Metaphors of populism: National, subnational, and transnational narratives in Belgian, French, and Spanish parliamentary discourses

Anaïs Augé, Nadezda Shchinova, Laetitia Aulit and Barbara De Cock (UCLouvain)

This paper proposes to investigate the metaphors of POPULISM in parliamentary discourse. We conduct a study relying on texts produced in three countries: Belgium (Dutch- and French-speaking), France, and Spain. We selected texts produced in 2019, when several elections took place in these countries, to observe the metaphorical use of the term by politicians. This analysis allows us to compare the contexts where actors and actions are associated with different 'populist' ideologies and different forms of sub-state nationalism.

This study aims at answering the following questions:

1. What are the metaphors that appear in this kind of discourse? And which metaphorical narratives do they construct?
2. How do these metaphorical narratives construct the subnational, national, transnational nature of populism?

Metaphorical narratives (Hanne, Crano, & Mio, 2014) are rhetorical devices that highlight a semantic and ideological link between different metaphors. This ideological use of multiple metaphors can then reveal the presence of metaphor scenarios (Sinding, 2017). Scenarios involve assumptions about the source concept which is exploited in discourse to promote different scripts and evaluations regarding the target concept (Musolff, 2019).

Preliminary findings suggest that the three datasets rely on similar narratives such as POPULISM as a JOURNEY-PATH-MOVEMENT or NATURAL FORCES (e.g., 'there will be nothing left of our democracy but ruins, swallowed up under a populist wave' (authors' translation)), but with different participants, scripts, and evaluations.

Because of these differences, we decided to focus on the JOURNEY-PATH-MOVEMENT narrative to see how this movement is represented in these different countries. In certain national and sub-national contexts, the narrative describes POPULISM as coming from within while in other contexts, POPULISM is described as a transnational phenomenon coming from outside. This leads to different ideological metaphorical representations of POPULISM in the three countries, which can be linked to the different political contexts.

Keywords: Populism; nationalism; narrative; scenario; parliament

References

Hanne, M., Crano, W., & Mio, J. 2014. *Warring With Words: Narrative and Metaphor in Politics*. New York and London, Psychology Press, Routledge.

Musolff, A. 2019. Factual narrative and truth in political discourse. In M. Fludernik & M.-L. Ryan (eds) *Narrative Factuality*. Berlin, de Gruyter, 351–367.

Sinding, M. 2017. From words to worldview: Framing narrative genres. *Poetics Today* 38(2), 363–391.