Jasmina P. Đorđević

DIGITAL MEDIA DISCOURSE IN LINGUISTIC RESEARCH

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Niš, 2022.

To my children!

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I would like to thank all the people who have inspired me in some way and who keep inspiring me on a daily basis. A list of names would be far too long, but it would certainly include my father and mother, my son and daughter, my husband as well as my sister and her family. In addition, the list would include many of my teachers, my mentors, my co-workers, friends and students. Each of these people motivated me at some point in my life, some of them even more than once. Each of these people has left a mark, has branded me, has spurred me to work harder, to be a better person. Even those people who have been mean, who have tried to put me down or prevent me from achieving a goal, even they contributed to this book and I would like to thank them from the bottom of my heart for igniting in me the passion to keep on working and giving my best.

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Preface

The monograph *Digital media discourse in linguistic research* offers an exploration into the relationship between discourse as a manifestation of language in the digital media and the research possibilities available in the field of linguistics, but not without referring to sociolinguistics, media studies, etc. Substantial research has been devoted to the separate aspects of the subject matter initiated in this book. Especially during the last two decades, the media, discourse and the digital realm have been rather frequent topics successfully elaborated on by authors who have been given due credit in this book. However, it seemed to me that there are not enough resources that would provide systematic and comprehensive insights into how to analyse, understand, describe and further explore digital media discourse by relating linguistic research with theoretical frameworks from communication studies, political studies, journalism etc. These frameworks may, in fact, shed new light on how digital media discourse is both created and perceived while offering some new understanding of all the affordances and constraints entailed in digital media discourse in linguistic research.

Given the new trades that digital media discourse undoubtedly adds to research designs, especially within linguistics, it seems that now more than ever, there is a need to re-evaluate and revise the theoretical and methodological assumptions existing in various approaches to discourse. This is especially true when it comes to analysing and discerning the power of media in general, the notion of power in discourse, the engagement of audiences, their representation in digital media discourse as well as adaptations of existing theories and methodologies employed for the purpose of interpreting discursive practices in the online space.

Research in any field of study that includes the term digital has now become a tricky business, to say the least. Everybody who may have some skill related to the use of a computer, smart phone, smart watch, tablet or other high-tech gadget will claim they know what digital media and digital media discourse mean. However, approaching the topic of digital media discourse from both a theoretical and practical point of view, which will provide a solid framework to rely on in future research, will have to include much more than just the skill to use technology.

To be honest, when I decided to write a book about digital media discourse in linguistic research, I was far too enthusiastic. What started as a simple idea: Oh, I should write about digital media discourse in linguistic research! was soon transformed into a never-ending journey. New topics kept appearing, new concepts had to be explained, new issues started bothering me and I realized already upon putting down the titles of the first chapters that quite a long road was ahead of me. That is why I cannot say that the book has a proper ending. Because it does not. I finished the last chapter and I realized I could have written at least two hundred more pages. In fact, during the time I was writing the book, even after I thought I had finished it, new articles and books kept appearing and I wanted to include all of them in this book because they were, in my opinion, more than relevant. But then I had to succumb to the painful truth that I could not possibly keep up with the pace at which new books and articles devoted to the digital media and the discourse in it were appearing.

Regarding the first part of the book, I realize that there are many other terms I might have explained to make the understanding of digital media discourse within linguistics more comprehensive. For instance, I have left out emojis and emoticons, pop-ups, banners, ads, various portals and platforms, etc. all of which contain language (i.e. discourse) presented in the digital media. And regarding the second part, I have not included as many relevant approaches as I have come across. At one point I had to draw a line because otherwise I would never have finished the book. Therefore, the current version of my book is a filtered version as I deliberately decided against some terms and against some approaches. The reason why is that the ones comprising the current volume are, in my modest opinion, sufficient to begin the journey of analysing digital media discourse in linguistic research.

The hardest task I had to face at the beginning was to provide an adequate definition first of the digital media and then a definition of digital media discourse. I realized that I could not write about digital media discourse in linguistic research without offering some explanation regarding at least a few major issues included in both (or either?) digital media and (or?) digital media discourse. The most prominent difficulty lies in the fact that there are two separate, even opposing stances that need to be reconciled: 1) the academic approach to the understanding of the digital media and the discourse occurring in them and 2) the practical approach of the main stakeholders in the industry of the digital media and the discourse occurring in them. It may

seem unbelievable, but these two claim to be referring to completely different issues although, after careful reading, they do, in fact, talk and write about the same – encoded information transferred through means of mass communication. What is different is their purpose.

Within the academic approach, digital media discourse is a field of study meant to provide deeper insight into the understanding of the relationship between language and the digital media, the way the digital media transport meaning, how people relate and connect via digital media to establish certain relationships that may be studied from the point of view of language and culture within society and how the digital media transform into a reflection of society, politics, culture, economy, etc. Within the practical approach, digital media discourse is content, spoken or written used to help people connect and share thoughts, ideas, beliefs. Both approaches are interested in what people say or write via digital media and how they do it. However, the academic approach goes a step further and wants to discern why people do it and how it affects their daily life. Therefore, I believe it is correct to say that the practical approach is interested in the technical aspects of digital media discourse referring to how it is transferred via bytes, codes, software, technology, etc. while the academic is devoted to the philosophical, historical, linguistic, cultural, social, psychological and anthropological issues related to digital media discourse. As there seems to be a slight resistance towards reconciling the theoretical and the practical, this book is meant to offer some common grounds for the two to meet on.

I should also add that when a long time ago I first started reading into the topic of the digital media and the discourse appearing in them, I was fascinated by the vast array of terms, concepts and points lying there open for discussion. Similar to any other field of academic research, the theoretical aspects of the digital media as well as the discourse appearing in them have been investigated within various fields of study, such as information and communication technologies, media studies, journalism, language, culture, anthropology, etc. At the same time, new fields of practical application have been and are still appearing in the form of new social media platforms, webdesign, advertising, content promotion, etc. This means that there is a wide range of terminology to be covered. Referring to all the terms occurring in both theory and practice would be impossible. That is why I have limited the presentation of terms in the first part of the book to those which I believe are crucial for the understanding of digital media discourse within linguistic

research as well as inherent to the trades, features and characteristics which might be in the focus of a digital media discourse analyst who is conducting the linguistic research.

At this point I should probably say something about the motivation that has driven me into this project. Having spent almost two decades researching first discourse in general and then digital media discourse in particular, I have been able to connect my three great passions in life: 1) watching films and shows (using digital media), 2) reading books (thinking about written discourse) and 3) using gadgets (playing with technology). The first I developed at a very young age and from the contemporary perspectives of child raising, my parents did a terrible job because they did very little to prevent me from turning into a television addict. Later, with the development of technology, I added watching films and shows on the VCR, then DVD and then the Internet. Now I am spending endless hours binge watching films and shows via streaming services. I must admit that I am more than curious to find out what new media I will use in the future! The second passion developed as soon as I started reading and it has not stopped until the present day. Despite being a strong advocate and supporter of technology, I am still a huge fan of the traditional book, i.e. the tangible sensation of flipping pages made of paper. I love the smell of new books! But my reading passion does not stop with books. I read literally everything that has been written down in any form, ranging from the ingredients on the packages of food to various online content (news, posts, comments, etc.). It is an obsession and there is no end to it as I am truly amazed at all the information that I find in the content that I read. And finally, my third passion was, in fact, triggered by my father, who was into technology quite a lot and I started using gadgets of all kinds very early so that today I could not imagine life without my laptop, smart phone, tablet or Kindle, not to mention all the gadgets in my kitchen. Obviously, the mentioned passions (the one for kitchen gadgets not included) relate to the academic research of digital media discourse as they are basic preconditions enabling such research.

The book *Digital media discourse in linguistic research* is divided into two main parts because I realized that there are two main aspects my book needs to explain. The first part is devoted entirely to the characteristics, trades and features of the digital in digital media discourse as well as the most common types of digital media discourse we encounter on a daily basis. I actually realized there are far too many concepts and terms that

constitute the phrase digital media discourse, such as interactivity, hashtags, hyperlinks, clickbaits, etc. which is why I decided to provide simple but informative explanations of at least some of the terms. Regarding the types of digital media discourse, again I limited my choice to the most important ones, such as the news, digital platforms and services, video games, blogs, etc. The second part of the book is devoted to several theories and approaches which may be adapted to the needs of digital media discourse in linguistic research. Out of a pool of available frameworks, I decided to choose those, which I believe are easy to implement (e.g. Framing Theory, Spiral of Silence, Newsworthiness, etc.). My choice was based primarily on my own research because in that way I was able to provide examples of how these frameworks have been adapted to digital media discourse analysis in linguistic research.

As far as my potential audiences are concerned, I believe that my book is mostly suited for members of the academic community as well as students of discourse who are investigating digital media discourse within various types of applied studies. However, it is also meant for members of the vast industry of the digital media who might need deeper insight into the mechanisms of discourse from a linguistic point of view. Given that my targeted audience includes a wide range of recipients from different fields, this book has been written in a less formal style. Relevant explanations will be provided and supported in a scientific and academic way, but rather than focusing only on formal approaches to the digital media and digital media discourse, I have decided to apply a lighter approach to both subjects. I will probably disappoint all those readers who might be hoping for complicated technical explanations of how the digital media operate. Even, when necessary, I will keep the hard-core technicalities to a bare minimum.

All in all, this book is supposed to aid and support the endeavour to deal with digital media discourse in linguistic research, maybe even lead to new conclusions and inspire fresh perspectives regarding methodological approaches. Hopefully, it will provide at least some insight into existing theoretical approaches and analytical tools already applied in Critical Discourse Analysis. Finally, I hope that students, researchers and readers in general will think that this book is a helpful and informative resource and not discard it as waste of time.

Though I have added proper acknowledgements, I would like to use this preface as well to express my gratitude to my family, my students, my

colleagues, my co-workers and friends who have all contributed to this book enormously. Without their unconditioned support and infinite patience I would not have been able to invest a single minute into completing this rather challenging project. One more time, I would like to thank my reviewers Assoc. Prof. Dušan Stamenković, Assoc. Prof. Strahinja Stepanov and Asst. Prof. Miloš Tasić for their valuable comments and suggestions based on which I could improve this book.

Of course, I acknowledge all shortcomings, errors and misrepresentations in this book as my own.

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Jasmina P. Đorđević

Introduction

What are digital media? As Bateman (2021) suggests, 'it is by no means always clear what is held in common with the term "digital" beyond some use of computers' (p. 1). A variety of definitions are available and they are all aimed at providing a precise, yet comprehensive explanation of the digital media. Histor- ically speaking, the rise of the media is closely related to the moment when people started recording history itself. In other words, people needed some form of me- dium to store information on and preserve it for future generations. Though primitive in comparison to modern forms of media, the first piece of stone, wood or even paper was a type of media. The development of printing press technology along with the subsequent rise of digital technologies and the Internet in more recent history have enabled the fascinating realm of the digital media (*Techopedia*, 2021). Therefore, the logical approach to defining digital media would be to define the immediate constituents of the term, i.e. digital and media and then work out what the phrase digital means.

As a term, the word 'media' has been used as a singular collective term preceded by the definite article, i.e. 'the media' (Williams, 1976, p. 169). More than that, the term has, in fact, been used to refer to 'communication media' as well as the institutions and organizations which people work in (print media, radio and television, publishing, etc.) (Lister, et al., 2009). Even the products of the media institutions have been identified as 'the media' (news, films, shows, tapes, discs, etc.) (Thompson, 1971, p. 23—24). From the late 1980s the term 'new media' has been used (Lister et al., 2009) because the world of media and communication started changing rapidly. The change, though present even before the introduction of the term 'new media', was now 'seen as part of a much larger landscape of social, technological and cultural change; in short, as part of a new technoculture' (Lister et al., 2009, p. 11).

Whenever the adjective 'new' is put in front of a word, what is usually expected of the product/service/trend/etc. is that it is some ground-breaking and extraordinary invention that will change the world as we know it. The new media did bring about inventions that would have been

unfathomable in the past, but that was not a surprise considering the advance of technology at the end of the last century. The true avant-garde happened in the society using the media, in particular online, or internet-based media. A whole new culture was born and to the present day that new culture has raised a new generation of users of the new media. And that is exactly what Bateman (2021) points out as a potentially crucial difference between digital and non-digital media – the social practices that the new media are anchored in (p. 6).

Now we have people who text and type faster than they write; who do not read but scroll; who acquire knowledge from interactive platforms rather than books; who browse through online shops instead of leaving their houses, entering a fitting room and putting on an actual piece of garment or pair of shoes; who memorize images instead of words; who retrieve information from gadgets and not from their minds; who store memories on clouds and seem to have no idea what printed photographs in actual photo albums look like; who have online friends, followers and subscribers instead of real friends; who use emojis and emoticons to express feelings, hugs, love, etc.; who have virtual relationships; whose houses function on their own; whose refrigerators can make shopping lists; who search for partners via dating apps; who backpark their car with sensors; who no longer pay attention to the streets they are driving through because their eyes are glued to a navigator; who skype with family members living in the same house; who organize play-dates for their children via Viber. What is more, we have social media teach us about beliefs, truths and standards instead of educators and teachers, we allow 'likes' and 'dislikes' to affect our self-esteem and we need to expose our lives on Instagram in order to feel better, worthier or more appreciated. The list is endless. In one word, the new media have brought about a new form of communication, a new form of socialization, a new form of thinking, believing and acting. More importantly, all this is done in the virtual space of the Internet which is why, when we refer to the media, we probably think of online media based on digital technologies rather than those used offline and printed on paper.

Nevertheless, despite the rather gloomy image of the modern world that the media nowadays are reflecting, they are an integrative part of human existence. At this point in history and the evolution of mankind, the impact of the media is undeniable and a world without them would be unimaginable. Though a lot of criticism and quite necessary investigations could

be directed at the negative aspects of the media in the modern world, this book is not meant to be critical of the media at all; yet, it is not meant to glorify the media either, be it the old, the new or the digital ones. This book is meant to provide deeper insight into what we can do with the media to make them work for us. Therefore, I shall now turn to the analysis of the term 'digital media' because at one point the word 'digital' replaced the adjective 'new' in front of the word media. The exact moment in history when the term digital media came into use would be difficult to determine. What can be determined is its meaning.

The first step in the analysis of the meaning of the term digital media should start with a dictionary definition. The *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* defines digital as 'a system of receiving and sending information as a series of the numbers one and zero, showing that an electronic signal is there or not'. The same dictionary states that the media is the 'main ways that large numbers of people receive information and entertainment, that is television, radio, newspapers and the Internet'. The definition of the term media supplied by *Techopedia* (2021) states that it 'describes any channel of communication' and it 'can include anything from printed paper to digital data and encompasses art, news, educational content and numerous other forms of information'. The same resource states that communication media are 'means of delivering and receiving data or information' whereas digital media is a term that refers to 'intricately encoded signals that are transmitted over various forms of physical and virtual media, such as fibre optic cable and computer networks' (2021).

Horst and Miller (2012) define digital as 'everything that has been developed by or can be reduced to, the binary – that is bits consisting of zeros and ones' (p. 5). This in fact means that 'the development of binary code radically simplified information and communication' (p. 5) through the media as a means of mass communication. We could also say that given that in its broadest sense mass communication includes broadcasting, publishing and the Internet, the digital media are a means of mass communication used to transfer information encoded as zeros and ones. Or, to put it more simply, the digital media are binary code in communication, nowadays primarily realized online.

It may seem that, the concept of the digital is easier to understand than the concept of the media (or not?) as it is all about the mentioned bytes, bits and binary language of zeros and ones. In comparison to the media,

which may refer to physical objects, real and virtual environments as well as abstract spheres of communication, the digital includes a machine (primarily the computer), some specific software to operate it as well as networks, hard drives and cloud services to move and store digital information. Therefore, the question now is whether the term digital media means just mass communication with digital tools or is there more to it? The immediate answer is 'yes, there is much more to it' because apart from computer-mediated communication (email, chat rooms, forums, voice image transmission, blogs, social networks, etc.) the digital media nowadays include new ways of distributing and consuming media texts with new features, such as interactivity and hypertextual formats (the World Wide Web, CDs, DVDs, podcasts, etc.) (Lister et al., 2009). In addition, virtual realities (simulated environments, representational spaces, games, etc.) and 'a whole range of transformations and dislocations of established media (in, for example, photography, animation, television, journalism, film and cinema)' are part of the digital media or the new media (2009, p. 13).

