Book of Abstracts

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Language and Communication Aspects of Disinformation

Book of Abstracts

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Plenary Lectures

The Grammar of Betrayal: Illiberal Conspiracy Tropes in Slovak Political Rhetoric

Pavol Hardoš

The Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Comenius University (Slovakia)

Slovak political discourse has seen a resurgence of illiberal rhetoric that weaponizes conspiracy theories against the pluralist foundations of a democratic society. This talk will draw on cultural studies, political science, and semiotic approaches to conspiracy theories and analyze conspiracy theories as meaning-making templates that can articulate conflict and generate meaning. Under conditions of social stress, conspiracy theories function as a mythological model organizing events and facts around a plot motivated by evil forces. As such, conspiracy theories can be weaponized by political actors as narrative instruments that organize social processes as an antagonistic struggle of "us" versus "them". They are powerful ideological tools of Othering, that posit a threat to the community, that is being advanced both externally and from within. Based on this framing, the talk will then explore how Slovak nationalist and far-right political actors have rearticulated older nationalist motifs around new "ideological specters", specifically targeting progressive liberalism, "gender ideology", and LGBTQ+ rights as threats to the nation. By examining the persistence of specific narrative tropes, the talk will demonstrate how the current illiberal conspiracy discourse draws upon and reinforces longstanding Slovak ideological traditions of "victimhood nationalism" and anti-Western resentment, where the Slovak nation repeatedly faces hidden, foreign, malevolent forces working against it. Finally, the talk will examine how such political myths can operate as instruments of autocratization, by both eroding epistemic authority and polarizing the public sphere through the strategic framing of internal betrayal.

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BIO

Pavol Hardoš is an assistant professor at the Institute of European Studies and International Relations, Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava. He holds a PhD. in political science from the Central European University in Budapest (CEU). His research interests focus on democratic theory, political philosophy, and the epistemic aspects of democratic politics, including questions of expertise, conspiracies, and social accreditations of truth claims. He has published in Politics and Governance, The European Journal of Political Theory, Intersections, and other journals. He also serves as the vice-chairman of the Slovak initiative Konšpirátori.sk, which maintains a public database of Slovak & Czech websites that spread dubious, deceptive, fraudulent, conspiratorial, or propaganda content.

What is Fear Speech? An Account in Terms of Emotional Fittingness and Manipulation

Tomáš Koblížek

Institute of Philosophy, Czech Academy of Sciences (Czech Republic)

The notion of **fear speech** is increasingly invoked to describe forms of communication that portray social groups – such as Jews, Muslims, migrants, or LGBT+ persons – as threats to society (Buyse 2014). Although empirical research suggests that fear speech spreads more effectively online than hate speech (Saha et al. 2021; Saha et al. 2023) and may play a significant role in processes of radicalisation (Klein 2021; Greipl et al. 2024), it has received little attention within theoretical debates. This talk, drawing on speech act theory, will develop an account of fear speech as a distinctive illocutionary phenomenon and will address three questions: How does fear speech differ from legitimate warning? How does it relate to hate speech? Must fear speech elicit fear in order to succeed as a speech act?

The talk will advance three claims. First, fear speech is best conceived as a warning about a group x that manipulates the conditions under which fear of x is fitting. More specifically, it manipulatively portrays a group x as a threat, such that fear of x appears to be an appropriate response.

Second, fear speech cannot be distinguished from hate speech by reference to any particular vocabulary. Contrary to suggestions in the existing literature (Buyse 2014; Saha et al. 2023), derogatory terms and slurs are neither necessary nor sufficient for fear speech. Fear speech is better understood as an illocutionary act that can be realised through a variety of linguistic forms, including apparently neutral descriptions, selective statistical reporting, or ostensibly factual argumentation.

Third, I argue that the success of fear speech does not depend on the actual production of fear. Rather, fear speech succeeds when its audience comes to regard fear towards the targeted group as warranted or fitting. This account explains why paradigmatic instances of fear speech often aim less at generating fear itself than at licensing hostility, exclusion, or aggression by presenting such responses as justified by the alleged threat posed by the target group.

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BIO

Tomáš Koblížek is a researcher at the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague. His work focuses on topics at the intersection of philosophy of language and political philosophy, including hate speech, disinformation, propaganda, and freedom of speech. Most recently, together with Monika Hanych and Jakub Kalenský, he co-authored the book **Disinformation and Hate Speech: Perspectives from Philosophy, Law, and Security** (2025). In 2025, he received the President of the Czech Academy of Sciences Award for the Promotion of Research, Experimental Development, and Innovation.

Linguistically based identification of disinformation: The case of Hungarian health-related fake news

Enikő Németh T.

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Szeged (Hungary)

According to the Global Risk Report of the United Nations published in 2024 (UN 2024), disinformation and misinformation are the second most important threats to sustainable development in North America and Europe, and the third one to all member states. The report also states that the international community is not prepared to defend against them. All this shows that recognizing and curbing disinformation, or fake news, which is mainly spread online on digital platforms faster than real news (Vosoughi – Roy – Aral 2018), is one of the great challenges of the 21st century. The flood of fake news causes significant damage at the individual and societal level, e.g. in healthcare, politics or economy. That is why it is vital to expose disinformation and stop its spread.

In the MTA-SZTE-DE Research Group for Theoretical Linguistics and Informatics we raised the questions: Can we, as linguists, do something to stem the tide of disinformation? Can we help to identify fake news with linguistic methods? Are there any linguistic features that can be used to detect fake news? In our project entitled Linguistic-based identification of fake news and pseudoscientific views supported by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, we investigate Hungarian health-related fake and real news to answer these questions. We employ a "form to function" corpus pragmatic approach (Aijmer 2018) and combine qualitative and quantitative comparative methods applied to the texts randomly selected from the MedCollect corpus, created by the research group. The MedCollect corpus (Szécsényi et al. 2024) contains 1480 health-related texts published between 2007 and 2023, which are of different genres and diverse topics. The fake news texts were collected manually from listed fake news sites, while most of the real news was collected automatically, using random sampling from reliable health portals.

The analyses based on the manual annotation of randomly selected texts from the MedCollect corpus have revealed that there are significant differences between fake and real news regarding the frequency and function of certain linguistic elements and influencing strategies. These include the implicit pragmatic phenomena in headlines, imperative forms, indirect directives, social deixis, intensification, quoting etc. In the present lecture three distinctive elements will be discussed in detail, namely implicit pragmatic phenomena in headlines, directives, and social deixis. The results of the discussion will show that the theoretically based, fine-grained empirical identification of the linguistic differences between fake and real news can contribute to the detection of fake news.

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BIO

Enikő Németh T. is a professor of linguistics, head of the Doctoral School in Linguistics at the University of Szeged and leader of the MTA-SZTE-DE Research Group for Theoretical Linguistics and Informatics. She is a correspondent member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and member of the Academia Europaea. Her research area includes pragmatic interfaces, implicit arguments, intentions and perspectives. Recently, she especially focuses on linguistic identification of Hungarian fake news and developing a fake news screener based on linguistic features.

