Speaking to the Gut:
How Emotive Language Is Conquering Public Communication

Appealing to emotions instead of rational arguments is becoming prevalent in public communication of Western democracies. Emotive language powerfully disseminates in the media and influences our perception in many respects – from taxes to immigration, from health to energy. This is for example the case in politics where the emotive language of populist political views colonizes public communication. What is more, despite their controversial and even borderline positions, populists recently gained decisive support in important democratic decision-making moments (e.g., the Swiss federal popular initiative "against mass immigration", the Brexit referendum, the U.S. presidential election).

In our panel, we investigate whether success of this kind stems from the communicative strategies adopted by public agents and the media reporting about their positions, in particular by the fact that they "speak to the gut" instead of the brain of the audience. We focus on:

- the linguistic features of emotionally-charged communication of and about key public agents and issues;
- the effect of emotionally-charged communication of media and key public agents on the audience;
- whether and how the persuasive intent of emotionally-charged communication is detected by the audience;
- reactions of the audience to emotionally-charged communication via social media;
- how emotive storytelling can be exploited for persuasive intents;
- persuasion vs. argumentation in public communication;
- emotive framing in public communication.

The following contributions are included in the panel.

1) Sensorimotor-Based Action Words Speak Louder Than (non Sensorimotor-Based) Words (Liane Ströbel, RWTH Aachen)

In order to conquer their voters, presidential candidates have to fulfill the mental task of implicitly introducing or transforming abstract concepts such as 'knowledge', 'experience' 'vision', 'competence', 'commitment', 'devotion', 'willpower', 'strength', 'determination' or 'external and internal challenges' into the chronological and hierarchical linearity that is inherent in language. This is achieved via a common trick, namely, that sensorimotor-based action words speak louder than (non-sensorimotor-based) words. Therefore, the candidates anchor their ideas in mental images based on bodily actions. Findings in cognitive neuroscience and cognitive psychology suggest that mirror neurons not only simulate observed actions, but that they are also activated when action or somatic lexemes are used.

In this talk we propose that sensorimotor concepts that have not been in the focus of political analyses to date are effective persuasive devices as they activate mental images

and frames. They are a perfect tool to manipulate the way we conceptualize, and, in particular, reanalyze our world since they do not introduce new concepts, but instead influence our beliefs, attitudes and values. Especially in the current presidential campaigns they were and are used in order to convey the idea of perfect leadership qualities: a combination of experience, commitment, willpower that can affront any external and internal challenges. They represent an effective linguistic tool that can be used frequently and iteratively to create a narrative frame that will remain vivid in the minds of the voters long after the speech and therefore subconsciously influence the reception of a given speech to a high degree. As such, even though sensorimotor concepts appear more "innocent" than other rhetoric strategies, they are powerful persuasive devices that can manipulate an audience through mental simulation and emotional arousal.

2) **Emotions and Evaluative Statements vs. Argumentation in Donald Trump's Tweets (Thierry Herman, University of Lausanne and University of Neuchâtel)**

Emotion innervates populist discourse (Dorna 2006). If we consider populism as a resentment ideology (Angenot 1994), it paves the way for expressing frustration and anger as a main linguistic device. We can also expect that those held responsible for causing these emotions are targeted with evaluative standpoints about how bad they are. Moreover, microblogging sites like Twitter are also "rich sources of data for opinion mining and sentiment analysis" (Pak & Paroubek 2010). In such a context, it is not astonishing that Donald Trump, who is known as a populist and a frenetic user of Twitter, relies on emotions and evaluative statements in his tweets. I would like to analyze one month of Donald Trump's tweets with Micheli's model of *said* and *shown emotions* (2014). Said emotions are explicit emotive words, for example "Isn't this a *ridiculous shame*?" (Trump, Dec 23, 2016 06:58:36 AM), while shown emotions are linguistic indicators from which an emotional cause of their presence can be inferred, like the exclamation marks in numerous Trump's tweets (13'299 "!" out of more than 30'700 tweets, according to Trumptwitterarchive.com). I would like to evaluate the amount and weight of emotions in Trump's tweets, as well as the presence of evaluative adjectives. Moreover, I wish to contrast emotional appeals with the relative presence or absence of argumentation. Since argumentation can be defined as expressing a standpoint justified at least by one argument, I would like to see if and how Trump justifies his opinions in his tweets. My hypothesis is that the emotive framing of Trump's tweets conceals the inherent "appeal to be justified" of evaluative statements. Consequently, personal opinions are linguistically delivered as obvious statements.

3) **Telling a Tale of Lost Greatness: Argumentative Framing in Trump's Presidential Campaign (Marta Zampa, ZHAW Winterthur)**

"The age of social media resembles the pre-literate, oral world" and "complicated, nuanced thoughts that require context don't play very well on most social platforms, but a resonant hashtag can have extraordinary influence", observes Joe Weisenthal on Bloomberg (November 29, 2016), commenting Donald Trump's communicative behavior.

Indeed, the 45th president of the United States seems to master pre-literate communication: he uses a limited and simple vocabulary, regularly combines concepts with evaluations, exploits repetition, abundantly appeals to emotions, and masters Twitter. In his presidential campaign, Trump proposed anarrative in line with the strict father model typically embraced by Republicans (Lakoff, 2004). He depicted himself as the savior who will restore the lost greatness of the United States, a country whose glorious fate has long been neglected by politicians and that needs a hero from outside politics to take command.