Based on all what has been said so far, we might conclude that **the digital media are a system of receiving and sending information as a series of the numbers one and zero through forms of physical and virtual media including television, radio, newspapers and the Internet.** What does this actually mean? And what are the various types of media?

According to the *Centre for Digital Media* (n.d.), digital media is 'a blend of technology and content, and building digital media products requires teams of professionals with diverse skills, including technical skills, artistic skills, analytical and production coordination skills'. The blend further includes that art, user experience, storytelling, software development, interaction and project management work together to produce media products in eCommerce, games, websites and mobile applications, animation, social media, video, augmented reality, virtual reality, data visualization, location-based services and interactive storytelling. What is more, the industries that may be included by digital media are entertainment, technology, eCommerce, non-profit, health, education, marketing and advertising, government, sports, environment, television, publishing and many more. In order to build digital media products, multi-skilled teams and specifically designed business processes are needed to provide the necessary levels of both efficiency and effectiveness. In fact, building one digital media product, for example a game, means having storytellers, programmers, artists, data

analysts, user experience designers, project managers and animators working together to combine different fields of knowledge (*Centre for Digital Media*, n.d.). The final product, design, visual identity, logo, etc. will have to reflect what it is for and who it is for which may not be an easy task .

As already stated, in the broadest sense, media are tools which people use to communicate (Lister et al., 2009). What started with books, newspapers and magazines, was then supported by radio, television and film. From today's perspective of bytes, bits and binary codes, these are traditional types of media used for communication. Nowadays, we have the Internet and Information Communication Technology (ICT) enabling binary coded communication via computers, smartphones, tablets, cloud services, platforms, websites, networks, streaming services, etc. The common denominator is that all the mentioned types of digital media have the same usage and purpose as they enable interpersonal communication across time and space within digital systems.

At this point I might dare propose a simplified explanation by saying that digital media are created as soon as some content is put in a digital format, i.e. translated into binary code, such as when daily news are published on an Internet portal, a photograph is memorized on a memory card, or a radio show is made available in the form of a podcast (Deighton & Kornfeld, 2008; Hand, 2008; Kirk et al., 2015; Lister et al., 2009). However, we have seen that the digital media do have more complex characteristics than that of being just digital tools. In fact, to make digital media what they are, two more elements are needed to enable their operation and functioning and they refer to interactivity and group forming, which will be discussed at the beginning of Chapter 1. What is important now is to focus on digital media discourse.

As with the digital media, we have to ask what digital media discourse actually is. Again, the number of definitions is countless. And once again a logical approach would be to try to define the immediate constituent elements of the term. As stated earlier, the digital media are a system of receiving and sending information as a series of the numbers one and zero through forms of physical and virtual media including television, radio, newspapers and the Internet. It might be expected that we only have to add the definition of discourse and there will be an acceptable definition of digital media discourse. But we have to ask again, is it really as simple as that?

The first problem is that it is difficult to define the term discourse in general, let alone in the digital space. Similar to the case of defining any other term in science, discourse can be defined in various ways. The definition will depend on the specific set of concepts that are used to study it. In other words, the specific field of study will provide its own definition (Blommaert, 2005; Burgin, 1982; Gee, 2007; Jones et al., 2015; Locke, 2004; Renkema, 2009).

With respect to the topic of this book, we will certainly need a definition that will clearly relate discourse to the context of using language in the digital media where people interact, socialize, create affiliations, establish communities, etc. in an artificially maintained reality. What is more, discourse in the digital media creates alliances within which people share beliefs, values and interests, but at the same time opposing groups may be formed establishing competitors, even enemies who are unable to communicate, i.e. engage in discourse at all. Or, if they do, they use certain discursive practices – hate speech quite often – to offend each other and undermine everybody who does not share the same views (Đorđević, 2020b). While discourse in the digital media can have the capacity to unite users in groups and communities, it may also be responsible for severe alienation. That is exactly why the answer to the question regarding a definition of discourse as a constituent element of the term digital media discourse is not simple.

The first step should again rely on a dictionary. *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* says that discourse in the field of linguistics is defined as 'the use of language in speech and writing in order to produce meaning'. It also says that discourse is 'language that is studied, usually in order to see how the different parts of a text are connected'. Thus, discourse is both what we do with language when we use it and also the product of that use that we study after we have used it.

Sociolinguists have typically referred to discourse as verbal interactions and sequences of utterances between speakers and listeners. For example, Hodge and Kress (1988) define discourse as 'a social process in which texts are embedded' (p. 5), Locke (2004) states that discourse is 'a social practice with particular emphasis on larger units such as paragraphs, utterances, whole texts or genres' (p. 13) and Fairclough (1992) refers to discourse as a 'practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning' (p. 64). This definition directly leads to Gee's (2007) differentiation between 'discourse' and

'Discourse' whereby the distinction is meant to recognize the interrelationships between social relations, social identities, contexts and specific situations of language use. Thus the capitalised term Discourse refers to:

> '… a socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions and artefacts, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or social network or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful 'role' (p. 161).

In other words, Discourse integrates ways of talking, listening, writing, and reading, but also integrates acting, interacting, believing, valuing and feeling into patterns associated with a recognizable social network, or affinity group (Gee, 2007).

Therefore, if discourse is a social practice, i.e. the social use of language, and if the digital media are a means of enabling interactivity and group forming via a digitally supported channel of communication, i.e. binary code in communication, we may assume that digital media discourse is the social use of language via a digitally supported channel of communication. Or, if I were to provide a more precise definition, I could say that **digital media discourse is language expressed within a certain context (social, political, cultural, economic, etc.) while realized through binary code for the purpose of enabling socially induced online or offline communication**.

At this point, I feel I should make a reference to the best-known scholar of digital media discourse (or new media language as it used to be referred to)–Susan Herring (e.g. 1996, 2001, 2004). She labelled the subject-matter of her research as computer-mediated discourse analysis, a term that has been in use for several decades and has only recently started to give way to the more contemporary term digital discourse studies (Thurlow, 2018). The analytic priorities that Herring proposed may be summarized as technological, situational and linguistic variables. The last one may be referred to as discourse features and they are related to structure, meaning, interaction management and social function (Herring, 2019). Similar studies suggest that particular attention should be paid to the practice of the communicators who are the users of digital media in a certain social context as well as to the intertextuality inherent in the convergence of digital media (Androutsopoulos, 2010). Georgakopoulou (2003, 2006), among other things, points out that research in the field of digital media discourse should include

the broader sociocultural practices and inequalities of communities or social networks as well as the contextual and particularistic nature of language in the digital media. In addition, both quantitative and qualitative research methods should be relied on.

As far as discourse analysis is concerned, a starting point in the understanding of the concept would be that discourse analysis is the study of the different ways that language and other semiotic systems are used to accomplish particular social actions whereby such study should include 1) text, 2) context, 3) actions and interactions as well as 4) power and ideology (Jones et al., 2015). In general, discourse analysis includes all four aspects but some approaches might emphasize one aspect more than the other. Nevertheless, all approaches to discourse will be attempts to understand the relationship between the way texts are put together and used to take specific actions in specific situations and the way texts reflect and help perpetuate certain social orders (2015).

However, in order to understand digital media discourse and analyse it properly, several elements of this type of discourse have to be understood. The most obvious elements of discourse in the digital media are certainly the language and the linguistic aspects of that discourse. Given that the second part of this book will be devoted to that aspect, less obvious aspects of discourse in the digital media which include basic characteristics beyond the language of the discourse will be discussed in Chapter One. These refer to the visual and/or oral presentation of the discourse to the public, the various tools used to attract audiences to certain discourse, the tricks implemented to convince them that the content is trustworthy as well as the means inviting audiences to participate in the discourse presented to them.

However, before I move to the first chapter, we should remind ourselves that the Internet and the World Wide Web are not the same.

Chronologically, the Internet is a lot older than the World Wide Web (Andrews, 2019). In the early 1960s J. C. R. Licklider, an MIT engineer, started popularizing the idea of an Intergalactic Network of computers. Soon after that, a team of computer scientists started to develop the concept of packet switching, a method enabling the effective transmission of electronic data. The packet switching method became the major building block of the Internet and the first workable prototype of the Internet was launched in the late 1960s with the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network or ARPANET, the first network that relied on packet switching to enable

communication between a lot of computers on a single network. During the next decade, an important step forward was made with the development of the Transmission Control Protocol and Internet Protocol, or TCIP/IP which were adopted on 1 January 1983 and are considered the cornerstone of our digital lives. These are standards that regulate the way data may be transmitted between multiple networks.

Almost another decade went by before the World Wide Web was invented by Sir Tim Berners-Lee (Abbany, 2016). Most sources indicate that Sir Tim first presented his idea in Geneva in 1989 when his boss said that the idea was 'vague but exciting' (CERN, 2008). During the next year, Sir Berners-Lee worked out the three fundamental technologies of the World Wide Web: 1) Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML), the structure of a web page which tells the browser how to display content; 2) Uniform Resource Locator (URL) or simply the web address and 3) Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (HTTP) or the request-response protocol in the client-server model. For example, a web browser may be the client (Mozilla, Internet Explorer, etc.) and an application running on a computer hosting a website may be the server (local area network or LAN, wide area network or WAN). At that point, Sir Berners-Lee came up with a name for his project: WorldWideWeb (WWW). On 20 December 1990, the world's first website and server went live at CERN and on 6 August 1991 Sir Berners-Lee posted a memo on the first online message board inviting people outside CERN to join him in creating the web. This may be considered the moment when digital media discourse was born. The rest is history.

The WWW is the system which consists of protocols and code based on which computers can host web pages and link from one to another around the global network, the Internet. In other words, the WWW sits on top of the Internet. Digital Media Discourse is what we use to communicate on the WWW (a service consisting of HTMLs, URLs and HTTPs) via the Internet (the infrastructure enabling it). A simple illustration would be to say that digital media discourse is the passenger sitting on the bus, i.e. the WWW while driving through the streets, i.e. the Internet. Or, in a more complex sense, the WWW is the collection of information which is accessed through the Internet and digital media discourse is the wrapping containing the information.

In this obviously specific environment, investigating discourse may be somewhat of a challenge. But it need not be difficult, let alone impossible.

All the theories, approaches, topologies and methodologies developed so far within the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as well as its little 'brothers and sisters' (e.g. political discourse theory, rhetorical analysis, discursive psychology, etc.) can be applied to digital media discourse. They just need some adjustment. The point I would like to make in this book is that what constitutes the basic trades of analysing digital media discourse in linguistic research is also what CDA relies on, or vice versa and they may be summarised as follows:

1. If we investigate discourse, we are discourse linguists.
2. We take a dialectical approach to the relationship between language and other aspects of human life.
3. We identify and select linguistic forms shaped by various contextual factors.
4. We analyse how the language that we use contributes to other aspects of life.
5. We draw conclusions and make inferences about the data we have collected.

As analysts of digital media discourse we, in fact, do all these in the digital realm. In addition, as linguists we can relate digital media discourse to linguistic research if we put such discourse into the context of empirical linguistics, such as language documentation, descriptive linguistics, language typology, corpus linguistics, sociolinguistics, anthropological linguistics, cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, to name a few. This would mean approaching digital media discourse from a broad spectrum of methodologies applied in empirical linguistics (Voelkel & Kretzschmar, 2021) without engaging in the specific linguistic domains (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics or pragmatics) in particular but rather collecting various language data presented in digital media discourse based on which research questions can be answered, hypotheses confirmed and conclusions drawn. In other words, we can investigate how ordinary activities are accomplished linguistically, a tradition practiced in Conversation Analysis (Schegloff, 2007), or how professional activities are accomplished linguistically (Cazden, 1988), or how language is reconstructed in ideology (Schäffner & Holmes, 1996) to name a few. The only difference is that the context of our analyses is situated in a digital environment – the WWW. Furthermore, we collect our language data in the same way other approaches to

discourse analysis suggest. We look for rhetorical goals, speech acts, scripts/plans, referentiality, topicality and thematicity as well as sequential organization expressed through the language presented in digital media discourse. These are the basic concerns a discourse linguist may have when embarking on the endeavour of discourse analysis, the first step being the identification of some linguistic form reflecting speech acts or referentiality, or any of the concerns mentioned here.

Some discourse theories use different terms for the linguistic forms they propose as the basic unit of their research approach. For instance, as will be presented in this book, the Theory of Newsworthiness may rely on linguistic devices (Bednarek & Caple, 2014) and van Dijk in his Sociocognitive Discourse Studies (2018) suggests discourse structures. Nevertheless, regardless of the term, digital media discourse in linguistic research will also have to rely on the identification of certain linguistic forms so as to facilitate a relevant data collection. Most analyses performed of digital media discourse based on the harvested data will be of a qualitative character but quantitative analyses are not excluded. What is more, some new approaches even suggest new methodological approaches to quantitative analyses of digital media discourse and some suggest a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach. Some of these will be presented in this book.

To conclude, discourse linguists engaging in investigations of digital media discourse, just like discourse linguists in CDA, will follow the main stipulation that language is inseparable from other aspects of our life. They will also base their primary assumptions on the idea that the selection of linguistic forms should be explained in terms of authentic human communicative needs. And last but not least, they will largely be inspired by insights from other disciplines, such as media studies, anthropology, cognitive science, functional linguistics, psycholinguistics, philosophy, sociology, etc. However, they will do all this within the realm of the WWW. I hope that this book will provide the necessary tools to put digital media discourse into the context of linguistic research in terms of collecting language data presented in digital media discourse and analysing it based on an adequate methodology with the aim to discover the meaning such data may have. Thereby, this book will hopefully be a resource which will enable the discourse linguist to explain regularities regarding language in digital media discourse so as to make predictions about society and its stakeholders based on systematic data-based research.

PART I: The Digital Media and Digital Media Discourse

Assuming that every concept which is taken up as the subject matter of a book needs a plausible definition and a comprehensive explanation. Part I of this book will be devoted exactly to that. It will be an attempt to define and explain in as many details as possible the two key concepts investigated in this book — the digital media and digital media discourse. To achieve that, Part I will present chapters and sections, which will hopefully contribute to the understanding of what digital media and digital media discourse, include and presuppose.

Therefore, Part I consists of two chapters. The first is devoted to the digital in the media and in discourse. The separate sections within this chapter are an attempt to shed light on the two concepts but also to provide explanations related to separate elements of discourse, the media and the digital world in general. Therefore, separate sections will be devoted to topics, such as hashtags, hyperlinks, user engagement, the phenomenon of the click, the question of user generated content, etc. These topics are closely related to the understanding of how digital media discourse works and what it takes to communicate content via the digital media by means of language.

The second chapter in Part I is meant to provide deeper insight into the types of digital media discourse, i.e. the forms that this type of discourse can take. Though there might be a rather long list of types of digital media discourse, the sections presented here are about three broad types: 1) discourse on news websites, 2) discourse in the social media and 3) discourse employed on websites, services and platforms in general. The third type is more comprehensive as it is devoted to a wide array of different digital media discourse including broadcasting and sharing services, such as YouTube, Pinterest, blogs, vlogs, etc. but also video games, giffs and similar dynamic content.

Hopefully, Part I will be comprehensive enough to provide an acceptable introduction to the second topic of this book, i.e. digital media discourse in linguistic research.

Chapter One: The Digital in the Media and in Discourse

Before starting the exploration of the digital in the media and in discourse, an explanation is needed regarding the question why this book is about digital media discourse and not about new media language or computer-mediated discourse as suggested by Susan Herring, who, with no doubt, is the best known and internationally most recognized scholar of language in the new media. As stated earlier, Herring (1996, 2001, 2004) introduced the term new media when referring to all the forms of computer-mediated communication that existed at the beginning of the new millennium and she established the core linguistic variables that the analysis of the language in the new media should rely on (structure, meaning, interaction and social function). Herring's basic framework is still considered fundamental in the research of digital discourse, a term now favoured by scholars in more recent research (Thurlow, 2018; Thurlow & Morczek, 2011).

However, after two decades in the new millennium with the concept of the digital having established itself firmly, while relying on the new trend of referring to the language in the new media as digital discourse, the term digital media discourse seems more appropriate. As will be presented in the chapters of Part I, the digital media are no longer new. More importantly, the discourse occurring in the digital media is no longer confined to the computer but is now being communicated via smart phones, tablets and even smart watches. No doubt other devices will be used in the immediate future. Therefore, the term computer-mediated discourse does no longer fit the scientific and academic paradigm related to the digital media and the analysis of the discourse occurring in them.

