

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES FROM THE WASHINGTON POST AND JUTARNJI LIST REPORTING ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every aspect of our lives and become the topic of scientific research in various fields. This paper analyses selected newspaper articles from *The Washington Post* and *Jutarnji list*, published from February to May of 2020, based on Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of three stages: description, interpretation, and explanation. At the description level, pandemic-related vocabulary is analysed; at the interpretation level, newspaper discourse is analysed from the perspective of news sources and modes of discourse representation; and at the explanation level the discourse is analysed from the standpoints of the institutional and societal contexts. Analysis revealed a striking difference between *The Washington Post* and *Jutarnji list* in the total number of pandemic-related words. There are 315 pandemic-related words in *The Washington Post* and 707 in *Jutarnji list*. Furthermore, in *The Washington Post*, the focus is on the dangerous aspects of the pandemic, while *Jutarnji list* focuses on certain neutral aspects of the pandemic. At the interpretation level, the results show that *Jutarnji list* used a higher percentage of specified news sources. There are no major differences in the usage of modes of discourse representation. The differences in certain aspects of newspaper discourse at the explanation level reflect a range of ideological differences between the two countries.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, the COVID-19 Pandemic, *The Washington Post*, *Jutarnji List*

1. Introduction

The health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has affected countries all over the world in the last couple of years. Dramatic changes have occurred in many countries which have been faced with multiple crises: health, economic, financial, political (Rogić Dumančić, Bogdan and Raguž Krištić 121). In order to slow down the spread of the coronavirus, various restrictive measures were introduced such as lockdown, stay at home orders, travel bans, social and physical distancing, masking, business closure, working from home, online

education etc. Mainstream media around the world, including *The Washington Post* and *Jutarnji list*, have reported on the pandemic, thus becoming a major source of information about the novel coronavirus. *The Washington Post* is an American daily, Pulitzer Prize winning newspaper, one of the greatest newspapers in the country. *Jutarnji list* is a Croatian daily newspaper, one of the leading newspapers in Croatia. Both newspapers report on the pandemic from various perspectives such as public health, economics, politics, international relations, online learning, travel, etc. Media discourse has long been a focus amongst various researchers. An important aspect of research into media discourse is critically evaluating its content. Qualitative research methods, such as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), have been applied to newspapers in particular, since one of the main features of this interdisciplinary approach is analysing the relationship between discourse and various social factors like power relations, ideology, social institutions, globalization. The CDA approach has been most frequently related to the media because they play crucial roles as “discourse-bearing institutions” (Garrett and Bell 6). According to Wodak and Busch (116):

in our more globalizing world, media have gained more power. The impact of media on political developments and decision making has yet to be fully explored. Moreover, the influence of media on the production and reproduction of beliefs, opinions, stereotypes, prejudices, and ideologies also has to be thoroughly investigated and compared throughout different countries worldwide.

According to Fairclough (1995: 47-48) media discourse should be considered as “the site of quite complex and often contradictory processes” since media function ideologically, but at the same time they entertain people, keep them informed about relevant political and social issues, and also reflect and contribute to “shifting cultural values and identities”.

2. Theoretical Background

Discourse analysis can be a challenging task because there are different approaches to defining discourse. Various authors have dealt with and contributed to the development of Critical Discourse Analysis. Norman Fairclough (2001: 10), who is considered a founder of this interdisciplinary approach, takes sociology, social semiotics, and systemic functional linguistics as the theoretical foundations of his studies. Critical discourse analysis is first mentioned in his *Language and Power* (2001), which lays the theoretical foundations for the development of this approach. According to Fairclough (2001: 14) CDA focuses on the relationship between discourse, ideology and power in sociocultural contexts. Generally accepted tenet that discourse is language in use is in accordance with the overall aim of CDA “to link linguistic

analysis to social analysis” (Wood and Kroger 2006). According to Wodak (1996: 17-20) CDA is concerned with the linguistic character of social and cultural process; it deals with both power in discourse and power over discourse; not only are society and culture shaped by discourse, at the same time they constitute it; language use may be ideological; discourses can only be understood in relation to their context; critical analysis focuses on a relationship between the text and its social conditions, ideologies and power-relations. The focus of CDA is the analysis of relations between language use and social-cultural structures. Fairclough (1995: 3) emphasizes that linguistic analysis of media, which particularly focuses on newspaper articles, or transcriptions of a radio or television programme, needs to be analysed as discourse because discourse analysis is concerned both with discourse practices as well as texts. For Fairclough (1995: 59) every discursive event has three dimensions: text, discursive practice and social practice. Discursive practice comprises the production and interpretation of texts.

