« Titre thématique »[*]

Mots. Les langages du politique : Your latest publication is *The Politics of Fear* (2015) : what is the type of corpora on which you have worked to analyse this type of discourse?

Ruth Wodak : I have studied data from a whole range of countries (Austrian, British, Dutch, French, German, Hungarian and US-American data; but, as I don't speak Hungarian, I had to rely on posters being translated for me by colleagues) and also included a wide range of discursive genres from different time periods: from speeches, both available online and which I was able to tape record, to interviews with journalists and various spin doctors (also in the United States), from posters which I collected during electoral campaigns over several years to many different kinds of online performances.

Mots. Les langages du politique : What is the time-range covered by your corpora?

Ruth Wodak : I have focused on post-1989 for Austria – the date after which Jörg Haider, then leader of the Austrian Freedom Party, started attracting popularity and votes. This coincided with the fall of the Iron Curtain and with the arrival of many migrants from Eastern European countries. That is also the time when we started analysing the reaction of the electorate in Austria via petitions and posters, speeches and so forth. Thus, 1989 is certainly a tipping point. Furthermore, the other data collection which I drew upon started in 1996, when we conducted a big empirical study in the UK on British newspapers about the way they labelled refugees, asylum seekers and migrants (Baker et al., 2008). This data collection covered a period of ten years. Moreover, I looked at various speeches around the time of two other tipping points, i.e. 9/11 and the financial crisis of 2008 (and the subsequent Eurozone/Greek crisis).

Mots. Les langages du politique : What are the main discursive strategies and linguistic features characterizing right wing populism in Europe nowadays?

Ruth Wodak : It is difficult to generalize because discursive strategies are very context-dependent; but we can highlight some recurring features such as the construction of inclusion and exclusion by means of blaming and scapegoating certain groups or people, or presenting oneself as a saviour for 'the people', which are arbitrarily defined by such parties. The linguistic realisations of such strategies are of course very different and depend on the norms and traditions of the respective country. Usually in official contexts, we observe more coded forms using what we call *soft expressions* whereas in anonymous contexts or on-line you can frequently find explicit expressions. Thus, there exists a continuum from explicit to indirect linguistic forms of exclusion. In the first chapter of my book, I claim that "All right-wing populist parties instrumentalize some kind of ethnic/religious/linguistic/political minority as a *scapegoat* for most if not all current woes and subsequently construe the respective group as dangerous and a threat '*to us*', to '*our*' nation; this

phenomenon manifests itself as a '*politics of fear*'; and all right-wing populist parties seem to endorse what can be recognised as the '*arrogance of ignorance*'; appeals to common-sense and anti-intellectualism mark a return to pre-modernist ~~or pre-Enlightenment~~ thinking." I argue that right-wing populism can be defined as a political ideology that rejects existing political consensus and usually (but sometimes not) combines *laissez-faire* liberalism and anti-elitism. Populism is anti-pluralist and anti-elitist. For example, presidential candidate from the FPÖ, Norbert Hofer, distinguished – in a TV debate and numerous pamphlets – between the 'Schickeria/Haute Volee' and 'the people', the real Austrians, thus implying – one could assume – that the many voters of the other candidate were not 'real Austrians' or possibly not even 'people'[1]. It is considered populism because of its appeal to the 'common man/woman' as opposed to the elites; I regard this appeal to a quasi-homogenous ~~demos~~ as salient for such movements[2]. More specifically, right-wing populism endorses a nativist notion of belonging, linked to a chauvinist and racialised concept of 'the people' and 'the nation'. This has to be kept in mind as both types of populism (left-wing and right-wing) otherwise share some features of style, form and mediated performance. In short: right-wing populism presents itself as serving the interests of an imagined homogenous people INSIDE a nation state, whereas left-wing populism or other parties ~~also~~ employing some populist rhetorical strategies have an ~~international stance~~, look OUTWARDS and emphasise diversity or even cosmopolitanism (albeit in different ways; see for example, Chavez in South-America). With respect to the political role of populist politicians, we distinguish between an 'oppositional habitus', which is the classical stance of populism, and a 'governmental habitus'. While observing the 'career-trajectory' of various right-wing populist parties across Europe, it becomes obvious that the oppositional habitus (opposing everything and especially 'those up there' while serving 'the man and woman on the street') suits the objectives of such parties better than having to find compromises when in government.

Mots. Les langages du politique : In your book you address the persistence of antisemitism as a discursive feature of many right wing populist discourses, how does it show?