To conclude, though the term digital media discourse may not be considered ground-breaking nor fundamentally new, it is a step away from the established framework of computer-mediated discourse (Herring, 1996). In order to be able to provide a review of possible analytical approaches, methods and tools which will be relevant to most types of digital media and the discourse occurring in them, the term used in this book will be **digital media discourse** because it fits the basic element of interactivity on the web established through communication via digital media. Hopefully, the elaborations related to the constituent elements of this term provided in the chapters to come will justify this decision.

#InteractivityAndGroupForming

The most prominent feature of the digital media is that they offer 'important opportunities to deliver traditional, linear information and media experiences in new ways' (Feldman, 2005, p. 13). The unique value added to such experience is 'not in the inherent character of the product so much as the manner in which it reaches its customer' (p. 13). This new manner is characterized by interactivity which 'gives the user some influence over access to the information and a degree of control over the outcomes of using the system' (p. 14). According to Feldman (2005), interactivity means that the user is presented with choices within the system itself. The choices are like crossroads and the user is expected to make decisions each time they reach a crossroads which then takes the user down new paths, towards new crossroads and new decisions. In that way, the crossroads, as well as all the possible pathways, 'control and moderate the user's access to the information' (p. 14).

In general, interactivity may be twofold (*Centre for Digital Media*, n.d.). On the one hand, interactivity may be bi-directional which means that a message being communicated via a digital medium goes into one direction and a return message comes back. Such communication is realized, for instance, via a smart phone or an email service. In the former, the message may be delivered as a spoken (e.g. conversation) or a written message (e.g. SMS or audio message) while in the latter it is delivered only as a written message (e.g. email). Regardless of whether it is via the telephone or the computer, the communication is realized in a back-and-forth manner – I write a message to you, or to more people, and you have the option to reply. On the other hand, interactivity may be one-way which means that a message is delivered to many people at once but no return message is received. Such communication occurs in the broadcasting industry, such as radio and television broadcasting companies. They are engineered to be one-directional and to enable communication without a return message. The receiver of the communicative act, the public in this case, is a passive observer, not really participating in the communication in the form of a return message. However, despite their being one-directional in form and transfer, the communication is, in fact, interactive because a message is being transferred

from one end (the broadcaster) to the other (the public) whereby the public is affected in some way by the communicative message and they may react to the message, make a comment, discuss the content, show some emotion, like or dislike something, etc.

Unlike that, digital media networks, such as television streaming services (Netflix, Amazon Video, Hulu Live, etc.), radio streaming services (SiriusXM Internet Radio, Tidal, Amazon Music Unlimited, Deezer, etc.), interactive learning websites (language learning websites, writing skills labs, etc.) and so on are types of media falling into the broad category of broadcasters. They are primarily one-way as they are delivering a message to a larger community but they may also be bi-directional as they enable and encourage some sort of return message or feedback. The feedback may be realized in the sense that the public choose content, rate or share it; or, in the sense that individuals interact with the digital media network by performing more demanding activities, such as posting pictures, commenting or uploading one's own content.

The second unique characteristic of the operation and functioning of the digital media is that individuals participating in the networks of the digital media may organize into user groups or online communities. Forty years ago, Licklider and Taylor (1968) stated that online interactive communities will consist of 'geographically separated people' (p. 30) who will not be 'of common location, but of common interest' (p. 38). The impact of these communities 'will be very great – both on the individual and on society' whereby 'the people with whom one interacts will be selected more by commonality of interests and goals than by accidents of proximity' (p. 40). Our reality proves that these communities are here and they are exactly what Licklider and Taylor predicted.

The fact that people gather in online groups on networked digital media, i.e. in a virtual reality instead of the actual reality, need not necessarily be presumed a bad thing. On the contrary, online groups enable us to coordinate projects, collaborate in joint activities, communicate news instantly, draw the attention of thousands of people in a single second and invite them to contribute in any way whatsoever. In the circumstances induced by the Corona crisis in 2019/2020/2021/2022 we learned to shift online for all sorts of purposes, such as listening to concerts, watching theatre plays, doing virtual tours of museums, even teaching and learning. Children and students all over the world had to haul their education from the actual

classroom to a virtual space relying on (browser-based) video communication services (Google Meet, Zoom, Jitsi, Microsoft Teams, etc.) and teachers had to adjust to a completely new format of teaching. All this is still happening to us and we are aware that the Corona pandemic has changed our lives for good and that the digital space will be our new (dare I say natural?) environment. Unfortunately, the dark side of online communities is yet to be battled but the positive impact of people gathering in online communities is undeniable. Again, I have to state that the dark aspects of the digital media, though prominent and significant, will be left aside in this book since this publication is focusing on the positive aspects of the digital media.

In a most general sense, online groups or communities may be *ad hoc* or arbitrary, either way they attract large numbers of individuals who gather in a group around a certain topic, cause or common goal (Kollock & Smith, 2005; Kraut & Resnick, 2012; Wellman, 2018). A thorough and detailed analysis of communities in the contemporary environment of the global cyberspace has been provided by Wellman (2018). The analysis includes important characteristics of communities, such as structure, dynamics, interpersonal relationships, social impact, etc. However, since the primary focus of this book is on digital media discourse, online groups and communities will be observed only from what we know from our immediate experience without going into the scientific aspects of affiliation, group dynamics, socialization, etc. (Wellmann, 2018).

Online groups and communities are commonly seen on Facebook and Instagram, but they also form on other social networks, such as TikTok or Snapchat or on cross-platform voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) and instant messaging (IM) software applications such as, Messenger, Viber and WhatsApp (Figure 1). The possibilities that online groups provide are endless. The fact that people gather around a common cause or problem provides a myriad of implementations and applications all showing how online groups and communities can be put to work and serve a greater good. For instance, since the creation of Facebook in 2004, we have seen all sorts of fundraisers, humanitarian activities, rescue operations and many other projects, all directed at a good cause. More than just being a means of advertising, groups have pulled off joint ventures unfathomable in a world outside the digital media. Thus, online groups (Facebook, Instagram, GoFundMe, etc.) have been created to invite people to devote to a cause, support underprivileged and marginalized people, save animals, improve the

environment, raise awareness, highlight important issues, etc. Influencers, who may have up to a million of followers (or more) on social networks, primarily on Instagram, have contributed to the rise of a completely new industry – influencer marketing. Though seemingly shallow, undermining important values and probably contributing to subversive frivolity (Abidin, 2016), this new industry has helped thousands of people build a business and support their families. Online groups and communities on any social network cannot be denied their power to resolve personal problems, find peers and build up self-confidence and faith. Arguments may be raised against this new type of virtual existence, but it cannot be denied that more than once have people with no voice whatsoever been provided with the chance to be heard. Some of them even for the first time in their lives.

To conclude this section, the conversion of regular media to digital formats is not the most important trade of the digital media. A much more prominent feature, which bears considerable value for society, is that the digital media can put interactivity and group forming to work and have them operate successfully in favour of issues, problems, causes, values, attitudes and beliefs which would otherwise be impossible to realize – and all these by means of language. The power of the written or the spoken word is multiplied in the digital media as it can reach many people at once and it can be presented in appealing formats, thus attracting attention, alerting to issues and calling for action.

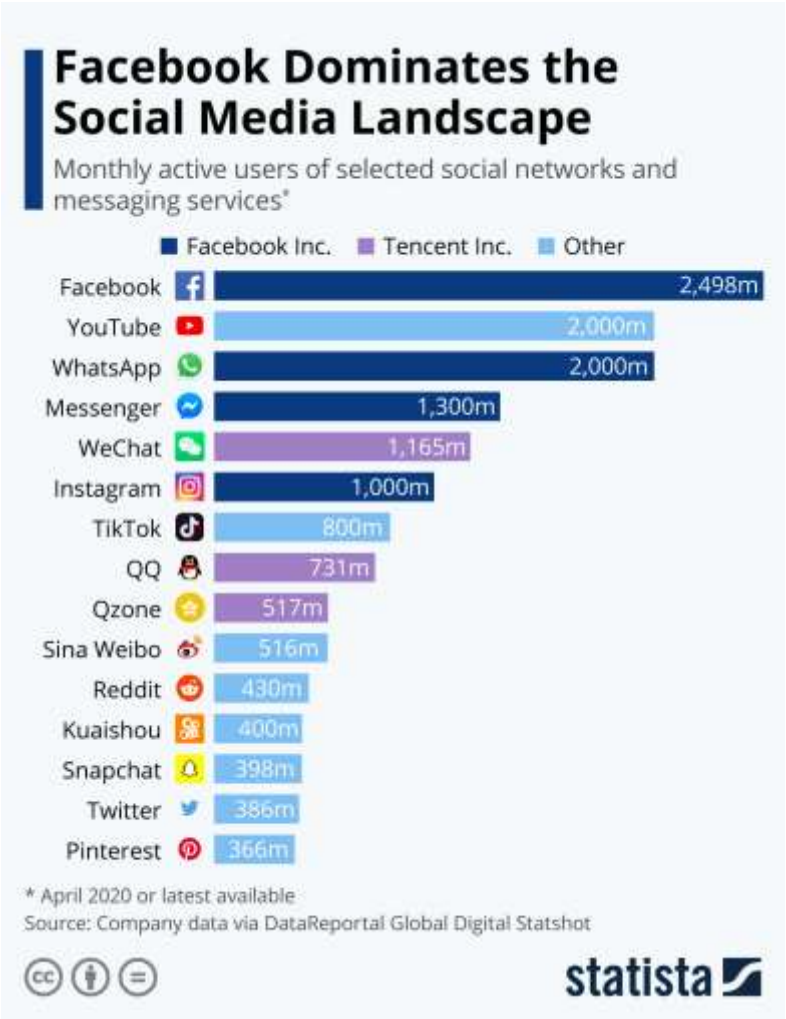

Figure 1: Active users of selected social networks and messaging services in April 2020 (Richter, 2020).

#Multimodality

Based on the application of multiple literacies within one medium, multimodality can be applied to communication practices which combine and integrate different semiotic modalities originating from different resources carrying and producing a specific meaning, expressed through language, song, dance, gesture, movement, visual image, sound, etc. (Bateman et al., 2017; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; van Leeuwen, 2015). Different media channels and outlets (broadcasting companies, Internet, print media) may produce meaning while exerting a certain effect through various products (film, transcript, theatre production, dance, music, song, novel, exhibition, etc.) while delivered via various media platforms (social media, television, cinema, radio, print media, theatre, library, archives, etc.) (Domingo, 2014; Hiippala, 2020).

The most influential authors who initiated relevant analytical approaches which would facilitate the study of multimodality are Gunther Kress, Jeff Bezemer, Carey Jewitt, John Bateman and Theo van Leewen, to name a few. They have managed to outline 'a social semiotic approach for understanding how distinct modes such as speech, writing, gesture, image and sound function as semiotic resources in order to facilitate the representation and communication of meaning' (Boria et al., 2020, p. 5). However, multimodality is not confined only to the domain of linguistics – it has been studied extensively within psychology, advertising, social media, storytelling, literary criticism, gaming and discourse analysis (2020) and as such the study of multimodality has yielded not only different approaches but also terminological variations which will be touched upon briefly in this section.

Fact is that multimodality has gained a lot of popularity among various researchers and within various fields of studies. However, an operationalizable definition is still missing (Forceville, 2021). Most conflicting ideas can be found about the question what a mode is. Social semiotics states that all aspects of discourse that are generating some kind of meaning are a mode, or at least belong to a mode (2021). This means that modes comprise a never-ending list of visual, aural, gestural, etc. elements (colour, size, sound, slap, etc.). Bateman et al. (2017) and Wildfeuer et al. (2019) advocate the incorporation of both semiotics and cognitivism whereby Bateman et al.

(2017) speak of 'canvases' (temporal unscripted; temporal scripted; spatial, static; spatial, dynamic and spatiotemporal, interactive) rather than media or modes. Canvases can be seen as slices of a certain multimodal communicative situation. Each of these slices may contain subcanvas presenting some variety of meaning-making. More about this topic will be provided later in this book (#MultimodalDiscourse and Multimodal Discourse Analysis).

Multimodal research in general relies on the conceptualization of semiotic modes as socially-shaped resources which are used as meaning-making and meaning-exchanging tools. Nevertheless, analyses should include both production and consumption, a point supported by Bateman et al. (2017) who refer to multimodal research in general and they state analyses need to be exhaustive. When applying the multimodal approach in practice, it should involve the following: '1) accounting for the communicative situations involved in engaging with a data visualization, 2) identifying the canvases on which these communicative situations take place, 3) identifying the semiotic modes mobilized on these canvases, and (4) the genres that shape the semiotic modes' (Hiippala, 2020, p. 288). As soon as the first step identifying canvases and describing their properties has been completed, a more comprehensive analysis of production processes can be conducted (2020). As stated in the same source, canvases 'inherit affordances from the materiality of the medium that carries them, and they may be manipulated in different ways for different communicative purposes' whereby the producer's motivation 'to manipulate these canvases and their material affordances can be revealed using ethnographic methods' (p. 287). This belief coincides with KhosraviNik (2017) who I will elaborate on in Chapter Nine.

Another approach has been suggested by Forceville (2006) within the domain of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory which links modes to sensory perception. Although such links cannot be assumed to be perfect correspondences, Forceville (2006) suggests nine different modes (spoken language, written language, visuals, music, sound, taste, smell, touch and gestures). Nevertheless, Forceville (2021) is not satisfied with the nine modes so he tentatively proposes to replace the gesture mode he suggested earlier (Forceville, 2006) by offering a more inclusive mode that he suggested could be labelled 'bodily behaviour' including gestures, postures, facial expressions and (manner of) movement, the last ones with sub-mode status (Forceville, 2021). The same source also suggests that the list of modes should remain limited and that a mode should be seen as a one meaning-

generating aspect that has to be complemented by other modes. Unfortunately, a complete list of possible definitions of and approaches to multimodality would by far exceed the scope of this book. One of the many significant resources providing valuable insight into the directions that multimodality might take in the future has been provided by Forceville (2021) suggesting that there are more than solid grounds for multimodality to develop into a discipline in its own right.

As far as digital media discourse is concerned, multimodality offers an analytical framework which allows the study of discourse as a complex manifestation of the interaction of different semiotic systems whereby language is only one of them. The complex media formats based on which the digital media operate nowadays, impose complex formats of communication which reflect a convergence of all types of media. The result is more or less a layering of different digital media and semiotic resources (Thurlow, 2018). When multimodality as an approach appeared, it was partly induced by the necessity to understand the digital media, in particular by the realization that communication, especially in the digital world, involves more than one mode (Boria et al., 2020). For instance, a simple blog may include at least three different modes, which are text, images and videos, while a vlog may rely on speech, text, moving images and music. The different modes are used to convey the meaning of the whole and without at least one mode, the whole would be incomplete and the meaning would be inconclusive. For instance, take away the speech from a vlog, and we would have a blog. In more complex digital media discourse examples, such as for instance in the case of Instagram, a single post (which may be considered a single sample of digital media discourse) may contain, speech, text, video, music and image while other patterns of meaning may be added, such as spatial, tactile and gestural.

It is exactly the aspect of multimodality that has given rise to the popularity of social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter, etc.) in the first place and it seems that the more modes a person on any social network adds to their post, the more popular and influential they are. A simple profile of a dog on Instagram (yes, owners create separate profiles for their pets!), for instance, includes some text about the dog which is either presented in the 'bio' and/or incorporated in individual posts (whereby linked to the bio), emoticons and emojis suggesting the emotion that the observer is expected to have when looking at the dog, images of the dog (with hashtags linking each image to popular posts, profiles and stories), videos

showing what the dog is doing (with hashtags), recorded speech explaining what the dog is doing, etc. This would be the bare minimum of a dog-based profile. Such a profile might generate hundreds of thousands of followers who are drawn into the multimodality of the digital media discourse they are being exposed to. What is more, the followers are in fact active participators because they react to a profile or post by liking it, commenting or adding new hashtags thereby contributing to the popularity of the post and spreading the community built around a single sample of digital media discourse focusing on nothing more than a dog who most followers have never seen and will never see in their entire lifetime.

When it comes to digital media discourse analysis in the context of linguistics, multimodality as an approach should rely on three core premises identified by Jewitt et al. (2016):

1. 'Meaning is made with different semiotic resources, each offering distinct potentialities and limitations.
2. Meaning-making involves the production of multimodal wholes.
3. If we want to study meaning, we need to attend to all semiotic resources being used to make a complete whole' (p. 3).

