

Attacking epistemic personhood on Twitter/X: A Spanish corpus-based examination

Abstract:

This paper reports on an examination of the actions that Spanish epistemic agents perform in order to question, challenge, undermine and/or destroy the epistemic personhood of an informer on Twitter, recently been renamed 'X'. Relying on a corpus of reactions to information about sanitary measures released during the COVID-19 pandemic by an allegedly reliable and trustworthy information source, namely the Spanish Ministry of Health, the analysis looks into the said actions and how these are arranged in larger digital discourse sequences. While contributing to extant research on conflict talk in Spanish on social networks, the paper also aims to raise vulnerable epistemic agents' awareness of the varied forms and dynamics of threats to epistemic personhood as a way of empowering them to identify and counteract such threats.

Keywords:

Conflict talk, digital discourse, epistemic personhood, epistemic trustworthiness, dismissive incomprehension, epistemic denigration

Attacking epistemic personhood on Twitter (X): A Spanish corpus-based examination

Manuel Padilla Cruz

Universidad de Sevilla

1. Introduction

In the realm of epistemic practices, conflict may originate or intensify when interactants cast doubts on epistemic agency or try to wreck a quintessential component of identity: *epistemic personhood* (Borgwald 2012; Thorson and Baker 2019). This personal trait is linked not only to knowledgeable ability and/or competence in some field, but also to reliability and trustworthiness as an informer. This paper reports on an exploration of how Spanish users of the social network Twitter—recently called ‘X’—attempt to question, defy and, eventually, ruin the epistemic personhood of an information source.

. More precisely, this study ascertains the verbal actions whereby Spanish epistemic agents tend to disparage the Spanish Ministry of Health and discredit them as questionable, untrustworthy or deceitful during the COVID-19 pandemic, while elucidating whether such actions are assembled into larger digital discourse sequences and recurrent patterns emerge

therein. Thus, this examination seeks to widen research on Spanish conflict talk in said social network (Arcila Calderón, Blanco-Herrero and Valdez Apolo 2020; Bou Franch 2021; Tejedor Calvo et al. 2020). Ultimately, the analysis purports to help vulnerable or disadvantaged epistemic agents understand the threats to their epistemic personhood with a view to endowing them with the knowledge that is most necessary for downplaying and counteracting it.

The paper continues by providing the background where this exploration is to be understood: a portrait of epistemic personhood (Section 2.1), an account of how it can be attacked (Section 2.2) and a review of conflict on Twitter/X (Section 2.3). After describing its methodology (Section 3), the paper presents and discusses the results (Section 4). To conclude, some final remarks will be made (Section 5).

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Epistemic personhood

Human beings are epistemic agents who acquire, construct and disseminate knowledge through a variety of practices. Among those practices features imparting information, whereby epistemic agents forge, consolidate, risk or even destroy a fundamental attribute: epistemic personhood. This was

characterised by Borgwald as “the ability to think autonomously, reflect on and evaluate one’s emotions, beliefs, desires, and to trust those judgements rather than deferring to others” (2012, 73). In other words, it is the capacity to make judgements and to trust them without depending on other people’s opinion.

Thorson and Baker (2019, 102) understand epistemic personhood as “the ability to author knowledge.” Accordingly, it implies “having ontological standing as a knower.” It amounts to being perceived as a source of knowledge in some domain and is exhibited through the information that is given about some issue and its quality. Hence, epistemic agents are interested in dispensing information that is not simply sufficient, relevant, clear, concise, unambiguous, well-structured, and well-presented, following Grice’s (1975) maxims, but that is also considered trustworthy (Padilla Cruz 2019a). For epistemic agents to achieve and/or retain epistemic personhood, they do not solely need to be deemed skilled, but also reliable and trustworthy informers.

Epistemic personhood is inextricably connected with *benevolence* (Sperber 1994) or *epistemic trustworthiness* (Fricker 2007; Origgi 2013). This social epistemic virtue involves the ability and willingness to be veridical, so it presupposes some responsibility for the genuineness of what is said. It depends on a series of *sources of trust* (Origgi 2013, 227–233) which determine whether epistemic agents and information deserve confidence. These sources include beliefs about the agents’ expertise or

authority in some domain, and their propensity to impart reliable information. Accrued over previous experiences, these beliefs make up their reputation as informants. Relatedly, epistemic trust is contingent on moral reasons favouring trust allocation to certain authorities, such as public or academic ones, simply because of their alleged authoritativeness.

But epistemic trust may also be affected by impressions, feelings and emotions, such as (dis)like, affect, (dis)affinity, (dis)satisfaction, disappointment or anger. As regards information, its alleged or actual relevance, timeliness, convenience, usefulness or helpfulness may also influence believability judgements (Padilla Cruz 2020a). Finally, trust allocation also depends on signals unveiling knowledge or ignorance, or possession or lack of evidence for making claims, recommending, advising or warning. They include eye contact, fidgeting, hesitation, stuttering, odd syntax, rephrasing, difficulties at finding appropriate vocabulary or use of evidential particles, adverbials, participles and clauses (Aikhenvald 2004; Cornillie 2007; Ifantidou 2001; Padilla Cruz 2020b).

Following Spencer-Oatey (2000, 2008), epistemic personhood is part of an individual's *quality face* (Padilla Cruz 2019a, 2019b). Indeed, this facet of face involves beliefs concerning competence and/or knowledge. Having an ontological standing as knowers or experts in some issue or area means being competent and knowledgeable therein. Since individuals often make judgements about their competence and/or knowledge and may also be

aware of those of other individuals about them, such judgements impact their epistemic personhood and, ultimately, their quality face.

2.2. *Attacking epistemic personhood*

Epistemic personhood partakes of the vulnerability of quality face: it may be put into question, eroded, threatened and/or even destroyed by a number of actions during epistemic practices. It may be compromised by publicly voicing arguably controversial, illogical, ill-founded or unwarranted claims, opinions, warnings or recommendations, as these allow the supposedly censurable doxastic universe that might have motivated them to be glimpsed. Additionally, epistemic personhood may also be overtly attacked by means of *conflictive* (Leech 1983), *face threatening* (Brown and Levinson 1987) or *impolite* (Culpeper 2011, 2016) acts. Specifically, attacks to epistemic personhood may be perpetrated through:¹

- a) Bald-on-record impolite acts, such as insulting an informer by means of aggressive slurs, disparaging terms and epithets that allude to undesired epistemic qualities, like stupidity, ineptitude, retardation or nonsensicality; to immoral and unfair conditions, like criminality,

¹ This list of actions is data-driven (see Section 4.1), so it does not intend to be exhaustive. Of course, further actions could damage epistemic personhood, such as ignoring the informer and not reacting to dispensed information. These actions would implicate that the information does not deserve uptake because of its untrustworthiness, while additionally showing lack of concern about the informer (Culpeper 2011, 2016).

psychopathy, sociopathy, insanity or madness, or even to ethically and epistemically disreputable social groups, like bonkers, lunatics or criminals. These terms intend to discredit, slight or smear the informer and, hence, to simultaneously call into question or deny the truthfulness, reliability, usefulness, helpfulness or convenience of information, opinions, suggestions, etc. (Allan 2015; Archer 2015; Croom 2013, 2014; Jay and Janschewitz 2008; Padilla Cruz 2019b).

b) Acts dissociating their producer from the informant and their viewpoints, seeking confrontation and making the informant feel unease. These acts would damage the informant's positive face and include:

- Expressing disagreement and/or making negative comments and critiques of voiced opinions, suggestions or warnings. Although the expression of disagreement is not an inherently impolite act, but may rather bind interlocutors (Angouri and Locher 2012), disagreement and negative comments and critiques may suggest, or overtly point out, the irrelevance, illogicality, untimeliness, inconvenience, uselessness, unhelpfulness, unreliability and/or incredibility of some information, and, ultimately, the informant's incompetence, unreliability, untrustworthiness and/or ignorance (Rees-Miller 2000; Sifianou 2012).
- Complaining, whereby epistemic agents express a variety of negative psychological states ranging from surprise, shock, disapproval and/or indignation to utter incredulity and distrust. These may be targeted at

both the information itself and its source, which may be considered to fail to meet expectations about relevance, logicity, timeliness, convenience, usefulness and/or helpfulness, and/or to blatantly violate (cultural) norms and values pertaining to truthfulness. Hence, they deserve censuring, amending and/or distrusting (Edmondson and House 1981; Edwards 2005; Laforest 2002).

c) Acts scorning or threatening the informer, insinuating that something bad might happen to them or encouraging them to undertake some undesirable course of action. These could affect the informer's negative face and comprise:

- Exhorting the informer not to take some high-minded or principled course of action, but one that is somehow consequential to the quality of their information. Thus, epistemic agents show distrust and/or reluctance to behave as advised (Kauffeld and Innocenti 2018; Kline 2019).
- Imprecating or wishing ill to the informant, thus implying that the deficiency and questionability of their information do not solely evince their incapacity and failure as an informer, but also make them worthy of some evil or misfortune that properly skilled and truthful informants should not deserve (Barker 2016; Goddard 2015; Hill 1992; Jay and Janschewitz 2008; Jumanto 2019).

