandeel employed her online social media space to launch her raunchy, feminist campaign against the hegemonistic, patriarchal rules imposed by Pakistani society. Although her offensive and opposition from the authorities was contained within this space for some time, her actions became relevant to the real-world Pakistani society when she engaged in a confrontation with a well-known Muslim Cleric that was presented in Pakistani traditional media. This highlights the blurred boundary between online and offline spaces and points to the possibility that total separation between the two is illusory. The crucial element that stands out in our case study analysis of the honour-killing of Qandeel is that devirtualization, as a consequence of the fluidity of the border between online and offline spaces, can have tragic consequences in the offline, real world. In addition to the crucial influence of honour culture in this murder, we also assess the possible effects of *fight*, *flight* and *fright* responses to the social threat of shame that correspond to anger, fear and depression, respectively, and which foreground the role of audience, relational mobility and social status.

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Serena Coschignano & Chiara Zanchi (University of Pavia)

The Usage of *rifugiato*, *profugo*, and *richiedente asilo* in the Italian Written Media: How Frames and Metaphors Contribute to Building Dehumanization

This study exploits Critical Discourse Analysis (e.g. Wodak/Meyer 2001, Fairclough 1995) to monitor discourses built by Italian newspapers from 2013 to 2019 over three lexemes related to the topic of immigration: *rifugiato*, *profugo*, and *richiedente asilo*. Building on preceding studies (e.g. Orrù 2018, 2017, Bruno 2012, Taylor 2009), we address a specific research question related to immigration discourses: do these lexemes lose part of their meaning, in particular their [+HUMAN] trait, and if so, how? We manually annotated a corpus of 4789 national newspaper headings containing the mentioned lexemes according to the following parameters: (a) orientation (positive:negative); (b) type of referent the lexemes point at (individuals:category:topic/issue); (c) discourse frames (welcome:initiative:etc.); (d) in cases of cognitive metaphors, the source domain that migrants are mapped to (e.g. FLUIDS). It turns out that, in most headings, the lexemes refer to a category or a topic/issue, rather than to individuals. Furthermore, the lexemes are mainly used within frames whose participants lack the human key features of agentivity and control. In addition, frames whose participants possess agentivity and control (e.g. crime) are mostly found in titles with negative orientation. Lastly, when present, metaphors show that migrants are paired with non-human and/or non-individuated entities, including ANIMALS, OBJECTS, and FLUIDS.

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Ester Di Silvestro (University of Catania)

#BuildTheWall and #closetheharbours. A Comparative Study of Donald J. Trump and Matteo Salvini's Populist Strategies in the Representation of Immigrants and Refugees on Twitter

Populism is a heterogeneous political phenomenon that is currently growing all over the world. It arose in Russia during the 19th century as a political movement that aimed to establish a rural socialism. Later, the word *populism* has been used in the 21st century to indicate left-wing presidents in Latin America, right-wing challenger parties in Europe, and both left-wing and right-wing presidential candidates in the United States (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017:1). Nowadays the increase of populism is due to several reasons such as the socio-economic situation, the migration phenomenon and all the terrorist attacks that followed 9/11. Moreover, after the election of Donald J. Trump in 2016, this phenomenon seems to be unstoppable. Populist politicians are well-known for their discursive strategies that aim to trigger people's emotions (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2018) in order to gain consensus. Nowadays these politicians are facilitated by the use of social media since they are part of our everyday life and play a crucial role in the political sphere. Indeed, social media allow politicians to address the electorate directly and without the help of traditional media (Enli, 2017; Van Kessel & Castelein, 2016), and to disseminate very easily their ideologies (Kreis, 2017: 1-2). Specifically, Twitter is the social media that has a perfect synergy with populist discourse (Ott, 2017) mainly because of its technological constraints (such as the limitation of characters) that favour the direct and aggressive populist style of communication. This paper aims to highlight the strategies that Donald Trump and Matteo Salvini used to cause a lack of empathy towards immigrants and refugees during the last three months of electoral campaign and the first seven months of government. More precisely, I will focus my attention on metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), topoi (Wodak, 2015) and representational strategies (Van Leeuwen, 1996; 2008). In addition to the qualitative approach (Machin & Mayr, 2012), I will use a quantitative approach (Baker, 2006; Partington, Duguid & Taylor, 2013) to investigate the data that include both tweets and traditional speeches.

