Description of the funded research project
1st Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects to Support Faculty Members & Researchers and Procure High-Value Research Equipment

Title of the research project: Tracing Racism in Anti-raCist discoursE: A critical approach to European public speech on the migrant and refugee crisis

Principal Investigator: Argiris Archakis

Reader-friendly title: TRACE

Scientific Area: Social Sciences

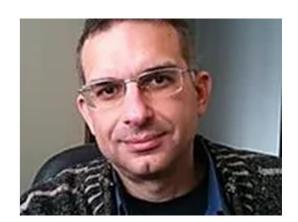**Institution and Country:** University of Patras, Greece

Host Institution: University of Patras, Greece

Collaborating Institutions:
Cardiff University, U.K.
The Open University U.K.
University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland
Università della Svizzera italiana, Switzerland
University of Malta, Malta
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece
Aristotle University Thessaloniki, Greece
Democritus University of Thrace, Greece
Hellenic Theater/Drama Education Network, Greece
Centre of Excellence for Multilingualism and Language Policy, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

Budget: 161.700€

Duration: 36 months

Project webpage: https://trace2019.wixsite.com/trace-project

Research Team:

- **Villy Tsakona, Assistant Professor, National and Kapodistrian University Of Athens, Greece**

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- **Anastasia Stamou, Associate Professor, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece**

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- **Korina Giaxoglou, Lecturer, Open University U.K.**

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The eruption of the migrant and refugee issue in European cities (2015-2018) led to the **rise of different stances and practices** within the European states, ranging from solidarity to xenophobia.

The main aims of the project

The **detection and critical analysis of the underlying messages that reproduce racist practices and ideologies** in anti-racist discourse of the public sphere dealing with migrant and refugee issues.

The **revelation that racist views are not cultivated** only through hate speech, which stigmatizes and overtly demonizes migrant and refugee populations, but **also through seemingly anti-racist discourse**, which aims at denouncing racist practices, **but ends up disguising, reproducing and sedimenting inequalities**.

Specific aims of the project

The creation of a corpus of anti-racist (multimodal) texts including media texts (advertising campaigns, news articles, TV shows, cartoons) and institutional texts (educational material, parliamentary proceedings, and other political and legal texts).

Corpus annotation and analysis in order to detect texts indirectly perpetuating social and/or sociolinguistic inequalities, that is, what we tentatively call anti-racist texts including liquid racist (Weaver 2016).

Drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the analysis concerns various linguistic and other semiotic strategies through which racist views infiltrate discourse intended as anti-racist.

The creation of a critical toolkit (TRACE) based on the findings of the analysis, in order to enhance individuals' critical awareness, namely their ability to detect racism in anti-racist discourse.

The final goal of the program is to inform and sensitize the public, particularly educational and institutional bodies, in this kind of latent racism via the use of printed and audio-visual material.

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The innovative aspects of the project pertain to the investigation of the contradiction identified in

the detection of racism in anti-racist discourse.

To this end, we attempt a thorough and extensive study of liquid racism (Weaver 2016) incubated in media and institutional discourse after the massive moves and dislocations of migrants and refugees.

More specifically, the originality of our project resides in:

the theoretical framework

as our study will contribute to the problematization of anti-racism, which remains a less explored area for CDA and/or Critical Linguistics;

the compilation of a corpus of anti-racist texts

that may also afford covert racist views concerning recent migrant and refugee issues, which, to the best of our knowledge, will be the first of this kind in Greece, and which will serve both research and educational purposes;

Project originality

the methodology adopted

for our analyses we will exploit **an array of critical tools**, which will reveal sociolinguistic and, by extension, sociocultural inequalities and exclusions. The combination of analytical frameworks such as the following

- *Discourse-historical approach (Reisigl & Wodak 2001),*
- *Narrative Positioning (Bamberg 1997/2004),*
- *General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH, Attardo 2001),*
- *Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA, Charteris-Black 2004), and*
- *Socio-semiotic Approach (van Leeuwen 2008)*

will enable us to create TRACE, **a hybrid and innovative methodological tool, specifically produced for the detection of liquid racism in anti-racist discourse** and addressed at non-experts;

the applications of the project

include the creation of the TRACE toolkit and highlight researchers' social role in enhancing **the critical awareness of the general public**;

the social dissemination of our findings

Will take place through **state-of-the-art technologies**, such as the use of a digital platform and audiovisual material, as well as through **educational activities**.

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The Trace toolkit will constitute an efficient means for **challenging and undermining racist standpoints and behaviors**, which is the long-term scientific and social impact of our project.

Scientific impact

- For the first time, anti-racist discourse **will be systematically** investigated through a (socio)linguistic lens.
- **The creation of a corpus of anti-racist texts** is, to the best of our knowledge, the first of this kind, and through open access it will be available for qualitative and quantitative analyses.
- **Open access educational material** will be compiled for students and teachers, so that they become trained in recognizing, assessing, and questioning implicit racist aspects of anti-racist discourse in everyday texts.
- **The training of (post)doctoral researchers** working for the project in detecting and analyzing latent racism is an important part of the scientific contribution of the project.
- **Academics from different disciplines and institutions** working on the project will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the topic at hand.

Publications (to date)

- Archakis, A. & Tsakona, V. (2021). "Greek migrant jokes online: A diachronic-comparative study on racist humorous representations". *Internet Pragmatics*.
- Tsakona, V., Karachaliou, R. & Archakis, A. (2020). "Liquid racism in the Greek anti-racist campaign #StopMindBorders", *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict* 8 (2): 232-261.
- Τσάκωνα, Β., Καραχάλιου, Ρ. & Αρχάκης, Α. (2020). "Μετανάστευση και κριτικός γραμματισμός: Η περίπτωση του ρευστού ρατσισμού". Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference (Nicosia, 11-12 October 2019): *Literacy and Contemporary Society: Identities, Texts, Institutions*, 525-539. Nicosia: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth.

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Social impact

Since one of the goals of the project is the production of **a critical toolkit** which will enhance the critical awareness of the bodies involved in the migrant/refugee issue, the following stakeholders will benefit form the project:

- **students and teachers/professors**;
- **non-profit organizations offering humanitarian aid, organizations and political bodies**, those responsible for advertising campaigns for migrants and refugees;
- **volunteers, researchers and citizens** interested in migration and (anti-)racism issues, and those involved in the psychological support of migrants and refugees.

Economic impact

Unveiling covert racism practices in the public sphere is expected to contribute to the strengthening of anti-racist discourse and ultimately to more inclusive policies and a more equitable treatment of migrant and refugee populations.

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1. **The compilation of a corpus of anti-racist texts**, which will consist of approximately 500,000 words, and a subcorpus of anti-racist texts where racism has been detected.

2. **Critical analysis of indicative anti-racist texts** into which liquid racism is detected, and creation of the TRACE critical toolkit.

3. **The creation of the digital platform**, which comprises: the project' website, a digital repository of bibliography, the electronic corpus of anti-racist texts, the annotated subcorpus of 'racist' anti-racist texts and the online Trace critical toolkit.

4. **Dissemination of the findings**:

   • **Social dissemination** through the project website and social media, posters and brochures, the Press, audiovisual material, and theatrical and educational workshops.

   • **Scientific dissemination** through presentations in international conferences, articles submitted to top quality international journals, organization of an international conference, and publication of an edited volume.

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