Contributed Papers

Climate Realism vs. Climate Denial: The Discursive Construction of News Values in Mainstream and Disinformation News Articles on Environmental Issues – a Comparative Perspective

Dominika Beneš Kováčová

Faculty of Arts, University of Ostrava (Czech Republic)

Masking as legitimate news sources and marketing themselves as an alternative to what they label mainstream 'fake' news media, disinformation news sites have been found instrumental in the production and circulation of false or deceptive news content (Surawy Stepnye & Lally, 2024). While each medium may differ in what piece of information it considers newsworthy and a range of factors is likely to be at play in the actual production of any news article, newsworthiness has been shown to be also linguistically and visually constructed through discourse. Previous studies of fake news articles (e.g., Baissa et al., 2025) have identified the incidence of certain news values not typically documented in mainstream news discourse such as subversiveness, religiosity and historicity. The goal of this paper is to continue in this line of research by analysing the news values discursively constructed in mainstream and alternative news articles on environmental issues and extending this analysis to the examination of accompanying multimodal resources (i.e., images, layout and embedded social media posts). Methodologically, this paper thus draws on the discursive news values analysis framework (Bednarek & Caple, 2012, 2017) and the dataset consists of a representative sample of news articles written in English and extracted from three mainstream (n = 30) and three alternative news sources (n = 30). The results of the analysis show that each type of news source (mainstream vs alternative) is correlated with a different set of news values constructed through specific linguistic and visual resources. Ultimately, this points to the value of qualitative, discourse-oriented analyses in disinformation characterization and, potentially, its detection.

This work was supported by the Operational Program The Johann Amos Comenius CZ.02.01.01/00/23_025/0008724.

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BIO

Dominika Beneš Kováčová is a researcher at the University of Ostrava, where she is currently involved in an interdisciplinary project exploring the creation, dissemination, reception and societal impact of disinformation. In her research she focuses on the discursive construction of newsworthiness in disinformation texts and the argumentative strategies these texts employ. Her broader research interests include digital discourse analysis, (internet) pragmatics, multimodality and news discourse.

Datasets for Analyzing Disinformation Discourse

Vladimír Benko & Dušan Žovinec

Ľudovít Štúr Institute of Linguistics, Slovak Academy of Sciences (Slovakia)

Although disinformation discourse is widely present in the Slovak media landscape in various forms (e.g., audio and video podcasts, chain emails, blogs, dedicated websites, etc.), our presentation will focus only on data that is already available in text form—namely, both regular and irregular publications and blogs.
With a few exceptions (Slovenské národné noviny, extraplus, and Zem a vek), media outlets that describe themselves as "alternative" are not published in print and are accessible (in both paid and free versions) only online—which is a major advantage for collecting data for disinformation research. A second favorable factor is the existence of a (peer-reviewed) public database of websites with controversial content, which makes it relatively easy to select and download the relevant data from the web. However, there is even a more straightforward option: extracting data from the existing Araneum Slovacum web-crawled corpus. In this paper, we describe the creation of several versions of the LANCOD corpus obtained through this extraction and present several possibilities for applying corpus-based methods in their analysis.

This work was supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency under the Contract no. APVV-22-0370.

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BIO

Vladimír Benko graduated from the Slovak Technical University. He is currently a senior researcher at the Ľ. Štúr Institute of Linguistics, Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS), and his research interests include computational lexicography and corpus linguistics. A member of the team developing a new multi-volume scholarly dictionary of the Slovak language and the principal investigator of the Aranea web corpora project.

Dušan Žovinec graduated from the Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics, and currently engaged in software support for the Slovak National Corpus Department the Ľ. Štúr Institute of Linguistics,Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS).

On the Role of Pragmatic Theories in Understanding of Clickbait Headlines

Károly Bibok

Institute of Slavic Studies, University of Szeged (Hungary)

The present paper has a twofold aim. First, it investigates titles of recent Russian and Hungarian news items in pragmatic frameworks definitely emerging in the last few years (cf. Finkbeiner 2024). It shows a claim that the understanding of news headlines should proceed considering the texts themselves. What is more, the body of the text does inevitably figure as a necessary context for understanding. My qualitative analysis enhances a wide range of linguistic phenomena characteristic of clickbait headlines starting from the use of euphemistic or pejorative words (including slurs) through ambiguous expressions and constructions to cataphors and other underspecified formulations (e.g. missing actants of predicative words, mainly of verbs). Some of these features of titles of news headlines are attempted to capture different nominations and categorizations of the same entity or event by means of the frame analysis wide-spread in humanities (cf. Pan–Kosicki 1993, Malinova 2015: 100–115). Other set of features can be treated with the help of notions such as implicatures and explicatures applied in (neo-)Gricean and Relevance theories of communication (Grice 1975, Sperber–Wilson 1986/1995).
Second, the present paper also investigates clickbait headlines from another – opposite – point of view, namely that of communicators (writers) because these items are often created with the aim of manipulating readers, i.e. they have a hidden and dishonest intention to influence the understanding of messages. Furthermore, some deceptive headlines do not merely mislead but they can be considered lies (Scott 2023).

Subprogramme for Linguistic Identification of Fake News and Pseudo-scientific Views, part of the Science for the Hungarian Language National Programme of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA)

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BIO

Károly Bibok is Professor at the Institute of Slavic Studies, University of Szeged, Hungary and member of the MTA-SZTE-DE Research Group for Theoretical Linguistics and Informatics. He is the co-editor (with Enikő Németh T.) of Pragmatics and the Flexibility of Word Meaning (Elsevier, 2001), The Role of Data at the Semantics–Pragmatics Interface (De Gruyter Mouton, 2010) and two special issues on Hungarian pragmatics research of Acta Linguistica Hungarica (2004, 2005). His special area of interest includes the following: 1. lexical pragmatics, 2. pragmatics of news headlines and fake news, and 3. the relationship between linguistics of the Russian language and theoretical linguistics.

How Did Propaganda Justify the War? Communication Strategies for Legitimizing the War and Images of the Enemy in Propaganda in Slovakia, 1939–1941: Selected Universalizing Narratives and Motifs

Katarína Bohová

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This paper analyzes the communication strategies used to legitimize war and construct images of the enemy in the propaganda of the wartime Slovak Republic from 1939 to 1941. The focus is on the discourses through which the Ludák regime's propaganda justified Slovakia's active involvement in World War II to the public, including the military aggression of Nazi Germany – an ally and guarantor of the independent state's existence – against "enemies."

Within the framework of institutionalized and instrumentalized propaganda, offensive operations were framed as "defensive" and "preventive" warfare. The paper focuses on recurring narratives and motifs that justified the outbreak of war and selected military operations, using examples from contemporary periodicals and visual materials. Particular attention is paid to the legitimization of German military actions against selected geopolitical and ideological "enemies" (Poland, Denmark, Norway, the Benelux countries, France, and the Soviet Union), including Slovakia's participation in these campaigns (against Poland and in the war against the Soviet Union), and to the image of the Western Allies (France, the United States, and the United Kingdom).

Anti-Western discourse was already present in Slovak State propaganda before World War II. After the war broke out, these trends continued to develop primarily due to Slovakia's status as a satellite state of Nazi Germany and its accession to the Tripartite Pact. The analyzed motifs of "defense" and "preventive attacks" further developed the image of the Western Allies and members of the anti-Hitler coalition as a constant threat to Europe. This paper aims to outline a working typology of selected universalizing narratives and motifs through which propaganda legitimized military conflict and presented it to the contemporary public as necessary and inevitable.

This work was supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency under the Contract no. APVV-22-0370.

