Words of Power, the Power of Words

The Twentieth-Century Communist Discourse in International Perspective

Edited by
Giulia Bassi

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART II.
THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY:
THE POWER OF IMAGES DURING THE COLD WAR

PART III.
THE SOVIET AREA: WORDS OF POWER BETWEEN SOVIETISATION
AND DISCOURSE STRATEGIES IN THE 'AGE OF EXTREMES'

PART IV.
BEYOND EUROPE:
WOR(L)D COMMUNISM IN THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY

INTRODUCTION
WHY SHOULD THE LINGUISTIC TURN BE TAKEN?

Giulia Bassi

(Università del Piemonte Orientale 'Amedeo Avogadro')

> *La storia della semantica è un aspetto della storia della cultura.*
> Antonio Gramsci, Quaderno XVIII[1]

This volume presents a collection of nineteen essays on the history of international communism during the twentieth century. Specifically, communist political parties and movements are investigated here through an interdisciplinary methodological prism, which combines the analysis of political-cultural processes with the study of political discourse through qualitative and quantitative textual or iconographic analyses.

This book is a product of the development of a research project conducted primarily by a group of Italian historians on the language of the Italian Communist Party. In addition to myself, the research group consisted of Roberto Colozza, Enrico Mannari, Andrea Mariuzzo and, above all, Franco Andreucci, who was the first in Italy to look at communism from a cultural, linguistic, and discourse analysis perspective. The study began with the eighth national conference of historical workshops for the Società Italiana per lo Studio della Storia Contemporanea (SISSCO, Italian Society for the Study of Contemporary History), held in Viterbo between 14th and 16th September 2015. The proposed panel of studies, entitled *"Semantic history", "Cultural history". The ICP through images and words: a conceptual and methodological interdisciplinary proposal* was the first opportunity to develop a study of these issues and it was well received in the Italian historiographical field. Subsequently, thanks to the ideas, advice and suggestions resulting

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[1]   "The history of semantics is a facet of the history of culture".

from presentations and debates in various seminar venues, the national and disciplinary perspective has expanded in an international and global sense to include the work of other authors, historians and linguists on communism in other European countries and across the world.

The starting point of the research was the shared recognition of a critical delay in adopting an analytical angle of a cultural nature and, to an even greater extent, in adopting linguistic-discursive approaches to the studies of Italian communism.[2] As the opportunities for comparison and experiences of research have all highlighted, this tendency derived from a more general repudiation of the interdisciplinarity that political and party historiography 'inherited' from the historicist vision that from Antonio Gramsci refers back to Benedetto Croce's philosophical approach, though naturally of a different political stamp. In fact, it is possible to note a similar distrust also within social history studies, dominated by a perspective that we could trace back to the idea of a general 'primacy of politics'. It is no coincidence that a part of Marxist historiography did not look favourably, at least until the 1960s, upon the studies of Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre, or Fernand Braudel.[3]

In particular, as far as lexicon studies are concerned, it seemed almost as if this reluctance sometimes echoed the traditional distrust of the language issues revealed by Marxism in the first half of the twentieth century. In the mid 1920s, Nikolaj J. Marr advocated a theory of the super-structural and class character of language, which, according to the Georgian linguist, was determined by the economic basis of society.[4] Despite the fact that Valentin N. Vološinov had expressed his criticism and proposed a less mechanistic alternative vision in 1929,[5] in the 1930s Marr's views were promoted to being the official Soviet linguistic doctrine,[6] gaining great popularity. In 1948, in *Izvestija Akademii nauk sssr*, Lazar O. Rèznikov claimed that the idealistic theory of language was the prerogative of 'bourgeois' philosophers, psychologists and linguists,

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[2]   With the exception of the most recent historiography, which includes the authors present in this volume. For a reconstruction of these gaps see Giulia Bassi, "Discipline and Organisation: Performativity and Revolutionary Semantics in Gramsci's and Togliatti's Texts (1916-1928)", 3-25.

[3]   See Eric J. Hobsbawm's essay, "From Social History to the History of Society", *Daedalus. Historical Studies Today*, 100, 1 (1971): pp. 20-45.