Ruth Wodak : Antisemitism occurs in various ways: one can detect very traditional forms of antisemitic prejudice expressed in Eastern European countries for example, by the Jobbik Party in Hungary or by the right wing in Poland, Bulgaria, Ukraine who quite explicitly blame the 'financial capital' or a 'world conspiracy' for all kinds of complex issues. But the more we move to Western Europe, the more such themes become implicit; strong taboos exist. However, there are many indirect means of expressing an antisemitic prejudice frequently ~~even~~ linked to anti-Muslims prejudice. Sometimes these occur together. For instance, we encountered debates about halal food and about circumcision in Austria and Germany which had both antisemitic and anti-Muslim connotations.

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1 See http://atv.at/atv-meine-wahl/gaeste-norbert-hofer-alexander-van-der-bellen/d1228604/.

2 See Chapters 1 and 2 in *Politics of Fear*.

Sometimes, however, Islamophobia has substituted antisemitism as the exclusionary and discriminating strategies are quite similar, the contents may differ. Central and Eastern-European right-wing populist and right-wing extremist parties frequently draw upon quite traditional antisemitic stereotypes stemming from religious antisemitism and racist antisemitism whereas in Western European countries, boundaries are frequently blurred between antisemitism, antizionism and anti-Israel feelings. Thus, differences must be analysed very carefully at each time because sometimes critique of the Israeli government is, of course, legitimate as the critique of any government can be; in other cases, the critique is generalised and extended to the entire country or to the 'Jews worldwide' which is, of course, fallacious. A very detailed qualitative, context-dependent analysis is necessary – which is why Critical Discourse Studies make sense.

Mots. Les langages du politique : I would like to address the question of class. In *Retour à Reims*, French sociologist Didier Eribon has analysed the phenomenon of working classes voting more and more for right-wing parties whereas until the 70s being more linked to left wing communist or labour parties. He states that whereas working classes used to have a positive identification with left wing parties, their current identification in the right wing is rather a negative one.

Ruth Wodak : That is a very important aspect indeed. If you consider the electorate and the range of reasons why people seem to vote for right-wing parties, there are many different aspects to this issue. If I may turn to 1989, - because a historical perspective is important -, you can observe the many ways 'fear' was instrumentalized: for example, the fear that migrants from Eastern Europe block countries would take jobs away from the people of the Western block. At the time, this threat was also strongly expressed by trade unions. There existed a quite general rhetoric of danger which was expressed in different ways: from anti-immigration and xenophobic discourses to a much more economically influenced discourse insisting on jobs and occupation. Since then, we detect the pervasiveness of such fears due to immigration, due to globalization, due to the political and social changes occurring in post-industrial societies. Hence, we are confronted with a division between the people who would like to preserve the status quo and are afraid of losing out (or have already lost), and the people who attempt coping with the enormous changes due to globalization phenomena.

The fear of losing out characterizes the discourse of the so called "modernization losers" who frequently (but not) belong to the working class and this fact implies a shift of values. For example, countries which have been strongly struck by the financial crisis have experienced a huge shift to the right by the working class. However, interestingly, other factors apart from the financial crisis also become relevant because the shift to the right concerns value-choices. In the book *Right-Wing Populism in Europe. Politics and Discourse* which I co-edited in 2013 (Wodak et al., 2013), a

Norwegian scholar[3] illustrates that in Norway working class voters shifted to the right because of preference for conservative values: family values, the fear of losing one's culture in a context of immigration (of being alienated), the belief that one's identity is being threatened by immigrants, and so forth. Identity politics and nationalism are therefore another reason for this shift to the right. Moreover, the fear of losing the social welfare state is also important. This phenomenon occurs strongly in Scandinavian countries: the fear that the social benefits of the welfare system would be destroyed by immigrants. Of course, what is absent in this discourse is that immigrants also contribute to the social welfare system by paying taxes. The young immigrant workers will therefore pay for the pensions of the old residents. In sum, a range of recurrent factors can be listed, from fears of "losing out" to xenophobia, from nationalism to a more general fear of social change.

Currently, the European Union has to cope with various huge crises: the financial crisis, the Eurozone crisis, the refugee situation, etc. And the contradiction inherent in all these debates concerns the way nation states, on the one hand, request more sovereignty, and on the other hand, blame the EU for not being 'efficient' enough in solving all these major problems – in spite of being part of the EU decision-making procedures. Of course, you can't have it both ways: you can't have ~~both~~ a sovereign nation-state deciding how to cope with refugees on its own terms, and on the other hand asking the EU to do it. So compromises will have to be found.