These three premises may be referred back to the 1980s when Halliday paved the path to the study of multimodality by stating that language should be interpreted 'within a sociocultural context in which the culture itself is interpreted in semiotic terms' (Halliday, 1978, p. 2). This leads to the conclusion that semiosis does not occur only in the mind but it is the result of the social practices within an entire community. Halliday suggests that three related variables should be considered when studying language within a sociocultural context: field, tenor and mode (1978). Should we refer these three variables to the pet-based Instagram profile mentioned earlier, we would see that field is the subject matter of the content of the discourse, i.e. the dog. Tenor is the social relation that exists between the participants in the interaction which in this case is the relationship established by the owner of the dog and his followers whereby the owner represents the dog and talks to the dog's followers. Very often dog owners even use a specific register to add authenticity to that communication. For instance, they may use words, such as 'hooman' instead of 'human' or use specific grammar structures and odd spelling conventions, such as in 'where dis hooman go'. The term mode refers to the channel of communication which in the case of

the dog profile combines at least speech and writing. If more than one mode is being used, the interaction is multimodal and it exists between the dog owner as the administrator of the Instagram dog profile and their followers as members of the community building around that dog, a virtual character who, for all we know, might not even exist in real life!

It should also be noted that multimodality as a framework is marked by different terminological traditions and conventions (Boria et al., 2020). As a result, some multimodality theorists claim they do not focus on meaning but state that they are interested in multimodal discourse or multimodal communication. At the same time, some theorists prefer the phrase semiotic resource instead of mode. The different wording does not really mean that there are different points of view within the framework of multimodality but rather that there are theorists who might, not intentionally though, contribute to misleading readership into concluding that multimodality is not about communication based on different forms of expression which involve more than just language. In other words, whether referring to multimodality as an approach to discourse or language, whether claiming that it is about modes or semiotic resources, what it boils down to is that multimodality is a framework which may be used to identify, determine and analyse the complexities of discourse comprising different communicative representations occurring in the digital media.

However, a much more prominent problem seems to be the fact that most theories of multimodality lack sufficient empirical confirmation (Hippala, 2021). As it seems, this shortcoming is a result of a lack of large-scale multimodal corpora based on which real-world communicative situations and artefacts could be annotated for their characteristics and subsequently be analysed (2021). The problem with such large corpora is that they 'remain untractable due to the time and resources needed to create them' (p. 2). Despite this obvious disadvantage, the impact of multimodality as a theoretical paradigm applied on digital media discourse is undeniable and time will provide adequate research to build the necessary foundation currently deemed insufficient.

#MutabilityAndErgodicity

Two terms that need to be explained in relationship to multimodality and interactivity, therefore to digital media discourse as described in this book are mutability and ergodicity. Both terms are explained in full details by Bateman et al. (2017) and I strongly recommend consulting this resource for a full under- standing of both notions. However, given the topic of my book, I do need to refer to mutability/immutability and ergodicity at least briefly.

To begin with, Bateman et al. (2017) refer to the term ergodic based on Aarseth's (1997) use and understanding of this concept. The etymology of the word indicates that it combines the Greek word *ergon* meaning 'work' and *hodos* standing for 'path'. This means that ergodic implies a certain amount of work that a participant in digital media discourse must invest in order to create the specific path they follow while engaging in the communicative situation of digital media discourse. However, Aarseth (1997) was mainly referring to linear verbal text whereas Bateman et al. (2017) adapted the notion of ergodic to fit the concepts of multimodal communicative situations. Therefore, 'the user/reader/viewer/hearer *having to participate* to co-construct the "test" that is emerging within some communicative situation' (p. 106) will do so to a greater or to a lesser degree and, what is more, in different ways depending on the individual communicative situation the participant is involved in.

However, given that a participant cannot invest work (*ergon*) and create a path (*hodos*) if the communicative situation is unchangeable, Bateman et al. (2017) suggest introducing the differentiation between mutable and immutable to refer to whether the text (discourse) in the communicative situation can be changed by the participant or not. This means that a certain discourse can be mutable ergodic, or it can be immutable ergodic. Different types of digital media discourse will be presented in Chapter Two but within this section I will refer only to a few to clarify the suggested distinction.

For instance, the discourse presented in a comic, a meme, or a giff is im- mutable as it is fixed. In other words, it has been created by its author and is now being presented to the reader/viewer. Or, discourse presented

in hypertext may be considered immutable if the text does not allow alterations by its users. How- ever, in both cases, the discourse is yet ergodic as it presupposes certain engage- ment by the participants involved in the communicative situation created by that discourse. In other words, the participant may explore the discourse, draw con- clusions, build on its content, etc. although the discourse itself may be immutable. Even in the case of the news, the discourse, though being immutable, does allow for ergodic participation as the readers of the news can comment on the content in the news and exchange opinions about it. Unlike that, discourse can be both ergodic and mutable meaning that not only can the participant invest a certain amount of work and create their own path while engaging in the communicative situation created by that discourse, they can also alter the organization or content of the discourse. For instance, the hypertext mentioned above may be mutable if the creators provide the option of collaboration on the hypertext. This would be the case with Wikipedia entries, for example. Communicative situations that are highly mutable and ergodic are video games and social networks because in both cases participants are, in fact, both expected and forced to change the organisation and the content of the discourse they are engaging in. Otherwise, the dialogue happening in relationship to these types of discourse could not exist.

Based on what has been stated so far, as well as following the systematisation of communicative media according to the affordances of their involved canvases (Bateman et al., 2017, p. 109) (for more information about canvases see #MultimodalDiscourse and Multimodal Discourse Analysis), a more detailed analysis of mutable ergodic and immutable ergodic communicative situations yields the following conclusions:

1) The role of the participant may be to observe or to participate.
2) The presentation of space may be 2D or 3D and the presentation of temporality may be static or dynamic.
3) In an immutable ergodic communicative situation the participant will be allowed to interpret and explore the organization and content of the discourse (hypertext, inphographics, film, comics, etc.).
4) In a mutable ergodic communicative situation the participant will have the opportunity to alter and configure the discourse (cybertext, CGI games, etc.).

5) In both mutable and immutable ergodic communicative situations the participants will have to pick a path of interpretation to follow and a set of strategies based on which they will participate in the discourse.
6) Depending on whether a discourse is mutable or immutable, the level of interactivity among participants and the degree of their immersion in the respective digital media discourse will range from low to high.

In brief, immutability/mutability and ergodicity are essential to the understanding of digital media discourse as they stir the direction the participants in digital media discourse can take. Are the participants simply observing, exploring and interpreting or are they configuring, altering and contributing to the discourse? If the former is the case, the respective digital media discourse will remain unchanged, yet powerful as it will have a certain impact. If the latter is the case, the digital media discourse will evolve and create grounds for new affordances, the level of interactivity among and degree of immersion of the involved participants will rise meaning that its impact will increase in time and make it more powerful. Nevertheless, even though a lot of discourse in the digital media may be immutable, this fact does not diminish its capacity to motivate and induce engagement thereby providing the necessary affordances that digital media discourse is expected to create.

#Hashtags

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* a hashtag is 'a word or phrase with the symbol "#" in front of it used on social media websites and apps so that you can search for all messages with the same subject'. A historically founded investigation into the origins of the hashtag would exceed the scope of this book. Let it suffice to say that it has been among us for quite some time. In different languages it has had different names derived mainly pursuant to the visual associations people had when looking at it. For instance, in the German language it used to be referred to as *Raute Zeichen* (Engl. diamond, hash) and in the Serbian language it has until recently been *taraba* (Engl. fence made of wooden slats or laths). At some point, the hashtag was called 'hash sign' in British English or 'pound sign' in American English. Whatever it has been called, it was (just) a symbol on a phone or computer keyboard. Its main function was to be mainly useless until the touch-tone telephone dragged it out of obscurity when answering machines started asking us to push it for some specific reason. If it had not been for Twitter, the hashtag would never have become what it is today – a symbol leading all symbols (Chakelian 2014, June 4). Currently, social networks could not survive without the hashtag.

When using a hashtag, all one has to do is type a one-word phrase, without spaces and put the symbol '#' in front of the phrase. This phrase can be added at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of a social media post. The spelling may vary from capital letters for all words, capital letters for the first word only or all lower-case letters. For example, #BookLover, #GetReadyToRumble or #cookingclub. Currently, the media are opting to write hashtags in lowercase only, but it is still not a 'thing' so to speak. Once a hashtag has been added, that post will be tied into a single stream of posts with the same topic. In other words, all posts marked with the hashtag #CookingClub will occur in one place so that anybody interested in the opinions/attitudes/beliefs/comments hundreds of people might have posted on a particular social network regarding that same topic can find those posts listed under this hashtag. What is more, related hashtags will be displayed as well. As an illustration, at the moment of writing this section (24 June 2021), #CookingClub on Instagram yielded 29,567 posts and the following related posts: #learningtocook, #cookingfortwo, #onlinecooking,

#recipesharing, #cookingforfun, #betterthantakeout, #veryyummy, #yummyformytummy, #mykitchenrules and #cookinginspo. A single day later, the number of both posts and related hashtags increased significantly (30,005).

The hashtag is a semiotic resource which enables microbloggers to embed metadata in their social media posts (Zappavigna 2015). Metadata is information that is added to a certain content and its function is to enable the retrieving and understanding of that content. It can also be said that the kind of metadata introduced with the hashtag is a type of descriptive annotation users of the social media produce themselves which adds to the significance of the content posted with the hashtag included. Being easy to use and not taking up too much space (data), a hashtag affords short but informative communication. Given the fact that a simple hyperlink may achieve the same, the question why one should use a hashtag at all is easy to answer: it has become the easiest tool to increase the searchability and visibility of any post or piece of information on any social media. And that is what the social media are about – posts that will generate as many clicks as possible, spread around quickly, become viral, gather a large community (Đorđević, 2020d). In other words, hashtags enable social relations (Litt, 2012), they mark topics (Kehoe & Gee, 2011), they form communities (Lin et al., 2013) and they support visibility and participation (Page, 2012). Therefore, the hashtag is a tool enabling microbloggers to be present while satisfying their need for prominence, importance, assertion, acceptance, etc. There is no need to say that more clicks on a social media post will lead to a boosted sense of self-esteem. The fact that this self-esteem is more or less fake (it exists – only – in the virtual world) is a topic for a different discussion.

However, hashtags are also important metadata in a linguistic context. They integrate into the linguistic structure of a discourse that they seek to annotate. Normally, metadata is hidden from the users of an information system but hashtags are not. Obviously, hashtags are an integrative part of the discourse and they perform a specific role within that discourse. They have 'three simultaneous communicative functions: marking experiential topics, enacting interpersonal relationships and organizing text' (Zappavigna, 2015, p. 274) which is in accordance with the theory of Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Language from the point of view of SFL is seen as a meaning-making resource which has three

functions: experiential, interpersonal and textual. Given that hashtags are a semiotic resource that rely on language (they are used to communicate messages), it may be concluded that hashtags have the same functions language has. The experiential meaning of a hashtag is embedded in its structure since the topic of the hashtag is the hashtag itself. The textual meaning is integrated in the way the discourse marked by the hashtag unfolds and spreads all over the social media. And the interpersonal meaning is obvious in the fact that the more users click the hashtag and comment/like/share it, the more individual interpretations are added to the discourse that the hashtag accompanies.

To conclude, hashtags are an integrative and inseparable part of discourse in the digital media without which modern digital media discourse would be almost unfathomable. Apart from being essential tools for establishing social relations and communities in the digital realm of social networks, hashtags perform many different linguistic functions and add important linguistic and social metadata to digital media discourse which would be difficult to realize without them.

#Hyperlinks

A very simple definition of a hyperlink (often referred to as link) is provided by the online dictionary *TechTerms* (2021) which states that a hyperlink is 'a word, phrase or image that you can click on to jump to a new document or a new section within the current document'. This means that a hyperlink is both a piece of information and a technological tool because it carries meaningful information and it can be used to get to another place where new information can be found.

A common convention in the use of hyperlinks is that they are denoted in blue and underlined. When hovering above the hyperlink, the cursor normally (if not personalised in a different way) changes to a small hand pointing at the link. A simple click on the hyperlink and a new page opens or a different place in the same document is presented. Fun fact, the choice of the blue colour for the presentation of hyperlinks is still a mystery. It seems that the blue colour was the most reasonable choice as it shows up well on a black/white colour scheme. It is also a fact that few people have a deficiency regarding the blue colour while red and green are quite often detected as problematic (Clark, 2001). These might have been the reasons why hyperlinks are blue. However, according to Berners-Lee et al. (2000) there was no particular reason for using blue. It was just a default. And Bernes-Lee should know as he is the one who introduced the use of hyperlinks in the way we use them on a daily basis when searching the Internet.

Hyperlinks were a revolutionary discovery and they make our browsing and searching on the WWW much easier. A simple click (or touch) on a hyperlink and we are at a completely different place on the web or in a document. The navigation of all the information we need and want is considerably easier with hyperlinks. What is more, hyperlinks provide us with the exceptional opportunity to share and contextualize our individual interests within public and private spaces (Hsu & Park, 2011); or, we can add our own hyperlinks to further explicate questions or to provide answers (de Maeyer, 2014).

However, when referring to hyperlinks in a written discourse, somebody might argue that hyperlinks disrupt the reading process and even have negative effects on how information is comprehended. After all, a hyperlink

is a tool and it allows a user to 'click [touch] on a word, phrase, or graphic image in order to jump to another piece of information or website' (Dimitrova et al., 2003, p. 403). This means that a reader will rarely ignore the hyperlinks in a text and thus be directed away from the text they have started reading. This also means that the reader might not comprehend or process the coherence, cohesion and structure of a discourse or not perceive the discourse properly given that many readers might not return to the original text they started reading. In other words, hyperlinks may be a trap as they induce a never-ending browsing trip around the Internet whereby no content is actually processed as a whole.

Nevertheless, hyperlinks fulfil a number of positive criteria which outnumber the negative ones. First of all, they allow the author greater depth of reporting while giving the reader the opportunity to actively and critically evaluate what has been reported (Borah, 2014; Larsson, 2013; van der Wurff et al., 2008). This means that the author can provide additional information otherwise not fitting the content of the discourse. Yet it will be available to the reader who may decide on their own to read the additional content or just ignore it. In the context of digital media discourse, hyperlinks can provide credibility since information is documented via hyperlinks and can thus be verified immediately. Especially online news outlets rely on hyperlinks because they cost them nothing while fulfilling the important role of building trust among the outlet's readership. Given that hyperlinks are immediate (Tremayne et al., 2007), they save the author of a discourse a lot of time and energy as the author can link their own content to some other content via a hyperlink. At the same time, the reader is spared the additional time and effort to search for that additional content. Hyperlinks also increase the number of page views, a trade of essential importance in the highly competitive world of digital media discourse (Weber, 2012).

All in all, hyperlinks are useful and in the context of digital media discourse they are indispensable. Many operations we nowadays perform on our devices depend on hyperlinks: from accessing an album of photos on our phone to logging into a social media account, from asking Google a simple question to referencing a source in a scientific article, from finding a friend on Facebook to posting about a current emotion or activity. Steensen (2011) argues that the fact that we can include hyperlinks within news coverage is one of the most powerful functions of digital journalism and I might add that this is true of all digital media discourse. Both as a piece of information and

a technological tool, hyperlinks enable communication, exchange of information and affiliations. More importantly, they allow open, free and creative participation of all actors in digital media discourse, authors and readers alike.

#Hypertext

The search for a simple definition of hypertext again leads to *TechTerms* (2021) which says that 'hypertext is text that links to other information' whereby the text itself is the link marker. In practice this means that by clicking on a hyperlink in a hypertext document the user can quickly jump to some other content. Similar to a hyperlink, hypertext is two things in one, i.e. it is text and technology as it contains text and it is a tool by means of which the text allows access to new text.

Earlier versions of hypertext occurred in the form of embedded menus or illuminated links (Koved & Schneiderman, 1986) which required complicated code typing, selecting from menus list or clicking markers in a text. All these were time-consuming and distracting. With the emergence of the World Wide Web the embedded blue-coloured hyperlink was adopted (Berners-Lee et al., 1994) which enabled accessing additional content with a simple click on the mouse.

What is the difference between a hyperlink and hypertext? One cannot but wonder. The answer is that hypertext is text with hyperlinks. However, not every text on the Internet is hypertext nor is every document on a computer some kind of hypertext. For instance, a text in an online magazine article with images and references that are just included in the text by positioning them anywhere in the text is plain and simple text. But if those images and references contain some code which is linked to some other content, that same text is hypertext and the links are hyperlinks. In some instances, hypertext may be included as text hovering above the original text. In other words, when hovering the cursor above marked pieces of text (usually in blue and bold), an additional window might appear hovering above the text. As soon as the cursor is moved, the hovering text disappears.