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BIO

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Disinformation Strategies in the Electoral Discourse of Portugal's Populist Radical Right Party Chega

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Research on populist radical right parties in Europe (Mudde, 2007) has argued that their recent consolidation depends largely on digital communication strategies that maximise reach, mobilisation, and polarisation. Building on this literature, this study analyses the role of disinformation in the communicative practices of the Portuguese party Chega across its digital platforms. Disinformation is conceptualised less as isolated factual falsehood and more as a strategic communicative action that creates conditions for biased interpretation. The aim is to identify how content production and the architecture of circulation on social media converge to generate distorted readings, reinforce societal cleavages, and stabilise narratives of threat and antagonism. We examine the main communicative and linguistic-discursive strategies underpinning disinformation and the manipulation of public opinion, through which the Portuguese populist radical right seeks to legitimise its positions.

Empirically, the study focuses on Chega's Facebook posts during the campaign periods for Portugal's 2019 and 2025 legislative elections. Methodologically, the research combines three levels of analysis. First, a quantitative component based on social network analysis and engagement metrics (posting frequency, sharing patterns, relative reach, interactions, and diffusion mapping around key themes), enabling the identification of attention peaks and amplification dynamics. Second, a pragmatic and linguistic-discursive analysis centred on the most frequent speech acts and on discursive strategies supporting implicature, disinformation, and persuasion. Third, a triangulation of circulation patterns (quantitative) and linguistic-discursive mechanisms (qualitative) tests the hypothesis that messages with higher densities of implicatures and stronger violations of conversational maxims (Grice, 1975) tend to be associated with greater propagation, adherence, and mobilisation capacity.

Overall, the analysis shows how the discursive and communicative choices of Portugal's far-right party operate as mechanisms of interpretive manipulation in the service of disinformation and vote-seeking. From a political science perspective, the study deepens debates on populist radical right parties and strategic communication by specifying how disinformation becomes embedded in party competition in digital contexts. More broadly, it assesses whether the effectiveness of disinformation depends not only on propositional content, but also on the deliberate use of communicative strategies that foster misunderstanding and polarised readings. Preliminary results point to patterns that are consistent with findings reported in comparative analyses of other European radical right parties, suggesting cross-national convergence in the combination of amplification dynamics and implicature-driven persuasion.

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BIO

Ana Braz is an invited Assistant Professor at the Humanities Department of Universidade Aberta (Portugal). She holds a PhD in Language Sciences from the University of Minho (Portugal) and in Portuguese, Brazilian and Lusophone African Studies from the Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint-Denis University (France), in co-tutelle. She is an integrated member of the Linguistics Center of Universidade Nova de Lisboa, and is also a member of the Distance Education and Elearning Laboratory (LE@D) of Universidade Aberta. Her research has focused essentially on the areas of Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis, particularly political discourse analysis, as well as on the teaching and learning of Portuguese as a Foreign Language.

André Pereira Matos is an Assistant Professor of European Studies at Universidade Aberta (Portugal), where he coordinates the BA in European Studies and the MA in Studies on Europe. He holds a PhD in International Relations and is an integrated member of the Centre for Research in Political Science (CICP) at the University of Minho. He is also Assistant Editor of the Portucalense Law Journal. His research focuses on European Union external relations, enlargement, and international relations theory, and has recently extended to political communication and disinformation strategies among Portuguese populist radical right actors.

Conservative Media and Disinformation about Queer People During Constitutional Changes in Slovakia

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Human rights issues with an emphasis on lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender people, intersex people or queer people (LGBTIQ+ community) and the rights of queer people divide Slovak society. Examples of pressures caused by opinions and differentiation between people in Slovakia are, for example, the long-term political and legislative status quo of systematic discrimination against queer people or, more specifically, the legislative amendment in the form of anchoring two sexes - male and female - into the Constitution of the Slovak Republic in September 2025. Furthermore, the ways in which queer people are represented are also influenced by the media production of conservative media (usually media that call themselves conservative) and may be related to the spread of misinformation about queer topics. Disinformation-oriented texts can relate to talking about queer people as something unconventional or immoral (non-Christian), unnatural (biologically) or dangerous to society (political ideology). Studying such disinformation practices of the media can lead to a better understanding of how a negative image of queer people is created in Slovakia during a period of important legislative changes. Hence, this paper focuses on a qualitative analysis of journalistic texts of the Slovak conservative online newspapers Hlavné správy, Hlavný denník and Štandard using critical discourse analysis (CDA) according to Norman Fairclough's theory (Fairclough, 1993). The aim of this study is to answer the question through the three dimensions of Fairclough's CDA model (description, interpretation and explanation): How do the Slovak online newspapers Hlavné správy, Hlavný denník and Štandard construct the position of queer people in the context of the adoption of the amendment to the Constitution of the Slovak Republic in September 2025? Eventually, this paper aims to clarify the language and strategies of selected conservative online newspapers that may contribute to the spread of misinformation about queer people and subsequently to the amplification of negative attitudes towards queer people.

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BIO

Matúš Ján Capko is a PhD student at the Institute of Slovak and Media Studies, Faculty of Arts, at the University of Prešov, Slovakia. His research focuses on exploring media discourse with an emphasis on Slovak media and issues of sexuality in the context of mediatization. The subject of his dissertation is the discursive formation of sexuality in the Slovak media sphere. Using Michel Foucault's theory and Foucauldian discourse analysis as its methodological ground, he is interested in examining the position of sexuality in the media discourse and how the media change public perceptions of sexuality.

Strengthening Epistemic Competence in the Age of Disinformation

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Disinformation, i.e., intentionally deceptive or misleading information, has emerged as a central threat to democratic governance. World Economic Forum (2024) ranks disinformation as one of the most severe short-term global risks, citing its capacity to erode institutional trust, weaken societal cohesion, and destabilize democratic processes. Early research on disinformation correction focused primarily on fact-based interventions, which directly refute false claims by providing accurate information (Lewandowsky et al., 2012; Chan et al., 2017). More recent work has examined whether such corrections are more effective when delivered before exposure (prebunking) or after exposure (debunking) to disinformation (Lorko et al., 2026). In practice, however, factually prebunking falsehoods is often infeasible, as it requires anticipating specific misleading claims before they circulate or acting immediately once they do. In response, recent research has increasingly turned toward logic-based interventions, which focus on identifying manipulative rhetorical techniques rather than correcting falsehoods factually. Logic-based interventions typically target linguistic and stylistic features that distinguish disinformation from reliable information, such as emotional tone, exaggeration, factual inconsistency, syntactic simplicity, and persuasive framing (Giachanou et al., 2023; Vosoughi et al., 2018). Crucially, recent research suggests that the ability to identify accurate information may be as important as the ability to reject falsehoods (van der Meer et al., 2023). We conducted a large-scale two-wave experiment (N = 3,129) comparing fact-based and logic-based interventions delivered before (prebunking) or after (debunking) exposure to (dis)information. Both interventions improved disinformation discernment, with effects persisting for at least several weeks. Fact-based corrections produced modestly larger direct effects on treated claims, whereas logic-based corrections generated larger spillover effects to untreated content. Debunking yielded stronger direct effects than prebunking. Social identity shaped how interventions operated: in the politicized domain of the Russo-Ukrainian war, interventions corrected targeted beliefs but failed to generalize, while in the identity-neutral domain of business and finance, interventions produced comparable direct and spillover effects. Accuracy-based incentives enhanced discernment across domains, even without corrective interventions. Our findings highlight the complementary roles of cognitive training and motivational cues in strengthening epistemic competence under democratic strain.