Mots. Les langages du politique : In your work, you develop what you call the discourse-historical approach in ~~CDS~~, an interdisciplinary approach which analyses the changes of discursive practices over time and in various genres: could you present this approach and the questions it sprang from?

Ruth Wodak : Very briefly: the *Discourse-Historical Approach* (DHA) allows relating the macro- and meso-level of contextualisation to the micro-level analyses of texts. Such analyses consist primarily of the so-called 'entry-level analysis' focusing on the thematic dimension of texts, and the 'in-depth analysis' which scrutinises coherence and cohesion of texts in detail. The general aim of the *entry-level* thematic analysis is to deconstruct the contents of analysed texts and to assign them to particular discourses. The key analytical categories of thematic analyses are *discourse topics*, which, "conceptually, summarize the text, and specify its most important information" (Teun van Dijk, 1991, p. 113). The *in-depth analysis* is informed by the research questions. The in-depth analysis consists of the analysis of the genre (e.g., TV interview, policy paper, election poster, political speech or homepage), the macro-structure of the respective text, strategies of identity construction and of argumentation schemes, as well as of other means of linguistic realisation[4].

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3 The article Wodak refers to is Magnus E. Maradal, "Loud Values, Muffled Interests: Third-Way Social Democracy and Right-Wing Populism", p. 39-54.

4 See the entry "The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)" (Wodak *et al.*, 2015, p. 23-61).

The DHA focuses on *texts* – be they audio, spoken, visual and/or written – as they relate to structured knowledge (*discourses*), are realised in specific *genres*, and must be viewed in terms of their *situatedness*. That is, many texts – including posters, speeches, comics, TV debates, postings and other web 2.0 genres – owing to their inherent ambiguities as *texts*, cannot be fully understood without considering different layers of *context*. Here, I propose a *four-level model* of context that includes the historical development of the respective political party (the *socio-political/historical context)*, discussions which dominated a specific debate/event (*the current context)*, a specific text (*text-internal co-text*) as well as *intertextual and interdiscursive relations*. The former two are of particular significance as they allow deconstructing *intertextual* and *interdiscursive* relations, presuppositions, implicatures and insinuations in the texts as arguments, topics and opinions are recontextualised from other genres or public spheres. The terminological pair interdiscursivity/intertextuality denotes the linkage between discourses and texts across time and space – established via explicit or implicit references. If text elements are taken out of their original context (de-contextualisation) and inserted into another (re-contextualisation), a similar process occurs, forcing the element in question to (partly) acquire new meaning(s).

Secondly, the DHA views *discourse* as a set of 'context-dependent semiotic practices' as well as "socially constituted and socially constitutive", "related to a macro-topic" and "pluri-perspective", i.e., linked to argumentation (Wodak et al., 2015, p. 23-61). Thirdly, positive self- and negative other-presentation is realised via *discursive strategies* (Reisigl et Wodak, 2001, p. 45-90). Here, I primarily focus on nomination (how events/objects/persons are referred to) and predication (what characteristics are attributed to them). A paradigmatic case might be the 'naming' of a protagonist or an institution metonymically (*pars pro toto*), for example Merkel for Germany, or as synecdoche (*totum pro pars*), for example the EU for all individual EU organisations. The strategy of perspectivisation realises the author's involvement, e.g., via deïxis, quotation marks, metaphors etc.[5]

Mots. Les langages du politique : You recently co-edited a *Discourse Studies Reader* with Dominique Maingueneau and Johannes Angermuller (2014): the French school has worked extensively on the concept of *discursive memory*, how do your approach relates to the work of French thinkers like Michel Pêcheux or Jean-Jacques Courtine?