When it comes to the positive and negative sides of hypertext, the same arguments listed in the previous section on hyperlinks may be listed here as well. Given the rapid advance of technology as well as the fact that the Internet is getting faster and faster, hypertext is becoming more sophisticated and more complicated. The World Wide Web may link tens of millions documents together via hypertext which means that users are literally overwhelmed with information. Clicking on links is tempting. Therefore, the

argument that hypertext is distracting is more than valid. However, one cannot ignore that hypertexts are extremely economical. For instance, when preparing some proposal (scientific, research, business, etc.) which contains references to all kinds of information and sources, inserting hyperlinks and/or hypertext into the text and turning it thus into hypertext is quite convenient. A reader can just click on a link and take a look at the additional information or source. If the same information or content were to be added in the old-fashioned way, it would have to occur in footnotes, notes or references. For instance, a common thing nowadays is that when we want to use a recipe published online, it is very convenient that the recipe contains hyperlinks and/or hypertext explaining steps, ingredients, utensils or any other issue that might be unknown or unclear to some user of the recipe while distracting for other more experienced cooks.

In the context of digital media discourse, hypertext makes a lot of sense. It is informative, explanatory, comprehensive and easy-to-use. At the same time, it provides users with an unfathomable pool of information as well as with the opportunity to be active, creative and contributing participators in the World Wide Web. This aspect of participation is a very important characteristic of digital media discourse which directly leads to the next very important feature – that of user engagement.

#UserEngagement

Survival of the digital media depends on the number of people actually using them so that a crucial aspect of this survival is based on studying and analysing the characteristics that make these media appealing to people (Khan, 2017). The more users, the more clicks, the more revenues. The success formula is simple, which means that user engagement is the most important criterion determining the achievement of any type of digital media. Paradoxically, despite various attempts among advertisers, researchers and other important stakeholders in the media industry, there is no single definition of engagement. Engagement has become 'a catchall for a variety of interactions" (Gluck, 2012, p. 3) which results in a co-creation of value (Brodie et al., 2013).

Engagement is considered a multidimensional concept including behavioural, cognitive and emotional aspects (Hollebeek, 2011). The first aspect refers to what users do with content they access, such as whether they click on the provided buttons and whether they share the content. The second aspect is a reflection of the users' thoughts mainly expressed in their comments and the third aspect is about the users' feelings, which can be expressed either through comments or by clicking the appropriate emoticon provided by the medium. News outlets, social networks, websites, services, platforms, applications, they all need insight into the number of people using them. Therefore, monitoring and measuring the number of people who access, download, read and use content in the digital media enables insight into the actual performance of the media.

Depending on the type of the media, different elements of user engagement are considered important. Shao (2009) suggests that there are three types of content use in the digital media: consumption, participation and production. Consumption refers to the number of users who access, view, read or watch content but do not respond. Sometimes, they are referred to as passive users or lurkers (Takahashi et al., 2003). Participation means that users actively interact either with other users (comment, reply, etc.) or the content (like, dislike, share, etc.). Production involves engagement at a higher level as it involves some form of content contribution, such

as when users produce and publish their own content (texts, photographs, hashtags, etc.).

In the broadest sense, all media seek insight into the number of users actually interacting with the specific type of media; therefore, they rely on various tools that measure different forms of user engagement. How often users access a medium, how long they use it, how often they come back to it, recommend its use to other users and many other questions can be asked and answered. Accordingly, a wide range of measuring tools, such as algorithms, software or statistics are employed to measure user engagement. The broader the insight into the various forms of user engagement, the better the knowledge regarding the medium. Based on the gathered knowledge, the media can analyse what and how they are doing right and what they need to improve.

A very important criterion contributing to user engagement is the overall truthfulness and credibility of the content offered to users. Of course, all media will boast of their content being true, credible and reliable, but whether the users perceive it as such is an aspect that all media want to be certain of. In other words, they seek quantified insight into the exact number of people who believe or disbelieve the content published in the media. The various means employed to measure the extent to which readers or users believe the content they are presented with will have to rely on their engagement. Unfortunately, no software can calculate the level of trust users may or may not have in the media. Polls, surveys and questionnaires do provide certain insight, but mostly more subtle means are needed. And that is where the phenomenon of the click becomes crucial.

#TheClickAsAMeasuringUnit

The term click has become a metaphor for a hyperlink or thumbnail, which when clicked on, opens a path to some new content (e.g. different page, image, explanation, news article, advertisement, video, etc.). Given that digital communication technologies have aided the emerging of new media settings, access to content relies on the perfect algorithm that will ensure the right number of clicks, i.e. users. For instance, social networks need users who like, share and click on ads. Similarly, news websites need users who read, comment and recommend. Though it may seem that different digital media types are interested in different criteria they are measuring, their ultimate interest is profit. Again the success formula is simple: the more clicks, the more revenues. What a common user might not realize is that all digital media need their users to click on any content presented to them. Earlier, users believed that clicking on ads meant profit for the medium advertising the product. However, the reality is that any click is a direct money-maker for anybody involved in the product in some way, the owner of the product or service being advertised included. The amounts will differ, of course, but every click is still contributing to the overall user engagement which, in turn, will reflect on the revenue of the particular digital media type.

Clicks are generated in different ways. The most obvious ones are employed by social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube which are characterized by their own unique architecture, norms and culture (Smith et al., 2012). Users can click on a button which enables them to express a certain emotion by choosing the right emoticon or to 'like', 'comment', 'reply', 'share', 'link', 'hashtag', 'retweet', 'tag', 'bookmark'. All these options are measured all the time and they contribute to the understanding of whether users support some content, agree with it and eventually even trust it. Unlike that, news stories published by news outlets have to fulfil different requirements. Harcup and O'Neill (2017) suggest that clicks ensure a positive impact on factors, such as power elite, celebrity, entertainment, surprise, bad news, good news, magnitude, relevance, follow-up and newspaper agenda. And yet, news outlets need to rely on more simple means to ensure and measure user engagement. Apart from ads as an obvious metrics, news outlets can measure whether their readers share and

recommend content. Those outlets that include comment sections can measure how many users have something to say and whether they are willing to engage in discussions regarding the news they have read.

Another important aspect about news websites is that search engines (e.g. Google) as well as social networks (e.g. Twitter), newsfeeds (e.g. Facebook) and news aggregators (e.g. Feedly), enable the retrieval of news based on personalized preferences and specific search criteria which no longer include visiting a particular website. Readers are only a click away from a comprehensive list of items which matches various interests, preferences, likes, dislikes, etc. This in turn means that news providers have to fight for a place on the lists that potential readers make and to reach thousands of them in the shortest possible time.

In scholarly research, clicks are typically evaluated from a critical perspective. The number of clicks is used as evidence of the type of content users of the media prefer (Kormelink & Meijer, 2018). Especially in the news industry, clicks indicate what news stories are read or viewed in comparison to others so that they serve as a proxy for people's preference over some content or interest in particular news (Tenenboim & Cohen, 2015). However, growing concern is being expressed regarding the obsession over clicks, metrics and traffic with respect to the future of journalism and the implications for society (Nguyen, 2013; Tandoc & Thomas, 2015). Quite a substantial number of news websites rely on the number of clicks, shares, user comments, etc. to measure popularity, reader engagement and response rates. Research shows that news organizations use metrics to inform their editorial decisions (Anderson, 2011; Vu, 2014). Ranging from news presentation (e.g. news placement and headline adjustment) to news production (expanding or following up the number of clicks), editorial teams rely on metrics systems and web traffic when deciding on their daily activities (Kormelink & Meijer, 2018; Tenenboim & Cohen, 2015). Obviously, the quality of journalistic writing is suffering in this race for clicks. What is more, many media representatives resort to clickbaits to increase engagement, a subject matter of the next section.

#Clickbaits

From a historical point of view, clickbait as a way to generate readership is not a modern invention. A variety of newspapers belonging to so-called yellow journalism used headlines based on sensationalism, exaggeration and even deceitful information to attract readers (Zannettou et al., 2019). Shifting the media to the digital realm has in fact brought advantages to yellow journalism as newspapers can now use the benefits of technology to reach a lot of people thereby ensuring quick publication, large circulation and limited verification of the news (Alves et al., 2016).

From a psychological point of view, a clickbait can be referred to the phenomenon of the so-called curiosity gap which is rooted in Loewenstein's Information-Gap Theory of Curiosity (Loewenstein, 1994). Pursuant to that theory people are generally inquisitive and usually internally motivated to learn new information so as to reduce the sense of being deprived of something. Therefore, in order to fill that knowledge gap, they are prone to click on a headline that will even remotely promise to provide the missing information (Chakraborty et al., 2016).

From a functional point of view, it may be said that clickbait is a curiosity-inducing technique applied mostly by newspapers with the aim to generate more readers. Given the technological aspect, just like the ordinary click, it is a link, or a thumbnail that when clicked will open an article or text (Kuiken et al., 2017). The main function of a clickbait is to capture the reader's attention by awakening their curiosity thereby prompting them to click on the headline. Though obviously annoying, deceptive, derivative and of poor quality, clickbaits ensure financial profit to the publisher because every click, as already stated, means profit (Kuiken et al., 2017; Potthast et al., 2016).

In order to succeed in realizing their function, clickbaits rely on the same set of strategies implemented by regular headlines. The main difference is that regular headlines lead to content which is objective, factual and real, while clickbait headlines quite often lead to content of low quality, usually containing sensationalist stories or even fake news. In that way, clickbait may be identified as a betrayal of journalism and its ethical values which

presuppose a faithful presentation of news based on truthfulness, honesty and professional conduct.

Nevertheless, clickbaits remain effective as they attract readers by means of superlative adjectives and adverbs, hyperbolic words, exclamations, capital letters, sometimes even profanity (Alves et al., 2016; Chakraborty et al., 2016; Potthast et al., 2016). In addition, techniques, such as forward referencing or interrogative forms are used (Kuiken et al., 2017) based on which readers are directly invited to read an article. Quite often clickbait headlines include a number:

'Thirteen reasons why you …' or
'Ten must-have steps before you…'

Sometimes clickbait headlines make use of the so-called piggybacking technique based on which a famous person or company is mentioned:

'[Name of some celebrity] tells you her secret how to…'

Some clickbaits rely on more subtle formulations:

'This is what you should do before…',
'Now you can finally…',
'LIVE: Famous doctor explains how to…',
'Why you should…', or
'The last [some object] you will ever need…'

However, one of the most favourite clickbait headlines seems to be the following one:

'You won't believe…'

To conclude, whatever technique they rely on, clickbait headlines are successfully capitalizing on Loewenstein's (1994) Information-Gap Theory of Curiosity. Obviously, readers fall for the luring effect of a clickbait headline as they expect to get the answer posed in it. Once the click has been made, the profit margin goes up while the reader remains deprived of the information they were hoping to get in the main body of the article (Alves et al., 2016).

#UserGeneratedContent

A means of encouraging user interaction, thus user engagement, is introducing User Generated Content (UGC) which is 'creating new viewing patterns and social interactions, empowering users to be more creative and developing new business opportunities' (Cha et al., 2007, p. 1). Depending on the type of media, UGC can be employed in different ways. From publishing videos and clips (YouTube, TikTok, 9Gag, etc.) and posting pictures (Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook, etc.) to publishing articles (Blogs, WordPress, Vice, etc.), UGC has evolved to the perfect tool generating user engagement and revenues for both the medium and the user. Users gain recognition, many even establish a profitable business by publishing and posting their own content, while the media harvest the revenues from a substantial number of clicks.

Amongst the various participation and production actions (Shao, 2009), UGC in the forms of comments on social networks and news websites is considered a valuable tool providing insight into user engagement. Users who publish their content on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, for instance, rely on comments as a form of confirmation and recognition of the implied value they would like their content to carry. Vice versa, by commenting the content, users not only contribute to the popularity of the publisher or poster, but they also expect and receive recognition of their own attitudes and beliefs. Therefore, their own comment becomes a means of affirmation of their own personality.

In case of the news media, after reading a news article, readers may be attracted to further engagement. They read comments posted by other readers, post their own comment or even discuss content with other readers via the comment section. In the digital domain, where users are physically detached from each other, comments provide insight into how individuals perceive reality, what they believe in as well as the extent to which they agree with ideas. Readers' comments reflect a reaction to content, thus creating a specific interface between a news article and its readership (Weizman & Dori-Hacohen, 2017). This interface is dominated by a dimension that not only relates discourse structures to social structures but also shows the immediate effect of this relationship (Bruce, 2018; Đorđevič, 2020; Toepfl &

Piwoni, 2015). In other words, readers' comments clearly demonstrate how the information presented to them in the news affects their attitudes, ideologies and language use. Research indicates that UGC may influence, even alter an individual's perception regarding certain content (Kim & Sun, 2006; Lee & Jang, 2010) which means that readers use comments to validate their own opinions against those of others.

To conclude, in order to understand the trend of public expression, the role of the public opinion climate in relation to the willingness to express opinions is crucial (Noelle-Neumann, 2016). Obviously, the secluded and anonymous space of the comment sections on news websites offers users the possibility to state openly what they think as opposed to face-to-face communication where the risk of retribution is high. Thus the behavioural act of expressing an opinion by posting a comment is becoming a favoured form of social behaviour within an immediate physical and geographical space otherwise deemed threatening.

At this point I would like to end my first chapter. Sor far, I have tried to offer explanations for some of the most important terms directly related to digital media discourse in general as well as to digital media discourse in linguistic research in particular. The next chapter will be devoted to the different types of digital media discourse that we encounter on a daily basis. Each of these types can be the subject matter of linguistic research and each can be approached from various points of view, which I will try to elaborate on in the second part of the book.

Chapter Two: Digital Media Discourse Types

No introduction to this chapter would be able to give enough credit to all the various approaches to different types of discourse. Rather than engaging in the presentation of the different views on the types of discourse, which would exceed the scope of this book considerably, let it suffice to say that a significant pool of literature is available regarding this topic (cf. Blommaert, 2005; Fairclough, 1992; Gee & Handford, 2011; Herring, 2001, 2013; Locke, 2004; Machin & van Leewen, 2007; Tannen & Trester, 2013; van Dijk, 1997; Zappavigna, 2012). However, it would be fair to start with Fairclough (1992) who maintains that 'discourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct and "constitute" them' (p. 3). This stipulation cannot be disputed in the context of the digital media because digital media discourse is a manifestation of communication in the digital media induced by society, i.e. by members of society with all their specific cultural, social, political and traditional concepts. That is exactly why this chapter will be an attempt to present the different digital contexts within which digital media discourse can be realized. Such presentation might offer new insights into how to analyse digital media discourse which will be presented in the second part of this book. The first type to be dis- cussed is multimodal discourse because discourse in the digital media consists of various layers of semiotic meanings which constitute the different modalities of digital media discourse (Androutsopoulos, 2010). All communicative events realized as text or discourse are realized by means of multiple semiotic resources (image, sound, dance, etc.) because the users and the creators of the digital media discourse in fact rely on all resources at their disposal and these resources are multi-layered, i.e., multimodal (2010).

#MultimodalDiscourse

When Yann Martel wrote *The Life of Pi*, it was deemed unfilmable because the visual portrayal presented in the story could not be transferred onto the screen. In other words, the technology was not advanced enough to transfer all the multimodal elements indicated in the story onto the screen. When the director Ang Lee took up the project, he made extensive use of Computer-Generated Images (CGI) based on which he managed to transfer onto the screen the persuasiveness of the visual presentations Martel described in the story (Rainer, 2012). In other words, Ang Lee materialized the multimodal elements from the discourse in the story and presented them to the audience via a visual and aural medium – a film.

The example of Ang Lee's accomplishment clearly indicates that the understanding of the term multimodal discourse presupposes that there are many layers of meaning in the term itself. The first distinction that has to be established is that between multimodal discourse and multimodal text. To begin with, text and discourse are definitely distinct, but also interwoven (Brait & Souza-e-Silva, 2012). Similarly, Kress (2011) points out that the terms text and discourse have been used 'more or less interchangeably, as names for "extended stretches of speech and writing" as pointing to the social meanings "inherent" in such texts' (p. 35). Therefore, Kress further stipulates, text is 'the material site of emergence of immaterial discourse(s)' (p. 35) which imposes the conclusion that text is a result of putting together words into phrases and sentences so as to get a coherent string of thoughts in either speech or writing.