[4]   Only as an example, Nikolaj Jakovlevič Marr, *Grammatika drevneliteratunogo gruzinskogo jazyka* (Leningrad, 1925). See also Lawrence L. Thomas, *The Linguistic Theories of N. Ja. Marr* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957).

[5]   Valentin Nikolaevič Vološinov, *Marksizm i Filosofija Jazyka* (Leningrad, 1929). See the Italian translation which, unlike the English one, also contains the author's introduction: *Marxismo e filosofia del linguaggio* (Bari: Dedalo, 1976).

[6]   Until, in 1950, it was contested by Stalin himself for "antimarxism", Iosif Vissarionovič Džugašvili (Stalin), "Marksìzm i vapròsy iasykosnànija", *Pravda* (1950).

such as Ernst Cassirer, Bertrand Russell, Henri Delacroix, and Ferdinand de Saussure, or Joseph Vendryes, Karl Bühler, and Edward Sapir. Precisely because of its 'bourgeois' character, according to the Russian semiologist, it could only be "anti-scientific" and "reactionary", serving to "smuggle into the field of linguistics the most noxious agnostic concepts".[7] If in Marxist orthodoxy the verbal expression, the word, was interpreted as a mere "reflection of reality in the form of sound",[8] it followed that the revelation of its performative relevance should be somehow reduced, if not completely denied, minimizing the importance of language in the hierarchical scale of matters worthy of analysis. Marr's theory, beyond Stalin's (political) refutation, survived transversely in later writings.

This attitude, by reflection, has probably also conditioned a part of historiography and studies on communism for a long time, given that many works seem to have been oriented – to use Marxist terminology – mainly towards the analysis of 'structures', that is the economic, political, even social factors, rather than the 'superstructure', that is the cultural, symbolic, identarian, or linguistic aspects.

As in the case of Italy, studies on international communism have tended to opt for investigations of a political or, more recently, social nature, avoiding analytical perspectives of a cultural or linguistic-discursive nature. In this sense, it is significant that in a magazine such as *Twentieth Century Communism*, published by Lawrence & Wishart since 2009, neither essays nor pamphlets on communist lexicons have been published.[9] Rare have been the works that look at Western communism from a purely linguistic perspective. With regard to French communism, for example, there is only one important exception, that of the studies of Jean Baptiste Marcellesi, who is, significantly, a linguist and not a historian.[10] In general, in fact, historians such as Philippe Buton have analysed the French Communist Party according to a traditional historiographic approach, focusing on issues of strategy and political organisation.[11] Even an authority

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[7]   Lazar Osipovǐc Reznikov, "Izvestija Akademii nauk SSSR. Otdelenie literatury i jazyka", VII, 5, "Del linguaggio e della sua natura. Contributo ad una critica delle teorie idealistiche del linguaggio", in *Rassegna della stampa sovietica*, 1-2 (1949): 57. See also Lazar Osipovǐc Reznikov, *Semiotica e marxismo. I problemi gnoseologici della semiotica* (Milano: Bompiani, 1967).

[8]   Reznikov, "Izvestija Akademii nauk SSSR. Otdelenie literatury i jazyka".

[9]   Wirsching's essay, "Violence as discourse?", is an exception. Emblematically, Issue 9, published in August 2015 and dedicated to the *Cultural Turn* in the studies on communist parties and movements, does not contain essays with a linguistic theme or approach.

[10]   See for example Jean Baptiste Marcellesi: *Le congrès de Tours (décembre 1920): études sociolinguistiques* (Paris, Le Pavillon, [1971]; *Linguaggio e classi sociali. Marrismo e stalinismo* (Bari: Dedalo, 1978).

[11]   Compare for example Philippe Buton's titles: "L'organizzazione del PCF nella prima metà degli anni cinquanta", *Sinistra e il '56 in Italia e Francia*, ed. by Bruno Groppo and Gianni Riccamboni (Padova: Liviana, 1987); *Le parti communiste français à la libération, stratégie et implantation* ([Lille]: A.N.R.T.

in the studies of French communism such as Marc Lazar, the protagonist of an important historiographic renewal attentive to the cultural and symbolic aspects of politics, did not investigate the strictly linguistic and discursive field.[12] There are also no works on Spanish communism focusing on the lexicon. Studies on the subject have in fact dealt with Spanish[13] and Catalan[14] communism and socialism in the form of historical-factual reconstruction, especially with reference to the 1936-1939 civil war. This trend can also explain the longstanding cultural lacuna within works on other Spanish-speaking communist parties, such as the Cuban one.[15]

