CALL FOR PAPERS

Centre for Applied Language Studies Virtual Conference
University of Limerick

"Representations of Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity in the Media: New Approaches and Perspectives"

We are pleased to announce the call for abstracts for our virtual conference with the theme "Representations of Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity in the Media: New Approaches and Perspectives", hosted by the Centre for Applied Language Studies (CALS) at the University of Limerick. Bringing together colleagues researching on this topic from different perspectives, the conference will provide a platform for exchange and discussions on current issues and approaches to examining transmodal (i.e. linguistic and other semiotic) media practices in relation to ethnic and linguistic diversity.

Language (in a wider semiotic sense) is at the heart of our communicative practices and is narrowly tied to community, identity, power and values and therefore ultimately to prejudice and inequality (see Blommaert 2010). Journalists' language use has received considerable scholarly attention, particularly because of professional media's important role in our everyday lives. Not only do we rely on the media for information about our world and what happens in it but also often it is only through the media that we learn about many members of our societies. How professional media as evaluative public voices portray ethnic and linguistic diversity therefore has implications for social cohesion and for how we encounter difference (Eide 2010; Jenks and Bhatia 2020). Previous research has, however, frequently highlighted the negative portrayal and insufficient coverage of ethnic diversity by the media, which is often associated with discourses of threats to public safety, strain on social systems and terrorism (Gabrielatos and Baker 2008; Goedeke Tort, Guenther and Ruhrmann 2016; Pietikäinen 2005; Piller, Torsh and Smith-Khan 2023; Poole and Williamson 2023; Van Dijk 2000). In addition, various studies have noted issues regarding the media's use of images that reproduce and reinforce stereotypes about migrants and ethnic minorities (Maurer et al. 2023; Panis, Paulussen and Dhoest 2019). Furthermore, professional media have often been found to show a lack of constructive engagement with linguistic difference in their coverage (Cotter 2011; Gieve and Norton 2007).

Since professional media have become multimedia outlets offering content through more than just their original channels (see Iosifidis 2011), such as via Instagram, TikTok and their websites, media representations of topics on ethnic and linguistic diversity have become more complex.

In addition, accelerated globalisation and new technologies such as AI have changed the procedures of media practitioners and the outcomes of media content production. Making sense of this complexity therefore requires innovative, interdisciplinary approaches that give new insights into representational processes.

We invite contributions from a wide range of linguistic and related disciplines. Possible research areas could include, but are not limited to:

- Critical discourse studies of representations of ethnic and linguistic diversity
- Sociolinguistic studies on influencing factors on media language
- Applied linguistic studies behind the scenes of media content production
- Social semiotic approaches to media communication
- Corpus linguistic analyses of media discourse

We are pleased to welcome our keynote speaker Prof. Colleen Cotter (Professor in Media Linguistics, Queen Mary University of London).

The one-day conference will be held online 9th May 2025. Presentations will be 20 minutes in length plus 5 minutes for questions/discussion. There will be no participation fee.

Abstracts outlining their connection to the conference theme (300 words excluding references) should be submitted to sarah.schaefer@ul.ie and helen.kelly.holmes@ul.ie by 16th February 2025. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by end of February 2025.

References

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Poole, E. and M. Williamson (2023), 'Disrupting or Reconfiguring Racist Narratives about Muslims? The Representation of British Muslims during the Covid Crisis', *Journalism*, 24 (2): 262–79.

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