

Already a movement or still a debate? Framings of the #MeToo hashtag in German, English and Spanish

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Translation in Transition 4
19 September 2019

The language of social media

The empowering effect of social media

Social media

- empower individuals to reach a large audience, change established views
- introduce or perpetuate frames in ways previously impossible
- “undermine the boundaries [...] and challenge the power of traditional news organisations” (Ahmed 2010)

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Hashtags as a linguistic phenomenon of social media

- Why do we use hashtags in social media?
- What are the linguistic functions and effects of hashtags?

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Le Hoang Nguyen @nguyenle · Sep 15

This young @astros fan is ready to go in to play #centerfield against the @Royals. #AgsWin #Astros #MLB #TakeltBack 🌪️ #nobaddays #YODO #havepassionwilltravel #putmeincoach @ Kauffman Stadium instagram.com /p/B2cd5IDAhc0/...



2

Why study hashtags?

What's linguistically interesting about hashtags?

- paralinguage – like intonation or emojis, but more powerful
#UnbackedClaim

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What's linguistically interesting about hashtags?

- paralanguage – like intonation or emojis, but more powerful
#UnbackedClaim



Black Friday @ItsBlack_Friday · Sep 11

Was hungry to the point of anger so I went to a restaurant for a proper meal before my 6 hour drive through the night. Actually such poor service and food I... I felt I needed to say something somewhere. #hangry #FirstWorldProblems



11



9



383



Julianne Regan @msjulianneregana · 20h

Bidding for dresses on eBay. STRESS. #FirstWorldProblems



5



1



23

[Show this thread](#)



AnalogueTrash @analoguetrash · 6h

I've broken my headphones this morning. The commute to work without them is horrific. <ML> #monday #FirstWorldProblems



2



8

What's linguistically interesting about hashtags?

By definition
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→ normally used
cross-linguistically

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Marilyse Hamelin
@Marilyse

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Comment **#MoiAussi** a changé la face de la musique pop



Comment **#MoiAussi** a changé la face de la musique pop

On assiste dernièrement à une véritable prolifération d'œuvres musicales ouvertement féministes. Laurence Nerbonne souffle sur les braises de #MoiAussi... voir.ca

1:24 PM - 10 Sep 2019



Si l'actrice américaine Alyssa Milano a balayé la twittosphère et lancé le mouvement **#MeToo**, c'est pourtant à Tarana Burke, une militante féministe de Harlem, que revient la paternité de cette expression datant de 2006, mais véritablement consacrée dans la foulée de l'affaire Weinstein. Initié par des femmes francophones privilégiées, des actrices d'Hollywood pour la

The #MeToo hashtag

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- encouraged “members of the public to join in to showcase the magnitude of the problem of sexual violence” (Mendes et al. 2018: 236).

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- has so far not been the object of scientific study

Hashtags for community building

Benefits produced by hashtags (Keller et al. 2018: 28–29)

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→ hashtags channel emotion and form communal activism

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 - self-branding via hashtags mainly found in one-to-many broadcasts rather than conversational, addressed messages (2012: 187)
 - hashtag talk involves multiple participants talking simultaneously about the same topic, rather than individuals conversing (2012: 196)

Functional linguistic approach to hashtag use

Hashtags enact three simultaneous communicative functions as meaning in context (Zappavigna 2015)

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- indicating topics – experiential
- organizing the structure of the post – textual
- metacomment construing an evaluative stance – interpersonal

Research objectives

- to study the semantic prosody of the #MeToo hashtag

Semantic prosody

Pragmatic colouring applied to words by its collocates (=words occurring along with it) (Louw 1993: 158–159, Vessey 2013: 13–14)

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Semantic prosody

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- to study the authors' evaluative stance in occurrences lacking collocates
- how do discourses around what seems to be the same concept diverge across languages?