2.1. Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Framework

Fairclough (2001:16) describes language as “a form of social practice” and refers to discourse as a whole process of social interaction, as well as the process of interpretation, with the text being a resource. In this view of discourse text is just a part of it. Due to the fact that discourse is seen as social practice, Fairclough (2001: 21) stresses the importance of analysing not just texts, and processes of production and interpretation, but the relationship between texts, processes and their social conditions. For the purpose of conducting such complex analysis Fairclough (2010: 132) proposes a three-dimensional framework in which discourse involves text, discourse practice and social practice and three dimensions of discourse analysis: description, interpretation, and explanation.

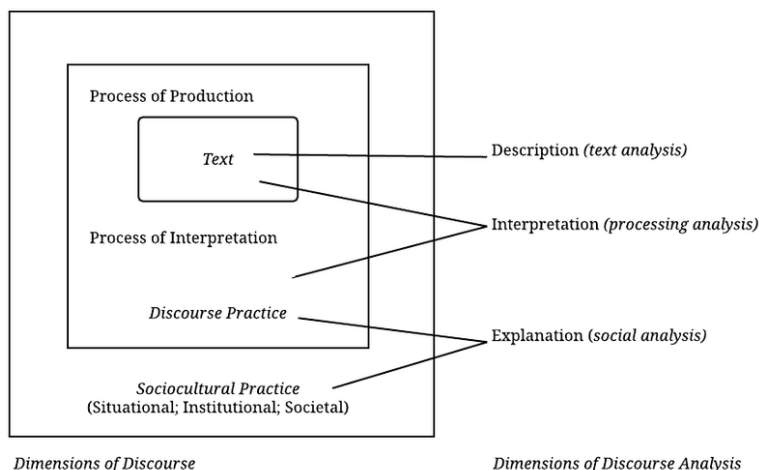


Figure 1 The three-dimensional conception of discourse (Fairclough, 2010: 133)

Description

Description deals with formal properties of text, such as vocabulary, grammar, textual structure, sentence types, modes, voice, modality and so forth. In analysing vocabulary, the method “is based upon the assumption that different ways of lexicalizing domains of meaning may include ideologically different systems of classification, so there is an interest in how areas of experience may come to be relexicalized on different classificatory principles” (Fairclough 1992a: 28). Experiential values focus on “the text producer’s experience of the natural or social world” (Fairclough, 2001: 93) and they are reflected by lexical choices. In this type of text analysis vocabulary items, grammatical features and so forth do not have direct significance in themselves, but the focus is on the function they serve at the time of their use especially in relation to their direct or indirect involvement in reproducing or resisting ideology and social power.

Interpretation

Interpretation analysis “is concerned with participants’ processes of text production as well as text interpretation” (Fairclough, 2001: 118). This means that the situational context and the intertextual context are central to the process of interpretation. According to Fairclough (1992b: 195), intertextuality refers to the productivity of texts- in which ways texts can transform previous texts and how new texts can be produced. In news reporting journalist rely on information from those who are treated by journalists as reliable sources, “prominent people in various domains of public life- politicians, police and lawyers, many categories of experts, and so forth” (Fairclough 1995: 79). Voices that are found in newspaper articles are considered as discourse representation. This type of discourse representation is “a form of intertextuality in which part of other texts are incorporated into a text and usually explicitly marked as such, with devices such as quotation marks and reporting clauses” (Fairclough, 1992a: 107). Newspaper articles are abundant with various examples of direct and indirect quotations.

Explanation

According to Fairclough (2001: 135), the aim of explanation is “to portray a discourse as part of a social process, as a social practice, showing how it is determined by social structures, and what reproductive effects discourses can cumulatively have on those structures, sustaining them or changing them.” In this view social structures refer to relations of power and social processes and practices refer to social struggle. There are two phases involved in the stage of explanation: social effects of discourse and social determinants of discourse.

Both should be investigated at three levels: in the immediate situation, in the wider institution or organization, and at a societal level.

3. Methodology

This paper makes a thorough analysis of newspaper articles reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic, based on Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of three stages: description, interpretation and explanation. Articles selected for the analysis were published in *The Washington Post* and *Jutarnji list* from February to May of 2020, in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have selected ten articles from *The Washington Post*, and eighteen articles from *Jutarnji list*. More articles have been chosen from *Jutarnji list* because these articles are mostly shorter than the articles in *The Washington Post*. The total number of words in the articles from *The Washington Post* is 15497, and in the articles from *Jutarnji list* 15248.