Another detrimental action to epistemic personhood is *dismissive incomprehension* (Cull 2019). This is the expression, by an individual who

is in a privileged epistemic position—or (unduly) claims to be an epistemic authority—of (feigned) ignorance or inability to understand some information. With this action, the actual or supposed authority aims to characterise that information as absurd or meaningless with a view to denigrating the informer and their epistemic capacities in the eyes of an audience. Thus, the authority seeks to undermine the informer's positive face (Culpeper 2011, 2016).

Dismissive incomprehension may be expressed verbally and by means of kinesics: i.e., looks, facial expressions, gestures, etc. Furthermore, it does not need to be limited to face-to-face contexts like academia, lectures or debates, but may also feature in technology-mediated contexts. Verbal examples are utterances like these:

- (1) This is gibberish/absurd/stupid/nonsense.
- (2) I cannot understand anything/a word (of what you have said).
- (3) What on earth does any of this mean?

However, it is unclear whether there are recurrent patterns to express dismissive incomprehension or it needs to be inserted in larger discourse sequences (Padilla Cruz 2019a, 2019b).

2.3. Conflict on Twitter/X

Over the last years, Twitter/X has not only become an online venue prone to conflict (Liu and Weber 2014), but an excellent propaganda outlet

broadcasting opposite views on ongoing conflicts of diverse nature and about manifold issues (Makhortykh and Lyebedyev 2015). It is used to disseminate and impose ideas and interests, as well as to vent sentiments that can significantly impact the political, ideological and identity arena, thus altering the dynamics of aggression and conflict (Lucić, Katalinić and Dokman 2020; Marwick and boyd 2014). This has led researchers from different fields to devise tools to detect, classify and analyse confrontational and hate speech (Burnap and Williams 2015; De la Peña Sarracén and Rossi 2019; Pereira-Kohatsu et al. 2019; Watanabe, Bouazizi and Ohtsuki 2018). Efforts have also been made in order to ascertain how users position themselves with respect to certain issues (Sältzer 2020); how they make their viewpoints clear, discredit adversaries or antagonise between two positions (Gabel, Reichert and Reuter 2022); how sarcasm and incivility are employed in order to attack adversaries (Anderson and Huntington 2017); how incivility is experienced and strategies protecting face are deployed (Walsh and Baker 2022), or whether aggressiveness favours retweet intention (Yuan et al. 2022).

Regarding the Spanish context, research on conflict on Twitter/X has shed much light onto how it is managed or relegated in posts ensuing political debates (García Martín, Calatrava García and Luengo 2018), the toxicity of politicians' posts (Guerrero-Solé and Philippe 2020), how posts intentionally or accidentally create confusion in order to generate negative emotions favouring polarisation (Llorca-Asensi et al. 2021), how they take

advantage of speculation and dramatization in order to attack certain users and persuade readers (Ferré-Pavia and Sambucetti 2022), or how they resort to aggression in order to reject and render invisible certain social groups, thus impeding their normalisation (Rivera Martín, Martínez de Bartolomé and López López 2022). The strategic use of aggressiveness and hate speech in order to generate confrontation has also received significant attention in contexts like politics (Amores et al. 2021; Bou Franch 2021; Hernández Santaolalla and Sola-Morales 2019), football (Martín García, Buitrago and Beltrán Flandoli 2022) or immigration (Arcila Calderón, Blanco-Herrero and Valdez Apolo 2020; Sánchez Ortega 2022). Overall, hatred has been found to be a prerequisite for debate to arise and to persist, along with tension, as long as there is anger.

Scarce or no attention, however, has thus far been paid to online conflict in connection with challenged epistemic capabilities. This is why this study seeks to analyse how epistemic personhood is verbally attacked or wrecked in Spanish. Owing to the unpredictability of attacks to this epistemic feature, the difficulties at accessing settings where these may originate, and concerns for the privacy and anonymity of the engaged epistemic agents, this study centres on public discourse that is easily and freely accessible (Ide 1998). Accordingly, it examines tokens of digital discourse coming from Twitter/X, which are amenable to use for research purposes (D'Arcy and Young 2012; Locher and Bolander 2019). The undertaken exploration aims to address the following research questions (RQ):

- RQ#1: What actions do Spanish-speaking epistemic agents perform in order to challenge and ruin an information source's epistemic personhood on Twitter/X?
 - RQ#2: Do such actions get assembled into complex discourse structures? If so, how many discourse moves—or textual excerpts performing recognisable actions (Biber, Connor, and Upton 2007)—do attacks to epistemic personhood give rise to on the social network under consideration?
 - RQ#3: Are there identifiable recurrent patterns in such move sequences?
- The next section presents its methodology. It describes the corpus on which the study relied and how this was analysed.

3. Methodology

3.1. The corpus

The study is based on the scrutiny of 141 posts, whose content concerns medical or health issues. The posts triggering them are multimodal, as they consist of videos or images accompanied by texts (see Table 1). They contain information, announcements and recommendations about COVID-19 vaccination, the use of facemasks and other health measures, which could be considered relevant, timely, helpful, useful, warranted, reliable and

trustworthy to citizenship during the pandemic. Importantly, the posts were made by a public institution that can be regarded as an epistemic authority in a very specific domain: the Spanish Ministry of Health. This institution is not the same type of epistemic agent as a human subject: it is a social collective endowed with group agency. Yet, the ministry may be perceived as an information source and, as such, be granted or denied epistemic trust like any individual epistemic agent (Dewitt 2012; List 2016).

Original post	Translation into English	Selected reactions
	<p>‘Keep protecting yourself against #COVID19 to protect others. Follow the health recommendations. Practice the culture of care and get your #BoosterDose.’</p>	36
	<p>‘#BREAKINGNEWS. The Public Health Commission has approved the update of the #COVID19Vaccine Strategy in Spain. When can boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 11 be vaccinated after #COVID19 infection? #IVaccinateSafely.’</p>	35
	<p>‘Remember. The mask is still mandatory if you travel by air, sea, bus, train, cable-car... Including platforms and stations. Protect yourself to protect others.’</p>	35


	<p>‘With this simple gesture, you protect yourself and your loved ones, breaking the chain of transmission of bacteria and viruses, including #COVID19. Remember that the virus is still among us. #Protectyourself to protect others.’</p>	35
---	---	----

Table 1: Posts triggering the selected reacting posts.

However, such messages are also deemed controversial due to general misinformation, ignorance, multiple epistemic and attitudinal stances, populism and/or conspiracy theories, among others (Baptista Ferreira 2021; Dow et al. 2021; Ullah et al. 2021). These could have prejudiced many citizens and led them to sustain, what in social epistemology is known as, a *testimonial injustice* against the ministry (Fricker 2006, 2007). This is an *epistemic injustice*—a wronging stemming from a negative knowledgeability-related assessment—consisting of thinking that the information dispensed by the ministry is unreliable. Consequently, posts reacting to such messages question their credibility and even include conflictive language. This examination exclusively centres on reactions of this kind.

The posts under scrutiny were collected between September 2021 and June 2022 using the advanced search tool on the platform. Among the terms used for the search were *vacuna* (‘vaccine’), ‘covid-19’, *mascarilla* (‘facemask’), *dosis de recuerdo* (‘booster dose’) and epithets like *inepto*

(‘inept’), *mentiroso* (‘liar’) or *criminal*. Once the posts were extracted, in addition to their *text attribute*—the body of the text—the following metadata were gathered: username, date of publication, link to the post and user’s location (Hardaker and McGlashan 2016).