Semantic prosody

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Methodology

Exemplary data

- extraction of tweets involving #MeToo hashtag
- time span recorded:
 - German 10 to 23 July 2019
 - Spanish 31 July to 6 August 2019
 - English 6 August 2019
- preliminary quantitative & qualitative analysis based on around 450 tweets per language (Twitter API limits)
- limitation: country identity not always (correctly) given

#MeToo collocates in English



#MeToo collocates in Spanish

camino ('path')
 compromiso internacional ('international commitment')
 campaña ('campaign')
 caza de brujas ('witch hunt') discursos
 caso ('case') fetiche ('fetish') hashtag
 carro ('bandwagon') iniciativa
movimiento
 mundo ('world') era
 marca ('brand') tiempos ('times')
 fenómeno trama ('narrative')
 chiringuito femirojo ('feminist left-wing beach bar')
 red internacional ('international network')

#MeToo collocates in German



WordItOut



Cross-linguistic framings of #MeToo

#MeToo as an organised pressure group

- merch (3), false accusation (2), false accuser (2), drama artist, architect, brigade, leadership, gang
- Hexenjagd ('witch hunt') (3), Aktivistin(nen) (f.) (3), Kampagne (2), Inquisition (2), Falschbeschuldigung ('false accusation'), Lynchmob, Lügengeschichte ('tall tale'), Opferkult ('cult of victimhood')
- marca ('brand') (2), caza de brujas ('witch hunt'), carro ('bandwagon'), red internacional ('international network')



Bright Start News
@BRIGHTstart

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Replying to @owahawkblog

It specifically painted "hippie chicks" as childish, dirty, drugged out, homicidal morons whose violent deaths are to be celebrated. That had to upset more than one [#MeToo](#) architect over at Alyssa Milano's agency, CAA. After all, Tarantino is repped by WMA, their competitor.

10:37 PM - 5 Aug 2019



Trek
@CogitoErgoSumAu

Follow

Replying to @TheTurul @hindmarshiking and 2 others

The current [#MeToo](#) leadership are mostly the men hating lesbians. They are desperately trying to create a wedge between men and women. Therefore anything men do to honour and please women must be attacked and denigrated.

11:15 PM - 5 Aug 2019

1 Retweet 7 Likes



Houelle Beck Klamame @houelle_beck - Jul 16

[#Halle](#)

"Am frühen Nachmittag erlag die 18-Jährige aus [#Afghanistan](#) ihren Verletzungen im Krankenhaus. Die Polizei ermittelt wegen des Verdachts eines Tötungsdelikts und fahndet nun nach einem 30-jährigen Tatverdächtigen namens Rami D., der ebenfalls aus Afghanistan stammt."



TAG24 NEWS Leipzig @TAG24LE

18-Jährige stirbt an schwersten Verletzungen: Polizei sucht Tatverdächtigen. [#Halle](#) [tag24.de/nachrichten/18...](#)

2

10

6



Markus
@Rallyefahrer

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Replying to @houelle_beck

Und von den sog. "Feministinnen" und [#metoo](#)-Aktivistinnen wird bestenfalls ohrenbetäubendes Schweigen kommen. [#mussmanwissen](#)

10:42 AM - 16 Jul 2019

3 Likes



nach welt
@nachweltcom

Follow

Ein Schlag gegen die [#MeToo](#) -Sexualhexenjagd: Der schändliche Zusammenbruch des Falls gegen den Schauspieler Kevin Spacey [nach-welt.com](#)

Cross-linguistic framings of #MeToo

Exaggerating the scope of #MeToo

- rebellion, survivor, mass-emasculation, battle, hot mess
- Hype, Zug ('train'), Auswuchs ('excess'), Sturm ('storm'), Welle ('wave')
- fetiche ('fetish')



Gaslighting Gilligan
@GasGilligan

Follow

Replying to @shady_info

@irlembberlin @bpol_b 250617

Makes sense. Men are the key to the streets & have been propaganda targeted by [#WhiteFeatherMedia](#) & political [#gaslighting](#); by [#MeToo](#) 🍆 mass-emasculatation & dehumanisation of men - ready to *trigger* & mobilise a global army...



Gaslighting Gilligan @GasGilligan
Replying to @QUINNWA91648884
@irlembberlin @bpol_b 250617

Shame, guilt, humiliation, demoralisation, dehumanisation, demoralisation, depression - "extremely potent" #DarkTriad...