With the exception of the Cuban case, this lack of attention does not seem to extend to studies on national communism in countries where communism has been in power, a fact, however, which must be considered in the light of studies on the relationship between totalitarianism and language, developed especially since the 1970s in conjunction with the linguistic turn,[16] but with important precedents already in the late '40s

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Université de Lille III, 1989); *Les lendemains qui déchantent: le Parti communiste français à la libération* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1993); *Communisme. Une utopie en sursis: les logiques d'un système* (Paris: Larousse, 2001).

[12]   For Marc Lazar, see for example: *Maisons rouges. Les partis communistes français et italien de la Libération à nos jours* (Paris: Aubier, 1992); *Le communisme. Une passion française* (Paris: Perrin, 2005). See also Marie-Claire Lavabre, *Le fil rouge. Sociologie de la mémoire communiste* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1994).

[13]   See for example: David Tredwell Cattell, *Communism and the Spanish Civil War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955); *El Partido Comunista Español, Italiano y Francés, cara al poder*, ed. by Mariangela Bosi and Hugues Portelli (Madrid: Editorial Cambio 16, 1977); Gregorio Morán, *Miseria y grandeza del Partido Comunista de España 1939-1985* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1986); Rafael Cruz, *El Partido Comunista de España en la Segunda República* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1987).

[14]   See Pere Ysàs: *La transició a Catalunya i Espanya* (Barcelona: Fundació Doctor Lluís Vila d'Abadal, 1997); "El movimiento obrero durante el franquismo. De la resistencia a la movilización (1940-1975)", *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea*, 30 (2009): 165-184. And Carme Molinero: with Pere Ysàs, *Els Anys of the PSUC [Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya]. El partit de l'antifranquisme (1956-1981)* (Barcelona: L'Avenç, 2010); with Pere Ysàs, *Las izquierdas en tiempos de transición* (València Universitat de València [2016]).

[15]   An exception is the essay by Lincoln Cushing, "Republic of Cuba, 1959", *Communist Posters*, ed. by Mary Ginsberg (London: Reaktion Books, 2017), 320-367, dedicated to the iconographic political propaganda of the Cuban revolution.

[16]   With regards to this see: Jean-Pierre Faye, *Langages totalitaires. Critique de la raison narrative, l'économie* (Paris: Hermann et Cie., 1972) and the more recent *Introduction aux langages totalitaires. Théorie et transformations du récit* (Paris: Hermann, 2002); Ruth Wodak, *Language, Power, and Ideology: Studies in Political Discourse* (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1988); *Translation under fascism*, ed. by Christopher Rundle and Kate Sturge (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). Specifically on the lexicon of German national socialism see, for example: Iris Forster, *Euphemistische Sprache im Nationalsozialismus: Schichten, Funktionen, Intensität* (Bremen: Hempen, 2009); William J. Dodd, *National Socialism and German Discourse: Unquiet Voices* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan,

and '50s.[17] The analyses on the Soviet lexicon and on the languages of the satellite countries are, in fact, rich and copious, and almost exclusively the prerogative of linguists, more rarely of historians. In addition to some collective works that investigated various aspects of the communist lexicon of the former Soviet-influenced area, such as the one edited by Petre Petrov and Larissa Ryazanova-Clarke,[18] most of the studies of this type focused on the totalitarian character of the communist lexicon or on the Bolshevization of the lexicons of the working-class republics, thanks to the work of important authors,[19] including Mikhail Ėpshteĭn on the Soviet Union[20] and František Čermák on Czechoslovakia.[21] Others, on the other hand, in collected works such as those edited by Paul A. Chilton, Mikhail M. Il'inskiĭ and Jacob Mey,[22] or by John S. Dryzek and

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2018). On the language of Italian fascism see: Giovanni Lazzari, *Le parole del fascismo* (Roma: Argileto, 1975); Augusto Simonini, *Il linguaggio di Mussolini* (Milano: Bompiani, 1978); Paola Desideri, *Teoria e prassi del discorso politico. Strategie persuasive e discorsi comunicativi* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1984); Enzo Golino, *Parola di duce. Il linguaggio totalitario del fascismo* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1994); *Credere, obbedire, combattere. Il regime linguistico nel Ventennio*, ed. by Fabio Foresti (Bologna: Pendragon, 2003).