In this paper, I consider how Trump frames socio-political issues within this heroic narrative and how he exploits them argumentatively. In particular, I look into Trump's use of epithets (Corazza, 2005; Croom, 2013), a precious rhetorical device that crystalizes the framing of an issue at the lexical level. To demonstrate this, I analyze Trump's framing of the jobs, immigration and infrastructure issues in announcing his candidacy (June 16, 2015), accepting the presidential nomination (July 21, 2016) and making a proposal for the first 100 days in office (October 22, 2016). Methodologically, I embrace Greco Morasso's (2012) approach to argumentative contextual frames, based on strategic maneuvering (van Eemeren, 2010) and frame analysis (Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1993; Entman, Matthes & Pellicano, 2009; Lakoff, 2004, 2009).

4) Emotionally connected – investigating the influence of emotions on social realities (Aleksandra Gnach, ZHAW Winterthur)

On social media platforms, individual and organizations are constantly communicating and at the same time transmitting information and emotion. Experiments show that people can "catch" emotional states they observe in others over time frames ranging from seconds to months (Hatfield et al. 1993; Howeset et al. 1985). Longitudinal data from face-to-face social networks has established that emotions as diverse as happiness, loneliness, or sadness are correlated between socially-connected individuals, and related work suggests that these correlations also exist online (Bollen et al. 2011). The possibility of emotional contagion between strangers, even in very brief encounters, has been documented by the effects of "service with a smile" on customer satisfaction and tipping (Pugh 2001). Research from the fields of positive psychology and neuroscience shows that small shifts towards positivity in communication can create big effects on business and educational outcomes, including higher productivity, better performance ratings, or lower levels of stress (Gielan 2015).

If peers can influence emotion, and emotions can influence the behaviour of people and therefore social realities, researchers need tools and ideas that are receptive to interdependencies between connected individuals and organisations. This paper examines emotions as social rather than solitary phenomena. It suggests that one of the principal functions of emotion is to align relations between people and that the investigation of virtual communities could be a fruitful way to understand emotions. Furthermore, it shows how combining ethnographic methods with sociological and linguistic frameworks can bridge the gap between micro and macro perspectives on emotions, virtual communities, and their interplay with social realities (Gnach 2017).

5) **Investigating emotions in collaborative newswriting (Daniel Perrin, ZHAW Winterthur; Mathias Fürer, ZHAW Winterthur; Margherita Luciani, USI Lugano)**

Analyzing the interaction between emotions and writing processes requires methodological access both to writing activities and to the various aspects of emotions. Due to the complexity of the topic, most research on emotions in the writing process has been done in experimental settings. Field research on emotions in real-life writing processes and interactions still appears to be an uncharted area. By investigating novice and expert journalists' verbal emotional displays in settings of collaborative newswriting, we aim to fill this research gap.

Over the past few years, we have been involved in large transdisciplinary research projects that have investigated journalists' text production processes. Data were collected and analyzed with Progression Analysis, an ethnographically-based multimethod approach. We have re-analyzed data to focus specifically on five aspects of emotions in newswriting: a) journalists' emotional expression in the final texts and intertextual chains, b) writers' emotional display in the collaborative text production processes, c) the interplay of emotion and cognition, d) writers' anticipation of the news items' emotive effects, and e) their reaction to emotional uptake by the audience.

We begin our presentation by discussing the research question in more detail. Second, we explain how knowledge gained from related research can be applied to address emotions in collaborative newswriting. Third, we describe our multimethod approach, Progression Analysis. Fourth, we present exemplary findings from a case study of long-term ethnography. The analysis shows how and why a journalist exploits emotional displays purposefully. For example, she does so the interest of the quality of service her magazine offers to its readers. Finally, we discuss how insights from this research can be generalized – and can contribute to academic and professional linguistic knowledge and awareness related to journalistic writing in general and its interplay with emotions in particular.

6) **The Interplay of Emotive Language and Rational Arguments in Financial Analysts' Recommendations – and Its Impact on Society-at-Large (Marlies Whitehouse, ZHAW Winterthur)**

The global financial markets are influenced by rational and irrational factors. In their attempt to guide investors through the volatile and erratic markets and to forecast developments in various industries, financial analysts play a key role. Their opinions influence the share prices around the globe; their assessments are wanted by investors, cited by the press, feared and pushed by the companies. Despite the huge influence of their recommendations, both the analysts as writers and the texts themselves are widely under-researched (Whitehouse, 2017).

In order to close this gap from the perspectives of applied linguistics and text production research, I have investigated the cultural, organizational, and individual variety of financial analysts' texts and text production in a series of transdiciplinary

projects since 1997. By doing so, I have built a context-annotated corpus of roughly 1500 financial analysts' company reviews (in German, English, and Japanese) which allows for comparative studies of linguistic aspects of financial communication.

In my presentation, I focus on *how* and on *when* equity analysts use emotionally-charged language in their recommendations for investors (part 1). Based on a qualitative English and a qualitative German sub-corpus (part 2), I use pragmatic text analysis (part 3) to explain what implications the combination of rational arguments and emotive language elements can have on investors, financial markets, and on society-at-large (part 4). I conclude by discussing how insights from this research can contribute to a deeper scientific and professional awareness of financial analysts' writing and its emotive aspects (part 5).