At the level of description Fairclough (1992a:75) organizes text analysis under four main headings: 'vocabulary', 'grammar', 'cohesion', and 'text structure'. This paper focuses on vocabulary, with the aim of identifying which words closely related to the pandemic are most frequently used. The comparative study of the reporting on the same situation in two newspapers aims to discover to which extent the assumption that "linguistic codes do not reflect reality neutrally; they interpret, organize, and classify the subjects of discourse" (Fowler 27) is applicable to the chosen newspaper discourse. The aim of this analysis is to reveal the world-views or ideologies as well as try to determine if there are striking differences between an American and a Croatian newspaper in describing the same situation. At the level of interpretation, the paper analyses the production and interpretation processes of news discourse in terms of intertextuality. Since newspaper discourse relies on what people have said, this paper analyses news sources and reporting modes of discourse representation. There are three categories of news sources: specified, semi-specified and unspecified news sources (Zhou, Qin 93). Fairclough (1992a: 107) has classified mode of discourse representation broadly into two types: direct and indirect discourse. There are also examples of indirect speech being used together with direct speech in the same sentence, which is termed preset direct discourse by Vološinov (134). Thus, with the aim of examining how newspaper discourse is produced and interpreted, this paper analyses three reporting modes: direct speech, indirect speech and preset direct speech. According to Fairclough (2001: 135) "explanation is a matter of seeing a discourse as part of processes of social struggle, within a matrix of relations of power." The aim is to depict the mutual effect between discourse and social structure. A piece of discourse, embedded within sociocultural practice, can be investigated at three levels of social organization: the situational level, the institutional level and the societal level. This paper analyses the institutional and the societal level.

4. An analysis of Newspaper Articles in *The Washington Post* and *Jutarnji list* based on CDA

This paragraph analyses newspaper articles reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic in *The Washington Post* and *Jutarnji list* based on Fairclough's three-dimensional framework.

4.1. Description of Newspaper Articles

At the level of description textual analysis of newspaper discourse is conducted. Linguistic features of the text are examined through vocabulary analysis. The following table shows the occurrence and the number of pandemic-related words in the selected articles from *The Washington Post*.

Table 1. Pandemic-related words in *The Washington Post*

Pandemic-related words	Number	Percentage
Virus and disease: coronavirus (81), COVID-19 (18), pandemic (18), spread (17), symptoms (10), disease (9), infection (9), transmission (2), contagious (1), intensive-care unit (1).	166	52.7%
Danger: risk (16), outbreak (16), panic (5), threat (4), damage (2), attack rate (2), hazard (2), crazy (2), fatal (1), erosion (1), dramatic (1), irrational (1), anxiety (1), frenzy (1), pressure (1), frightening (1), calamity (1), destruction (1), carnage (1), suffering (1).	61	19.4%
Prevention and control: quarantine (11), measures (10), social distancing (8), hand sanitizer (7), protective equipment (5), face mask (3), taskforce (2), disinfectant (2), disinfecting wipe (1), protective gear (1).	50	15.8%
Severe consequences: crisis (14), death (12), shutdown (4), job loss (3), hardship (2), recession (2), travel bans (1),	38	12.1%
Total	315	100%

Pandemic-related words are grouped in four categories according to their meaning. The highest proportion of words (52.7%) refers to the virus and the disease. Words that evoke danger and have strongly negative meaning account for 19.4% of the total number of words. The third category, which includes words

that refer to the prevention and control of the disease, accounts for 15.8% of the total number of words. The final category, which includes words that evoke severe consequences that the pandemic causes, accounts for 12.1% of the total number of words. The following table shows the occurrence and the number of pandemic-related words in the selected articles from *Jutarnji list*.

Table 2. Pandemic-related words in *Jutarnji list*

Pandemic-related words	Number	Percentage
Virus and disease: koronavirus (coronavirus) (151), zaraza/ zaražen (infection/ infected)(84), slučaj (case) (62), COVID-19 (40), epidemija (epidemic) (31), bolest/ oboljeli (sickness/ the sick) (23), gen/ genska/ genetika (gene/ genetic/ genetics) (22), pandemija (pandemic) (7), simptomi (symptoms) (7), inficiran/ infekcija (infected/ infection) (7), respirator (respirator) (7), bolesnici (patients) (6), širenje (spreading) (5), epicentar/ izvorište (epicentre/ source) (3).	455	64.2%
Prevention and control: mjere (measures) (26), karantena (quarantine) (24), zaštita/ zaštitna oprema/ odijela/ samozaštita (protection/ protective equipment/ protective suits/ self-protection) (7), razmak/ distanciranje (distance/ distancing) (5), testiranje (testing) (5), cjepivo (vaccine) (4), propusnica (pass) (4), skener za mjerenje temperature (temperature scanner) (3), kontrola (control) (3), pregrada od pleksiglasa (plexiglass shield) (2), tunel za dezinfekciju (disinfection tunnel) (2), prijenos (transmission) (2), kontakt (contact) (2), rukavice (gloves) (2), higijena (hygiene) (2), restrikcije/ restriktivne (restriction/ restrictive) (2), zabrana (napuštanja mjesta prebivališta) (prohibiton (to leave the place of residence)) (2), otvaranje (zemlje, granica) (opening (countries, borders)), (2), potvrda o imunitetu (immunity certificate) (2), pranje ruku (handwashing) (1),	103	14.6%