12:14 AM - 6 Aug 2019

1 Like



Herr Dings aus Bums 🍆
@HrDings_ausBums

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Ist ja nicht der erste Fall, bei dem eine Karriere und nicht zuletzt ein Mensch zerstört wird, weil Frauen oder auch Männer auf den [#metoo](#) 🍆 Hype aufspringen, um daraus Kapital zu schlagen oder wenigstens EINMAL in den Medien erwähnt zu werden.



Strafverfahren gegen Kevin Spacey wird eingestellt

Zuerst verschwand das Handy des Opfers, dann zog der Mann auch noch die Zivilklage zurück. Nun lässt die Staatsanwaltschaft die Anklage gegen Kevin Spacey ganz fallen.

tagesanzeiger.ch



Santos Martinez
@SMShaffick

Follow

Replying to @KikeFSierra

Que bonito que se vaya normalizando el fetiche [#MeToo](#) 🍆



1:47 AM - 4 Aug 2019 from Munich, Germany



Cross-linguistic framings of #MeToo

Questioning the veracity of #MeToo

- rhetoric (2), nutcase, BS, idea, madness, claim
- Argumentation, Unsinn ('nonsense'), Kartenhaus ('house of cards'), Gschichtli ('little story'), Dorf ('village')
- chiringuito femirojo ('feminist left-wing beach bar')



Franklin Nyairo
@SpaceAndOrTime

Follow

Replying to @geekinthejungle

It is called, extrajudicial witch-hunt, post-Harvey Weinstein **#MeToo** BS! Nights once classed as bad dates or near misses, are being exhumed and re-evaluated. Women are watching the film of their lives, searching for smthng they missed. stop, rewind. Look again.

10:03 PM - 5 Aug 2019 from Vantaa, Suomi

2 Retweets 2 Likes

1 2 2



carlosdeloso
@carlosdeloso

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#MeToo y otros chiringuitos femirojos similares deberían ser condenados e ilegalizados por manipular y compararse con aquellos que han sufrido violación. Es indecente que esas mujeres que han vendido su cuerpo para obtener ventajas laborales vengan ahora a mostrarse como ...

12:47 AM - 5 Aug 2019

1 2



Mansion_Dave
@DavidDa31879275

Follow

Replying to @michelvi

It's very much like a **#metoo** idea and can be weaponized, by anyone for any reason, too easily!
#RedFlagLaw

9:39 PM - 5 Aug 2019

1 2

Anne Wünsche zeigt Po auf Instagram – Fans vermuten Photosho...
Die ehemalige "Berlin – Tag & Nacht"-Darstellerin wird immer wieder für ihre Postings kritisiert. In ihrem neuesten Post vermuten Fans, die ...
stern.de

14 2 6



Klaus Hain Psy. D.
@klaus_hain

Follow

Replying to @sternde

Ich frage mich immer, was Menschen antreibt sich so fotografieren zu lassen? Wenn dann jemand darauf reagiert, kommt sofort die **#MeToo** Argumentation.....

4:17 AM - 20 Jul 2019

1 2

#MeToo without collocates: Four stance categories

Criticise



Dr Amy Kavanagh
@BlondeHistorian

Follow

This morning I will be on @BBCWomansHour to talk about how I experience unwanted touching as a disabled woman.

Disabled women & non-binary people keep being excluded from #MeToo 🙋 & my new project with @DrHannah seeks to change this.



Amalia Blanco
@AmaliaBlanco2

Follow

No se como podemos ser tan imbéciles. Muy harta. Si. Tb del #metoo 🙋



La Razón @larazon_es
#Cultura | La "Traviata" del MeToo 📺 Paco Azorín estrena en Peralada una versión de la obra de Verdi en la que la protagonista es una mujer empoderada, con pantalones y que deja los tacones a un lado irzn.es/pbszs2