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BIO

Vladimíra Čavojová is a senior researcher at the Institute of Experimental Psychology of the Centre of Social and Psychological Sciences at the Slovak Academy of Sciences. In her research, she focuses on examining various kinds of misinformation, scientific reasoning, and efforts to improve scientific communication to reduce the spread of misinformation. Besides her numerous scientific accomplishments, she is also passionate about the popularization of science.

Matej Lorko completed his PhD in behavioral and experimental economics at Macquarie University in Sydney and currently works at the Faculty of National Economy of the University of Economics in Bratislava, as well as at the Institute of Experimental Psychology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. His research focuses on the market for volunteering and charitable giving, as well as tax compliance, and most recently also on combating disinformation — for example, in connection with the war in Ukraine. He lectures on human thinking and decision-making, as well as on how to discover typical patterns of human behavior. As a volunteer, he co-organizes the Discover Summer Academy for high school students.

The Axiological Dimension of Disinformation: How TASS Mobilises Values Against Europe

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Disinformation campaigns represent a strategically significant dimension of contemporary information warfare. While Russian disinformation operations have been widely studied, considerably less attention has been paid to their axiological dimension: how Europe is constructed as a political and civilisational adversary through value-laden framing, and how such representations work not only by introducing false claims but by shaping the interpretive conditions through which actors, events and policies acquire credibility, causal significance and moral meaning. A statement may be factually accurate in isolation yet contribute to a deceptive account when relevant context is suppressed, responsibility is selectively assigned, or moral significance is attached to some actors and withheld from others. Drawing on a corpus of disinformation items identified by Polish and international fact-checking platforms, the study employs a mixed-methods approach combining critical discourse analysis (CDA) with linguistic-axiological analysis (LAA). A deductive coding framework, informed by established value typologies associated with Rokeach, Schwartz, Inglehart and Huntington, is used to identify explicit and implicit values across five dimensions: ideological and political, security and threat-based, moral and ethical, cultural and religious, and economic and material. The analysis focuses on the linguistic mechanisms through which these values are constructed and mobilised, including evaluative language, metaphor, framing, referential choices and emotional appeals. The study addresses two questions: which values are mobilised in TASS coverage of Europe and the European Union, and how are these values constructed linguistically and incorporated into broader narratives? The findings show that value mobilisation is hierarchically organised. Security and threat-based values provide the dominant frame, while political, moral, cultural and economic values operate as supporting appeals. Civilisational framing functions primarily as an intensifier, strengthening claims made in other registers. Values are rarely stated directly. Instead, they are conveyed through referential choices, metaphor, presupposition and markers of epistemic certainty, and they are distributed asymmetrically: Europe and Ukraine are constructed through explicit evaluative labelling, while Russia is legitimised more subtly through grammatical positioning. By situating these patterns in the broader context of strategic communication, the study shows how disinformation can exploit shared political and cultural values to erode institutional trust, deepen social divisions and weaken democratic discourse. Because such narratives often work by shifting evaluative meaning rather than simply denying factual content, verification-based responses address only part of the problem. Building resilience to disinformation therefore also requires attention to the value frameworks through which political actors, events and institutions are interpreted and judged.

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BIO

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The Invasion of Neoliberals and Neo-Marxists: Political and Social Labels with the Prefix Neo- in Contemporary Czech Discourse

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A wide range of terms is used in Czech public discourse to refer to political and social groups, ideologies, their supporters, and people who are associated with them for various reasons. Many of these labels contain the prefix neo-, which highlights a perceived revival or new form of an older ideological tradition. Terms such as neonacista (neo-Nazi) have been common in Czech since the 1990s. Based on corpus data, their frequency appears to have remained relatively stable over time, although with some fluctuations.

This paper examines the use of neo- terms in Czech discourse from the 1990s to the present day. The analysis focuses on expressions such as neofašista, neonacista, neokomunista, neomarxista, neobolševik, and neoliberál, as well as related concepts. The study tests the following hypotheses:

- The selected terms occur more frequently in anti-establishment media than in mainstream media.
- The selected terms are used to describe individuals and groups not only in political or ideological contexts.
- The selected terms show a tendency toward semantic weakening, accompanied by a stronger pragmatic or evaluative function.

The research combines quantitative corpus analysis with qualitative analysis. The corpus data come from the Czech National Corpus, specifically the synchronic corpus syn_v14, the web corpus online1 and online_archive (the archived web corpus). The analysis focuses primarily on the referents of these labels (e.g., individuals, groups, public organizations, politicians, or other public actors), their collocational patterns, and the types of texts in which they occur.

The study forms part of a broader research project investigating how historically charged political terms associated with Central European twentieth-century history are used in contemporary public discourse.

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Epistemic Deception and Dialogic Closure: Corpus- and AI-Assisted Discourse Analysis of Disinformation as Incitement

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Disinformation is not reducible to isolated falsehoods; it is a strategic communicative practice grounded in epistemic deception and inherently expressed linguistically (Grieve & Woodfield, 2023; Sousa Silva, 2022; Etaywe, 2026). Unlike misinformation, which reflects unintentional inaccuracy, disinformation is engineered to reframe and contaminate facts, manipulate beliefs, polarise publics, legitimise ideological agendas, and orient attitudes and actions (e.g. Booth et al., 2024; Etaywe, 2026). In extremist and conflict contexts, disinformation functions as a discursive technology that constructs grievance, reshapes moral orders, and frames violence as rational or defensive necessity (Cox et al., 2021; Etaywe et al., 2026). Global risk assessments (World Economic Forum, 2025) highlight disinformation as a leading driver of social destabilisation and institutional distrust. Its persuasive power, however, lies less in content alone than in patterned linguistic strategies that regulate dialogic space, constrain interpretive alternatives, and simulate epistemic authority Etaywe et al., 2026). This paper advances a linguistic framework for analysing extremist disinformation as structured epistemic manipulation and dialogic foreclosure. Drawing on a two-million-word corpus of jihadist propaganda magazines (e.g. Dabiq, Rumiyah, Inspire) and far-right perpetrator manifestos, the paper combines a structured AI-assisted inductive–deductive workflow with corpus-assisted discourse analysis. The inductive (data-driven) phase used LLM to identify recurring lexical–semantic architectures – epistemic delegitimation, truth monopolies, secret coordination, absolutist certainty markers, moral binaries, and manufactured inevitability – without pre-imposed constraints. The deductive (theory-driven) phase applied the Engagement system of Appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005), coding patterns of Engagement resources of, e.g., proclamation, denial, countering, endorsement, and attribution. Concordance analysis of The Great Replacement manifesto provided close-text insights into Engagement functions of the 'key' Engagement resources (following keyword analysis). Findings show that extremist disinformation operates through dialogic foreclosure, pre-emptively delegitimising alternatives, narrowing epistemic space, and replacing deliberation with moral binaries. Recurrent markers – exclusivising ("with no doubt"), proclamative ("we know"), disclaiming ("spread lies"), and counter-expectational ("They say…, but…") – construct insider revelation, simulate authority, and convert belief into obligation. Patterns converge structurally across ideologies, showing disinformation functions through epistemic and symbolic manipulation rather than factual distortion. Methodologically, this study contributes a replicable, hybrid approach integrating corpus linguistics, AI-assisted pattern detection, and systemic functional discourse analysis. It demonstrates how AI can enhance the scale of analysis while preserving interpretive accountability in the human-enabled deductive coding. Theoretically, the paper advances understanding of disinformation as epistemic engineering, foregrounding dialogic closure as a key mechanism by which extremists consolidate authority, polarise publics, and legitimise violence. Practically, it informs counter-disinformation strategies by evidencing the centrality of linguistic architectures in persuasive, mobilising, and morally charged communication.