3.2. Data analysis

Following the guidelines supplied by the *Association of Internet Researchers* (Markham and Buchanan 2012), the data were duly anonymised by removing all identifying information (D’Arcy and Young 2012; Locher and Bolander 2019). Then, they were individually coded by means of an acronym that indicates the domain to which the post belongs—‘MED’ for medicine—and the post order number. Next, the posts were included in an Excel spreadsheet which contains information about the poster, the text attribute and their links.

Each post was segmented into moves and these were quantified. Then, the moves were sorted and labelled on the grounds of the verbal action that is accomplished in them. This classification relied on the aforementioned conflictive (Leech 1983), face threatening (Brown and Levinson 1987) or impolite (Culpeper 2011, 2016) acts. The actions performed in the moves were also quantified and, in the case of the posts consisting of more than one move, the different combinations of actions were additionally identified.

4. Results and discussion

The examination this paper reports on aims to ascertain the actions whereby Spanish Twitter users attack the epistemic personhood of a supposedly reliable information source (RQ#1), whether such actions combine in larger discourse stretches (RQ#2) and, if so, whether recurrent actional patterns can be observed (RQ#3). The following Sections present and discuss the results of the undertaken examination, thus responding to each of the RQs.

4.1. Actions attacking epistemic personhood

Overall, the epistemic agents reacting to the information released by the Spanish Ministry of Health perform a total of 237 actions in order to attack epistemic personhood in the 141 posts in the corpus. Of these actions, 103 are insults '[INS]' (43.45%), 69 amount to the expression of disagreement '[DIS]' (29.11%), 36 consist of exhortations '[EXH]' (15.18%) and there are 22 imprecations '[IMP]' (9.28%). However, only six cases of dismissive incomprehension '[INC]' have been observed (2.53%) and one sole complaint '[COM]' (0.42%).

Evidently, these findings are somehow expectable, given that the corpus was selected on the grounds of the aggressiveness and offensiveness of the posts. This criterion seems to have biased the data in favour of attacks consisting of insults, disagreements, exhortations and imprecations over those involving dismissive incomprehension or complaints. Figure 1 compares the actions that are accomplished with a view to calling epistemic personhood into question:

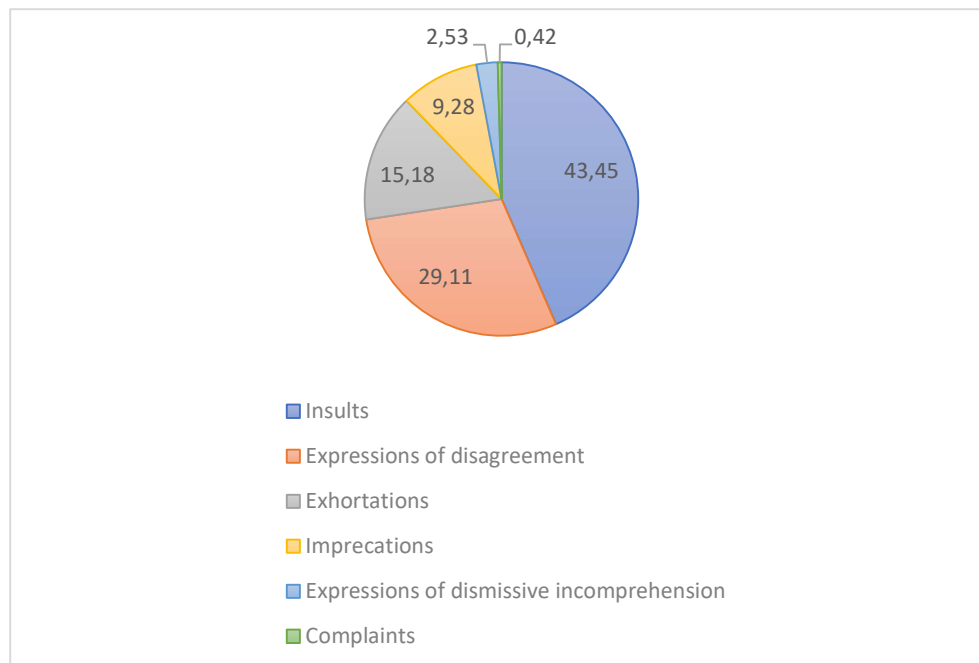


Figure 1: Actions attacking epistemic personhood.

Noteworthy of attention is the fact that the reliability, timeliness, helpfulness, usefulness and trustworthiness of the information, and hence the Spanish health authorities' epistemic personhood, are predominantly questioned by means of insults (Croom 2013, 2014; Jay and Janschewitz 2008). In most posts these authorities are denigrated through traditionally

spelt epithets like *corruptos* ('corrupt', MED004), *terroristas* ('terrorists', MED014) or *criminales* ('criminals', MED021) or *sinvergüenzas* ('rascals', MED027). In other posts, in contrast, insults are acronymic, as in the case of the recurrent *HDLGP*, which stands for *hijos de la gran puta* ('son of a bitch', MED032, MED044); combine letters and numbers, as in *4s3s1n0s* for *asesinos* ('murderers', MED005), or even have typos, as in *serdos* instead of *cerdos* ('pigs', MED009). Although these qualifying terms do not directly and overtly seek to undermine the epistemic personhood of the information source by alluding to the deficiencies of their skills and failure as an epistemic agent, doubts are cast on it by characterising the source as a type of person from whom nothing good, fair or reasonable can be expected, and hence, not even correct, reliable or well-intended information (Anderson and Huntington 2017; Gabel, Reichert and Reuter 2022).

However, the corpus also includes insults containing disparaging characterisations connected with epistemic abilities and trustworthiness (Padilla Cruz 2019b), such as the recurrent *mentiroso* ('liar', MED008, MED028, MED041), *indigentes mentales* ('mental indigents', MED035), *incompetentes* ('dimwits', MED043, MED103), *retrasados*, ('retarded people', MED045), *ineptos* ('inept people', MED046), *burros* ('morons', MED055), *lerdos* ('idiots', MED057), *magufos* ('sorcerers', MED097, MED102), or the acronym *SBNRMLS*, which stands for *subnormales* ('dim-witted people', MED136). Clearly, these insults do attempt to besmirch, lessen or erode the authorities' epistemic personhood by referring to their

supposed ineptitude and unreliability (Allan 2015; Archer 2015). Moreover, indignation and incredulity about the messages from these authorities are fairly obvious in four insults wherein tweeters resort to comparisons. Two of them connect the authorities with disreputable characters, of which (4) is an example, and one with an animal that is stereotypically associated with clumsiness and ineptitude (5); the remaining one (6) seemingly attempts to be somewhat witty, perhaps with a view to introducing some humour:

(4) *Sois peores que el doctor Mengele.* (MED011)²

‘You are worse than doctor Mengele.’

(5) *Sois como los burros: Tiráis pa'lante sin mirar nada más. Pero ellos tienen más dignidad que vosotros.* (MED055)³

‘You are like donkeys: You pull forward without looking at anything else. But they have more dignity than you.’

(6) *fernando simón es como si gloria fuertes fuera un maricón.* (MED132)⁴

‘Fernando Simón is as if Gloria Fuertes were a faggot.’

The opinions voiced in the responding posts in order to show disagreement are diametrically opposed to the messages publicised by the authorities (Sältzer 2020). This is perhaps due to a certain wrath, which

² Josef Mengele was a German *Schutzstaffel* (SS) official during World War II who was known as *Todesengel* (Death Angel) because of his deathly experiments with prisoners at Auschwitz.

³ Original typos, mistakes and punctuation idiosyncrasies are preserved.