[17] Victor Klemperer's work, *The Language of the Third Reich. Lingua Tertii Imperii: A Philologist's Notebook*, is a landmark book (Berlin[-Ost]: Aufbau-Verlag, 1947). See also Harold Dwight Lasswell, *Language of Politics: Studies in Quantitative Semantics* (New York: G.W. Stewart, 1949).

[18] See *The Vernaculars of Communism: Language, Ideology and Power in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*, ed. by Petre Petrov and Larissa Ryazanova-Clarke (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

[19] See for example Beatrix Kress, *Totalitarian Political Discourse? Tolerance and Intolerance in Eastern and East Central European Countries: Diachronic and Synchronoc Aspects in Collaboration with Karsten Senkbeil* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2012). On the influence of the Russian language on the GDR German language see: Kurt Buttke, "Zur Rolle und Bedeutung der russischen Sprache in der gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung der DDR", *Der Große Oktober und die russische Sprache*, ed. by Valerij V. Ivanov (Leipzig: Verlag Enzyklopädie, 1977), 77-93; Heidi Lehmann, *Russischdeutsche Lehnbeziehungen im Wortschatz offizieller Wirtschaftstexte der DDR* (Düsseldorf: Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann, 1972); Richard E. Wood, "Russian Influences in the German of East Germany", *Pacific Coast Philology*, 6 (1971): pp. 60-64. For the Italian language, see Vincenzo Orioles' entry "Russismi" in the Treccani *online encyclopaedia* (2011): http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/russismi_(Enciclopedia-dell'Italiano)/, last accessed on 3 June 2019.

[20] Mikhail Ėpshteĭn, *Relativistic Patterns in Totalitarian Thinking: An Inquiry into the Language of Soviet Ideology* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center, Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, 1991). See also *State and Political Discourse in Russia*, ed. by Nadežda Ažgihina, Giancarlo Bosetti, *et al.* (Roma: Reset DOC, 2017).

[21] František Čermák, *Slovník komunistické totality* (Praha: NLN, 2011); František Čermák, "Jazyk totality a dneška: jak odráží realitu a ovlivňuje lidské vědomí", *Jazyk v politických, ideologických a interkultúrnych vzťahoch, Sociolinguistica Slovaca 8,* ed. by Julia Wachtarczyková, Lucia Satinská and Slavomír Ondrejovič (Bratislava: Veda, vydavateľstvo SAV, 2015), 50-60. See also Věra Schmiedtová, *Malý slovník reálií komunistické totality* (Praha: Nakl. Lidové Noviny, 2012).

[22] *Political Discourse in Transition in Europe, 1989-1991*, ed. by Paul A. Chilton, Mikhail Mikhaĭlovich Il'inskiĭ, and Jacob Mey (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publisher, 1998).

Leslie Holmes,[23] have investigated the discursive transformation and the changes in languages during the difficult period of transition of the States of the former Soviet bloc,[24] including the countries of the Russian Federation.[25] Similar considerations can be made with regard to the studies on Chinese communism, thanks for example to the work of linguists such as Fengyuan Ji and Xing Lu.[26]

An analysis of communism from a cultural and, above all, linguistic point of view seems therefore to have suffered so far from time constraints and to have remained anchored to certain geographical areas. The reluctance to depart from the schematics of Marxism and Marxist historiography, in fact, seems paradoxically to have come more, and more extensively, from the studies on communism in those countries where there has never been a communist State. During the second half of the twentieth century, the gradual transformation of the communist parties of Western Europe into 'constituent' parties of democratic systems (weakening or profoundly transforming the original revolutionary framework) probably contributed to anchoring identity and sense of belonging to the Marxist ideology, compromised to a lesser extent by the logics of power and the coercive and repressive policies of authoritarian regimes. Today, with the transformations in the international scientific panorama that have been triggered since the end of the Soviet system, the progressive shift of interest from the parties towards more 'fluid' political realities, to use a Bauman term,[27] does not facilitate the return of analyses centred on the great political mediation agencies of the twentieth century, nor the development of attention to their language.