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When Heart Wins over Head: Conceptualizations of szív ‘heart’ in Hungarian in Relation to Emotions and Reasoning

In numerous languages, specifically ones that reflect the ‘Western’ tradition, the dichotomic relationship of ‘head’ and ‘heart,’ a tenet of the Cartesian dualism, has been observed: the first one responsible for intellectual processes while the latter one embracing emotions/feelings (e.g., Niemeier 2008). The broad-brush analysis of expressions related to the body-part terms *szív* ‘heart’ and *fej* ‘head’ evidences that this view is applicable to Hungarian as well (Baranyiné Kóczy 2019). On the other hand, considerable data have also shown that while in some languages, such as Chinese or Thai, the heart serves as a holistic center which governs both emotional and rational human activities (Berendt & Tanita 2011, Yu 2007, 2008), in certain cultures, e.g., Swahili or Fulfulde, the division between the two faculties is not as clear as it first seems, which manifests in locating certain cognitive abilities (e.g., memory) in the heart (Kraska-Szlenk 2005, Shehu [submitted]). The present study argues that in the Hungarian language, even though the heart is primarily associated with emotions, it is often tailored to expressions referring to various types of intellectual processes such as decision making, opinion, thinking, advice taking or understanding. The study, which employs a qualitative method, exploits language data exerted both from dictionaries (Bárczi & Országh 1959–1962) as well as the *Hungarian National Corpus* (HNC). The analysis of the examples leads to the observation that in Hungarian, the tight connection of the heart to mental processes resides in the underlying conceptualization that the verification of rational activities requires a strong support from the heart – which serves either as a FACULTY OF EMOTIONS or as a FACULTY OF CONSCIENCE.

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Marcin Trojszczak (State University of Applied Sciences in Konin) & Chiara Astrid Gebbia (Independent Researcher)

Regulating Emotions vis-à-vis Inhibiting Unwanted Thoughts – A Comparative Study of their Metaphorical Conceptualisations in English, Polish, and Italian

The objective of this study is twofold. First, it aims to investigate which physical images are used to metaphorically describe the mental activities of emotion regulation and cognitive inhibition. In order to achieve this goal, the study makes use of language data retrieved from selected representative corpora of English, e.g. COCA, Polish, e.g. NCP, and Italian, e.g. CORIS/CODIS. More specifically, it investigates cross-linguistically synonymous target domain lexemes for emotions (e.g. *joy/happiness*, *anger/fury* for English; *gioia /felicità*, *rabbia/furia* for Italian; *radość/szczęście*, *gniew/wściekłość* for Polish) and thoughts (*thought/idea* for English; *pensiero/idea* for Italian; *myśl/pomysł* for Polish). Second, based on empirical findings, the study attempts to discuss a range of specific questions related to these two different though closely related psychological phenomena such as 1) to what extent are they described by means of similar or the same metaphorical images in three analyzed languages; 2) are there any metaphorical images which are specific for a particular process; 3) what these linguistic findings can tell us about the distinctive character of these two phenomena and the way they are experienced by language users.

Lucia La Causa (University of Catania)

Arabic and English Swinging between Heart and Mind

Studies about language and emotion have shown that multilingual speakers feel more comfortable with their L1, the ‘language of the heart’ (Dewaele, 2013), for expressing strong emotions such as anger (Pavlenko, 2002; Dewaele, 2006) and love (Dewaele, 2008). However, this does not necessarily mean a preference for the L1 (Dewaele, 2011). Indeed, multilingual speakers may use a LX instead of their L1 depending on many factors and for different reasons. This study, which is part of a wider research project, focuses on the wide and strong use of English by Egyptian rappers and their fans (mostly young Egyptians) in songs and on social network’s pages, sometimes even at the expense of their mother-tongue, the Arabic language. The key aims of this paper are, firstly to demonstrate that English is used as a tool for expressing feelings (mostly anger, revenge and sense of belonging to a ‘familia’) although being a foreign language in Egypt, and, secondly, to investigate the sociolinguistic reasons and factors why this specific group of Egyptians prefer using English instead of their mother tongue. This analysis will be held through the examination of videos, song lyrics, users’ comments on social networks’ pages and a questionnaire to a small sample of young Egyptian fans of Egyptian rappers.

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Songs

- Arabian Knightz - Rebel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z696QHAbMIA>
- Arabian Knightz - Not Your Prisoner: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=schIdC3LdLk>
- McAmin – Mr Kordy - Cairo City League: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LAWSIGZAebg>
- Mr Kordy - Fuckin' Widda Real https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QI_khjTKWC4
- MC Amin, Sphinx - Gamed Fash خ ف ش جامد 5 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FlrPjvkjNH0>