

# Exploring Hate Speech as Dangerous Speech

Katarina Damčević  
University of Tartu

Autumn School “Dialogues with Children and Youth”

1-2 November 2018, Kubija hotel, Võru



This research has been supported by the European Regional Development Fund and Archimedes Foundation



# Hate speech

1. What is hate speech?
2. Difficulties in defining hate speech
3. Functions of hate speech
4. Hate speech, conflict, and responsibility
5. Modelling hate speech → dangerous speech



**ZA DOM SPREMNI**

“Ready for the Homeland”



*The message can invoke “past injuries and traumas that are historically sedimented in the norms, structures and conventions of language and social institutions” (Posselt, 2017: 17)*



Novi list, 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018

# Dangerous Speech (Benesch, 2013)

*Any form of expression (speech, text, images) that can increase the risk that its audience will condone or participate in violence against members of another group (Benesch, 2013).*

1. The message
2. The speaker
3. The audience
4. The social and historical context
5. Medium/mode of dissemination

# Dangerous Speech (Benesch, 2013)

1. The message can be explicit, but also subtle; its character depends on the remaining four elements and is content and context dependent.

→ which mechanisms are employed, e.g. metaphors, omission, taboos, threat construction, conspiracy theories

→ which narratives reinforce particular messages

# Dangerous Speech (Benesch, 2013)

2. The speaker: how influential he/she is, e.g. a political or religious leader, or an anonymous figure.

→the variety of discourses produced **about** dangerous speech that influence public debate

→motivation and justificatory mechanisms behind dangerous speech producers



# Dangerous Speech (Benesch, 2013)

3. An audience may be more susceptible to dangerous speech due to a history of conflict, unresolved trauma, or other circumstances that lead to the weakening of social ties to other social groups.

→the role of exclusive cultural texts that reinforce exclusion

→the internal organization of various groups (mnemonic organization, hermetic or open, imposition of boundaries)

# Dangerous Speech (Benesch, 2013)

4. The social and historical context emphasize the relevance of the overall environment in which speech reaches its audience; it may include aspects such as previous episodes of violence, war, and otherwise difficult living conditions.

→the story behind it comes with responsibility

→the function of a memory condenser (Lotman, 1990; Posselt, 2017)

*This sense of security in the space we all inhabit is a public good, and in a good society it is something that we all contribute to and help sustain in an instinctive and almost unnoticeable way. Hate speech undermines this public good, or it makes the task of sustaining it much more difficult than it would otherwise be. It does this not only by intimating discrimination and violence, but by reawakening living nightmares of what this society was like – or what other societies have been like – in the past (Waldron, 2012: 4)*

# Dangerous Speech (Benesch, 2013)

5. Medium/mode of dissemination as an increasingly important element in mobilizing various groups and spreading dangerous speech, especially when a community depends only on one source of information.

→online wars

→advantages of having available online content (a collection of cultural texts and languages)



## Naljepnice



ZDS 1991 – naljepnica

Select

kn 10.00



Zabrana! – naljepnica

Select

kn 10.00



Uranium – naljepnica

Select

kn 10.00



Kućica – naljepnica

Select

kn 10.00

# Concluding remarks

- modelling as acknowledging multiple elements of a given phenomenon, their relations, and dynamic
- importance of the multimodality of dangerous speech and the role of media literacy
- everyone's perspective should (ideally) be included

# References

1. Benesch, Susan. (2013). "Dangerous Speech: A Proposal to Prevent Group Violence." Retrieved September 10, 2018, from <https://dangerousspeech.org/guidelines/>
2. Blanuša, Nebojša. (2017). "Trauma and Taboo: Forbidden Political Questions in Croatia." In: *Croatian Political Science Review*. Vol. 54(1-2): 170-196.
3. Council of Europe (2018). ECRI Report on Croatia (fifth monitoring cycle). European Commission against Racism and Intolerance.
4. Lotman, M. Yuri. (1990). *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*. London: I. B. Tauris.
5. Psaila, E., Adamis-Császár, K., Verbari, M., Leigh, V., & Dalla Pozza, V. (2015). The European legal framework on hate speech, blasphemy and its interaction with freedom of expression. In: Directorate General for Internal Policies. Policy Department – Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs. European Parliament.
6. Posselt, G. (2017). "Can Hatred Speak? On the Linguistic Dimensions of Hate Crime". In: *Linguistik Online* 82 (3), 5-25.