⁴ Fernando Simón Soria is an epidemiologist who has directed the Centre for Coordination of Health Alerts of the Ministry of Health since 2012 and performed as spokesperson for the Ministry of Health during the COVID-19 pandemic. In turn, Gloria Fuertes García was a poet included in the so-called *Generation of the 50s* subsequent to the literary movement of the first Spanish post-war generation.

would have arisen as a consequence of surfeit and feelings of helplessness during the pandemic (Grech and Grech 2021). These would have sparked off the boldness, audacity and even rebelliousness that can be noticed in the respondents' contributions, wherewith they might have sought to confront and antagonise the authorities (Culpeper 2011, 2016; Gabel, Reichert and Reuter 2022), as the following examples exhibit:

(7) *SOIS UNOS MIERDAS VACUNAZIS CORRUPTOS. INCLUSO LA OMS LO DESACONSEJA. ¡¡¡VENDIDOS!!!* (MED072)

'YOU ARE SHIT CORRUPT VACCINAZI. EVEN THE WHO DOES NOT ADVISE IT. YOU ARE SOLD PEOPLE!!!'

(8) *Hay que ser HDLGP para pedir que se vacune a los niños pequeños con algo que no les protege hasta la tercera dosis estando a punto de aprobarse medicamentos específicos para los enfermos.* (MED074)

'You have to be MTHRFBCKRS to request that young children be vaccinated with something that does not protect them until the third dose, since specific medications for the sick are about to be approved.'

Disenting posts denote incredulity and clear defiant attitudes, perhaps also motivated by unawareness of the actual consequences of the pandemic (Grech and Grech 2021). Insinuation of such a stance does not only enable the tweeters to deprive the authorities of credibility in order to ruin their epistemic personhood, but also to distance from them (Culpeper 2011, 2016). This dissociation is further fostered by the negative attitudes towards

the authorities' messages, which bind an in-group whose members would endorse such attitudes (Padilla Cruz 2010).

On some occasions, disagreement involves *echoing* previous well-known messages released by the authorities and references to policies, decisions and measures (Sperber and Wilson 1995), as the following post shows:

(9) *Me recuerda a lo de ...las mascarillas no son necesarias pero lávate las manos que el virus entra por ahí. Pandilla de ineptos!!!* (MED076)

'This reminds me of... the masks are not necessary but wash your hands because the virus enters through there. Bunch of fools!!!'

On others, dissent is expressed through overt allusions to widely entertained and taken-for-granted (prejudiced) ideas, as can be observed in example

(10):

(10) *Mascarilla no protege de los virus. Mascarilla PERJUDICA*

GRAVEMENTE LA SALUD . MINISTERIO DE SINVERGÜENZAS.

(MED106)

'Mask does not protect against viruses. Mask SERIOUSLY HARMS HEALTH. MINISTRY OF SCOUNDRELS.'

Both tactics do not simply require repetition or paraphrase. For them to effectively dissociate their producers from the authorities, it must be manifest that questioning, rejecting or disdainful attitudes are conveyed (Wilson and Sperber 2012). The tweeters would take advantage of this in order to not simply call into question the messages, policies, decisions and

measures, but, more importantly, the authorities' benevolence and reliability, thus surreptitiously ridiculing them (Culpeper 2011, 2016).

Disagreement is even voiced by replicating unfortunate slips of the tongue made by the cabinet's members, wherewith the audience may be familiarised, as example (11) illustrates:

(11) *Y dale Perico al torno... no tenéis solución... qué lástima de Ministerio, bueno, éste y otros cuantos más... Ciencia, Consumo... en fin. La "expertitud" que brilla por su ausencia.* (MED075)⁵

'And let the lathe work, Perico... You are hopeless... What a shame about the Ministry; well, this and a few others... Science, Consumer Affairs... Anyway. The "expertise" shines by its absence.'

Like in the examples discussed by Anderson and Huntington (2017), the sarcasm and condescending tones which such a replication transpires also enable the tweeters to express mocking, dissociative, questioning and rejecting attitudes (Wilson and Sperber 2012). Thus, they further manage to ridicule and belittle not only the authorities, but also the government of which they are members, and curtail their credibility as information sources (Culpeper 2011, 2016; Dynel 2016; Kreuz 2020).

Moreover, the expression of disagreement may seek to affect the ideological and political arena in Spain (Lucić, Katalinić and Dokman 2020; Marwick and boyd 2014). In some cases, it can work as an incitement to

⁵ In this post there is a recognisable allusion to a slip of the tongue made by the former vice-president Carmen Calvo, who referred to the government's expertise through the infelicitous term in quotation marks.

insubordination against some authorities who are supposed to give unwarranted, deceitful and/or harmful information. Therefore, disagreement can also be regarded as an effective attack to epistemic personhood, albeit somewhat veiled and indirect. This can be seen in the following post:

(12) *Estos del ministerio son unos lerdos que al menos a mi no me representan. Si te indican algo haz lo contrario si quieres sobrevivir.*

(MED057)

‘Those from the ministry are dumb, at least they don’t represent me. If they tell you something, do the opposite if you want to survive.’

The tone of the exhortations in the corpus is evidently imperative. In essence, tweeters do not directly abuse epistemic personhood through them. Rather, what they encourage the authorities to do— something undesirable (Kauffeld and Innocenti 2018)—suggests stances of utter mistrust, a sound questioning of the Ministry’s messages and avenging desires. This can be observed in the following posts:

(13) *La #DosisDeRecuerdo que se la ponga vuestra puta madre. (MED001)*⁶

‘Give the #BoosterDose to your fucking mother.’

(14) *Mafiosos BAKUNAROS vosotros, que estáis todos a sueldo de las FARMAMAFIAS, a estas alturas solo engañáis a los tontos. (MED117)*

‘You gangsters, vaccinate yourselves, you are all in the pay of the pharma-mafias, at this point you only deceive fools.’

⁶ The campaign launched by the Ministry of Health purposefully exploited the ambiguity of ‘recuerdo’ (‘booster’/‘memory’) in the nominal phrase *dosis de recuerdo* (‘booster dose’).

In fact, exhortations allow the responding tweeters' scepticism, contempt, anger and even fury to be glimpsed (Kline 2019). These feelings and attitudes would be duly motivated by the supposed dubiousness and potential harmful, or fatal, consequences of the messages from the authorities. Moreover, exhortations also evidence a strong attitude of rebelliousness and a clear intention to disobey the authorities' recommendations (Lucić, Katalinić and Dokman 2020; Marwick and boyd 2014). Thus, while impacting their negative face (Culpeper 2011, 2016), these acts erode their believability.

Something similar applies to imprecations, whereby reacting tweeters wish all sorts of misfortunes and calamities to the authorities (Goddard 2015; Hill 1992). Frequent imprecations are "Que os follen" (MED002) or "Que os den" (MED033), both meaning "fuck you". By themselves, imprecations do not work as evident blows to epistemic personhood. As opposed those in religious contexts, which beg for goods like commiseration, favour or mercy (Barker 2016), the imprecations in the corpus attempt to instil beliefs that something detrimental should befall to their addressees. Thus, they seek to frighten the authorities through reference to some evil that is wished upon them. They function like curses or execrations, which amount to expressions of loathing showing scorn, aiming at confrontation and ultimately undermining negative face (Culpeper 2011, 2016; Jay and Janschewitz 2008; Jumanto 2019). Yet, the misfortune or adversity to which they allude is presented as reasonable and perhaps

even expected: it is a deserved punishment for the untrustworthiness, harmfulness and unfairness of what the authorities recommend. This can be seen in the following posts:

(15) *Mafia, algún día pagareis por todo lo que estáis provocando, tarde o temprano llegará vuestro día, ratas.* (MED033)

‘Mafia, one day you will pay for everything you are causing, sooner or later your day will come, rats.’

(16) *Venga #Mercenarios #Sicarios #Terroristas mintiendo para que la gente de inoculen una #Terapiagénica con unos efectos adversos increíbles que hasta matan, en un tramo de edad donde casi no ha habido incidencias! Algún día serán juzgados por #Crimendelesahumanidad #Yoacusos #Ineptos* (MED113)

‘Come on, #Mercenaries #Hitmen #Terrorists lying so that people inoculate a #Therapyogenic with incredible adverse effects that even kill, in an age group where there have been almost no cases! Some day you will be judged for #Crimesagainsthumanity #Iaccuse #Ineptpeople.’

Imprecations insinuate the tweeters’ intuitions or certainty that their own ideas and epistemic stance about the pandemic, vaccines and facemasks, among others, are the correct. In other words, imprecations seem to arise as a result of the tweeters’ feelings or beliefs that they are in the right epistemic position and can hence regard what the Ministry advises as outrageous and worthy of a strict sanction. Indeed, the rightness of their

views appears to be reinforced by allusions to justice and a likely future trial, as in example (16) above or in “Tendréis vuestro Nuremberg” (“You will have your own Nuremberg,” MED086). In turn, the fact that the tweeters dare to openly accuse the authorities of crimes, as in (16) again, suggests that they claim, or even misappropriate, a certain role of epistemic authority.