12:00 PM - 5 Aug 2019

1 Retweet 11 Likes



1



1



11

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12:00 PM - 5 Aug 2019

1 Retweet 11 Likes

1 1 11

Reject/hijack



SPIEGELVERKEHRT
@AchimSpiegel

Follow

Die übliche Täter-Opfer Umkehr der linken Presse. Stimmt die Herkunft der Täter, ist es mit #metoo 🙋 plötzlich nicht mehr weit her. spon.de/afwi2 via @SPIEGELONLINE



Freiburg - Prozess um mutmaßliche Gruppenvergewaltigung: "Wie Monster"
Elf Männer stehen wegen des Vorwurfs der Vergewaltigung einer 18-Jährigen vor Gericht. Ein 25-jähriger Tatverdächtiger schliderte nun seine Version der Nacht.
spiegel.de

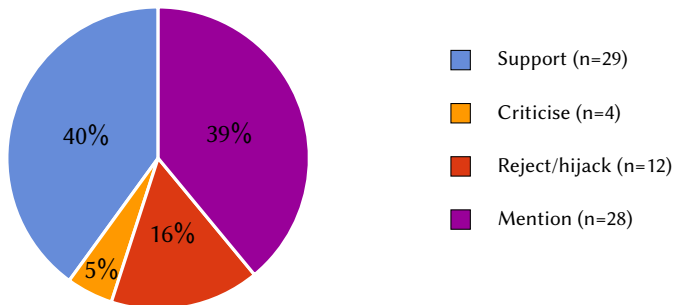
11:00 PM - 10 Jul 2019

16 Retweets 39 Likes

16 39

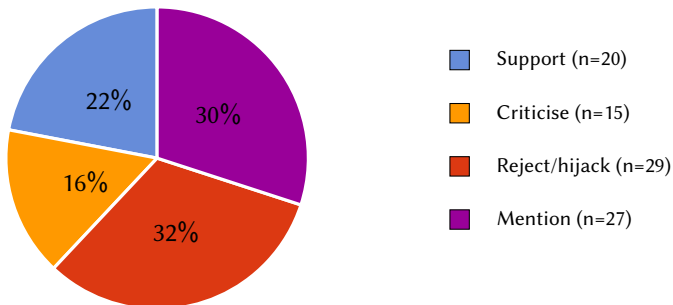
#MeToo in English

Without collocates (n=73)



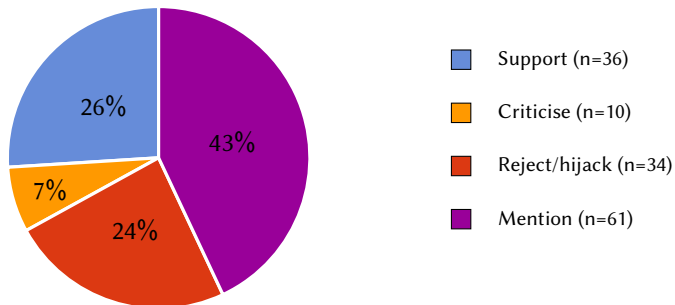
#MeToo in German

Without collocates (n=91)



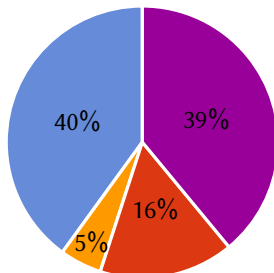
#MeToo in Spanish

Without collocates (n=141)

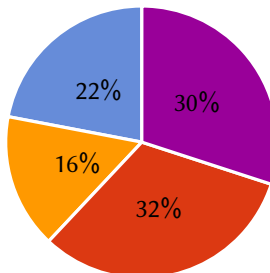


Comparison of #MeToo hashtags without collocates

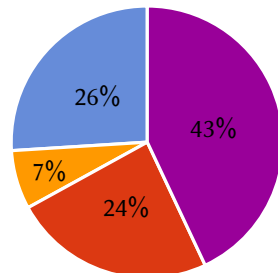
English (n=73)



German (n=91)



Spanish (n=141)



Conclusion

Some tentative observations

- German discourse: semantic prosody frames #MeToo more reluctantly (“debate”) or even negatively (“hysteria”) than in English and Spanish (“movement”, “movimiento”)
- mirrored by authors’ stance where no semantic prosody is used

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Thank you for your attention!

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