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BIO

Awni Etaywe is a forensic linguistics and communication scholar with expertise in terrorism, incitement, disinformation, and threatening communication. He earned his PhD from the University of New South Wales, Sydney, and has developed a research portfolio at the intersection of language, security, and digital deviance. His research employs AI- and corpus-assisted discourse analytic tools, with publications in leading journals and international handbooks, including Discourse & Society, Language in Society, Discourse & Communication, The Routledge International Handbook of Online Deviance, and a forthcoming Cambridge book on Forensic Linguistics of Terrorist Incitement through Stance and Disinformation. His expert analysis extends beyond academia, featuring in ABC, Radio New Zealand, and the influential Australian Quarterly, The Conversation, and New Zealand Defence and National Security Magazine – Line of Defence.

Comparing Corpus Statistics

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With the recent proliferation of large language models capable of generating meaningful text at or even beyond human levels, the role of text corpora in linguistics is changing. In web corpora especially, we can no longer assume that the majority of texts have been produced by humans. It is reasonable to expect that misinformation campaign texts are particularly likely to be machine-generated, as such environments place little emphasis on coherence and factual accuracy. LLMs therefore represent an ideal tool for the large-scale production of post-truth propaganda. Although it is unclear how much content from "alt-reality" websites is machine-generated, it is a fairly safe assumption that Slovak-language texts published before 2023 were predominantly of human origin. We present a framework for comparing large text corpora using basic statistical measures (such as the number of tokens, words, sentences, and documents, along with their distributions), orthographic features, and selected stylometric and linguistically motivated metrics adapted for very large collections of texts. We provide results for several major Slovak corpora, a number of "non-mainstream narrative" corpora, and fully synthetic corpora generated by LLMs. The results are publicly available to support both improved corpus compilation and subsequent linguistic analysis of differences among texts of varying provenance.

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BIO

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Linguistic and Communicative Means of Propaganda in Dialect Leaflets from Eastern Slovakia in the Early 20th Century

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This paper examines techniques of linguistic manipulation and instruments of propaganda employed in political leaflets written in dialect and distributed in eastern Slovakia in the early twentieth century. It builds on a case study of leaflets framing the ideology of Slovjakism, specifically a leaflet announcing the establishment of the Vichodnoslovenska rada(Eastern Slovak Council) and the proclamation of the so-called Slovenska radova republika (Slovak Soviet Republic) (Gavurová 2026). The present study extends this research by analysing additional printed materials, including the "Leaflet on the Achievements of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (Chmelárová 1969), as well as other leaflets from the Slovak Soviet Republic collection held in the Archives of the Regional Museum in Prešov. The analysis demonstrates how techniques of linguistic manipulation were used to portray communist ideology positively while presenting the new constitutional order of Czechoslovakia negatively, thereby placing the intended recipients in a state of cognitive dissonance (cf. Táborský 2020). Particular attention is paid to the role of emotionally charged vocabulary in the association techniques and attribute agenda-setting, through which selected aspects of contemporary events were framed in the desired light. A discourse analysis of the leaflets further reveals how propagandistic narratives encouraged the target audience to reason by analogy, thereby reinforcing confirmation bias in favour of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

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BIO

Miroslava Gavurová is an associate professor at the Institute of British and American Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Prešov, Slovakia. Her research interests include translation studies, Slovak linguistics, abbreviation studies and dialectology. Her recent work focuses on Eastern Slovak dialects, linguistic identity, and the use of dialect in historical and contemporary communication. She is the author of monographs and scholarly articles and has translated fiction, poetry, and children's literature from English into Slovak. Her current research examines unfounded beliefs in folklore, as well as linguistic manipulation and propaganda techniques in dialect-written political leaflets from the early twentieth century.

Dehumanizing Rhetoric in Polish Anti-Migrant Disinformation Discourse

Natalia Gruenpeter & Aleksandra Michałowska-Kubś

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The analysis examines the linguistic mechanisms shaping contemporary Polish anti-migrant discourse, with a focus on dehumanization and degradation of the migrants. While explicit hate speech remains present, current discursive practices increasingly rely on subtler forms that mask antagonism and reduce the perceived moral cost of its expression. The study demonstrates how language both reflects and reinforces exclusionary attitudes toward migrants. Disinformation as the production of misleading messages creates a communicative environment shaped by interpretive habits and socially embedded meaning-making practices. Ironic euphemisms, and neologisms are rhetorical tools that normalize hostility and facilitate the spread of disinformation. The presentation approaches the topic from a practice-based perspective in disinformation monitoring and analysis.

Preliminary Findings

The research combines qualitative and quantitative analysis of selected social media posts, focusing on disinformation narratives about migrants (implicitly from Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia) portraying them as a threat to the safety, prosperity, or identity of Polish citizens, or – in some cases – on narratives drawing on white-supremacist rhetoric that frames migrants as a civilizational danger to be repelled. The findings indicate a clear shift from overt hostility toward more coded, indirect forms of exclusion. The presentation explores several key categories of rhetorical devices:

- Ethnic labeling and racialization

Migrants are frequently categorized through ethnic, racial, national, or religious labels that reduce diverse individuals to a presumed collective identity. Such labelling essentializes group membership, attributes shared characteristics or behaviors to entire populations, and reinforces boundaries between "us" and "them." Ethnic labelling may be realized through covert linguistic forms, including ironic nicknames, diminutives, and coded references. These expressions often avoid explicit racial or ethnic slurs while nevertheless indexing specific ethnic or migrant groups and reproducing exclusionary meanings (e.g. "rashidek," "pajetek," "pakol"). Through racialized and ethnicized framing, migrants are portrayed as culturally incompatible, inherently different, or collectively responsible for societal problems, thereby legitimizing exclusionary attitudes and discriminatory narratives.

- Irony and "softened" hostility

Dehumanization is increasingly conveyed through irony, sarcasm, and pseudo-neutral euphemisms such as "engineers," "(culture) enrichers," "doctors," or "professors." These labels function as delegitimizing ironic markers that not only mock migrants but also undermine pro-migrant and human-rights-oriented discourse. Irony diffuses accountability, fosters group cohesion, and expands what is considered permissible or humorous in public discourse, making such content harder to challenge and more easily shareable.

- Lexical and morphological creativity

Novel compounds and neologisms (e.g., "tarantulas," "pajet/pajetek," "enrichers" – in this context the Polish word "ubogacacz" ("enricher") is a neologism derived from the phrase "ubogacenie kulturowe: ("cultural enrichment") demonstrate how linguistic innovation supports dehumanizing narratives. These constructions reinterpret migrants through sensational, mocking, or zoological frames that reinforce otherness and heighten emotional reaction.

Contribution

The proposed presentation contributes to research on political communication, disinformation, and hate speech by:

- demonstrating how indirect linguistic strategies may shape perceptions of migrants;
- highlighting irony as a largely overlooked mechanism of dehumanizing language;
- analysing the interplay between metaphorical and humorous framings in online discourse;
- offering an analytical framework relevant to broader studies of mediated hostility and comparative research.