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[23] *Post-communist Democratization: Political Discourses Across Thirteen Countries*, ed. by John S. Dryzek and Leslie Holmes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[24] In *Post-communist Democratization* see for example the cases of Yugoslavia, written with Siniša Nikolin (pp. 57-75); of Slovakia, with Stefan Auer and Antoaneta Dimitrova (173-189); of Romania, with Bogdan Chiritoiu (190-205); of Bulgaria, with Antoaneta Dimitrova (206-221); of Poland (225-239); and of the Czech Republic (240-252).

[25] In *Post-communist Democratization* see the cases of Belarus (pp. 79-91) of Russia, written with Tatiana Rogovskaia (92-113); of Ukraine, written with Victor Hohots and Kyrylo Loukerenko (114-130); of Armenia (133-146), of Georgia (147-157), and of Moldova (158-169). In *The Vernaculars of Communism*: Larissa Ryazanova-Clarke, "Linguistic Mnemonics: the Communist Language Variety in Contemporary Russian Public Discourse" (169-195); Ilya Kukulin, "'The Golden Age of Soviet Antiquity': Sovietisms in the Discourse of Left-wing Political Movements in post-Soviet Russia, 1991-2013" (196-220).

[26] For example, *Chinese Communication Studies Contexts and Comparisons*, ed. by Xing Lu *et al.* (Westport Greenwood Publishing Group Ann Arbor: Michigan ProQuest, 2002); Fengyuan Ji, *Linguistic Engineering: Language and Politics in Mao's China* (Honololulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004); Xing Lu, *The rhetoric of Mao Zedong: Transforming China and its People* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2017). See also: Yali Peng, "China", *Post-communist Democratization*, 33-56; *Words and Their Stories: Essays on the Language of the Chinese Revolution*, ed. by Ban Wang (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011).

[27] Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000).

Yet, language studies, even from a diachronic perspective, have long been an important field of study that, since the 1970s, has been and still is able to illuminate important aspects of the past that cannot be detected if tackled through 'more classical' methodological approaches. In 1985, the linguist Teun A. van Dijk noted that the historical analysis of discourse – in this volume addressed from various methodological perspectives – was not recognized as a discipline until a few decades previously.[28] This statement presupposes the fact that, *already* in 1985, the historical analysis of discourse was a discipline that had been recognised and established for some time.

Starting from the last thirty years of the twentieth century, in fact, the process whereby the humanities opened their specific methods of analysis to suggestions from other disciplines has accelerated. Language, both as an object and as a perspective of analysis, has acquired a place of particular importance, if not of primary importance, in this process of methodological hybridization, and continues to retain it in the international panorama of the humanities and social sciences. Among these, studies on language, renewed from a multidisciplinary analytical perspective, have played a particularly important, if not prominent, role in the later success, longevity, and incisiveness of the humanities and social sciences within the international panorama. It was the Austrian philosopher Gustav Bergmann who was the first to use the useful expression "linguistic turn" in his 1960 review of a book by the English analytical philosopher Peter F. Strawson.[29] However, the expression became known above all through the publication, in 1967, of the anthology *The Linguistic Turn* by Richard M. Rorty.[30] In the introduction, before reviewing some essays by the most important philosophers of the period, including Bergmann himself, the American thinker noted that the convergence of interest in language studies even dates back to the period between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Even the historiographic sector has been able to benefit from this scientific renewal, developing a research very different from the traditional one, passing from new cultural history[31] to the radical narrativistic interpretation of history.[32] The greater communica-

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[28]   Teun A. van Dijk, *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, 4 vols. (London: Academic Press, 1985).

[29]   Peter Frederick Strawson, *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics* (London: Methuen & Co., 1959). Gustav Bergmann's review, "Strawson's Ontology", *Journal of Philosophy*, 57, 19 (1960):601-622.

