Symposium title: *By the way* or *in your face*? Political positioning by linguistic means

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Symposium format:
- **Symposium Multimodal**

Symposium mode:
- **Hybrid**

Sub-themes:
- ☐ LANGUAGE IN USE: communication, interaction, conversation analysis, discourse, corpus, media
- ☐ LINGUISTIC SOCIAL ISSUES: linguistic (in)justice, power, advocacy, attitude & bias, diversity-emancipation, discriminations, ethnicity and gender, ideology, language & social justice

Abstract:
Political positioning is a linguistic practice by means of which people discursively bring forth and process the fundamental states and constitutions of social coexistence. The thesis of the symposium is that positionings are accomplished in the most diverse ways. Political positioning can be – *in your face* – demanded and undertaken loudly, vehemently and very explicitly. Such positionings are visible and salient practices of political discourse. However, positioning can also be very implicit, subtle or taken-for-granted and thus take place on the basis of barely perceived features of expression. It is above all these subtle indexical forms of political positioning – *by the way* – that make our everyday interactions appear discursively relevant for social coexistence.

The symposium discusses research on political positioning by linguistic means in current and historical discourses. It explores the question of how macro-states and conditions of common existence are (re)produced on the microlevel of concrete interactions and texts.

Argument:
Political positioning is a linguistic practice by means of which people discursively bring forth and process the fundamental states and constitutions of social coexistence. Especially increasingly liminal and precarious (cf. Spitzmüller/Bendl 2020) fluid and uncertain states of crisis and permanent transformation - which are not only to be found in recent global history or the current developments in Eastern Europe - require social positionings that are produced interactionally and discursively (cf. positioning theory, Davies/Harré 1990). Such positioning is carried out on the basis of historical retrospection, current stocktaking and future perspectives and proves to be political insofar as it has a reference to common and communal coexistence, which is accomplished indexically (cf. Dang-Anh/Scholl 2022).

The thesis of the symposium is that linguistic positionings are accomplished in the most diverse ways. Political positioning can be – *in your face* – demanded and undertaken loudly, vehemently and very explicitly. Such positionings are visible and salient practices of political discourse. However, positioning can also be very implicit, subtle or taken-for-granted (cf. Garfinkel 1967) and thus take place on the basis of barely perceived features of expression. It is above all these subtle indexical forms of political positioning – *by the way* – that make our everyday interactions appear discursively relevant for social coexistence.

Furthermore, speakers make use of a variety of linguistic means in political positionings. For example, they employ narratives (cf. Dang-Anh/Scholl 2022, Fina/Georgakopoulou 2012) and appellations/categorisations (cf. Acke 2015, Hornscheidt 2006) to position themselves or others both explicitly and implicitly. Implicature and presupposition as well as phonetic, orthographic, grammatical or lexical variation are linguistic means by which more implicit positionings are performed.

For our symposium, we invite speakers to present their research on political positioning by linguistic means in current and historical discourses in democratic and authoritarian political systems as well as in all regions and languages. We are especially interested in contributions which explore the question of how macro-states and conditions of common existence are (re)produced on the microlevel of concrete interactions and texts. Topics can include but are not limited to political positionings

- towards or by political actors, for example candidates for political offices, influential individuals in media and society, authoritative leaders,
- towards or within political systems, groups or movements, for example political parties like social democrats or conservatives, unions or online communities, feminist, ecological or populist movements,
- towards political opinions, ideas or ideologies, for example as against or for COVID-19 measures, as a proponent of gender-fair language, as anti-communist or as Marxist,
- in everyday interaction or in settings and communities of practice that are not to be considered primarily political.

Acke, H. (2015). Sprachliche Legitimierung protestantischer Mission: Die Publikationen von Svenska Missionsförbundet um 1900. De Gruyter.

Dang-Anh, M.; Scholl, S. (2022). Politisches Positionieren in der NS-Zeit: Zur sprachlichen Bearbeitung von Identitätsdilemmata in Eingaben und Zellengesprächen. In: Heidrun Kämper and Albrecht Plewnia (eds.): Sprache in Politik und Gesellschaft: De Gruyter, 123–140.

Davies, B., & Harré, R. (1990). Positioning: The Discursive Production of Selves. Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 20(1), 43–63.

Fina, A. de; Georgakopoulou, A. (2012). Analyzing Narrative: Discourse and Sociolinguistic Perspectives. Cambridge University Press.

Garfinkel, H. (1967). What is Ethnomethodology? In: Harold Garfinkel (ed.): Studies in Ethnomethodology. Polity Press, 1–34.

Hornscheidt, A. (2006). Die sprachliche Benennung von Personen aus konstruktivistischer Sicht. De Gruyter.

Spitzmüller, J.; Bendl, C. (2020). Prekaritätserfahrungen. Einleitung in das Themenheft. In: Wiener Linguistische Gazette 85, 1–23.