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BIO

Natalia Gruenpeter holds PhD in Cultural Studies, she works at the Disinformation Analysis Centre at NASK, Poland (Research and Academic Computer Network – National Research Institute) in Poland. Her work focuses on health- and science-related misinformation, including the identification, monitoring, and assessment of emerging narratives across digital media and online platforms. In 2026, she contributed to the CEDMO report on health-related disinformation in Poland, supporting efforts to better understand the impact of misleading information on public health. Before joining NASK, she worked at the Open Science Platform at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Mathematical and Computational Modelling (ICM), University of Warsaw, where she led training, communication, and outreach activities in the fields of Open Science and research data management.

Aleksandra Michałowska-Kubś – graduate of law and psychology, PhD in the humanities in the field of literary studies. Since 2021, she has been engaged in the analysis of disinformation. Author of numerous reports and publications devoted to this phenomenon. Currently works at the Disinformation Analysis Centre at NASK (Research and Academic Computer Network), National Research Institute. Her main areas of interest include disinformation targeting migrants and minorities, false or misleading climate-related content, as well as conspiracy theories.

Constructing Credibility: A Thematic Analysis of Argumentation and Epistemic Agency in Focus Groups

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This paper examines patterns of argumentation related to the perceived credibility of news in the online environment. The study draws on data from two focus groups (N = 14; 7 participants in each group) conducted with adult participants of diverse educational and professional backgrounds. The discussions were centered on how individuals evaluate the trustworthiness of online news, what criteria they apply when assessing credibility, and how they justify their judgments in situations of uncertainty or conflicting information. The data were analysed using thematic analysis. Particular attention was paid to recurring argumentative strategies, justificatory frameworks, and rhetorical resources participants employed when constructing claims about credibility. In addition, the analysis explores participants' epistemic agency — that is, how they position themselves in relation to their own knowledge, uncertainty, and responsibility for evaluating information. The study therefore examines not only what participants consider trustworthy or untrustworthy, but also how they discursively construct themselves as competent, sceptical, doubtful, or reflexive knowers within the group interaction.

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BIO

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Morphological Features of Fake News in Climate Change Discourse

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This study examines grammatical differences between news articles published by Czech online mainstream media and disinformation (or antisystem) outlets, focusing specifically on morphological features. The analysis compares the relative frequencies of selected morphological categories in texts from both media types. The material for the study is drawn from the CLIC24 corpus, which consists of nearly 700 Czech online news articles representing both mainstream and disinformation sources. All texts address the topic of climate change, ensuring thematic consistency and minimizing differences arising from topic variation.

Methodologically, we calculate the relative frequencies of selected morphological features, including parts of speech, grammatical cases, types of pronouns, deverbative adjectives, past participles, and perfect participles. MorphoDiTa tool was used for morphological annotation (Straková et al. 2014).

The results reveal systematic differences between the two media types. Mainstream media texts show a higher frequency of nouns, numerals, and prepositions, as well as greater use of genitive and locative cases. They also contain more past participles and singular nouns. In contrast, disinformation texts exhibit higher frequencies of adjectives, adverbs, interjections, conjunctions, pronouns, and particles. They are characterized by greater use of dative, vocative, and instrumental cases, as well as possessive, indefinite, negative, and demonstrative pronouns.

Overall, the findings suggest that mainstream and disinformation media differ not only in content and framing, but also in systematic grammatical patterns.

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BIO

Miroslav Kubát works as an assistant professor at the Department of Czech Language, University of Ostrava. He received his PhD in General Linguistics and Theory of Communication. His main research interests include quantitative linguistics, corpus linguistics, and stylometry. His publications focus especially on the quantitative study of stylistic variation across different types of texts and on political discourse. He is a Member-at-Large of the International Quantitative Linguistics Association and Editor-in-Chief of Glottometrics. He has led several research projects focusing on quantitative approaches to language. His international experience includes research stays in Austria, Slovakia, Italy, Greece, and Germany.

A Comparative View of Thematic Progression Breaks as a Rhetorical Device in Online Disinformation and Mainstream Media Texts

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While there is a substantial body of work on linguistic characteristics of disinformation texts (Lugea, 2021), it is notable that the rhetorical strategies used in them to express an ideological stance (e.g., through evaluative expressions) has only recently received increased attention from linguists (cf. Baissa et al., 2025; Trnavac & Põldvere, 2024). According to Fairclough (1992, pp. 183–184), one such rhetorical strategy is the employment of various patterns of Theme and thematic progressions, particularly the selection and distribution of marked themes. As argued by Hawes (2010), this is especially true of marked themes which function as thematic progression breaks, i.e., points where one thematic progression ends, and another begins.
The present study continues in this line of research by applying a modified typology of Hawes's TP breaks to a contrastive analysis of texts published on disinformation and mainstream news websites. The analysis is conducted on a small corpus of 50 disinformation texts collected from listed disinformation websites, and 50 texts collected from mainstream media websites. The corpus comprises texts exclusively written in English and focusing on the topic of climate change. The primary aim of the analysis is to determine the frequency and distribution patterns of TP breaks in the texts. Preliminary findings suggest that in comparison to mainstream news texts, disinformation texts exhibit higher TP-break frequencies, with exceptionally marked TP-break types – interrogative and exclamative breaks, annexes, and verb themes – being prominently represented. This suggests a higher reliance on evaluative rhetoric. Interestingly, in terms of distribution, the exceptionally marked types often appear in bundles in the disinformation texts, forming a pattern of progression where each link builds upon and reinforces the communicated ideological viewpoint. Such progressions represent very effective persuasive strategies and warrant further investigation.

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BIO

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Toilets for 72 Genders: Gendered Disinformation and Language Strategies in Slovak

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Gendered disinformation can be defined as „the deliberate spread of false or misleading information that weaponizes gender to achieve political ends. It operates on two levels: targeting gender equality itself as a political project, and exploiting gender norms to delegitimise and silence individuals, especially those who challenge existing power structures“ (Saner 2026). Pavol Hardoš (2026 and Drążkiewicz – Hardoš 2026) argue that anti-gender narratives exhibit features characteristic of conspiracy theories. Building on these views, as well as other work on anti-gender narratives (cf. Korolczuk – Graff – Kantola 2025; Sekerák 2020), the paper identifies several language strategies used in anti-gender narratives. It maps different meanings of chosen terms (for example gender equality, gender ideology, gender mainstreaming) in the Slovak language according to the context in which they appear. This analysis of meaning is supported by corpus analysis using a comparative approach, with data drawn from the Slovak National Corpus and the Corpus of Alternative Media.

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BIO

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Czech Climate Change Media Discourse from the Perspective of Quantitative Syntax

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Disinformation and fake news can be studied from various linguistic perspectives. One established approach focuses on lexical patterns, topics, and discourse framing, often using keyword and association analyses (cf. Cvrček & Fidler, 2024; Fidler & Cvrček, 2023). The present study focuses on grammatical features; specifically, it compares disinformation and mainstream media reports at the syntactic level using quantitative methods.

We analyze several measures of syntactic complexity, including average sentence length, average clause length, mean dependency distance (MDD), mean hierarchical distance (MHD), and the average amount of coordination per sentence. The dataset consists of the newly compiled CLIC24 corpus, which contains nearly 700 news articles published in 2024 by 11 Czech online media outlets covering climate change and the Green Deal. The corpus includes both disinformation (or antisystem) media (e.g. AC24, Infokurýr) and mainstream outlets (e.g. České noviny, iRozhlas). The texts were parsed using UDPipe 2.0 (Straka 2018), a widely used dependency parser trained on Czech treebanks within the Universal Dependencies (UD) framework (Zeman et al., 2024).