Regarding the expression of dismissive incomprehension, the data in the corpus suggest that it is not a very common practice, at least in the reactions to the messages from the Ministry or by the Twitter users who posted them. In fact, the selection criterion applied to data-collection could have reduced the likelihood for dismissive incomprehension to appear in the corpus, given that this action does not seem to involve overtly aggressive and offensive expressions, but inability to understand or confusion at the meaning of an utterance. Moreover, the corpus does not exhibit patterns consisting of attributive sentences in which information is assessed as gibberish or nonsense, or sentences headed by a verb denoting psychological or epistemic activity that explicitly allude to inability or failure to understand an opinion or piece of information, like those in Cull (2019). Instead, the data show that dismissive incomprehension is mainly expressed not by means of evaluative assertions, but by means of interrogative structures that call into question the intelligibility, reasonableness, timeliness and credibility of what is said, as in these cases:

(17) *Pero vosotros leéis lo que ponéis, sinvergüenzas?* (MED059)

‘But do you read what you post, scoundrels?’

(18) *Son ustedes la champions League de Pedro Sanchez. Son ustedes la mentira hecha ministerio. ¿Que es eso de 5 meses para adultos y 8 semanas a los niños?. EL VIRUS SON USTEDES.* (MED061)

‘You are the Champions League of Pedro Sánchez. You are the lie-turned-ministry. What do you mean by 5 months for adults and 8 weeks for children? The virus is you.’

Owing to their rhetorical nature, such sentences may even purport to simultaneously insinuate astonishment at the absurdity of the dispensed information, as could have been done through expressions like “it is just crazy talk” (Cull 2019).

Finally, the only example of a complaint that has been attested in the corpus does not constitute a direct attack on epistemic personhood either, as it expresses discontent, irritation, annoyance and/or rage at having to wear the facemask:

(19) *Putá que vos parió ya con el puto trapo infecto de mierda.* (MED104)

‘Whore who gave birth to you, with the fucking rag infected with shit.’

However, such feelings could be motivated by the conviction that the mask is of little use, which is undoubtedly contrary to what is defended by the authorities. Therefore, this complaint could also constitute another implicit attack on epistemic personhood. In it, the reliability and/or suitability of the recommendations made by the authorities are challenged through the expression of negative feelings for having to make use of something whose

efficacy is doubted. The fact that complaints are also underrepresented in the corpus could also have been motivated by the aforementioned selection criterion and their predominantly expressive nature (Edwards 2005). Nevertheless, given their ubiquity (Laforest 2002), it is surprising that complaints feature in the corpus to a lesser extent than dismissive incomprehension.

4.2. Number of moves in attacks to epistemic personhood

Quite remarkably, 84 out of the 141 posts in the corpus (59.57%) consist of just one move, while the remaining 57 posts (40.42%) consist of more than one move. Of the posts exceeding one move, 32 consist of two moves (22.69%), 13 have three moves (9.21%), six include four moves (4.25%), three comprise five moves (2.12%) and two integrate six moves (1.41%). Figure 2 exhibits the distribution of posts depending on move number:

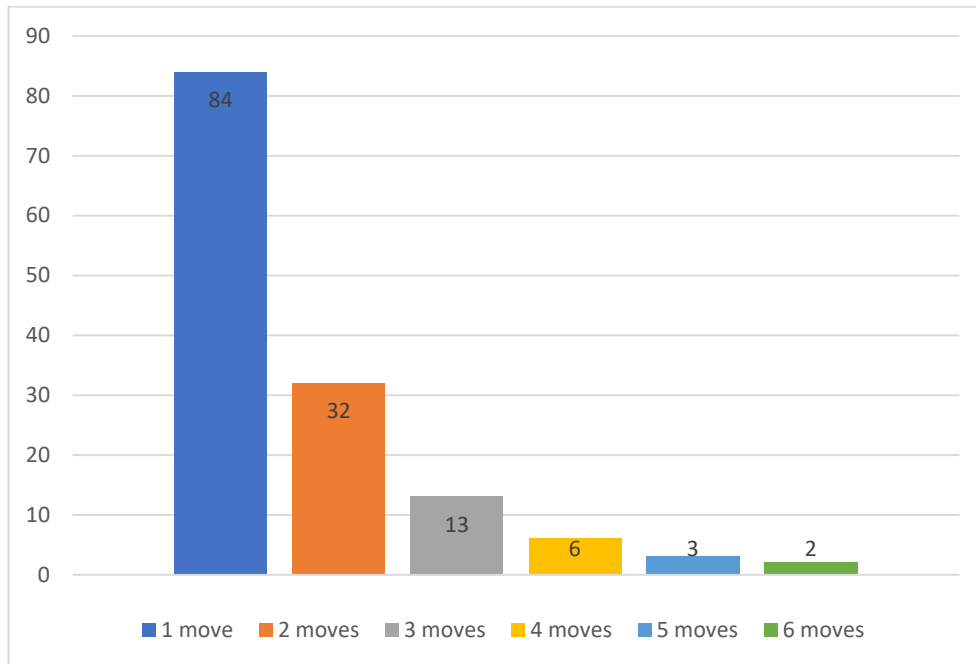


Figure 2: Distribution of posts by move number.

The data reveal that the attacks to the epistemic personhood of the source of controversial and allegedly untrustworthy information are chiefly committed by means of short, but rather incisive, forceful and visceral, posts, which outnumber the attacks through more complex and elaborated texts. In fact, in the one-move posts, the epistemic agents reacting to the textual or multimodal messages by the Ministry of Health insult this information source in 52 of them (36.87%); exhort, encourage or urge the authorities to do something disadvantageous in 14 posts (9.92%); imprecate them in 12 posts (8.51%); disagree with the information that they publicise and express contrary opinions in 5 posts (3.54%), and complain about the

content of that information in only one post (0.7%). These findings are displayed in Figure 3:

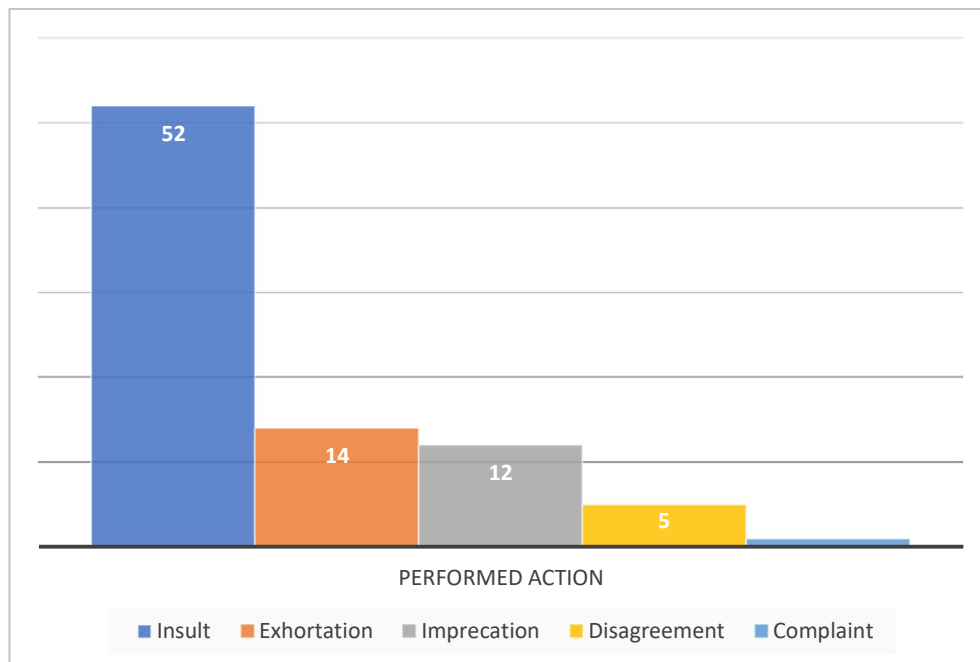


Figure 3: Actions performed in one-move posts.