In general, it may be assumed that 'a text can be anything from a lolcat to a concert T-shirt to a dictionary to a performance' and each text is multimodal (Arola et al., 2014, p. 1). In fact, it may be difficult to single out monomodal texts. Nevertheless, they are perceived as existing in the form of legal documents, privacy policies, disclaimers, etc. and the discourse in such texts continues to prioritize mainly logo-centric or linguistic representations, thus resisting the use of images, new graphic layouts and moving images (Mills, 2013). Apart from these few singled out examples, the vast majority of texts is multimodal displaying multimodal discourse ranging from newspapers, magazines, science reports, billboards, film scripts, to memes,

cartoons, films, animated shows, video games and similar content that includes more than one mode of communication (Cazden et al., 1996). For instance, a simple TV commercial includes at least some music and the voice of an announcer (aural mode), a video showing the product (visual mode) and some text on the screen displaying additional information (linguistic mode). If actors are added who communicate to each other, move their hands, point to something or move from one place to another, there will be two more modes, the gestural and the spatial ones as well. Each mode plays a particular role in the overall message, but 'it is the combination of modes, the multimodality that created the full piece of communication' (Arola et al., 2014, p. 4). More importantly, all the modes together create the multimodal discourse of the commercial.

The next aspect to point out here is that multimodal discourse consists of complex semiotic entities which are adapted for consumption by users of different language and cultural backgrounds (Pérez-González, 2014). Within such contexts, different types of texts may be created each with its own particular meanings. Parts of the meaning of a text may derive from the interaction between words and visuals (cartoons, memes, illustrations, etc.) and sounds (songs, musical compositions, jingles, etc.). For instance, the text in a meme may be very short, but the discourse presented in the text will still convey different meanings because of other semiotic entities added to the text. Thus, multimodal texts combine and integrate the meaning-making resources of more than one semiotic modality (language, gesture, movement, visual images, sound, etc.) to produce text-specific meaning (Baldry & Thibault, 2017).

This meaning-making process can be illustrated with a popular meme based on a scene from the film *Race to Witch Mountain* with Dwayne Johnson, a famous actor mostly appearing in action films in which he usually plays a very masculine, strong, almost invincible character. The meme has been used in many different cultural contexts to convey quite specific cultural trades. In the case presented here (Figure 2), the meme is in Serbian and is supposed to express a characteristic related to the Serbian culture – the almost illogical fear of draught, or, more specific, the fear of ending up with almost any disease because of a current of cool air in a room or other confined space. In the scene that the meme originated from, two teenagers, a girl and a boy, enter a cab driven by Johnson who notices this only after a few minutes. Obviously, he is surprised when he sees them on the back seat.

The meme has been used in many different contexts since the illustration of a very strong person, who has been taken by surprise, may be employed to indicate an array of different, mostly humorous, meanings and intentions.

Figure 2. Illustration of different semiotic entities in a meme.

A closer look at the meme (Figure 2) indicates that the differences between the facial expressions in the first and the third picture are in fact the most important for the understanding of the entire meme and it can easily be adapted to any cultural context when it is meant to illustrate shock or surprise caused by some information or knowledge. In the meme in Figure 2, the text added to the first picture is:

What do you want?

The girl's response in the second picture is:

To open a window.

And then there is the expression of shock on Dwayne Johnson's face.

Obviously, the most important aspect of the meme in Figure 2 is the additional semiotic entity of the facial expression presented in the third picture. Without it, the meme would be meaningless. Yet, the meaning-making process initiated by the meme is limited to the people from Serbia because a person from another cultural context might not be able to relate to it. In Serbia this meme is illustrative of the irrational fear of even the slightest draught. In fact, almost every Serb at some point in their life will assume that they have caught a cold, that their neck hurts, or that their lumbago got worse because they had been in some draughty place. The sentence: It must have been the draught! is a diagnosis for a myriad of diseases or conditions in Serbia. Opening a window in a car, in a Serb's mind, is detrimental. In the context of the Serbian culture, this meme is hilarious and it is the multimodality of the discourse presented in the entire meme that is conveying the culture-specific meaning. In a different cultural context, the meme will probably be meaningless, or have a different effect, which means that multimodality in discourse is culture-specific as well. In other words, the meaning-making process of multimodal discourse will depend on the recipient's cultural background as much as on the skill to understand a visually presented message.

Therefore, new aspects of both text and discourse in multimodal discourse have to be considered. The most important aspect is that the words and phrases comprising a text are 'materially diverse' and they may include 'gesture, speech, image (still or moving), writing, music (on a website or in a film)' meaning that they can be drawn into 'a semiotic entity in two, three or four dimensions' (Kress, 2011, p. 36). If discourse is the social use of language and text is its materialization through semiotically diverse manifestations, it may be concluded that multimodal discourse is the realization of the specific relationship between the meanings of a community and its semiotic manifestations (2011, p. 27). In other words, multimodal discourse is text realized through different modes of communication (Cazden et al., 1996). As shown in Figure 2, the meme has been realized through four modes of communication: the linguistic mode (the text), the visual mode (the image of the characters), the spatial mode (the inside of a car and the windows) and most importantly the gestural mode (the facial expression in the third picture). However, the message itself, as well as how it will be received, will depend

on the specific community that the multimodal discourse is directed at. In other words, there is no guarantee that the same multimodal discourse will be interpreted in the same way by its different recipients.

One possible approach to the understanding of multimodal discourse in the context of the digital media can rely on the work of Cazden et al. (1996). They introduced a new approach to understanding modes of meaning in the context of multimodality which they understood as an integrated meaning-making system found in electronic multimedia text, hypertext, multimodal texts, etc. The authors classified their modes of meaning for the purpose of establishing multiliteracy as a new approach to literacy pedagogy. In their opinion, the multiplicity of communication channels and increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in the modern world can no longer rely on the current view of literacy which is based on the traditional objective to teach learners to read and write 'page-bound, official, standard forms of the national language' thereby restricting literacy pedagogy to 'formalized, monolingual, monocultural and rule-governed forms of language' (Cazden et al., 1996, pp. 60–61). Therefore, the authors attempted to broaden the understanding of literacy and literacy teaching and learning 'to include negotiating a multiplicity of discourses' (p. 61).

The term multiliteracies implies two aspects: (1) the 'multiplicity of communication channels and media' and (2) the 'increasing saliency of cultural and linguistic diversity' (Cazden et al. 1996, p. 63). In a context where these two aspects are regarded crucial, a pedagogy of multiliteracies can focus on 'modes of representation much broader than language alone' which 'differ according to culture and context and have specific cognitive, cultural and social effects' (p. 64). This means that every culture relies on certain modes of communication to achieve various cultural purposes and these will differ from culture to culture. Assuming that every culture has their own meaning-making modes, each culture will relate linguistic to visual, spatial, or any other modes in a way that is specific to their own culture and produce multimodal texts which will reflect the specific meaning-making modes of that specific culture (Đorđević & Stamenković, 2021; Đorđević & Stamenković, forthcoming in 2022). In the context of the digital media, multimodal discourse is an essential constituent and multimodality a key term.

Based on a somewhat different approach suggested by Bateman et al. (2017), multimodality is 'a way of characterizing communicative situations (considered very broadly) which rely upon combinations of different

"forms" of communication to be effective' (p. 7). This communication is enabled by a certain medium which is regarded a carrier of semiotic modes that carry meaning. When referring to the characteristics of a medium, Bateman et al. (2017) suggest the notion of *canvas* to describe it whereby they suggest that the notion of canvas implies different dimensions of communicative situations which carry meaningful regularities. They also suggest several material properties of a canvas, such as space (2D or 3D), temporality (static or dynamic), transience (permanent or fleeting), and how the user is positioned with respect to the canvas (distanced observer or immersed participant) (p. 104). In their opinion, anything that can carry signs created with a certain intention is a canvas, i.e. a carrier of semiotic modes. The intention behind the canvas implies that the semiotic modes presented on the canvas are offered for some kind of interpretation. Therefore, multimodal discourse may be considered a canvas, or even several canvases, created intentionally by members of society to carry semiotic modes (which have been shaped by society) and to convey certain meanings. The multimodal discourse analyst's job is to discern those meanings and put them into a broader perspective of interpretation. The notion of canvas as well as its analysis will be described in more details in the second part of this book (Chapter Seven).

To conclude, digital discourse in its broadest sense is a manifestation of text in various types of media and it may include basic forms of communication, such as spoken and written language, pictures, sounds, music but also more 'digital' ones, such as hyperlinks and hypertext. Multimodal discourse is an 'ensemble' of communicative practices (Bateman et al., 2017, p. 7) and as such it is present everywhere. Whether realized as an analogue or as a digital manifestation, discourse nowadays can rarely be monomodal because it almost never relies only on one mode of communication (Cazden et al., 1996). Therefore, it might be concluded that discourse in the digital media is, in fact, multimodal.

#MediaDiscourse

Somebody might argue that there is no clear difference between digital media discourse and media discourse as both may refer to the various forms of interaction that take place through a broadcast platform, both spoken and written (O'Keeffe, 2006). However, the term media discourse is now seen as discourse containing primarily news and information distributed by news agencies and news outlets. Therefore, the study of media discourse allows for an understanding of how ideas presented in different contexts are delivered to the public via print media, radio and television but also online newspapers, blogs, vlogs and other news generators (Koopmans & Statham, 2010; Macdonald, 2003; Matheson, 2005; Perrin, 2013; Talbot, 2007). Though the online environment shifts media discourse into the realm of digital media discourse, it is still media discourse if it refers to the dissemination of news, announcements, information and similar informative content disseminated by media outlets. Therefore, we could say that **media discourse includes news, information and feature stories delivered to the public by way of newspapers, magazines, social media, the Internet, television and radio.** Obviously, the media have been altered significantly during the last two decades primarily due to the Internet, which is why the discourse presented and promoted via the media has changed as well and so have approaches to exploring them (Bednarek, 2006; Bennett, 2016; Graber & Dunaway, 2015; Koopmans & Statham, 2010; O'Keeffe, 2006; Perrin, 2013; Talbot; 2007; Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011; van Dijk, 2013).

Media discourse is a manufactured product meant to inform a specific audience. An important aspect to explore is how this has been accomplished but also what effects the media exert through their interaction with the public. Relevant literature suggests that theories and investigations regarding this aspect have been proposed for almost an entire century, i.e. since the First World War in the 1920s, to be precise (Jusić, 2009). A complete list would by far exceed the scope of this book, which is why details regarding media effects may be explored, for instance in Bryant and Oliver (2009) who have provided a comprehensive reference volume with exceptional contributions from various scholars.

A general opinion supported in most investigations of media discourse is that the media play an important role in all spheres of life (cultural, political, religious, social, etc.), as they indicate and highlight causes, events and consequences (Coleman & Ross, 2010; Macarro, 2002; Perrin, 2013; Talbot, 2007; Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011). More than that, both the media (i.e. news broadcasting channels) as well as the discourse they rely on contribute to the shaping of public opinion to the extent that media discourse may be deemed responsible for major political developments in many parts of the world. For instance, numerous studies have shown that the role of the media in the downfall of former Yugoslavia and the subsequent peace-building efforts has been enormous (Jusić, 2009; Price & Thompson, 2002; Reljić, 1998; Skopljanac-Brunner et al., 2000; Snyder & Ballentine, 1996). Although none of these studies could confirm or specify the exact contribution of the mass media and their content to the events related to the dissolution of former Yugoslavia, it has been clear that the media coverage did have significant influence.

To conclude, media discourse is primarily discourse disseminated by broadcasting companies, news agencies and newspaper outlets. In comparison to digital media discourse, the term media discourse is more limited. Nevertheless, in the digital world, media discourse is extremely powerful as it can have a significant impact on all spheres of life (cultural, political, religious, social, etc.). Indeed, as stated, media discourse may shape public opinion to the extent that it can influence political developments (Beciu et al., 2017; Dubrovskaya & Kozhemyakin, 2017), exert judicial power (Dubrovskaya et al., 2015) and even change the meaning that an event may have for the public (Zhang, 2015). Bearing in mind that one of the most common realizations of media discourse is in fact in the news, or that we may identify media discourse with the news, the next section will be devoted to that type of discourse.

#TheNews

According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Britannica, n.d.) the earliest known journalistic product, or news item was a news sheet circulated in ancient Rome known as the *Acta Diurna* (probably published in 59 BC) which recorded and published important events on a daily basis. The first regularly published newspapers appeared in German cities and in Antwerp in 1609 and while often hindered by government-imposed censorship, taxes and various restrictions, during the 18th century newspapers managed to reach the position they enjoy today (*Britannica*, n.d.).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the fight for the recognition of a career in journalism was based on the idea that 'the health of society depends upon the quality of the information it receives' (Lippmann, 1920, p. 48). What is more, 'the chief purpose of the "news" is to enable mankind to live successfully toward the future' (p. 52). Although these words have been steering the news industry until the present day, the digital platform era has brought about a new scrutiny of the journalism and news media (Wilding et al., 2018) as well as the news which have changed significantly since the appearance of Google in 1998, Facebook in 2004 and Twitter in 2006.

On the one hand, through digital platforms news producers have access to substantially larger audiences almost instantly. News agencies, such as Associated Press, Reuters, United Press Online, etc. (details will be provided in #WebsitesBlogsPodcastsAndVlogs), or online news outlets of major and minor newspapers, such as bbc.com, cnn.com, nytimes.com, etc. are now crucial for the dissemination of news. Similarly, the art of creating viral content (Foer, 2017) has been mastered successfully by many influential Internet news outlets, such as BuzzFeed and Vox, who have specifically oriented towards publishing news from all over the world. The result of such omnipresence is an enormous audience who have access to an unfathomable range of news content.

On the other hand, digital platforms have brought about some harms as well. Most news agencies have to face the results of the global trend reflected in the collapse of the traditional financial model in the media as a direct result of digitization so that revenues generated from advertising are now flowing into online platforms (Fisher, 2018). Consequently, lower returns have imposed redundancies and restructuring (Picard, 2014) which

are leading to an existential crisis (McNair, 2006) for traditionally trained journalists. Easy access to the Internet nowadays enables almost everybody to be a publisher, which 'has resulted in a blurring of professional boundaries between reporters and bloggers, citizen journalists and other communication roles' (Fisher, 2018: 21). The fact that news media face competition from other sources of information (Strömbäck et al., 2020), such as digital and social media, has given political and social actors the freedom to be less dependent on news media given that they can reach their audiences via Instagram, Facebook and Twitter (Groshek & Koc-Michalska, 2017). The current situation indicates that the digital news agenda is now controlled both by news companies and the digital platforms that play a significant role in news distribution (Wilding et al., 2018). What is more, the participatory public helps set the agenda as well so that news media transact with audiences, advertisers and digital platforms.

Many definitions of the news are available and they depend on the context within which news as a phenomenon is explored. However, most definitions (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017; Schultz, 2007) boil down to two common points which state that news should:

1. Carry a diverse range of informative content about important matters.
2. Be based on timeliness, exclusivity, conflict, proximity, prominence, relevance and scale.

However, the news may also depend on the practices of individual editors and journalists which may often differ from those of the organizations that employ them. This means that the news producers, the news organizations and the news distributers may not always be on the same page, especially given the situation in which the financial model of the news industry has changed considerably.

Since the news as a type of digital media discourse will be presented in more detail in the second part of the book, at this point I will only briefly refer to van Dijk (2013) who suggests that a news item is a 'type of text or discourse as it is expressed, used, or made public in news media or public information carriers such as TV, radio and the newspaper' or in a narrower sense, a piece of 'news discourse about past political, social, or cultural events' (van Dijk, 2013, pp. 4–5). Given its range and primary aim, news discourse is also public discourse because it is influenced by the public opinion

already in the process of making but it is also meant to influence the public. This means that the two important constituent elements of the structure of news are, in fact, the process of news production and the comprehension of news by the public (2013). Given the digital context, online news articles are types of text or discourse presented to their audiences via the Internet and the World Wide Web through various networks, platforms, services, etc. News items are presented to various audiences, thus implying that these audiences share some general opinions specific to the context they live in. What is more, the attitudes they form are essentially social, which to a certain extent define the goals, interests, values and norms of a group, relative to socially relevant issues (2013). Obviously, discourse in the news may be observed from many angles which is why more attention will be paid to it in the second part of this book. At this point it is necessary to understand that news discourse implies a specific type of discourse largely influenced by public opinion while meant to create public opinion.