The results indicate a tendency toward higher syntactic complexity in texts published by antisystem media across most of the applied measures. Articles from disinformation outlets exhibit longer sentences and clauses on average, as well as higher linear (MDD) and hierarchical (MHD) dependency distances. At the same time, these texts display a higher amount of coordination per sentence. Overall, the findings suggest that disinformation media may combine structurally complex dependency patterns with coordination-based expansion strategies, pointing to a distinctive syntactic profile that complements content-based approaches to media analysis.

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Xinying Chen is an assistant professor in the Department of Czech Language at the University of Ostrava, Czech Republic. She holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics. Her research focuses on quantitative and statistical linguistics, dependency grammar, syntactic complexity, complex linguistic networks, lexical semantics, transformer models, and text classification. She has published widely on quantitative syntax, linguistic typology, stylistic variation, and contextual embeddings. She is a member of the International Quantitative Linguistics Association. She has completed research stays in France, Qatar, Germany, Spain, Italy, and Slovakia.

Michaela Nogolová is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Czech Language at the University of Ostrava, Czech Republic. Her research focuses on quantitative linguistics, dependency syntax, syntactic complexity, language laws, syntactic units and their distributions, and genre and stylistic variation. She has participated in several research projects focused on the quantitative analysis of disinformation media, political speeches, and second-language acquisition. She has undertaken research stays in Spain, the United Kingdom, Bulgaria, and Slovakia, and has attended international summer schools in the USA, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, and Ireland.

Political and Legal Aspects of an Effective Model for Strategic Communication

Andrey Rikhter

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This presentation will discuss the current theoretical and methodological aspects of disinformation research from the perspective of international law and political science, taking into account also the historical-cultural approach to disinformation practices from the standpoint of freedom of expression. It will raise questions as to whether: (1) there is a human right to (know) the truth? And (2) there is a human right to (disseminate) lies? They are important issues today as the governments in too many parts of the world aim to suppress political voices by ostracizing and outlawing disinformation as such. On the other hand, the world indeed stands bewildered at the current outbursts of false news, blurred boundary between facts and propaganda, and the governments' search for ways and means to diminish social harm of disinformation. No wonder, that foreign information manipulation and interference (or FIMI) is at the centre of the EU activities in communication field. Politically and legally, disinformation is understood as verifiably false or misleading information that cumulatively is created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public, and may cause public harm. The presentation will provide a viewpoint for what the international law says on lies and truths in global affairs. With the aim to help minimize the impact of targeted disinformation on the population, the presentation aims to provide a clearer methodological approach, analysing public harms of information rather than its correctness. It provides arguments to distinguish between the following three types of lies: (1) illegal disinformation, (2) legal disinformation that 'may cause public harm' and (3) legal and harmless disinformation. The presentation will also deal with the context of disinformation and propaganda, the conditions under which they are interpreted and misinterpreted by audiences. Those conditions involve pluralism, freedom and independence of the media, level of media and information literacy of the public, including its awareness of the threats of propaganda, and role of modern means of dissemination (platforms, deep fakes, AI). The design of a successful (effective) model for strategic communication is suggested to be based on transparency of the government, easy access to information, raising ethical standards of and trust to the mass media, high communication culture of the public – including awareness of FIMI, tolerance to all kinds of minorities, and broader social cohesion and inclusion in public affairs.

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BIO

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Richter has authored some 300 publications on media law and policy in English, Russian, Albanian, Arabic, Armenian, Azeri, Bosnian, Croat, German, French, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, Serbian, Slovak, Tajik and Ukrainian. He sits on the editorial boards of a number of international journals on communications and the media. He has systematically analysed media developments and regulation in the Eastern Europe and Eurasia, including, since 1994, for the European Audiovisual Observatory. His latest publications deal with the issues of regulation of disinformation in the media, "fake news", and related topics. In 2011 – 2022 he served as Director and a Senior Adviser at the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. Andrei Richter was a long-time professor at the School of Journalism, Lomonosov Moscow State University, where he chaired a department in media law and history in 2008-11, and Adjunct Professor of the Webster University in Vienna, in 2022. He founded and led Moscow Media Law & Policy Institute, a leading Russian press freedom CSO in 1990-2010s. He also served as a commissioner at the International Commission of Jurists and the Chair of the Law Section of the International Association for Media and Communication Research. Among languages that he speaks freely are Ukrainian, English and Russian.

On Systematically Distorted Communication: Words Lost Their Meanings, Therefore the Word 'Disinformator' Is a Compliment

Jaroslava Rusinková

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This presentation reports on research conducted as part of the project **Language and Communication Aspects of Disinformation**. The project approaches disinformation not primarily as a lexical or grammatical phenomenon, but as a marked form of strategic communication grounded in specific pragmatic rules and principles. From this perspective, disinformation is understood as a process (**disinforming**) and a form of interaction that creates communicative conditions enabling the misinterpretation of a text or message in accordance with the author's communicative intent.

This pragmatic approach connects disinformation with J. Habermas's concept of "systematically distorted communication," understood as a form of pseudo-communication in which mutual misunderstandings remain unrecognized because consensus is falsely assumed (Habermas 1970). The presentation examines how this form of communication operates within the alternative public sphere and how language contributes to processes of social positioning, exclusion, and identity construction. Particular attention is paid to the re-symbolization of terms associated with disinformation, including **konšpirátor**, **dezolát**, and **disinformer**. Labels initially intended as stigmatizing may be appropriated and assigned positive meanings, thereby becoming resources for constructing group identity and acquiring social and political capital.

The analysis draws on media discourse from mainstream, alternative, and social media, as well as on the JAKOD 2.0 corpus, compiled from websites identified as untrustworthy by Slovak non-government organisation Konšpirátori.sk. The corpus enables the analysis of word frequency, collocations, syntactic and thematic contexts, and domain-specific patterns. The presentation thus explores the linguistic and social mechanisms through which the concept of disinformation and related labels are negotiated, contested, and re-symbolized in contemporary public discourse.

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BIO

Jaroslava Rusinková is a researcher in the Department of Sociolinguistics at the Ľ. Štúr Institute of Linguistics, Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS), where she focuses on several research areas: 1. the theory of standard language and language culture, 2. the Rusyn minority language in the context of Slovak language policy, and 3. language in social relationships. Within these areas, she focuses on language attitudes and qualitative research on language involved in various social and communicative activities (discrimination, misinformation, manipulation). She has published two monographs: Standard Slovak as a Natural Language (On the Background of Language Attitudes) in 2020 and Discriminatory Instrumentalization of Language in 2023. She works on APVV project titled Linguistic and Communicative Aspects of Disinformation, where she deals with the manipulative side of disinformation communication, focusing on the principles and rules of creating so-called disinformation effect, and also addresses disinformative communication as systematically distorted communication (concept of J. Habermas).