[30]   Richard M. Rorty, *The Linguistic Turn. Recent Essays in Philosophical Method* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), then republished as *The Linguistic Turn. Essays in Philosophical Method* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[31]   See for example *The New Cultural History*, ed. by Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

[32]   The reference is to Hayden White, *Metahistory. The historical imagination in nineteenth-century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

tion between the different disciplinary sectors,[33] the diffusion of the postmodern paradigm that adopted the need for a reinterpretation of history free from any finalism,[34] the attention to traditionally little-investigated cognitive fields, such as linguistic,[35] cultural and symbolic phenomena,[36] or the logics of power,[37] are all factors that have laid the foundations for the gradual abandonment of a positivist historiographic analysis, which looked at 'reality' as an 'objective' datum in favour of a more 'secular' and 'disenchanted' cognitive approach.

In particular for the studies of history and linguistics, the 1980s saw the proliferation of a series of approaches specialized in the analysis of speech from either or both a synchronous and diachronic point of view. Here we need look no further than the most popular ones, such as historical discourse analysis, historical text linguistics, historical pragmatics and historical semantics. By establishing an interdisciplinary field, combining study of the past with the study of language, the historical analysis of discourse and semantic history can proceed through different approaches, following different directions and perspectives of analysis. Laurel J. Brinton in 2001 described in particular three basic approaches. First, the so-called historical discourse analysis, that is a historical analysis of language from a synchronic perspective. Secondly, the discourse-oriented historical linguistics, that is, an investigation of pragmatic-discursive factors from a diachronic perspective. Thirdly, the diachronic(ally oriented) discourse analysis, which is a synthesis of the previous two, which interweaves synchronic historical analysis and diachronic historical analysis of the text.[38]

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[33]   Between history, anthropology, sociology, linguistics and psychology.

[34]   Postmodernism: "In Western philosophy, a late twentieth century movement characterized by broad scepticism, subjectivism, or relativism; a general suspicion of reason; and an acute sensitivity to the role of ideology in asserting and maintaining political and economic power", in https://www.britannica.com/topic/postmodernism-philosophy, last accessed on 3 June 2019.

[35]   From the studies of Ludwig Wittgenstein, as in *Logisch-Philosophische Abhandlung* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1922), up to the 'linguistic acts' of John Langshaw Austin, *How to do Things with Words: the William James Lectures, Delivered at Harvard University in 1955* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

[36]   It could be traced back to the analysis of the archetypes of Carl Gustav Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, vol. 9 (London: Routledge & Paul, 1959), and up to Clifford Geertz's 'culture-as-text', *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

[37]   The reference is in particular to the studies of Michel Foucault, for example *L'Ordre du discours* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1971); and then to those of Pierre Bourdieu, as in *Ce que parler veut dire. L'économie des échanges linguistiques* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1982).

[38]   Laurel J. Brinton, *Historical Discourse Analysis*, *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, ed. by Deborah Schiffrin, Deborah Tannen, and Heidi Hamilton (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 138-160.

The development of information technology and consequently of digital humanities, especially in France and in the Anglo-Saxon countries, has subsequently enriched the historical-linguistic perspective in terms of automatic analysis of texts.[39] While quantitative IT approaches have given scholars the opportunity to investigate large amounts of data, computational analysis – or corpus linguistics – has attempted to explore the linguistic regularity of texts through the use of such tools.[40] In recent years, a type of investigation that attempts to combine the qualitative and quantitative analysis of texts into a single approach of methodological hybridization, called Corpora in Discourse Analysis, has also become more widespread. These studies are based on the linguistic research carried out by Norman Fairclough, Paul Baker, and Ruth Wodak at Lancaster University in the UK, and by Michael Stubbs at the Universität Trier in Germany.[41]

No less important are the studies on iconic and iconographic language, which are fundamental for understanding historical change since, as Pierre Bourdieu explained, "the 'eye' is a product of history reproduced by education".[42] Even studies on iconic language, or visual studies, have taken shape since the 1970s within cultural studies, in conjunction with the linguistic turn and the growing importance that the image has taken on in modern consumer society, to the point of Guy Debord referring to his 'spectacular domain'.[43] Born in the artistic field but then extended to other humanities and social disciplines,[44] visual studies have increasingly gained their own autonomy, diversi-

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[39] On the advantages offered by corpus linguistics, a branch of computational linguistics, to a historiographic investigation of quantitative methods, see "Tra linguistica e storia: incroci metodologici e percorsi di ricerca", ed. by Francesca Socrate and Carlotta Sorba, *Contemporanea*, 2 (2013): 285-333.

