

# Floating between hoax and authority: the construction of COVID-19 vaccine sentiment in online media

Federica Modafferi

Technical University of Chemnitz

English and Digital Linguistics

[federica.modafferi@s2015.tu-Chemnitz.de](mailto:federica.modafferi@s2015.tu-Chemnitz.de)

# Introduction

- The “influence” of Covid 19
- Expertise and consequent authority are questioned
- Communication method more important than given data (truth)?
- Rise of anti-vax communities, hoaxes and echo-chambers

# Recurring themes (Smith, Rubinstein Reiss 2020)

1. «They» are lying to you

2. Civil liberties

3. Everyone is an expert

4. Science won't save us (nature is better)

5. Skew the science

6. «They» are out to harm you

# Ideas

- Three research articles:
  - Late Dr Thomas Jendges (2021)
  - Quantitative analysis
  - Qualitative analysis (Nvivo?)
    - Humor and memes
- Cross-disciplinary: psychology, sociology, semiotic
- Main RH: Communication is key to proving the «truth» regardless of any scientific method or expertise.

# References

- Abbas A. H., 2021. *Politicizing COVID-19 Vaccines in the Press: A Critical Discourse Analysis*. *Int J Semiot Law*. 2021 Jul 10;1-19.
- Abbas, A.H., 2020. *Politicizing the Pandemic: A Schemata Analysis of COVID-19 News in Two Selected Newspapers*. *Int J Semiot Law*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-020-09745-2>
- DeDominicis, K., Bутtenheim, A. M., Howa, A. C., Delamater, P. L., Salmon, D., Omer, S. B., & Klein, N. P. (2020). *Shouting at each other into the void: A linguistic network analysis of vaccine hesitance and support in online discourse regarding California law SB277*. *Social Science and Medicine*, 266.
- DeDominicis, K., Bутtenheim, A. M., Howa, A. C., Delamater, P. L., Salmon, D., Klein, N. P., & Omer, S. B. (2021). *Studying attitudes towards vaccine hesitance and California law SB 277 in online discourse: A dataset and methodology*. *Data in Brief*, 35.
- Omer, S., Amin, A.B. Limaye, R.J., 2017. *Communicating about vaccines in a fact-resistant world*. *JAMA Pediatr*. 171 (10), 929-930.
- Promoting COVID-19 vaccine acceptance: recommendations from the Lancet Commission on Vaccine Refusal, Acceptance, and Demand in the USA*. *Lancet* 2021; 398: 2186–92.
- Smith, Tara C., Reiss Rubinstein, D., 2020. *Digging the rabbit hole, COVID-19 edition: anti-vaccine themes and the discourse around COVID-19*. *Microbes and Infection* 22: 608-610.

# Further References

Charteris-Black, J. (2021). *Metaphors of Coronavirus. Invisible Enemy or Zombie Apocalypse?* Palgrave Macmillan.

Egbert, J., Larsson, T., Biber, D. (2020). *Doing linguistics with a corpus: Methodological considerations for the everyday user.* Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/elements/doing-linguistics-with-a-corpus/F50C163E2862F0B028424EC354D31C0C>

Elliot, C. & Greenberg, J. (2022). *Communication and Health. Media, Marketing and Risk.* Palgrave Macmillan. <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-16-4290-6>

Raatikainen, P. (2021). Truth and Theories of Truth. In Stalmaszczyk, P. *The Cambridge Handbook of the Philosophy of Language.* Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cambridge-handbook-of-the-philosophy-of-language/truth-and-theories-of-truth/3D1A8F2F05DC81330F119B135447B744>

Research topic in [Frontiers in Psychology](#): *Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): The Impact and Role of Mass Media During the Pandemic.*

Tannen, D., Hamilton, H. E., & Schiffrin, D. (2015). *The handbook of discourse analysis.* John Wiley & Sons. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/book/10.1002/9781118584194>