



Polarization and Digital Discourses: Critical and Socio-Cognitive perspectives

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Symposium format:

- **Multimodal symposium**

Symposium mode:

- **Hybrid**

Sub-themes (multiple choices - delete the others):

- ☐ **LANGUAGE IN USE:** communication, interaction, conversation analysis, discourse, corpus, media

Argument:

As can be observed, contemporary public discourses are becoming increasingly characterized by polarization, that is, by the formation of two distinct, combative and opposing 'sides' and a 'shrinking middle' (Fleischer & Bond 2004) of moderate discourse. Polarization in discourse is particularly visible in the Internet and digital media, which are often deemed responsible for this growing trend. However, polarization must not be considered an inherent property of digital discourse but rather "a result of strategic polarizing actions taken by specific actors in order to establish control over the debate" in their communities of interest/practice (Savski, 2020). Following methods and analytical tools from Socio-Cognitive Linguistics (SCL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspectives, this symposium intends to show the main polarizing strategies that are deployed in different domains -such as media, social, political, educational and business discourse, etc.-, and how they contribute to unravel the relationship between language, cognition and social practices in the construction of specific frames and socio-cultural identities. The intrinsic relationship between cognitive linguistics and critical discourse studies, we think, can help to unravel the different forms of polarized discourse across different contexts, languages and media, as new ways of communication and genres are continuously developing. Key concepts and questions to this symposium are:

- Which are the main discursive strategies that characterize polarized discourse?
- How are digital media contributing to the construction and spread of polarization?
- How do interactions between discourse and other semiotic resources (images, gestures, music and sound, performances, etc.) influence polarized discourse.
- Which are the effects of globalization in polarized strategies across languages and cultures?

Alonso-Belmonte, I. and Porto, M.D. (2020). Multimodal framing devices in European online news. *Language & Communication* 71, 55–7.

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- Filardo, L., Morales-López, E. & Floyd, A. (2021). *Socio-political Polarization and Conflict. Discursive Approaches*. New York: Routledge.
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- Savski, K. (2020). Polyphony and polarization in public discourses: hegemony and dissent in a Slovene policy debate. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 17 (4), 377-393.