[40] See, just as an example, *Using Corpora to Explore Linguistic Variation*, ed. by Randi Reppen, Susan M. Fitzmaurice, and Douglas Biber (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2002); *Corpus Linguistics: Investigating Language Structure and Use*, ed. by Douglas Biber, Susan Conrad, and Randi Reppen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[41] See for example: Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (London; New York: Longman, 1989); Paul Baker, *Using Corpora in Discourse Analysis* (London: Continuum, 2006); Ruth Wodak, for example in *Methods of critical discourse analysis*, ed. by Ruth Wodak *et al.* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2016); Michael Stubbs, *Words and Phrases: Corpus Studies of Lexical Semantics* (London: Blackwell, 2002).

[42] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 3.

[43] Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (Canberra: Hobgoblin Press, 2002).

[44] As in *New Perspectives in Iconology: Visual Studies and Anthropology*, ed. by Barbara Baert *et al.* (Brussels: Academic and Scientific Publishers, 2011).

fying and specializing in types of approaches – rhizomatic, narrative, cognitive, semiotic, aesthetic, ethical –[45] leading even to studies on language and political propaganda.[46]

Beyond the specificities of all these interpretative models of studies on language and of the hybridizations between different approaches, what we want to underline once again is the *importance* that language has assumed, since the mid-1970s, in the scientific analysis of the humanistic and social disciplines, of history first and foremost, but also the *longevity* of these theoretical researches and their practical uses within the panorama of historical studies at an international level, at least since the mid-1980s.

In the face of all these considerations, then, the methodological lacuna and the lack of interest in cultural and linguistic issues highlighted here through the studies on national and international communism appear even more serious. "Why should the linguistic turn be taken?", Bergmann had already asked back in the late 1950s. For three fundamental reasons, the philosopher replied:

> *First*. Words are used either ordinarily (commonsensically) or philosophically. On this distinction, above all, the method rests. The prelinguistic philosophers did not make it. Yet they used words philosophically. Prima facie such uses are unintelligible. They require commonsensical explication. The method insists that we provide it. […] *Second*. Much of the paradox, absurdity, and opacity of prelinguistic philosophy stems from failure to distinguish between speaking and speaking about speaking. Such failure, or confusion, is harder to avoid than one may think. The method is the safest way of avoiding it. *Third*. Some things any conceivable language merely shows. Not that these things are literally 'ineffable'; rather, the proper (and safe) way of speaking about them is to speak about (the syntax and interpretation of a) language.[47]

This volume therefore intends to underline the importance of linguistic and discursive aspects as central elements in the symbolic construction of politics and as qualified indicators for the understanding of historical dynamics. In the essays, language, whether textual or iconic, is in fact intended as the object of the analysis, as a study of the use of the words of a particular party or communist movement, but also as an instrument

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45   See Nicholas Mirzoeff, *Introduction to Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999); *Handbook of Visual Communication. Theory, Methods, and Media*, ed. by Ken Smith *et al*. (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005); James Elkins, *Theorizing Visual Studies: Writing through the Discipline* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

46   For example Victoria E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1997); *The Art of Persuasion: Political Communication in Italy from 1945 to the 1990s*, ed. by Luciano Cheles and Lucio Sponza (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).

47   Gustav Bergmann, *Logic and Reality* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), 177.

through which salient elements of the endeavours of individual parties and national communist movements are clarified.

Moreover, this volume intends to capture the turn that has also introduced an approach into the studies on communism and its ideology which has identified an essential key to understanding the historical and political transformations, including local ones, in the global dimension. In this scientific season, when it becomes increasingly clear that disciplinary boundaries cannot exhaust the descriptive and interpretative capacity, unless a fruitful methodological hybridization is used, the work brings together contributions by historians, linguists, and philosophers and historians of language. The purpose is in fact to make different disciplines and scholars of different academic backgrounds converse on the same subject (the language of communism), in a common methodological perspective (the historical-discursive one), even if along different analytical lines.

