

## Tweets across the Borders: An Interlingual Study on European Populism

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### Abstract

*This study explores the discourse of four European populist and extremist parties on Twitter, namely Front National, Lega Nord, Movimento 5 Stelle and UKIP, both from a quantitative and a qualitative perspective. The analysis of the most frequent keywords in their tweets, compared to mainstream parties reference corpora, allowed to identify the most recurrent themes conveyed by the four groups. Results show a considerable number of common keywords in the examined parties, with the exception of Movimento 5 Stelle. Furthermore, the study of the keywords collocations depicts how each party describes common topics, such as immigration, finance and the European Union. Findings report that the majority of collocates are exclusively used by the populist parties in comparison with the reference groups, suggesting an apparent discrepancy between populist and established parties' discourse. Finally, tweets were annotated following the Appraisal framework (Martin/White 2005). This process highlighted how parties bond with their followers by identifying any propensity in the use of evaluative language, for example, instances of emotions, judgments, intensifications or expression of stance. Outcomes indicate that all four parties tend to intensify or decrease degrees of evaluation and to avoid engagement with different stances, whereas the expression of emotional, ethical and aesthetic judgments is similar in populist and reference groups.*

### Keywords

*discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, appraisal theory, social networking, systems, populist parties, twitter*