Even though post brevity may be due to the constraints of the social network, it might also be a consequence of various factors. Among them would feature the tweeters' time scarcity or a simple desire to just show their negative opinions and attitudes without going into further detail about the reasons why they question the veracity, timeliness, helpfulness or usefulness of a piece of information. Thus, they would position themselves by merely contributing to an anti-COVID-19 discourse that is co-constructed by a wider community of users who are linked to one another by similar attitudinal and epistemic stances (Durmaz and Hengirmen 2022;

Herrera-Peco et al. 2021). This can be observed in the exhortation in the following one-move post, which vents the rebellious attitude characterising that discourse:

(20) *La mía os la podéis meter por el culo.* (MED019)

‘You can stick mine up your ass.’

An additional factor could be the belief that the forcefulness and aggressiveness of posts could achieve a greater emotional impact on readers and enhance their effectiveness in undermining the epistemic personhood of their targets. Nevertheless, by adding to other more elaborate and lengthy posts where similar viewpoints and attitudes are perhaps more vehemently expressed—of which (7), (8), (11) or (15) above and (21) below are examples—the posts would prompt other users to deduce an array of implications (Sperber and Wilson 1995) pertaining to the tweeters’ own opinions, feelings, attitudes and reasons for discrediting the authorities and the information that they impart.

(21) *Sois terroristas informativos y unos hijos de la gran puta , estáis*

promoviendo un experimento génico que sabéis que esta causando

miles de muertes y millones de efectos secundarios graves. (MED123)

‘You are informative terrorists and motherfuckers, you are promoting a gene experiment that you know is causing thousands of deaths and millions of serious side effects.’

4.3. *Move patterns*

As for patterns in the posts comprising more than one move, the most recurrent actional combination by far is detected in the two-move posts. It involves insulting the Ministry and expressing disagreement with them, which is observed in 15 cases (26.31%). Then, insults are paired with exhortations in six posts (10.52%), and with imprecations in four posts (7.01%). Less frequent patterns consist of exhortations that are coupled to dissent, which is witnessed in three cases (5.26%), and repeating disagreement or expressing dismissive incomprehension of what is said and insulting the authorities, both of which are found in two cases (3.50%).

In the three-move posts, a reiterated move pattern is only seen in four cases (7.01%). In them, the responding epistemic agents insult the information source and manifest their disagreement twice. Next, in two posts (3.50%), their attacks to epistemic personhood involve exhorting the authorities to take some questionable course of action and supporting such exhortations with two contrary opinions, while in other two posts such attacks include insulting, disagreeing and imprecating the informant.

In turn, in the four-move posts, there is only a move pattern that is observed twice. It consists of an insult to the authorities, an exhortation and two contrary opinions. Of the three five-move threats to epistemic personhood and of the two six-move attacks each displays a different move

arrangement. The variety of move patterns in each type of post is detailed in

Table 2:

Number of moves	Move arrangement	Number of posts
2 moves	[INS] + [DIS]	15
	[INS] + [EXH]	6
	[INS] + [IMP]	4
	[EXH] + [DIS]	3
	[DIS] + [DIS]	2
	[EXH] + [EXH]	1
3 moves	[INS] + [DIS] + [DIS]	4
	[INS] + [DIS] + [IMP]	2
	[EXH] + [DIS] + [DIS]	2
	[INS] + [IMP] + [INS]	1
	[INS] + [DIS] + [EXH]	1
	[EXH] + [EXH] + [INS]	1
	[INC] + [DIS] + [INS]	1
	[DIS] + [EXH] + [IMP]	1
4 moves	[INS] + [EXH] + [DIS] + [DIS]	2
	[INS] + [DIS] + [DIS] + [INS]	1
	[INS] + [INS] + [INS] + [INC]	1
	[INS] + [INS] + [EXH] + [EXH]	1
	[DIS] + [DIS] + [DIS] + [DIS]	1
5 moves	[EXH] + [DIS] + [DIS] + [IMP] + [DIS]	1
	[INS] + [INC] + [DIS] + [DIS] + [INS]	1
	[INS] + [DIS] + [DIS] + [INC] + [IMP]	1
6 moves	[DIS] + [DIS] + [DIS] + [DIS] + [DIS] + [DIS]	1
	[INS] + [DIS] + [INS] + [IMP] + [INS] + [DIS]	1

Table 2: Move arrangements in posts exceeding one move.

The data reveal that, as post length and complexity increase, move pattern heterogeneity also increases. The most recurrent patterns to attack epistemic personhood are found in two-move posts and, to a lesser extent, in three-move posts. Overall, posts with an initial offending component prevail, given that insults begin 14 of the 24 attested move combinations; next follow those with an opening exhortative character, which total five, and those with an initiating dissenting tone, which amount to four.

Exhortations and disagreement are reiterated in two- to five-move posts, while insults are reiterated in three- to six-move posts. Surprisingly, one of the four-move posts and another of the six-move posts only consist of a sequence of dissenting moves. Regarding imprecations, they close three move patterns and appear in the second half of two patterns.

Concerning dismissive incomprehension, the data also reveal that it is not expressed in one-move posts, in an isolated manner; rather, it is accompanied by additional concurrent actions, as attested by (18) above and (22) below:

(22) @ccarballo50 and @Cresp_R *de qué hablas, de la alergia primaveral*

que está dando positivo como lo daba la gripe de las navidades?

farsante a sueldo de las mafias! (MED139)

‘@ccarballo50 and @Cresp_R what are you talking about, the spring allergy that is testing positive like the Christmas flu? Faker in the pay of the mafias!’

Although dismissive incomprehension appears to need accompanying by, or inserting into, a more or less extensive sequence of moves, which perhaps lend some support to the expression thereof, this should not mean that it can never be expressed in isolation. In fact, as Cull (2019) showed, on plenty of occasions is it deprived of adjacent moves.

5. Concluding remarks

This paper has reported on an examination of data from a corpus of posts reacting to various messages coming from an epistemic authority like the Spanish Ministry of Health during the COVID-19 pandemic. The posts under scrutiny aim to question their reliability, timeliness, helpfulness, usefulness and trustworthiness, and thus weaken or wreck the epistemic personhood of the information source. Accordingly, the study seeks to shed light onto a series of issues, which correspond to three RQs, concerning attacks to epistemic personhood by means of digital discourse.

RQ#1 concerns the actions that are performed in order to cast doubts on epistemic personhood, the most frequent of which are found to be by far insults. While some of these clearly pertain to the epistemic unskilfulness or deficiencies of their targets, others identify them with despicable types of people, such as terrorists or criminals, from whom spiteful and unfair actions, and therefore, untrustworthy information, can only be expected. However, other attacks have been detected to be shaped as exhortations, imprecations or the expression of disagreement. These actions aim to suggest the ineptitude and malevolence of the information source, and hence distrust in the information and advice that they give.

RQ#2 regards the number of digital discourse moves mobilised to challenge epistemic personhood. The data analysis reveals that most attacks are committed through a single, rather blunt action. Nevertheless, a

relatively large percentage of the attacks are perpetrated through multiple actions, thus giving rise to a variety of multi-move posts.

RQ#3 pertains to the move structure that such attacks generate. The data suggest a variety of actional combinations and arrangements. However, there seems to be a preference for the joint expression of insults and disagreement, and, to a lesser extent, of insults and exhortations. The data analysis has additionally evinced that epistemic personhood, at least in the corpus under consideration, is not significantly challenged in Spanish by means of the expression of dismissive incomprehension. In the very few cases where this epistemically demolishing action has been observed, its performance depends on indirect strategies that greatly differ from the fairly explicit ones wherewith Cull (2019) exemplified it. Furthermore, the expression of dismissive incomprehension has been ascertained to require the joint realisation of additional actions that generate supporting digital discourse move sequences.

The limited size of the corpus scrutinised in this study, the domain from which it has been extracted and the technology-mediated environment where the data therein were produced, however, call for more larger-scale explorations, in domains other than medicine and also in face-to-face contexts. Future research could additionally compare attacks to epistemic personhood in various languages in order to determine whether there are significant differences in terms of length, actional patterns and severity. Furthermore, a more fine-grained picture of their discourse dynamics would

require looking into responses to these attacks. Surely, the valuable insights that would be gained from such studies could provide a better understanding of this devastating epistemic practice and help epistemic agents in a vulnerable or disadvantaged position counteract or downplay it.