To conclude, a slightly broader definition of news proposed by Graber and Dunaway (2015) stipulates that despite the fact that the news tends to contain information that is timely, it is often sensational, since journalists choose to present scandals, violence and human drama, which is why sensationalism may dominate the news. In addition, the news has the tendency to present familiar stories about people or life experiences that give even distant events a close-to-home feeling (2015). Finally, as has been stated, the development of the Internet and computer-mediated communication has shaped both the world of digital media as well as the discourse presented in them. Tannen and Trester (2013) refer to the discourse of the media as discourse 2.0, or the language of the new media. What is more, the development of digital media is changing so much that new approaches to the analysis of discourse 2.0 are needed (2013) and the exact purpose of this book is to offer some of them. Therefore, at this point I should point out that the term news nowadays covers a much broader range of meanings than it used to which is why we can refer to news when thinking of any information published in the digital realm. In other words, any discourse in the digital media can be more or less news. And that is how news is being treated in this book – it is information in its broadest sense.

#FakeNews

A book on digital media discourse cannot be complete without at least a few words on the phenomenon of fake news, a term which has increasingly been in use since the US election in 2016 (Waisbord, 2018). Initially, the term fake news was used to describe satirical sites, fabricated news, even propaganda (Tandoc et al., 2017). The meaning of the term expanded because presidential candidate Donald Trump used it to describe unsupportive and unsympathetic news coverage. According to Hambrick and Marqardt (2018), Mr Trump used the words 'fake news' in 180 tweets.

However, the frequent use of the term fake news since 2016 has changed its meaning considerably. Now there are two relevant yet different references to fake news, the first being enforced by academics and the second by politicians. In the context of this book, the first is of more substantial importance although the second should not be dismissed as unimportant either. In 2017 *Collins Dictionary* named the term fake news 'Word of the Year 2017' which undoubtedly speaks in favour of the sudden popularization of the term and its influence. The meaning now comprises almost any kind of false, deceitful and misleading information disguised as legitimate news. In other words, it ranges from 'fabricated news circulated via social media to a polemic umbrella term meant to discredit "legacy" news media' (Quandt et al., 2019, p. 1). Academics discuss the term as fabricated news or pseudo news while politicians see it as a tool to achieve political polarization, decrease trust in institutions or even undermine democracy (Persily, 2017).

A rather narrow but acceptable definition is that fake news are news articles that are 'intentionally and verifiably false, and could mislead readers' (Alcott & Gentzkow, 2017, p. 213). However, this definition excludes other forms of misleading information including mistakes made by journalists or politicians as well as rumours, hoaxes, clickbaits and conspiracy theories which are used in politics for various reasons (Zannettou et al., 2019). With the aim to provide a distinction between mis- and disinformation, Wardle (2017) argues that misinformation is unintentionally false whereas disinformation is deliberately false. Nevertheless, both types depend on the content, the motivation of the creator and the dissemination mechanisms which is why Wardle proposes a typology of fake news, i.e. of mis- and disinformation.

According to Wardle's typology (2017) there are seven types of false information distributed on a scale of intended deceit: satire or parody, misleading content, imposter content, fabricated content, false connection, false context and manipulated content. The intention of the creators of each of these varies and it can reflect just poor journalism but it can also be meant to parody or to provoke or 'punk'. In addition, it can be motivated by passion, partisanship, profit, political influence or even propaganda. With respect to dissemination mechanisms, Wardle (2017) states four of them: unwittingly sharing by social media users, amplification by journalists, pushing by loosely connected groups and dissemination in sophisticated disinformation campaigns (including botnets and troll factories). Unfortunately, when it comes to distinguishing fake from real news, there seems to be no tool nor mechanism. It all boils down to how educated people will be to second guess their reaction to a piece of news before sharing it. Obviously, fake news has become far too seemingly real that it is impossible to come up with some tool which would sift through the fake to separate the real.

Considering that the news landscape has become very fragmented and that clickbait may often determine whether a news outlet will survive the competition on the media market or not (Chen et al., 2015), fake news has also become a tool of ensuring broader audiences. However, there is reasonable fear that fake news receives more attention than real news which could be confirmed during the last three months of the US presidential election in 2016 when false stories generated more than 8 million shares, reactions and comments (Clark & Marchi, 2017). The result was that readers were confused and unable to distinguish between real and fake news as well as credible information and false facts (Brummette et al., 2018; Clark & Marchi, 2017). In order to alleviate the harm that fake news can inflict, Mark Zuckerberg partnered up with fact-checkers and introduced specific tools so that Facebook users could report fake news (Hackett, 2017).

Unfortunately, defining and identifying fake news is a (never-ending?) work in progress. There are far too many dimensions that need to be approached and analysed before a complete and comprehensive definition may be expected. What can be concluded at this point is that fake news is often meant to discredit legacy news media (Donald Trump being a striking example). Furthermore, fake news makes allegations that challenge mainstream media discourses thereby blurring the interpretation of the concept of the term. For the sake of a conclusion at this point, fake news can be seen

as some kind of rhetorical means used to cast doubt on a story, discredit a person's integrity or even shake trust in the media system as a whole (Jack, 2017).

#Deepfakes

A relatively new threat is now being infiltrated into the digital space, digital media discourse included – deepfakes. Defined as technology used to create doctored videos by means of artificial intelligence, deepfakes are now recognized as one of the most recent hazards for journalistic quality and news credibility spreading uncertainty among users of online information and readers of news content (Vizoso et al. 2021).

Deepfakes are a form of digital manipulation of both audio and video and they are very realistic and difficult to detect (Chesney & Citron, 2019). The technology allows the replacement of both the face and the voice of a person (target) with the face and the voice of a completely different person (source) creating thus a manipulated version of a piece of news deemed trustworthy. The technique is based on specially designed algorithms relying on Generative Adversarial Networks. The algorithms enable replacements of thousands of images and videos thereby creating a highly realistic presentation of a person speaking, acting, moving, etc. (Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020). In other words, already existing recordings of a person saying something can be manipulated in such a way that the person may seem to be saying any sentence to the extent that mouth movements and voice are altered so as to suit the final aim of the one creating the deepfake. The results are often alarmingly convincing, in particular given the fact that online videos usually have a low resolution thereby not demanding high quality reproduction. When the end user plays the deepfaked video they cannot recognize it as fake or manipulated. In addition, the systems used for the creation of deepfackes are learning how to improve themselves so that every single new video is becoming better since the system accumulates past experiences and builds on them. Deepfakes practically raise fake news to an entirely new level dangerously taking over, especially considering the fact that any mobile phone user can create deepfakes by means of apps that are available for free download (Vizoso et al. 2021).

Deepfakes can be labelled in four categories based on the forms they rely on (Farid et al., 2019):

1) Face replacement or face swapping which involves literally taking a person's face (source) and 'stitching' it onto another person's

face (target). Of course, this technique requires extensive modelling and the analysis of various angles.

2) Face re-enactment is also known as puppetry based on which the features of a target's face are manipulated to the extent that all the movements of their mouth, eyebrows, eyes are re-enacted. The technology keeps people's features intact so that they appear more life-like. At this level the technology can be applied mainly with motionless targets who face the camera.
3) Face generation involves creating an entirely new image of a target's face. Two neural networks are pitted against one another so that the first generates an image while the second judges whether the output is realistic enough.
4) Speech synthesis is still a new form of deepfake which creates a model of a voice which can read out text in the exact same way the target would do.

Certain attempts are already being made to mitigate the dangers of deepfaked content, the most obvious being fact checking, a method relying solely on individual attempts to validate the authenticity of certain content. Given that both fake news and deepfakes undermine news credibility, many governments are taking organized actions in the fight against disinformation while trying not to infringe free speech guarantees, a value that has taken decades to be secured. Thus, governments are trying to fight disinformation within the boundaries of their own legislations. Most of them can do only as much as to recommend strategies and raise awareness among their citizens to assess the content they are being presented with. For instance, democratic governments respecting the value of free speech, such as Australia, Canada as well as certain countries in the European Union focus on media literacy and rely on enforcing media literacy campaigns. Unlike that, some governments resort to propaganda and media regulations which rely on bills, laws and even arrests meant to root out any attempt of disinformation. Whichever solution used or implemented, it is inevitable that modern humanity will have to face the consequences of a completely new type of warfare – the one fought in the cyberspace.

#DigitalPlatforms

In this section special attention is focused on digital platforms because they have changed the way digital media discourse is presented to the users of the digital media.

As a business enterprise, a digital platform is a place on the WWW which enables the exchange of information, goods or services between producers and consumers. The latter are an important constituent element as they make the community which the digital platform depends on. After all, no community, no inherent value of the platform. Digital platforms and platform services include the following:

1) Digital search engines (Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc.);
2) Social media platforms:
   a) Facebook, LinkedIn – used for social networking;
   b) Twitter, Tumblr – used for microblogging;
   c) Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat – used for photo sharing;
   d) YouTube, Vimeo – used for video sharing;
3) Content aggregators (Feedly, Google News, etc.);
4) Service-oriented platforms (Uber, Airbnb, GrubHub);
5) Knowledge platforms (Quora, Yahoo).

All digital platforms follow a certain business model (advertising, subscription, pay-as-you-go, etc.) and they depend on certain key elements, such as the ease of use, trustworthiness, security, providing value to their community and ability to scale in a certain way. The reason why these platforms and services deserve attention in the context of digital media discourse is simple – they have completely changed the way discourse in the digital media is produced, distributed and consumed. The news business is a very striking example as the producers of the news have realized that without digital platforms, their news will fail to reach a larger community.

At this point we should remind ourselves that a media outlet is a broadcasting channel that provides news, information and feature stories to the public. Historically, media outlets first had to rely only on newspapers and magazines printed on paper, then some of the media outlets turned to radio and television and now media outlets use the Internet. However, not only do newspapers have websites thereby occupying their own little digital space, they have also turned to social media platforms, such as Facebook and

Instagram. From the moment when the first newspaper that went online, namely *The Columbus Dispatch* on 1 July, 1980, we have reached the point when every newspaper has to rely on a digital platform based on which they disseminate their content and generate users. Obviously, this has altered the way news is conceptualized and produced as well as distributed to its audiences and consumed by them.

Traditionally, news is produced by journalists working at a newspaper or news agency – the print media – and the final news product – the article – is published in a newspaper – the printed publication of the news media. This means that news media are like mediators who stand between the newsmakers and the public. However, the emergence and development of digital platforms has changed the route via which the news travels from the journalist to the audience as well as the way news is consumed. The news is still mediated, but the nature of the mediation has changed (Wilding et al., 2018). News need not be printed only and consumers do not have to wait at the newsstand for the morning or evening edition of their favourite newspaper to arrive fresh from the printer. Nowadays, news is a 24/7 product available at a few clicks. The Internet and mobile devices, especially smart phones have made it even easier as the news can be accessed anywhere at any time via Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. Each of these has its own way of presenting the news, but it is still the news. What is more, the news is being published constantly, i.e. as soon as a journalist learns about a newsworthy story, they can write the article and publish it immediately. That is why the term news now covers various types of information, all neatly organized in sections ranging from political, social, sports, medical, economic and financial issues to advice on lifestyle, life-coaching manuals, fashion, cosmetics and recipes. The variety is breathtaking imposing that digital media discourse has no limits and no boundaries. Everything in the digital media can be discourse, and all discourse may be presented as news.

A very important aspect to consider is that the new form of mediation between the news and the audience via digital platforms has had some significant influence on the discourse presented in the news and the standards that such discourse is supposed to be subjected to. In addition, there is a significant distinction between news and opinion whereby the former is deemed objective, accurate, legitimate, factual, etc. while the latter is subjective, emotional, unprecedented, etc. (Marwick, 2018). News distributed via digital media is quite often more opinion than news, thus resulting in the

fact that the distinction between news and opinion is blurring. What is more in 'social spaces, the traditional journalistic value of objectivity no longer makes sense: virtually every story is augmented with someone's opinion' (Marwick, 2018, p. 504). Even when it comes to less serious content, i.e. news items related to lifestyle, cosmetics, fashion, the film or music industry, etc., the audience may have to question the accuracy of the information presented to them. In other words, there will always be doubt whether the news is accurate and factual or whether it is an opinion.

When the process of digitization in the news business started to indicate that the costs of production and distribution of news have to be covered in new, more modern ways depending on clicks, likes and content sharing, it became clear that the nature of the news was changing (Shirky, 2008). The news had moved away from the notion of newsworthiness to stories that are driven by the expectations and actions of online users. What happened was that editing and filtering information was being undermined and even made irrelevant (2008). In addition, the spreading of blogs, vlogs and other forms of citizen-journalists' writing have contributed to the lowering of standards within the news industry. In the attempt to keep up with all the changes that digitization had brought about, journalists had to adapt. The first thing that suffered in this environment of lower standards was the discourse presented in the news. As argued by Davies (2008) 'if truth is the object and checking is the function then the primary working asset of all journalists, always and everywhere, is time. Take away time and you take away truth' (p. 63).

Since the second part of this book will be an exploration of the different forms of digital media discourse in linguistic research, the impact of the mentioned platforms and services on the news will be presented in more detailed contexts. Therefore, at this point the conclusion to be drawn is that digital platforms have contributed immensely to the evolution of the news and the discourse presented in them.

#HeadlinesAndLeads

Online articles are one possible way of presenting news in the media and the more effective the discourse is presented in them, the greater the intended influence of a particular news item will be (Coleman & Ross, 2010; Johnson & Ensslin, 2007; O'Keefe, 2006; Talbot, 2007). This influence may be exerted already in the headline and the lead, which is why it is of crucial importance to analyse how this influence will be realized. Obviously, whether a particular article presenting a certain news item will be read or not depends on the level of interest that the headline and the lead will provoke in the potential reader.

As far as headlines are concerned, research has confirmed that they have a double function: 1) a semantic function, regarding the referential text, and 2) a pragmatic function, regarding the reader (the receiver) to whom the text is addressed (Bonyadi & Samuel, 2013; Dor, 2003; Ifantidou, 2009). The two functions are 'simultaneous, the semantic function being included in and justified by the pragmatic function' (Iarovici & Amel, 1989, cited in Dor, 2003, p. 698). Research has also confirmed that the writer's perspective of an appropriately written headline does not necessarily coincide with the reader's perspective of an effective headline. In fact, readers seem to follow their own expectations of relevance when deciding on which article they will read in more details or not (Ifantidou, 2009). In other words, headline readers tend to disregard standard norms such as length, clarity, and information as long as the headlines succeed in attracting attention. They do so primarily in terms of creative style regardless of underdetermined semantic meaning.

In general, it may be argued that the main function of the headline 'is to alert the reader (receiver) to the nature or the content of the text. This is the pragmatic function of the headline, and it includes the semantic one' (Iarovici & Amel, 1989, p. 443). In addition, 'the headline enables the reader to grasp the meaning of the text', which means the headline 'functions as a plurality of speech acts (urging, warning, and informing)' (p. 443).

Regarding leads, significant conclusions have been provided by research based on Framing Theory (details will be presented in Chapter Four). The theory relies on the basic idea that the way information is presented to the audience, i.e. the way it is framed, influences the particular choices that readers make regarding the way they process that information (Chong &

Druckman, 2007; Scheufele, 2000; Slothuus, 2008). Research has shown that leads which are projecting the frame of misfortune (e.g. violence or conflict) foster increased reading times of the associated articles (Reese et al., 2001; Zillmann, 2002; Zillmann et al., 2004). However, if the lead is highlighting the misfortunes themselves or emphasizing the economic implications of the misfortunes, the readers seemed less interested in the content of the article (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Zillmann et al., 2004). In fact, news articles mainly rely on attributing the frames of responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic consequences and morality, with the attribution of responsibility frame most commonly used in the news (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The same research also showed that there were no significant differences between different media outlets (e.g. television vs. the press), but rather between serious and sensationalist types of news. An additional conclusion was that sober and serious newspapers and television news programmes rely on responsibility and conflict frames whereas sensationalist ones on the human-interest frame.

Headlines and leads are deemed conclusive in the sense that they may exert influence even if the effect of the lead seems weaker than the effect of the headline. In order to analyse the differences between headlines and leads, as well as the significance of one versus the other, a certain analytical approach is needed to approach both the discourse of the headlines and the leads in online news. The second part of the book will shed some lights on this issue.

