Representing the Roma in Romanian Media
A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

av

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Abstract


In this thesis, I addressed the representation of the Roma in Romanian newspapers, television news, and social media. I focused on Romania, a country with the largest Roma population in Europe, and where the Roma have historically experienced centuries of discrimination and social exclusion. I conducted an in-depth Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) to reveal what kind of discourses are used to represent this minority group, after Romania joined the European Union. The analysis in this thesis confirms the well-documented discourses in reference to Roma as criminal, uneducated, dirty, immoral, and as resisting assimilation into wider society. In addition, this research shows how these discourses have been incorporated into newer forms specific to the current political climate across Europe, increasingly dominated by right-wing populist politics, where minority groups, such as the Roma have become easy targets for politicians to justify their political failures and are scapegoated for lack of jobs, declining economic prosperity, instability, fears of immigration and of the loss of national autonomy and traditions. The detailed MCDA analysis allowed me to show how racism can be communicated in a variety of ways, not so much in relation to biological differences but in terms of culture, behaviour, traditions and national values. The multimodal approach was instrumental in showing how different media, with their different affordances have their specific way of avoiding overt racism while nevertheless the ideology remains. We see how the combination of different modes help to communicate the civil nature of violent actions, such as camp evictions, or the representation of poverty as a choice, rather than embedded in the social structures. Moreover we see on social media how ‘simple fun’, in the form of humour and ridicule, is loaded with extreme forms of racism that even call for ethnic cleansing.

Keywords: Roma, Multimodal Critical Discourse analysis, racism, right-wing populism, Romanian media

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