

## **From voicing dissent to declaring a revolution. The language of protest**

Protest means that people organize to publicly voice and demonstrate their anger about, their objection to, their dissatisfaction with, and their desire to influence actions, decisions and measures by governments and other institutions, which are perceived as unjust, cruel, and/or ethically wrong. Protests may focus on democracy and democratic participation, the climate crisis, police violence, sexual violence, economic aspects (e.g. wages, retirement age), restrictive measures (e.g. in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic). Protests may take different forms, ranging from pamphlets and speeches via demonstrations and marches to strikes and anarchic violence. Protests may involve – and sometimes also unite – people from different walks of life, whether it is different classes, genders, ages, professions. And protests may become ‘brands’, with their own names, hashtags or acronyms (e.g. Arab Spring, Fridays for Future, BLM, #MeToo).

Protest is supposed to raise the wider public’s awareness of an issue and mobilize political engagement. But for that purpose it first has to attract attention, which usually involves some form of disruption of order. This is why protest is often seen as negative by some or even by many, at least initially. However, most major social and political improvements in people’s lives have been initiated by public protest, so that it is also often seen as positive.

Language has always played an essential role in protest, whether it is in texts formulating the central ideology of a movement, in slogans condensing it into readily-available phrases, in debates about the legitimacy of these ideas, in calls for participation, in messages organizing joint actions, and in all discourses talking about protest.

The goal of our workshop is to examine how people, organizations, movements and the media use language to stage, manage, organize, and represent protest, thereby shaping our conceptions of the topics at issue.

We invite contributions which report on current research into concrete protest discourses or which discuss theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of the relation of protest and language use. We put great emphasis on interdisciplinarity – researchers from different academic (and non-academic) backgrounds, working with different approaches, preferably in joint projects – and diversity – different topics, sociocultural and political contexts, registers and genres, and languages.

This workshop, supported by *verbal*, the Association of Applied Linguistics in Austria, will take place at Karl-Franzens-University Graz, Austria, from 8 to 10 December 2023, and will be co-organized by Hermine Penz und Georg Marko (both University of Graz, Austria).

Please submit an abstract of no more than 300 words to [georg.marko\(at\)uni-graz.at](mailto:georg.marko(at)uni-graz.at) by 31 August 2023 (notification will be sent by mid-September). Individual presentations will be allocated 30 minutes, including 10 minutes for discussion. The workshop language is English.