Funding information

This research has been funded by the project “La digitalización de la interacción humana y su impacto social: Consecuencias, retos y concienciación de uso” (UPO-1380703). In turn, this project has been funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and by the Ministry of Economy, Knowledge, Enterprise and University (Regional Government of Andalusia), within the framework of the ERDF regional operative programme Andalusia 2014-2020.

References

- Aikhenvald, Alexandra. 2004. *Evidentiality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Allan, Keith. 2015. “When Is a Slur Not a Slur? The Use of Nigger in ‘Pulp Fiction’.” *Language Sciences* 52: 187–199.

- Amores, Javier J., David Blanco-Herrero, Patricia Sánchez-Holgado, and Maximiliano Frías-Vázquez. 2021. "Detectando el odio ideológico en Twitter. Desarrollo y evaluación de un detector de discurso del odio por ideología política en twits en español." *Cuadernos.info* 49: 98–124.
- Anderson, Ashley A., and Heidi E. Huntington. 2017. "Social Media, Science, and Attack Discourse: How Twitter Discussions of Climate Change Use Sarcasm and Incivility." *Science Communication* 39 (5): 598–620.
- Angouri, Jo, and Miriam Locher. 2012. "Theorising Disagreement." *Journal of Pragmatics* 44 (12): 1549–1553.
- Archer, Dawn. 2015. "Slurs, Insults, (Backhanded) Compliments and Other Strategic Facework Moves." *Language Sciences* 52: 82–97.
- Arcila Calderón, Carlos, David Blanco-Herrero, and María B. Valdez Apolo. 2020. "Rejection and Hate Speech in Twitter: Content Analysis of Tweets about Migrants and Refugees in Spanish." *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas* 172: 21–40.
- Baptista Ferreira, Gil. 2021. "Conspiracy Theories in Time of the Covid-19 Pandemic: Populism, Social Media and Misinformation." *Comunicação e Sociedade* 40: 129–148.
- Barker, Kit. 2016. *Imprecation as Divine Discourse: Speech Act Theory, Dual Authorship, and Theological Interpretation*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

- Biber, Douglas, Ulla Connor, and Thomas A. Upton. 2007. *Discourse on the Move: Using Corpus Analysis to Describe Discourse Structure*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Borgwald, Kristin. 2012. "Women's Anger, Epistemic Personhood, and Self-Respect: An Application of Lehrer's Work on Self-Trust." *Philosophical Studies* 161: 69–76.
- Bou-Franch, Patricia. 2021. "Maleducados/Ill-mannered" during the #A28 Political Campaign on Twitter." *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict* 9 (2): 271–296.
- Brown, Penelope, and Stephen C. Levinson. 1987. *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Burnap, Pete, and Matthew L. Williams. 2015. "Cyber Hate Speech on Twitter: An Application of Machine Classification and Statistical Modelling for Policy and Decision Making." *Policy & Internet* 7 (2): 223–242.
- Cornillie, Bert. 2007. *Evidentiality and Epistemic Modality in Spanish (Semi-)Auxiliaries: A Cognitive-functional Approach*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Croom, Adam M. 2013. "How to Do Things with Slurs: Studies in the Way of Derogatory Words." *Language & Communication* 33: 177–204.
- Croom, Adam M. 2014. "The Semantics of Slurs: A Refutation of Pure Expressivism." *Language Sciences* 41: 227–242.

- Cull, Matthew J. 2019. "Dismissive Incomprehension: A Use of Purported Ignorance to Undermine Others." *Social Epistemology. A Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Policy* 33 (3): 262–271.
- Culpeper, Jonathan. 2011. *Impoliteness. Using Language to Cause Offence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Culpeper, Jonathan. 2016. "Impoliteness Strategies." In *Interdisciplinary Studies in Pragmatics, Culture and Society*, ed. by Alessandro Capone and Jacob L. Mey, 421–446. Cham: Springer.
- D'Arcy, Alexandra, and Taylor M. Young. 2012. "Ethics and Social Media: Implications for Sociolinguistics in the Networked Public." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 16 (4): 532–546.
- De la Peña Sarracén, Gretel L., and Paolo Rossi. 2019. "Aggressive Analysis in Twitter Using a Combination Model." In *Proceedings of the Iberian Languages Evaluation Forum*, ed. by Miguel A. García Cumbreiras et al., 531–536. Bilbao: CEUR Workshop Proceedings.
- Dewitt, Aaron. 2012. "Group Agency and Epistemic Dependency." *Episteme* 9 (3): 235–244.
- Dow, Benjamin J., Amber L. Johnson, Cynthia S. Wang, Jennifer Whitson, and Tanya Menon. 2021. "The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Search for Structure: Social Media and Conspiracy Theories." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 15 (9): e12636.
- Durmaz, Nihal, and Engin Hengirmen. 2022. "The Dramatic Increase in Anti-vaccine Discourses during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Social

- Network Analysis of Twitter.” *Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics* 18 (1): e2025008.
- Dynel, Marta. 2016. “Pejoration via sarcastic irony and sarcasm.” In *Pejoration*, ed. by Rita Finkbeiner, Heike Wiese and Jörg Meibauer, 219–240. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Edmondson, Willis, and Juliane House. 1981. *Let’s Talk and Talk about It*. München: Urban & Schwarzenberg.
- Edwards, Derek. 2005. “Moaning, Whinging and Laughing: The Subjective Side of Complaints.” *Discourse Studies* 7 (1): 5–29.
- Ferré-Pavia, Carme, and María F. Sambucetti. 2022. “El neoconservadurismo religioso en Twitter. La campaña #ConMisHijosNoTeMetas y el discurso contra la igualdad de género.” *Teknokultura: Revista de Cultura Digital y Movimientos Sociales* 19 (1): 55–66.
- Fricke, Miranda. 2006. “Powerlessness and Social Interpretation.” *Episteme, A Journal of Social Epistemology* 3 (1–2): 96–108.
- Fricke, Miranda. 2007. *Epistemic Injustice. Power and the Ethics of Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gabel, Sabrina, Lilian Reichert, and Christian Reuter. 2022. “Discussing Conflict in Social Media: The Use of Twitter in the Jammu and Kashmir Conflict.” *Media, War & Conflict* 15 (4): 504–529.
- García Martín, Javier, Adolfo Calatrava García, and Óscar G. Luengo. 2018. “Debates electorales y conflicto. Un análisis con máquinas de soporte

- virtual (SVM) de la cobertura mediática de los debates en España desde 2008.” *Profesional de la Información* 27 (3): 624–632.
- Goddard, Cliff. 2015. “‘Swear Words’ and ‘Curse Words’ in Australian (and American) English. At the Crossroads of Pragmatics, Semantics and Sociolinguistics.” *Intercultural Pragmatics* 12 (2): 189–218.
- Grech, Paulann, and Reuben Grech. 2021. “Covid-19 Restrictive Measures: A Theoretical Exploration of Defiant Attitudes.” *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* 42 (4): 317–320.
- Grice, Herbert P. 1975. “Logic and Conversation.” In *Syntax and Semantics vol. 3: Speech Acts*, ed. by Peter Cole, and Jerry Morgan, 41–59. New York: Academic Press.
- Guerrero-Solé, Frederic, and Olivier Philippe. 2020. “La toxicidad de la política española en Twitter durante la pandemia de la COVID-19.” *Hipertext.net* 21: 133–139.
- Hardaker, Claire, and Mark McGlashan. 2016. “‘Real Men Don’t Hate Women:’ Twitter Rape Threats and Group Identity.” *Journal of Pragmatics* 91: 80–93.
- Hernández Santaolalla, Víctor, and Salomé Sola-Morales. 2019. “Postverdad y discurso intimidatorio en Twitter durante el referéndum catalán del 1-O.” *Observatorio* 13 (1): 102–121.
- Herrera-Peco, Iván, Beatriz Jiménez-Gómez, Carlos S. Romero Magdalena, Juan J. Deudero, María García-Puente, Elvira Benítez de Gracia, and Carlos Ruiz Núñez. 2021. “Antivaccine Movement and COVID-19