nuspojave (side effects) (1), samodisciplina (self-discipline) (1), odgovorno ponašanje (responsible behaviour) (1).		
Severe consequences: smrt/ smrtonosan/ smrtnost/ mortalitet/ letalitet (death/ lethal/ mortality/ lethality), (51), umrli/ umiranje (the dead/ dying) (26), kriza (crisis) (6), izvanredno stanje (state of emergency) (6), žrtva (victim) (2), posljedice (društveno-gospodarske) (consequences (social-economic)) (2), kontaminiran (contaminated) (1), kritično stanje (critical condition) (1), mrtvačnica (morgue) (1), stigmatizirani (stigmatized) (1), preopterećenost (zdravstvenog sustava) (overload (of the health care system)) (1), recesija (recession) (1).	99	14.1%
Danger: panika (panic) (12), rizik (risk) (10), ugrožen/ ugroza (endangered/ danger) (8), borba/ boriti se (fight/ to fight) (6), rat (war) (2), obrana (defense) (2), katastrofa (catastrophe) (2), nužda (necessity) (2), alarmantna situacija (alarming situation) (1), iracionalan (irrational) (1), prijetnja (threat) (1), zabrinutost (worry) (1), strah (fear) (1), zloglasna (tržnica) (infamous (market))(1).	50	7.1%
Total	707	100%

The highest proportion of words (64.2%) refers to the virus and the disease. The second most frequent category includes words that refer to prevention and control of the pandemic (14.6%). The category which includes words that refer to severe consequences of the disease account for 14.1% of the total number. Words that evoke danger account for 7.1% of the total number of words.

4.2. Interpretation of Newspaper Articles

In the second stage of Fairclough's framework, news sources and reporting modes of discourse representation are analysed.

4.2.1. News Sources

News sources refer to individuals, documents, institutions which provide reporters with viewpoints and newsworthy information. Their influence is crucial in the process of news reporting. There are three categories of news sources: specified, semi-specified and unspecified news sources (Zhou, Qin 93). Specified sources refer to those whose name, position or status are explicitly stated in the news. Semi-specified sources are those whose detailed information is not included in the news, but some collective nouns that have general meaning are used instead, such as “scientists say...”. Unspecified sources are those whose information is quite vague and inexplicit such as “according to the report...”. The distribution of news sources is shown in the table below.

Table 3. News sources in *The Washington Post*

	Specified	Semi-specified	Unspecified	Total
Number	178	73	15	266
Percentage	66.9%	27.4%	5.6%	100%

Specified source accounts for the highest proportion among the three types of news sources, 66.9%. Semi-specified source accounts for the second largest proportion, 27.4%, and the unspecified one accounts for quite low proportion, 5.6% of the total percentage of news sources. Some examples of sentences that rely on semi-specified or unspecified source may express certain ideology. Edelman (31) employs the term “reference to mythical groups” or “fictional reference groups and benchmarks”, which are evoked when semi-specified or unspecified sources are used. Here are four examples.

(1) Tehran has come under criticism for its inept and secretive approach to the outbreak, which probably enabled its spread.

(2) Separately, senior U.S. health officials, including Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, were reportedly “blindsided” by Trump’s decision to put Vice President Pence in charge of the country’s coronavirus task force.

(3) President Trump attempted to play down the scale of the threat, even as U.S. officials warned Americans to prepare for a crisis.

(4) Older students may suffer even more from social isolation, experts say, because friends play a far more important role in their lives.

The source in example (1) is unspecified, it is not mentioned who criticised Tehran for using inept and secretive approach in the fight against the pandemic. In this way reporters may attempt to convey their own ideas about the situation in Tehran, allowing for the possibility that they even enabled the virus to spread instead of stopping it. In example (2) source is also unspecified, what is more, the term reportedly is used in reporting on health officials not agreeing with Trump’s decision. This can lead to a conclusion that the reporter does not agree

with Trump's policy and does not support his decisions in the fight against the pandemic. Sentence (3) contains semi-specified source, it shows that U.S. officials, not specified which ones precisely, do not agree with Trump's evaluation of the current situation. In this way readers are guided to a great extent, since these judgments cannot be traced back. In example (4) the semi-specified source, "experts", is used, in the context of online learning during the pandemic. Experts in the field have great authority and readers may be guided to believe that all scientists share this opinion since no determiner before "experts" is used. The credibility of these judgments should be discussed further. The distribution of news sources in the selected articles from *Jutarnji list* is shown in the table below.

Table 4. News sources in *Jutarnji list*

	Specified	Semi-specified	Unspecified	Total
Number	160	13	11	184
Percentage	86.9%	7.1%	6%	100%

Specified source accounts for the highest proportion among the three types of news sources, which is 86,9%. Semi-specified source accounts for the second largest proportion, which is quite low, 7.1 %, and the unspecified one accounts for 6% of the total percentage of news sources. Here are four examples.

