



"What does populism mean in Belgian media discourse?
A Corpus-Assisted Analysis of the terms populism and
populist in French- and Dutch-Speaking Media in Belgium"

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ABSTRACT

This chapter analyzes media discourse about populism. Specifically, we examine the collocational profiles of the terms populism(s) and populist(s) in the Belgian media during 2019, a year with various elections. Using a corpus-assisted discourse studies approach, we compare the occurrences of the terms in the media outlets of the two main linguistic communities of Belgium: Dutch-speaking and French-speaking. Each dataset contains digital articles with the token populis* collated from an established journal, a serious-popular medium, a free daily medium, and a state-funded medium. We show which actors and phenomena are labelled as populist and with which connotations the terms populism and populist are used in media discourse. In order to do so, we first identify separately the frequency of each form of populis* in each media source. Then we analyze the collocates of populis* and we classify them in semantic categories. We report our key findings, including the recurrence of certain patterns of populism(s) and populist(s) usage specific to each linguistic community, as well as the main similarities and differences regarding how the terms are used in Belgian media discourse.

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