- Negationism: A Content Analysis of Spanish-written Messages on Twitter.” *Vaccines* 9 (6): 656.
- Hill, Deborah. 1992. “Imprecatory Interjectional Expressions: Examples from Australian English.” *Journal of Pragmatics* 18 (2–3): 209–223.
- Ide, Risako. 1998. “‘Sorry for Your Kindness’: Japanese Interactional Ritual in Public Discourse.” *Journal of Pragmatics* 29 (5): 509–529.
- Ifantidou, Elly. 2001. *Evidentials and Relevance*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Jay, Timothy B., and Kristin Janschewitz. 2008. “The Pragmatics of Swearing.” *Journal of Politeness Research* 4 (2): 267–288.
- Jumanto, Haryati S. 2019. “The Pragmatics of Swearing. How it Contextually Counts.” *ELLiC Proceedings* 3: 324–333.
- Kauffeld, Fred J., and Beth Innocenti. 2018. “A Normative Pragmatic Theory of Exhorting.” *Argumentation* 32: 463–483.
- Kline, Susan L. 2019. “Exhortation in Interpersonal discussion.” In *Networking Argument*, ed. by Carol Winkler, 440–446. London: Routledge.
- Kreuz, Roger. 2020. *Irony and Sarcasm*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Laforest, Marty. 2002. “Scenes of Family Life: Complaining in Everyday Conversation.” *Journal of Pragmatics* 34 (10–11): 1595–1620.
- Leech, Geoffrey. 1983. *Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman.
- List, Christian. 2016. “What Is It like to be a Group Agent?” *Noûs* 52 (2): 295–319.

- Liu, Zhe, and Ingmar Weber. 2014. "Is Twitter a Public Sphere for Active Conflicts? A Cross-ideological and Cross-hierarchical Look." In *Social Informatics. Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, vol. 8851, ed. by Luca M. Aiello, and Daniel McFarland, 336–347. Cham: Springer.
- Llorca-Asensi, Elena, Alexander Sánchez Díaz, María E. Fabregat-Cabrera, and Raúl Ruiz-Gallardo. 2021. "'Why Can't We?' Disinformation and Right to Self-determination. The Catalan Conflict on Twitter." *Social Sciences* 10: 383.
- Locher, Miriam, and Brook Bolander. 2019. "Ethics in Pragmatics." *Journal of Pragmatics* 145: 83–90.
- Lucić, Danijela, Josip Katalinić, and Tomislav Dokman. 2020. "Sentiment Analysis of the Syrian Conflict on Twitter." *Medijske Studije* 11 (22): 46–61.
- Makhortykh, Mykola, and Yehor Lyebyedyev. 2015. #SaveDonbassPeople. Twitter, Propaganda and Conflict in Eastern Ukraine. *The Communication Review* 18 (4): 239–270.
- Markham, Annette, and Elizabeth Buchanan. 2012. "Ethical Decision-making and the Internet Research: Recommendations from the AoIR Ethics Working Committee (Version 2.0)." <https://aoir.org/reports/ethics2.pdf>.
- Martín García, Alberto, Alex Buitrago, and Ana M. Beltrán Flandoli. 2022. "Fútbol, racismo y Twitter. Disección del discurso del odio en el caso Diakhaby." *Razón Y Palabra* 26 (113): 123–139.

- Marwick, Alice, and danah boyd. 2014. “‘It’s just Drama’: Teen Perspectives on Conflict and Aggression in a Networked Era.” *Journal of Youth Studies* 17 (9): 1187–1204.
- Origgi, Gloria. 2013. “Epistemic Injustice and Epistemic Trust.” *Social Epistemology: A Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Policy* 26 (2): 221–235.
- Padilla Cruz, Manuel. 2010. “Metarepresentation and Indirect Complaints: A Relevance-Theoretic Approach.” In *In the Mind and across Minds: A Relevance-theoretic Perspective on Communication and Translation*, ed. by Ewa Wałaszewska, Marta Kisielewska-Krysiuk and Agnieszka Piskorska, 167–187. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Padilla Cruz, Manuel. 2019a. “Reconsidering Dismissive Incomprehension—Its Relation to Epistemic Injustices, Its Damaging Nature, and a Research Agenda: A Reply to Cull.” *Social Epistemology Review and Reply Collective* 8 (11): 42–51.
- Padilla Cruz, Manuel. 2019b. “Qualifying Insults, Offensive Epithets, Slurs and Expressive Expletives: A Relevance-theoretic Approach.” *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict* 7 (2): 156-181.
- Padilla Cruz, Manuel. 2020a. “Dismissive Incomprehension Revis(it)ed: Testimonial Injustice, Competence, Face and Silence. A New Reply to Cull.” *Social Epistemology Review and Reply Collective* 9 (3): 34–43.

- Padilla Cruz, Manuel. 2020b. "Evidential Participles and Epistemic Vigilance." In *Relevance, Figuration and Continuity in Pragmatics*, ed. Agnieszka Piskorska, 69–93. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Pereira-Kohatsu, Juan C., Laura Quijano-Sánchez, Federico Liberatore, and Miguel Camacho-Collado. 2019. "Detecting and Monitoring Hate Speech in Twitter." *Sensors* 19 (21): 4654.
- Rees-Miller, Janie. 2000. "Power, Severity, and Context in Disagreement." *Journal of Pragmatics* 32 (8): 1087–1111.
- Rivera Martín, Beatriz, Ireide Martínez de Bartolomé Rincón, and Pilar J. López López. 2022. "Discurso de odio hacia las personas LGTBIQ+: Medios y audiencia social." *Comunicación, Periodismo y Política* 39: 213–233.
- Sältzer, Marius. 2020. "Finding the Bird's Wings: Dimensions of Factual Conflict on Twitter." *Party Politics* 28 (1): 61–70.
- Sánchez Ortega, Juan J. 2022. "La animadversión y el odio de Twitter hacia los refugiados." *Discurso & Sociedad* 16 (1): 115–148.
- Sifianou, Maria. 2012. "Disagreements, Face and Politeness." *Journal of Pragmatics* 44 (12): 1554–1564.
- Spencer-Oatey, Helen D. (ed.). 2000. *Culturally Speaking. Managing Rapport through Talk across Cultures*. London: Continuum.
- Spencer-Oatey, Helen D. (ed.). 2008. *Culturally Speaking: Culture, Communication and Politeness Theory*. London: Continuum.
- Sperber, Dan. 1994. "Understanding Verbal Understanding." In *What Is*

- Intelligence?*, ed. by Jean Khalifa, 179–198. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sperber, Dan, and Deirdre Wilson. 1995. *Relevance. Communication and Cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Tejedor Calvo, Santiago, Laura Cervi, Gabriel Jaraba, and Fernanda Esperanza Tusa. 2020. “Spanish Journalists on Twitter: Diagnostic Approach to What, and How Spanish Journalists Talk about Politics, International Affairs, Society, Communication, and Culture.” *Anàlisi* 63: 1–18.
- Thorson, Juli, and Christine Baker. 2019. “Venting as Epistemic Work.” *Social Epistemology. A Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Policy* 33 (2): 101–110.
- Ullah, I., K. S. Khan, M. J. Tahir, A. Ahmed, and H. Harapan. 2021. “Myths and Conspiracy Theories on Vaccines and COVID-19: Potential Effect on Global Vaccine Refusals.” *Vacunax* 22 (2): 93–97.
- Walsh, Michael J., and Stephanie A. Baker. 2022. “Avoiding Conflict and Minimising Exposure: Face-work on Twitter.” *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media* 28 (3): 664–680.
- Watanabe, Hajime, Mondher Bouazizi, and Tomoaki Ohtsuki. 2018. “Hate Speech on Twitter: A Pragmatic Approach to Collect Hateful and Offensive Expressions and Perform Hate Speech Detection.” *IEEE Access* 6: 13825–13835.

Whillock, Rita K., and David Slayden (eds.). 1995. *Hate Speech*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Wilson, Deirdre, and Dan Sperber. 2012. "Explaining Irony." In *Meaning and Relevance*, ed. by Deirdre Wilson, and Dan Sperber, 123–145. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yuan, Shupe, Yingying Chen, Sophia Vojta, and Yu Chen. 2022. "More Aggressive, More Retweets? Exploring the Effects of Aggressive Climate Change Messages on Twitter." *New Media & Society*. OnlineFirst.