(5) Neslužbeno doznajemo da mlađi muškarac koji je pozitivan na koronavirus i nalazi se u klinici "Fran Mihaljević", radi u tvrtki Ericsson Nikola Tesla, a u Milanu je bio na utakmici Lige prvaka Atalanta- Valencia.

(Unofficially, we have found out that a younger man who tested positive for the coronavirus and is in the "Fran Mihaljević" clinic, works at the Ericsson Nikola Tesla company, and was in Milan at the Atalanta-Valencia Champions League match.)

(6) Prema neslužbenim informacijama Jutarnjeg lista, uskoro bi mogao biti potvrđen prvi slučaj koronavirusa u Hrvatskoj.

(According to unofficial information from Jutarnji List, the first case of coronavirus in Croatia could be confirmed soon.)

(7) Prema istraživačima, identifikacija HLA gena neke osobe, što se može učiniti brzo i jeftino, može pomoći u boljem predviđanju težine bolesti, pa čak i identificiranju onih koji će imati najviše koristi od cijepljenja.

(According to researchers, identifying a person's HLA gene, which can be done quickly and cheaply, can help in better prediction of the severity of the disease, and even in identifying those who will benefit most from vaccination.)

(8) Zrakoplovna industrija uvijek iznova naglašava da je zrak u avionima, zahvaljujući kvalitetnim filtrima za čestice, barem jednako čist kao u operacijskim salama.

(Aviation industry repeatedly emphasizes that the air in airplanes, thanks to high-quality particle filters, is at least as clean as in operating rooms.)

In examples (5) and (6) unspecified sources are used in reporting about the first case of the coronavirus in Croatia. At that time everybody was eager to find out about the first cases. Thus, journalists published unconfirmed information about the first victim. Example (7) contains semi-specified source, "istraživači" (researchers), whose opinion on the disease treatment is expressed, but cannot be verified. This suggests that the journalist's opinion may be conveyed in this piece of news discourse. Also, in example (8) semi-specified source is used, "zrakoplovna industrija" (aviation industry), in writing benevolently about the conditions in aeroplanes and safety for passengers during the pandemic comparing it to operating rooms.

4.2.2. Modes of Discourse Representation

Since newspaper articles represent what people have said, reproduce their opinions, they contain different examples of direct and indirect quotations. Direct speech presents a speaker's exact words included in text with quotation marks, usually with a reporting clause. Indirect speech reports the speaker's words without directly quoting them, thus quotation marks are omitted and indirect discourse is realized by a subordinate clause. In Fairclough's opinion (1992a: 107), the boundary between the words of the reported and the words of the reporter is less explicit. Preset direct speech, the term introduced by Vološinov (134), combines both indirect and direct speech in the same sentence. The proportion of modes of discourse representation in selected articles from *The Washington Post* is presented in the table below.

Table 5. Reporting modes in *The Washington Post*

	Direct speech	Indirect speech	Preset direct speech	Total
Number	154	77	25	256
Percentage	60.2%	30.1%	9.7%	100%

Direct speech accounts for 60.2% among the three modes of discourse representation, followed by indirect speech (30.1%) and preset direct speech (9.7%). Indirect speech and preset direct speech together (39.8%) account for a considerable proportion of the reporting modes. In this way reporters can express their viewpoints and ideologies. Here are some examples.

(9) Separately, senior U.S. health officials, including Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, were reportedly "blindsided" by Trump's decision to put Vice President Pence in charge of the country's coronavirus task force.

(10) He too had minimized the threat until just last week, at which point he stopped referring to the novel virus by its scientific name and instead switched to calling it the "Chinese virus".

(11) Painting a squalid if not shocking portrait of sickness behind bars, the inspectors- two veteran D.C. criminal justice experts- said inmates with the virus are isolated and prohibited from showering or cleaning their cells.

In example (9) discourse representation originates from an unspecified source, the word "blindsided" is specially marked with quotation marks, indicating that health officials were apparently caught unawares by Trump's decision. This word is negative, it suggests a harmful or detrimental action. In example (10) "Chinese virus" is marked with quotation marks. It is implied that the virus belongs to China. Both expressions in these two examples are particularly marked, which suggests that reporters disprove of the content of the speech or want to emphasize them. Example (11) represents the category of indirect speech. Initial part of the sentence "painting a squalid if not shocking portrait of sickness behind bars" introduces indirect discourse. Reporter adds his own opinion, uses extremely negative words when referring to the situation in prison, suggesting lack of care for prisoners during the pandemic. The proportion of modes of discourse representation in selected articles from *Jutarnji list* is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Reporting modes in *Jutarnji list*

	Direct speech	Indirect speech	Preset direct speech	Total
Number	108	77	11	196
Percentage	62.1%	32.3%	5.6%	100%

Direct speech accounts for 62.1% among the three modes of discourse representation, followed by indirect speech (32.3%) and preset direct speech (5.61%). Indirect speech and preset direct speech together (37.9%) account for a considerable proportion of the reporting modes.