The interdisciplinary slant and the global analytical approach interact in the following way. The first two sections are dedicated to the Italian Communist Party and the movement that generated it; the third continues with an analysis of the parties operating in the European area under Soviet control; the last section ends with a focus on the Latin American continent and East Asia.[48]

Specifically, the first section of the volume, entitled *The Italian Communist Party: The Power of Words and Symbols in Communist Discourse from the Origins to the Seventies*, is dedicated to an historical-linguistic investigation of the Italian Communist Party and movement over an extended period of time. The years considered are those between the birth of the party in 1921, as the Communist Party of Italy, section of the Comintern, and the end of the 1970s, years in which the party managed to reach its historical peak of social consensus: 33.4% in the local elections of 1975 and 34.7% in the general election of 1976. Four of the five essays in this first part are aimed at illustrating the rhetorical paths and discursive styles of party communication, both in general (Franco Andreucci) and in the specific lexicon of its leadership (Giulia Bassi). The rhetorical and linguistic dynamics of the party in situations of internal political conflict, such as the one that opposed the ICP to the group of *il manifesto*, are also analysed (Roberto Colozza), as are the linguistic policies and the dynamics of communication within the broad programme of party schools (Anna Tonelli). The fifth essay, on the other hand, is aimed at reconstructing the complicated relations between the ICP and the Chinese Communist Party (Guido Samarani and Sofia Graziani).

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[48] The lack of a section dedicated to the communist parties of the euro-western area is obvious, and is a reflection of the difficulty of finding, from within the albeit rich team of experts in the history of communism, authors who dealt with such a specific topic as language.

The second section, *The Italian Communist Party: The Power of Images During the Cold War*, is dedicated to the analysis of the symbols and images of the Italian Communist Party during what historians have interpreted as the 'hottest' years of the 'Cold War'. Specifically, the party leader Palmiro Togliatti and his portrayal (Luciano Cheles), anti-communist propaganda, in particular by the Christian Democrats (Andrea Mariuzzo), and the political dynamics between the ICP and social subversiveness that found expression through wall graffiti (Enrico Mannari), are all analysed. All the essays in this part of the volume are accompanied by an extensive iconographic display.

The third section, entitled *The Soviet Area: Words of Power between Sovietisation and Discourse Strategies in the 'Age of Extremes'*, is composed of five essays on the Soviet Communist Party and the communist parties under its sphere of influence. This part of the volume also presents works dealing with different themes and periods: the rhetorical form of tautology in Stalinist Soviet discourse (Petre Petrov); the gradual Sovietization of the lexicon in democratic Germany (Barbara Delli Castelli); the representations of the agrarian world in Romanian communist discourse (Călin Morar-Vulcu); the totalitarian aspects of language in Czechoslovakia (František Čermák); and linguistic policies in the former Yugoslavia (Maria Rita Leto).

The fourth and final section, entitled *Beyond Europe: Wor(l)d Communism in the Twentieth-Century*, takes the investigation to a global level, presenting the work of two authors on Latin American communism (Valeria Coronel, Joaquìn Fermandois) and four authors on Asian communism (Guo Wu, Fengyuan Ji, Xing Lu, Patricia Pelley). Specifically, the multiform languages of the Ecuadorian left (Coronel), the historical-linguistic evolution of the communist parties of Chile (Fermandois) and Vietnam (Pelley), and the great Chinese Communist Party from various perspectives, such as the conceptualization of national minorities (Guo) and the forms of linguistic and semantic control of the Maoist leadership (Ji, Lu), are analysed.

And if giving thanks is the highest form of thought, as Gilbert Keith Chesterton wrote, I am happy to close this introduction by expressing my deepest gratitude to all those who have participated in this undertaking. The book is the result of an intense collaboration and a stimulating comparison between different scholars of Italian and international communism. First of all, I would like to offer my most sincere thanks to the authors of *Words of Power, the Power of Words*, not only because, in showing great faith in me, they have made their very interesting essays available for this publishing project, but also for the patience and the precise advice with which they helped me in the complicated task of packaging such a rich and substantial volume. I would therefore like to thank Franco Andreucci, František Čermák, Luciano Cheles, Roberto Colozza, Valeria Coronel, Barbara Delli Castelli, Joaquìn Fermandois, Sofia Graziani, Guo Wu, Fengyuan Ji, Maria Rita Leto, Lu Xing, Enrico Mannari, Andrea Mariuzzo, Călin Morar-Vulcu,

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