

Multimodal Analysis of Independence March Posters in Poland: Ideological Appropriation of National Symbols through the Lens of Conceptual Integration Theory.

In this presentation we analyse selected posters from the corpus of 20 official posters announcing the Independence March organised in Poland on the National Independence Day (11th November) in the last 12 years. The posters function both in a traditional paper form as well as in the digital space. It is the online environment, however, that affords their spread and availability to the public and triggers a broader discussion in the social media. In our analysis we show that the posters are in line with a more general trend observed on the Polish political scene, i.e., the ideological appropriation of the Polish flag and other national symbols by far-right organisations. The trend also involves the appropriation of Polish national holidays (esp. those marking important events in the history of the Polish nation) which nowadays are mostly associated with nationalistic, xenophobic beliefs and attitudes and thus celebrated almost exclusively by these communities. A prime example of this trend is the Independence March which used to be a national event celebrated by everyone, but for the last several years has been strongly associated with far-right organisations and as a consequence rather shunned by other segments of society. We conduct a multimodal analysis (Forceville, 2020; Forceville & Urios-Aparisi, 2009) of selected posters in order to evidence the references and associations that emerge in the blending of several input spaces that are activated by image, text or both. Some of those input spaces activate historical or religious concepts, as well as other symbols (often racist, antisemitic or homophobic). The references may be explicit, e.g., the use of rainbow colours to refer to LGBTQ community, or implicit (e.g., the reuse of a historical poster with a Soviet red star substituted with the Z military symbol of Russian 2022 invasion of Ukraine, which nonetheless retains the original anti-Jewish and anti-Bolshevik character). Additionally, they point to a productive trend of creating counter-posters or parodies of the official posters that has been common for years. The study is maintained within the methodological framework of cognitive semantics in general and conceptual integration theory in particular (Brandt & Brandt, 2005; Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, 2003).

References

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