(12) Najdalje u tome otišla je Austrija, čiji je konzervativni premijer Sebastian Kurz predstavio "kalendar" postupnog izlaska iz karantene.

(Most unexpectedly acted Austria, whose conservative Prime Minister Sebastian Kurz presented a "calendar" for a gradual exit from quarantine.)

(13) Razloge takvog uspjeha, tvrdi, treba tražiti u tradicionalnoj neslozi pravne teorije, inertnosti i ravnodušnosti pravne i opće javnosti i izolacionističkoj politici Ustavnog suda koji se drži "visoko ko oblak il tron, da ne dopre do njegov niskog tornja zvon"...

(The reasons for such success, he claims, should be sought in the traditional discord of legal theory, the inertness and indifference of the legal and general

public, and the isolationist policy of the Constitutional Court, which is positioned "as high as a cloud or a throne, so that the bell of its lower tower cannot reach it" ...)

(14) Predsjednik Republike Zoran Milanović izjavio je u petak kako se suzdržava od davanja komenara o koronavirusu jer smatra da bi svojim intervencijama unio pomutnju, ali je uvjeren kako Vlada do sada nije napravila nijednu grešku. (The President of the Republic of Croatia, Zoran Milanović, said on Friday that he refrains from commenting on the coronavirus because he believes that his interventions would cause confusion, but he is convinced that the government has not made any mistakes so far.)

In example (12) word "kalendar" ("calendar") is specifically marked with quotation marks, indicating that it is Kurz's word. The reporter particularly marked it, probably to put an emphasis on it since it discusses a hot topic of relaxing COVID-19 control measures. Example (13) exemplifies the usage of both indirect and direct speech in the same sentence. The source of information is the Judge of the Constitutional Court, Andrej Abramović. The initial part of the sentence reports his words without directly quoting them, then continues with direct speech in quotation "...visoko ko oblak il tron, da ne dopre do njeg niskog tornja zvon" (as high as a cloud or a throne, so that the bell of its lower tower cannot reach it"). By employing these words, the judge criticizes the work of the Constitutional Court. Since quotation marks are used, in contrast to the previously used indirect speech, the reporter gives prominence to this statement. Example (14) represents the category of indirect speech. The final part of the sentence, "...ali je uvjeren kako Vlada do sada nije napravila nijednu grešku" ("but he is convinced that the government has not made any mistakes so far") may be understood as an extension or explanation of the previous words, and the reporter's voice can be comprehended as being blended with the news source.

4.3. Explanation stage

This part of the paper deals with the analysis of social determinants of discourse considering the institutional and societal contexts.

4.3.1. Institutional and Societal Context

The Washington Post, founded in 1877, is an award-winning newspaper, ranked among top ten U.S. newspapers by circulation. While the role of the press is to serve the public by providing newsworthy information, it has also become a business which seeks ways of increasing its revenue, as well as attracting reader's attention. Most news media in the U.S., including newspapers, are market-oriented private companies financed through advertising, and subscriptions (Holcomb and Mitchell). Fairclough (1995: 42) states that the press and commercial broadcasting, being pre-eminently profit-making organizations,

make their profits by selling audiences to advertisers. The history of development of news media in Croatia, on the other hand, is turbulent and very interesting. Thus, in the midst of political, social and economic turmoil at the end of the 1980's, in the Socialist Republic of Croatia, news reporting has become critical to a certain extent, with reporters feeling free to express their own independent opinions, as an instance of resistance to official, somewhat authoritarian official politics. Despite their limited media freedom, newspapers slowly became an independent social factor that began to play a crucial role in creating positive, as well as negative social values (Nacionalni izvještaj o medijima 20). After core political changes at the beginning of the 1990's, new newspapers were founded, mostly as commercial private companies financed through advertising and circulation. One of the leading newspapers in Croatia, *Jutarnji list*, was founded in 1998. It is published by Hanza Media, which promotes it as newspaper of liberal and social democratic orientation.

The U.S. is a world superpower, with the third largest population in the world, and whose economic, military and cultural influence is unprecedented. The Republic of Croatia is a small European country that gained independence in 1991. When WHO proclaimed the COVID-19 pandemic on 11 March 2020, the whole world was caught unawares by the outbreak of this infectious disease. The atmosphere of fear, suffering and death has become a part of people's daily lives. The first case in the U.S. was reported on 21 January 2020 ([History](#)). American public health experts agree that many mistakes were made especially at the beginning of the pandemic. The Trump administration minimized the virus's threat, testing was slow. There was a lack of strong national strategy, authorities' activities in the fight against the virus were uncoordinated. Crisis management was not at the level that was expected from one of the global leaders, which resulted in a very high death rate, with around 1 million deaths (Worldometer). The first case in Croatia was registered on 25 February 2020 (Koronavirus.hr). The government formed a Science Council and National Crisis Headquarters for the COVID-19 pandemic. Very strict measures were introduced to prevent spread of the virus. Later on, measures were relaxed, and there were disagreements between some members of the Council and politicians, about dealing with the pandemic and relaxing measures, which all coincided with the start of the tourist season and the necessity to activate the economy. Statistics show that Croatia ranks seventh in Europe, as of October 2022, with very high incidence of coronavirus deaths per 100,000 population (Stewart).

