
“Dirty satanist paedophiles”: discovering hate speech against the LGBTQIA+ community in Italian, between religious extremism and conspiracy theories

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The last few years have seen a global rising concern about the diffusion of hateful rhetoric against marginalized people and right-wing radicalization through conspiracy theories. Thus, hate speech (HS) has been extensively studied, highlighting how it can change based on the targeted group, on the social media platforms it uses and on the time frame in which it is produced (Basile et al., 2019). Therefore, to analyse HS effectively, it is essential to keep up with the new forms it takes, the new platforms that host HS and the ever-changing rhetorical arguments that build the foundations of hateful discourse.

Through a corpus-based approach, this study aims to investigate and classify the linguistic features of HS against LGBTQIA+ people on popular Telegram chats in Italian, characterized by a high number of Christian religious extremists and believers in fearmongering conspiracy theories.

The investigation develops in two phases.

A) The corpus was annotated using the framework developed by Sanguinetti et al. (2018), classifying every comment on the basis of the following categories: HS (yes/no), HS intensity (on a scale from 1 to 4), aggressiveness (no/weak/strong), offensiveness (no/weak/strong), irony (yes/no) and stereotypes (yes/no).

B) A new annotation framework was developed, in order to address the specific themes and peculiar rhetorical strategies used against the LGBTQIA+ community, and in particular against transgender people; therefore, the corpus was annotated also on the base of the following binary (yes/no) categories: dehumanization, invalidation of gender identity, pathologization, religious themes, conspiracy theories and populist rhetoric (Comandini & Patti, 2019).

References: • Comandini, G. & V. Patti, (2019). An impossible dialogue! Nominal utterances and populist rhetoric in an Italian Twitter corpus of hate speech against immigrants. In *Proceedings of the third workshop on abusive language online*. Minneapolis: Association for Computational Linguistics, 163–171. • Basile, V. et al. (2019). SemEval-2019 Task 5: Multilingual Detection of Hate Speech Against Immigrants and Women in Twitter. In *Proceedings of SemEval 2019*. Minneapolis: Association for Computational Linguistics, 54–63. • Sanguinetti, M. et al. (2018). An Italian Twitter Corpus of Hate Speech against Immigrants. In *Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation (LREC 2018)*, Miyazaki: European Language Resources Association (ELRA), 2798–2805.