

Negotiating and resisting membership : I am not a populist

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This contribution seeks to advance on the analysis of inferences and cultural dimensions of membership categorisation (see overview in Stokoe 2012). To do so, we focus on how Twitter users negotiate (McKinley & Dunnett 1998, Berry 2022) and resist (Widdicombe 1998) categorisation as "populist" in a corpus of 2019 tweets containing *I am not a populist* and its French, Spanish and Dutch equivalents. The mere rejection of the label populist reflects that this is a relevant identity in the analysed interactions (cf. Fitzgerald 1999).

These uses are highly indexical, viz. to be understood in the occasion of their production (Antaki & Widdicombe 1998:4). Our analysis thus firstly relies on the linguistic context: the message – or thread of messages - in which *I am not a populist* is embedded creates or rejects membership categorisations and, in doing so, may expand on characteristics associated with being a populist. This association may be explicit but more often draws on implicit knowledge, since categories are “inference-rich” (Sacks 1992:40). The resistance of the category affiliation is “a way of addressing the inferential consequences that might follow accepting the categorical identity” (Widdicombe 1998:59). In doing so, the interaction develops resistance strategies while also giving insight into the features that interlocutors associate with being a populist.

The latter also relies on the cultural competence required to interpret such inferences. Therefore, our analysis will also take into account the broader sociopolitical and cultural context, with the comparison of tweets in different languages contributing to exploring this dimension.

Keywords: MCA, Twitter, negotiation, resistance