The analysis of selected articles from *The Washington Post* shows that reporters can be quite critical, for example, of Trump and his administration in the article "China has blood on its hands: Fox News hosts join Trump in blame-shifting". Furthermore, reporters are quite critical towards differences between people related to working from home in the midst of the pandemic that are connected to race and education in the article "Working from home reveals

another fault line in America's racial and educational divide". In *Jutarnji list* reporters do not overtly show such criticism towards the authorities. What is more, they report quite positively on the Prime Minister's activities, which is presented in the article "Plenković s predstavnicima klubova, najavio paket ekonomskih mjera. U ratu smo protiv virusa, panike i društveno-gospodarskih posljedica epidemije" ("Plenković with club representatives announced a package of economic measures. We are at war against virus, panic and the socio-economic consequences of the epidemic"). There's one article which reports an opinion of a Judge of the Constitutional Court, who is openly very critical towards certain legal actions conducted by the government he does not agree with, and finds them unconstitutional, in "Oštro upozorenje Ustavnog suca. Stožer nije imao zakonsko pravo donijeti odluku o zabrani napuštanja mjesta prebivališta i stalnog boravišta" ("A sharp warning from the Constitutional Judge. The headquarters did not have the legal right to decide on the prohibition of leaving the place of residence and permanent residence").

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Through analysing newspaper articles from *The Washington Post* and *Jutarnji list*, from February to May of 2020, this paper focuses on the differences and similarities between newspaper discourse of these two respectable newspapers. A critical discourse analysis is conducted through three stages of description, interpretation and explanation. At the description stage the overall analysis shows that there is a noticeable difference in the frequency of occurrence of pandemic-related words. There are 315 words in *The Washington Post* and 707 in *Jutarnji list*. Words used by journalists communicate the messages of a text, in this case about the pandemic, and frame the story in direct ways. It seems as if the surge of the virus is reflected in the abundance of words that are closely related to the pandemic. Thus, articles from *Jutarnji list* are more densely filled with words which evoke this horrendous situation. Another noticeable difference is shown in the frequency of occurrence of words that evoke danger. Such words in *The Washington Post* account for 19.4 % of the total number of words, which is quite high in comparison to the occurrence in *Jutarnji list* (7.1%). There is no big difference in the usage of words that refer to the prevention and control of the disease, 15.8% in *The Washington Post* and 14.6% in *Jutarnji list*. Similarly, there is no big difference in the occurrence of words that evoke severe consequences, 12.1% in *The Washington Post*, and 14.1% in *Jutarnji list*, 14.1%. Journalists in *The Washington Post* put more focus on dangerous aspects of the pandemic, evoke that by using words such as *panic*, *threat*, *frenzy*, *hazard*, *calamity*, *anxiety* etc. These results imply that even such powerful country like the U.S. is overwhelmed by this extremely dangerous situation. Journalists in *Jutarnji list* focus more on neutral aspects of the pandemic, but they do evoke dangerous aspects of the pandemic by using words such as *panika*

(*panic*), *borba* (*fight*), *katastrofa* (*catastrophe*), *strah* (*fear*). This is particularly shown in the usage of words related to *death* (*smrt*), there are 51 such occurrences, while in *The Washington Post* word *death* is used 12 times. In Croatia, which is much smaller and less powerful than the U.S., the focus is on words that evoke severe consequences and the outcome of this horrible situation, possibly with the aim of making people more aware of the importance of their own responsibility in the fight against the virus.