Ruth Wodak : This book emerged from all our combined interests, backgrounds and approaches: Angermuller is a ~~sociologist and~~ sociolinguist with a more 'postmodern' approach, Maingueneau is a linguist from the French school of discourse analysis, and I was trained as a sociolinguist, I come from the background of critical theory, and moved to text linguistics and discourse analysis. We found ways to work together because we are interdisciplinary (or

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5 For more details see *Politics of Fear*, Chapter 3 as well as the entry "The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)" (Wodak *et al.*, 2015, p. 23-61).

transdisciplinary...), we wrote the introduction together, and there, you can notice how our ideas are integrated after having discussed extensively how we define "discourse" or "context" or the inclusion of a historical dimension in qualitative analysis. Much French work is also very quantitative whereas I have always focused more (but not exclusively) on qualitative analysis. For me, quantitative analysis is an entry point for studying the distribution of items; but then qualitative analysis becomes necessary to deconstruct the subtleties and complexities of the text. I am also more interested in pragmatics and in argumentation theory, in analysing latent and implicit meanings. And I am very influenced by text linguistics and by semantic/conceptual history. We managed to linguistically operationalize conceptual history, for example, when studying European multilingualism policies (Krzyzanowski et al., 2011). We also wanted to highlight continental European research because many handbooks of discourse studies or discourse analysis are oriented solely towards English speaking countries. Usually, the few references from continental European scholars who are cited are restricted to Jürgen Habermas and Michel Foucault, possibly Pierre Bourdieu. Thus, we decided that the work of scholars from the German or French speaking world or from Scandinavia, Eastern and Southern Europe should be circulated more widely. This was also one of the motivations for the book.

Mots. Les langages du politique : How do you relate to the Marxist approach to power structures which characterizes the French theory of discourse?

Ruth Wodak : I take a realist stance: I don't believe that 'the world is a text'; therefore we have to look at the dialectic relationship between society and communication. My education partly explains my approach: I was influenced by Basil Bernstein's theories, who was very important when I was studying in the 1960s and 1970s. Bourdieu was also very influential, especially his notion of *habitus* which influenced my work a lot, for example, in my book about politics, discourse, and action (Wodak, 2009).

Mots. Les langages du politique : Your scientific production on the discursive construction of relationships and identities also concerns gender (Wodak éd., 1997; Kotthof *et al.* éd., 1997): how do you understand the notion of "gender"?

Ruth Wodak : In the Seventies, I was part of the first women's group at the University of Vienna. However, I was never only interested in gender; gender is part of the construction of identity, at the intersection with other factors such as race, ethnicity, and class. For instance, the book I wrote about the mother-daughter relationship (Wodak et al., 1986) sprang from an interest in the deconstruction of the male/female dichotomy. During this research the mother-daughter relationship was a big theme in the feminist movement. I realized that social class as well as many other facts had to be taken into account. Thus, we can never decontextualize gender. Also, we can never reduce gender to a question of pure performativity, there are practices and structures of power that must be taken into account, such as women receiving 16-17% lower wages than men for the same job in Austria (and elsewhere). But I must admit that as I study xenophobia, islamophobia, racism, and

discrimination, I am again more and more interested in the way women are discursively included/excluded and how gender politics become part and parcel of identity politics and body politics on a large scale.

Mots. Les langages du politique : I would like you to address the relationship between identity and language from your personal standpoint: when did you start writing in English and how do you locate yourself within the different languages in which you work and live?

Ruth Wodak : I started writing in English after my PhD dissertation, once I was invited to give talks to international audiences. At the time, colleagues had to revise what I wrote, sometimes I had to rewrite my papers and I was very lucky to have mentors who explained differences to me. My first book in German, which was then translated into English (Wodak, 1986), opened a whole new world because as long as you don't write in English people don't read you and that is very frustrating for all of us who are not native speakers of English. So now I write both in English and in German, and I realise I have more difficulties sometimes in German despite it being my mother tongue, than in English because I am so used to teaching in English that I sometimes even miss German words. This is why in Lancaster, where I have been working for ten years now, my German speaking colleagues and I speak German in corridors and take a break from the tiring code switching work we constantly do.

Indeed, if you work in different languages you always experience a *Gestalt* switch because if you present something in English it is very different from presenting it in German. The academic genres differ and when I started writing in English, I had to basically re-learn how to write academically. Thus, it means moving to a new culture and changing academic cultures. Whenever you switch language you also switch academic culture, and you have to do it consciously. I remember being part of a big EU project DYLAN, a sociolinguistic Sixth Framework Project, where we held meetings in the three working languages of the EU - English, German and French -, meetings with approximately sixty people, and after three days of multilingualism I thought I would go crazy. Indeed, a lot of energy is required in such a multilingual environment because it is not just a matter of language *per se* but also a matter of culture, of meanings, of traditions and histories. And you have to know that linguistics in England has a very different tradition from Germany, Austria and France. That project was a very interesting experience, and I actually thought that instead of doing much and extensive fieldwork, we could have just studied ourselves, we were our own linguistic laboratory.

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