The Language of Disinformation in Wartime Ukraine: A Critical Analysis of Disinformation Discourses in English-Speaking Newspapers

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This study examines how disinformation surrounding the ongoing war in Ukraine is created, spread, and communicated in major English-language newspapers. By viewing disinformation as a way of communicating, the research investigates the linguistic and discourse tactics that shape public understanding of the russian invasion of Ukraine, polarize beliefs, and maintain social and geopolitical tensions. It pays special attention to how language mirrors selective knowledge, ideological stances, and emotional appeals in wartime reporting. On the methodological side, the study uses critical discourse analysis to explore a qualitative collection of pro-Ukraine news articles published between 2022 and 2025 in The New York Times, The Guardian, and The Daily Telegraph and pro-russian media (RT, TASS, Sputnik International, NewsFront). By using Fairclough's three-dimensional model, the analysis focuses on textual features, discourse practices, and the wider socio-political contexts. It also employs frame analysis (Entman, 1993) and critical metaphor analysis (Charteris-Black, 2004) to uncover dominant narratives, evaluative patterns, and legitimization strategies that might help spread or normalize disinformation. The findings highlight patterns of crisis framing, emotional language, binary oppositions, and selective sourcing, which could reinforce distorted interpretations of the conflict and social divisions. The study emphasizes that being more aware of the linguistic tools used in media discourse is crucial for lessening the effects of disinformation. It wraps up by underscoring the significance of ethical journalism, clear framing, and media literacy as vital strategies to build resilience against disinformation during wartime.

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RT, TASS, Sputnik International, NewsFront.

BIO

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When Disinformation Clicks: Why Disinformative Texts Do Not Appear as Disinformation

Roman Soóky

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The paper examines which linguistic and discursive mechanisms cause disinformation texts to be perceived by recipients as reasonable, comprehensible, or unproblematic, and thus accepted without triggering critical interpretation. The analysis is based on the assumption that the acceptance of disinformation results from discursive normalization rather than individual cognitive failure. The theoretical-methodological framework combines ecological psychology — i.e., situated perception of meaning, the affordance-based nature of linguistic stimuli, languaging — (Heft, 2001; Steffensen & Harvey, 2018; Reed, 1996) with egolinguistics (Beaver & Stanley, 2023; Dolník, 2012; Kravchenko, 2006, 2007), which makes it possible to analyze the relationship between linguistic form, the subjective relevance of an utterance, and the identity anchoring of the recipient. These approaches are operationalized through R. Wodak's (2021) discourse-historical approach to critical discourse analysis, which allows for tracing stable discursive patterns over a longer time horizon. The empirical material consists of (1) transcripts of focus group discussions conducted with individuals prone to believing in conspiracies (N = 6), selected according to the Conspiracy Mentality Questionnaire methodology, focusing on their spontaneous interpretive strategies when engaging with disinformation texts, and (2) a corpus of public communications from one political party in Slovakia (public speeches, informational newspapers, and social media posts) from the period 2016–2024. The analysis focuses on narratives constructed in relation to progressivism and liberalism, particularly their topoi, value oppositions, and naturalized interpretive schemas. The results show that disinformation discourses systematically employ linguistic normalization, the personalization of experience, and implicit value frames, through which they create an impression of "common sense." The paper offers a sociolinguistically relevant model for analyzing disinformation that links the micro-level of linguistic means with the macro-level of ideological meaning production in political communication.

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BIO

Roman Soóky is a researcher at the Ľ. Štúr Institute of Linguistics, Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS). His research focuses on interpretative competence, critical reading, and resilience to manipulative and disinformation-driven communication, grounded in the theoretical frameworks of ecological psychology, egolinguistics, and ethnomethodology. He applies concepts such as autopoiesis to the analysis of political and media discourse, including hate speech and forms of manipulation that remain undetectable by algorithmic moderation systems. In the research project Linguistic and Communicative Aspects of Disinformation, he focuses on the manipulative side of disinformation communication, the analysis of the interpretative competence of language users. He is part of the research on manipulative techniques and comprehensibility, which is being conducted through focus groups.

Anti-Charter as a Source of Contemporary Disinformation?

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This study examines the key linguistic and thematic features of the media campaign against the civic initiative 'Charter 77', also known as the 'Anti-Charter' (Železný, 2011; Křemen, 2020). It interprets these strategies as historical sources of contemporary disinformation narratives. Central to this focus is a pamphlet targeting the writer Hana Ponická, which was published in Pravda in November 1977 (Stanková, 2023) and exemplifies propaganda from the normalization era. It demonstrates how official discourse constructed the image of an internal enemy, framed alleged threats to international stability and reinforced the dichotomy between the 'peace-loving' socialist bloc and the so-called 'evil West'. The study argues that these narrative patterns and linguistic techniques have endured, resurfacing in the contemporary Slovak political and media landscape in the form of disinformation. Methodologically, this study employs linguistic, semiotic and discourse analytic approaches to identify structural similarities between propaganda texts from the late 1970s and contemporary disinformation. Particular attention is given to the pragmatic dimension of the texts, especially the speech acts employed to manipulate audience perception and lend legitimacy to ideologically motivated claims (Mesežnikov & Gyárfášová, 2018; Hudek, 2022). The analysis also incorporates the theory of media labelling, which played a crucial role in producing and stabilising stigmatising categories surrounding selected individuals, themes or events (Stanková, 2025). The corpus consists of authentic anti-Charter materials published in national periodicals in 1977 (Karlík & Pokorná, 2002), and these are compared with current examples of Slovak disinformation discourse. The findings reveal enduring continuities in narrative templates and communication strategies that persist despite changing political contexts. While the anti-Charter has attracted scholarly interest, particularly in the Czech Republic, the linguistic dimension of this phenomenon has largely been overlooked, especially in the Slovak context. By tracing these historical and discursive links, the study demonstrates how propaganda techniques from the normalization era continue to influence contemporary ideological communication and the dynamics of disinformation.

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BIO

Mária Stanková is an Associate Professor in the Department of Journalism at Comenius University's Faculty of Arts in Bratislava. Her research focuses on the intersection of language, literature and journalism, building on her PhD studies in Slovak literature. In 2021, she published a monograph on literary criticism. She is also the author of textbooks for journalism students and two works of fiction, and has translated books from English into Slovak. Dr Stanková is a member of the Slovak Linguistics Society of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and sits on the editorial board of the scientific journal Otázky žurnalistiky.

Comparative Analysis of the Functions of Quoting in Health-Related Pseudo-Scientific and Scientific News

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Quotation, which can take different linguistic forms, appears in language use in various contexts. The main components of this communicative practice include the current speaker, the source of the quoted text, the quotation itself, as well as verbs expressing the act of speaking and various grammatical structures (Csontos 2023). The main functions of quoting include establishing credibility and factuality, sharing and verifying knowledge, and supporting arguments (Bublitz 2015). However, the functions of quoting may be influenced by the genre and register of the text (Fetzer 2020). Pseudo-scientific texts can be considered one of the main categories of fake news. Their main characteristics are the mimicry of science, the imitation of scientific methods, references to scientists, and the use of scientific terminology and quotations. These (linguistic) tools enhance the persuasive power of fake news. Although the form of quotation is governed by grammatical constraints, the functions of quotations may be influenced by the characteristics of different text types.

The present paper aims to compare the functions of quoting in health-related pseudo-scientific and scientific news, as these two types are similar on the surface, yet the communicator's goals may differ. The analysis is based on 50 pseudo-scientific texts and 50 scientific news from the MedCollect corpus (Szécsényi et al. 2024). The quotations were collected manually based on their grammatical structures and quotative verbs. The mode of quotation (direct, indirect, mixed quotations), the meaning and the connotations of the quotative verb, the person and number of the quotative verbs, the pragmalinguistic tools appearing in the quoting segment, and the presentation of the source text and original communicator were all taken into consideration to determine the functions of quoting. The results show that there are shared functions of quoting in pseudo-scientific and scientific news, but the manipulation strategies identified in pseudo-scientific texts have revealed additional functions in pseudo-scientific texts. The analytical method and the results may contribute to the detection of pseudo-scientific texts.

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