At the interpretation level, by comparing the results of the analysis, we can conclude that there are certain differences between them in the usage of types of news sources. The newspaper industry in the U.S. has been in a steady decline, for a number of years, caused by a loss in readership and ad revenue (Adgate). The circulation of weekday newspapers, both print and digital, shows a sharp decline in the last twenty years (Pew Research Centre). Regarding Americans' trust in media, according to Gallup poll conducted in 2022, only 37% of Americans trust newspapers, and 63% say they do not have much confidence in the newspapers or have none at all (Brenan). In Croatia, just like in the U.S., the circulation of newspapers is falling significantly every year (Aztn). Regarding Croatians' trust in media, the results of the research conducted by Promocija Plus Agency show that Croatians trust more television or radio than daily newspapers (IndexHR). Only 22% trust newspapers, almost 33% do not trust them and 39.3% neither trust nor distrust them. Our results show that *The Washington Post* uses 66.9% of specified news sources, while *Jutarnji list* uses a significantly higher percentage, 86.9%. This may suggest that reports in *Jutarnji list* are, to a certain extent, more reliable, exert a higher degree of objectivity and authenticity. If we correlate these results to people trusting newspapers, we can see that far more Americans do not trust them (63%) as opposed to Croatians, with 33% not trusting newspapers. Furthermore, the difference between them is also conspicuous in the usage of semi-specified news sources. *The Washington Post* uses 27.4% of semi-specified sources, while the percentage in *Jutarnji list* is considerably lower, 7.1%. When comparing the usage of unspecified news sources, the difference between them is insignificant. *The Washington Post* has 5.6% of unspecified news sources, and *Jutarnji list* 6%, which confirms that both newspapers very rarely rely on unverified pieces of information. By comparing the results of the analysis related to the usage of reporting modes in news discourse of the two newspapers, we notice that there are insignificant differences between them. The biggest difference is in the usage of preset direct speech, *The Washington Post* has a higher percentage, 9.7%, as opposed to 5.6% in *Jutarnji list*. If we consider the occurrence of both indirect speech and preset direct speech together we come to the following proportions: 39.8% of the total number occurs in *the Washington Post*, 37.9% in *Jutarnji list*. The results show there is no big difference between the two newspapers in modes of representing discourse. We can conclude that by using indirect speech and preset direct

speech reporters are not completely unbiased in their reporting and their ideology is conveyed to a certain extent in the process of production. In this way the medium intervenes in the original voices. Thus, readers even may not be certain which pieces of information come from the news source, which from reporters. We must point out that not all examples of indirect speech as well as preset direct speech, in both newspapers, contain reporters' opinions or ideologies, but they do allow reporters to implicitly express their voices and in that way influence readers.

The analysis at the explanation level shows a noticeable difference between the two newspapers in the usage of semi-specified news sources. We can conclude that, by using more semi-specified sources, reporters from *The Washington Post* more frequently and openly express their own viewpoints, thus making these parts of news discourse ideologically significant. It should be emphasized that *The American Society of Newspaper Editors* has repeatedly been warning for the last ten years that trust in the media is declining, and that the public perceives newspapers as often being biased and leaning towards sensationalism (Malović 10). Fewer instances of semi-specified sources in *Jutarnji list* may indicate that reporters are not being that critical or openly expressing their viewpoints, which may be the result of the past authoritarian political system, the effect of which may still somewhat linger in news reporting when media freedom was quite limited, and politicians influenced media content to a great extent. Media independence should be an indisputable feature of all commercial media. Print media in Croatia are not completely independent, because the content is influenced by the owners whose goal is revenue increase, which points to dependence of editorial policies on advertisers and owners (Nacionalni izvještaj o medijima 12). By conducting a thorough analysis of articles reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic, this paper aspires to help readers to read relevant newspaper content critically and objectively and to enhance their critical awareness. Even though an elaborate analysis is conducted, there are some limitations. In order to obtain more objective results, more articles should be included in the analysis, which could be further analysed at the level of predication, transitivity, modality etc.

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**ANALISI CRITICA DEL DISCORSO DI ARTICOLI DI GIORNALI *WASHINGTON POST* E
JUTARNJI LIST SULLA PANDEMIA DI COVID-19**

La pandemia di COVID-19 ha avuto impatto su ogni aspetto della nostra vita ed è diventata l'argomento di ricerca scientifica in vari campi. Vengono analizzati articoli scelti dal *Washington Post* e *Jutarnji list*, pubblicati da febbraio a maggio 2020, basati sull'analisi tridimensionale di Norman Fairclough, la quale include tre fasi: la descrizione, l'interpretazione e la spiegazione. In fase della descrizione viene analizzato il vocabolario relativo alla pandemia, poi al livello di interpretazione vengono analizzati le fonti di notizie e i modi di rappresentazioni di un discorso, ed al livello esplicativo il discorso è analizzato in contesti istituzionali e sociali. L'analisi ha rivelato notevole differenza tra il *Washington Post* e *Jutarnji list* nel totale numero di parole relative alla pandemia. Ci sono 315 parole relative alla pandemia in *Washington Post* e 707 in *Jutarnji list*. Inoltre, in *Washington Post*, l'attenzione si concentra sugli aspetti pericolosi della pandemia e in *Jutarnji list* si concentra sugli aspetti neutrali della pandemia. Al livello d'interpretazione i risultati mostrano che *Jutarnji list* utilizza una percentuale maggiore di fonti di notizie specificate. Non ci sono grandi differenze nell'uso delle modalità di rappresentazione del discorso. Le differenze degli aspetti del discorso quotidiano al livello esplicativo riflettono le ideologie diverse tra i due paesi.

Parole chiave: Analisi critica del discorso, la pandemia di COVID-19, *Washington Post*, *Jutarnji list*