#SocialMedia

Before starting any elaboration on social media in the context of digital media discourse, some basic terminological differences need to be established between social media, social networking and social media platforms. According to *TechTerm* (2021), social media stands for a collection of internet-based communities within which users interact with each other online, such as on web forums, wikis and different kinds of user generated content (UCG) websites. The term social networking is often used instead of the term social media, but in fact it refers to the users' interaction via the social media, i.e. the actual communication which must be two-directional and involve at least two participants. Social media platforms are the digital platforms comprising the actual websites and services via which the online communication is realized. In other words, 'a social media platform is a web-based technology that enables the development, deployment and management of social media solutions and services. It provides the ability to create social media websites and services with complete social media network functionality' (*Techopedia*, 2021).

For instance, Facebook enables social networking and it is an example of social media as it is an online community but it is also a social media platform since it provides the complete working environment, the operating system and additional utilities. Unlike that, Twitter is a social networking service based on which users can engage in social networking by posting and interacting with messages known as 'tweets'. Twitter may even be described as a Short Message Service (SMS) on the Internet. In comparison to that, a website is a collection of dynamic or static pages which are joined together in a whole while offering users some controls (e.g. open pages, download content, etc.). To conclude, social media rely on Internet-based websites, mobile applications and social media platforms, which enable users to generate and share their own content and do social networking (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Despite the various definitions of the social media in the literature, they all boil down to the following basic characteristics: a) social media are internet-based, b) they provide a mechanism for users to connect, communicate and interact with each other and c) they enable archiving and sharing content (Correa et al., 2020; Gruzd et al., 2012; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Obviously, social media platforms all serve the purpose of social networking but still they may be divided into various categories in accordance with their purpose or the technology they use. For instance, Arora (2012) offers a typology based on five cultural dimensions: utilitarian-driven, aesthetic-driven, context-driven, play-driven and value-driven., McCay-Peet and Quan-Haase (2016) state that based on the technology they use, social media could be divided into six types of applications: social networking, bookmarking, social news, media sharing, microblogging and blogs and forums. In my opinion, there are four main categories of social media depending on the kind of social networking activities users primarily want to realize while using them and they are as follows:

1. Social networking platforms in general based on which users can communicate, establish relationships, build communities, talk about themselves, present their lives, find friends, unfriend friends, block friends, etc. Such platforms are Facebook, LinkedIn, ResearchGate, Academia and some other less popular or locally popular platforms that enable people to form affiliations and communities, which may be social, professional, academic, etc.
2. Microblogging platforms where people can express their opinion and share their thoughts. Most popular are Twitter and Tumblr. These platforms differ from social media platforms in the sense that they do not provide as many different options. In addition, microblogging as an activity involves posting comments, opinions and arguments with a limited number of characters.
3. Photo-sharing platforms with the general purpose of posting pictures. Most popular are Instagram, Snapchat and Pinterest. On these platforms, users may also elicit comments and opinions but they will be primarily related to the picture which has been posted. It may be argued that these platforms have evolved into self-promotion spaces preferred even for business purposes.
4. Video-sharing platforms enable users to share videos with a myriad of different content. Most popular are YouTube, TikTok and Vimeo. Their main purpose is the same as with photo-sharing platforms (self-promotion, business, education, etc.).

In addition, there are social media which allow bookmarking (Dribble, Pocket), collaborative authoring (Wikipedia, Google Docs), web conferencing (Skype, Google Meet, Zoom), scheduling and meeting (Doodle, Google Calendar), etc. Given the rapid changes happening on a daily basis, social media keep occurring, moving, changing and disappearing. One day a community is being formed, people start interacting with each other, but at one point the community slowly dissolves and users move to a new social media platform. That is exactly why the power of the big social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and TikTok must never be underestimated. The fact that they have enormous numbers of users, that they are being used constantly and that an unfathomable amount of information is stored on them, causes respect and awe.

More important than the technology behind the social media or how they may be categorized is the kind of relationships that users form in the realm of social media. These relationships are realized through a specific type of discourse which is created, perceived, exchanged and shared between and among users in the online space, thus creating discourse communities. In other words, 'social media provide a communicative medium through which people are rapidly and intensively creating new kinds of discourse communities' whereby these 'contexts have a number of affordances and features that encourage users to create new kinds of connections, information and social actions' (Kim & May, 2015, p. 3). It can be argued that online communities are 'groups of people with common interests who interact through the Internet and the Web' and that there are 'communities of transactions and communities of interests' (Vossen & Hagemann, 2010, p. 59). In other words, users create affiliations driven by their interests and potential gains. As a result, social media discourse can increase cohesion and group identification so that discourse communities transcend national, linguistic and cultural boundaries while creating strong social identities as well as transforming individual and group trajectories (Cornillie et al., 2012).

If social media there are 'digital environments in which interaction between the participants constitutes an important part of their activities' (Leppänen et al., 2014, p. 113), the type of interaction will determine the type of activity and vice versa. The participants' interaction is established by connecting first to people they have some kind of relationship with and then they move on to build new relationships with people they get to know in the online space based on that initial interaction. In that process, users present

themselves and build their own identities based on a kind of dialogic construction realized through updates and comments, i.e. posts (Vásquez, 2014). The fact that social media strip the users of attributes usually available to speakers in a face-to-face interaction means that users of the social media have to create a specific (mainly written) discourse based on which they present themselves and build their identity. Thus it may be argued that users 'portray themselves not through physical co-presence but through the use of a set of diverse but largely text-based and visual resources, including moving images such as animated GIFs and videos which involve audible content' (Tagg & Seargeant, 2016, p. 216).

The dialogic construction of the identity of each social media user also depends on the participants' social roles which are two-dimensional because offline roles will most probably define the participants' online roles and vice versa, online social roles may be enacted and extended offline. According to Golder and Donath (2004), social roles may be defined as a 'mixture of allowances and constraints, combined with the choices the individual makes given this mixture' (p. 213). This means that social roles emerge from people's responses to perceived expectations and social norms so that people's behaviour is 'not random, nor is it a free-for-all' (Blackledge et al., 2014, p. 486) nor do social categories rigidly predetermine how individuals will act. In such a context of utter importance are the people's perceptions of their ascribed roles as well as of the roles they orient towards while trying to understand and manage social situations (Williams, 2005) or perform their social identities. However, in complex modern societies, participants in the social media make more affiliations at the same time with various social categories via a certain type of discourse so they have to assume, negotiate and manage different social roles (Blommaert & Varis, 2013). What is more, social media users are not just targeting or responding to a pre-existing audience and their discourse, they are actually constructing it (Tagg & Seargeant, 2016). This means that while engaging in interaction (discourse), people construct an idea of their audience because they want to give a specific context to their utterances.

For instance, when somebody posts an opinion about something on Facebook, let us assume the person's name is Tom, he expects some kind of reaction. Some of the users on Facebook who belong to Tom's community of friends (conveniently called followers) start commenting Tom's post, i.e.

they post opinions in which they are supporting the argument, opposing it, adding their own opinions, or simply by liking or disliking the post which again reflects agreement or disagreement with the opinion Tom posted. As the dialogue below Tom's original post develops (primarily but not exclusively in the form of written discourse, sometimes emoticons and likes/dislikes are used), the audience and the context around the post are being constructed and shaped and at one point Tom will be a hero for those who support him. Next time when Tom posts a new opinion, that same audience will be expecting a certain kind of attitude thereby attributing to Tom certain qualities which means that in the minds of Tom's friends (followers) he will be the one who has strong opinions, or he will be the one everybody respects for his sharp mind and tongue, or he will simply be the one everybody respects. In one word, at that point Tom will have managed to build his own (preferred) audience who will always respond to his posts, giving him a sense of value and constructing a specific social role which Tom would never be able to create in an offline environment. It would take him far too much time to reach each of his followers in person, explain his opinion and react to the follower's response, again assert his opinion, move on to the next follower, state what other followers have said, etc. However, on Facebook Tom can negotiate a public, personal, social or professional role while he recreates, extends and transforms his identity in accordance with his motives and expectations. In the process, he builds a community who will support him and value his opinions.

To conclude, social media may have set off as an entertainment option. Now they are complex environments in which people create and build discourse communities, shape audiences, reconstruct and negotiate their identities, present themselves in different ways, evolve as individuals, gain self-confidence, promote themselves, assert their individuality, etc. Of course, there are many negative sides to the online space as some users may not experience the same support Tom has managed to build himself. In many cases, users who are not as lucky as Tom can end up with hateful followers who will make it their goal to destroy the user's self-confidence and contribute to the shaping of a miserable identity. This aspect of the social media will be elaborated in the section on hate speech (#HateSpeech). Nevertheless,

the fact remains that in the online space of the social media, i.e. in digital media discourse, everything is possible.

#WebsitesBlogsPodcastsAndVlogs

The most basic definition of a website (alternative spellings are web site, Web site and Website) is that it is a collection of web pages (*TechTerms*, 2021). These web pages are in fact files which are coded in HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) and linked to each other as well as to pages on other sites. HTML is the specific language used to create webpages, the building blocks of websites (e.g. the home page and other pages depending on the content presented). The most important building element of a website is the content based on text, but it can also include image media, such as photos or videos and other files. The text on a website is mainly based on hypertext (see section #Hypertext) but it can also be simple text.

Fact is that there are more than 1.3 billion websites worldwide (*Searchmetrics*, 2021). In addition, there are internal company intranets which can be accessed only by a limited number of people and there is the 'dark web', an alternative online world made for encrypted content which can be accessed only with certain browsers. Let it suffice to say that the dark web hosts illegal marketplaces for illegal products (e.g. guns, drugs and human beings) and that certain exchanges (e.g. stolen data) and transactions (e.g. contract killings) can be completed there. In addition, in certain cases, individuals (e.g. political dissidents) use the dark web to connect and share information because it provides the necessary guarantee of anonymity and cyber protection usually not possible on the regular WWW. Therefore, the actual number of websites is much larger than 1.3 billion with an estimated daily data quality of more than 4 billion GB. If this data were all paper documents and if we wanted to visualise this number, we could do that by imagining that 10 GB of paper documents would cover the length of a football field (Keheley, 2020). Given that a football field is 110 m long, 4 billion GB of paper documents equals 44 billion kilometres, or the length of 400 million football fields in a single day!

The World Wide Web comprises a variety of website types. At this point, the most common types will be explained but only from the point of view of the discourse they contain and not their technological characteristics as that would by far exceed the scope of this book.

To begin with, news websites are, in fact, online newspapers. A rather early version of a news site was *News Report* which appeared in 1974 and it

reported on the Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations or PLATO system, the first generalised computer-assisted instruction system. It started in 1960 and was supported by the ILLIAC I computer at the University of Illinois. Nowadays, many news outlets have both a print and an online version of their daily news, but many smaller and independent newspapers have opted for an online version only. The Internet is known to be limitless offering an almost unfathomable range of opportunities for news outlets in the online space which is why they have become indispensable. In addition, most journalists are now being taught to be able to write the news, to shoot video, take a picture, all that to be the first who will publish some news.

The news may also be generated from a big news agency, or press agency, or news service (e.g. *Reuters, Associated Press, TASS*, etc.). This is an 'organization that gathers, writes, and distributes news from around a nation or the world to newspapers, periodicals, radio and television broadcasters, government agencies, and other users' (*Britannica*, n.d.). A news agency supplies news to its subscribers (news outlets) thereby financing its work based on subscriptions. News outlets all over the world rely on the services of news agencies. Despite the fact that major news outlets might have extensive news-gathering resources of their own, they still refer to news agencies for the bulk of daily news. Finally, one of the major advantages of news websites is that they do not depend on funding as do print newspapers. News sites can practically be operated on a voluntary basis, maintained even by one person only. Newsworthy events are discovered, put in writing and published almost instantly. These news can be prepared by professional journalists, but also by amateurs. Obviously, the more professional the journalist, the more trustworthy the news should be. However, very often, small independent news sites show the tendency of publishing more objective and trustworthy content than big shot news outlets (more details will follow in Chapter Five).

The next form of websites are blogs. They are easy to create and can be used for different purposes. In general, blogs are created by a single user who writes about issues from their subjective point of view. Research has shown that blogs have a huge potential for the democratization of information as it can be both a relevant medium for the production and dissemination of content as well as the participation and expression of opinion and criticism from readers (Nardi et al., 2004a). The discourse presented in a

blog is mostly personal, written in the first person singular and can include topics ranging from recipes, fashion advice and parenting to scientific, financial and political topics. The most common relationships established through blogs is One-to-All (the author addresses their readers through the content in the blog) and All-to-One (the readers address the author through the content in their comments). An additional, more complex relationship can be built through the All-to-All relationship where the author of a blog connects to other blogs by adding a list of references to other blogs referred to as a Blogroll. In general, these other blogs contain similar content as well as related issues creating thus a network of discourse based on common topics and shared opinions (Efimova & Moor, 2005).

A smaller version of blogs are so-called microblogs which are short, real-time messages used for the purpose of information exchange (Grace et al., 2010). The discourse presented in microblogs is also meant to present the author's activities, opinions, status and accomplishments but in a more abbreviated form – micro form. Again, microblogs are personal, written in the first person singular, the content is diverse and the relationships established are the same as in blogs. However, microblogs provide a distributed organization of messages unlike blogs which are more centralized. In other words, microblog messages are distributed to all the users subscribed to the specific channel that the microblog belongs to whereas blogs are distributed only to followers subscribed to that specific blog. In addition, comments on a microblog are published on a common board visible to all while comments on a blog are confined to the circle of subscribers only. Therefore, the discourse presented in microblogs reaches a much broader audience.

A relatively new form of online audio programme that listeners can tune in are podcasts as well as shortcasts, a short version of a podcast episode crafted around its key ideas. A podcast (or shortcast) is, in fact, an audio (or even video file) that can be downloaded to a portable media player and played back at a later point (McClung & Johnson, 2010). Podcasts have the advantage over live radio programmes that listeners do not have to listen to the content at a scheduled point in time. In addition, users can subscribe to feeds so that new podcasts are automatically downloaded to their devices. The discourse presented with podcasts is specific as it is created for a certain purpose and directed at a certain audience. Podcasts may serve a wide range of purposes, from commercial presentations, to scientific talks and entertaining stories while different audiences follow podcasts with the

expectation to get information or to be entertained. Sometimes guests are invited to a podcast thereby resembling radio shows. Traditionally, podcasts rely on one-to-one engagement, i.e. a listener listens to the podcast created by the podcaster. However, the listener may then share their experience and comment on the podcast, thus deliver word-of-mouth marketing adding to the growth of the podcast. Last but not least, artificial intelligence is now adding new features to podcasts enabling users to have a dialogue with an artificial assistant, ask questions about something they have heard in the podcast, or even express their opinion directly addressed at the podcast creator who can engage with their audiences by receiving their feedback. In one word, podcasts are now interactive offering a multi-dimensional creation and exchange of discourse.

Similar to both blogs and microblogs are vlogs which are in fact a blended version of videos and blogs, evident both in the name and the content. Like blogs, vlogs are a user-generated form of online communication that serve as media for social commentary, alternative newscasts, creative outlets or personal online diaries (Nardi et al., 2004b). The type of communication established is the same as with blogs, microblogs and podcasts. However, instead of using written discourse to address their subscribers (as in blogs and microblogs), or just audio (as in podcasts), authors of vlogs use video image and spoken discourse to express their opinions, discuss issues and share their experiences. Authors basically make video recordings of themselves talking. Many vloggers use additional content, such as presentations, images and videos, but the basic means of communication is their speech while watched doing it. Most vloggers rely on YouTube (Trier, 2007). While it may be argued that vloggers are simply lazy to sit down and express their opinions in writing, vlogs are in fact more effective as the visual mode of communication is contributing to a more intimate and more personalized experience of the author's presentation of their opinion, thoughts and experiences (Bruce, 1996). Given that more and more Internet users like the idea of gaining knowledge through viewing videos, the reach of vlogs by far exceeds the reach of both blogs and microblogs.

A type of website that needs to be mentioned although not containing much discourse to analyse are online shops. The first thought related to online shops is that they are designed for online shopping and that thought is completely correct. However, online shops represent a condensed type of digital discourse as they are used only with a commercial and financial

purpose. Nevertheless, such discourse, though abbreviated and simple, offers insight into how certain mechanisms of discourse are being employed as instruments that facilitate the purchase of products and services. That is why the story about online shops is much more complex as it entails a chain of activities prior, during and after the sales which requires precise knowledge of the customers preferences. This means that the owner of the online shop must know how to address their potential shoppers and develop specific marketing strategies which, among other things, have to rely on a specific adaptation of the content referring to the product or service through text, image and video (Strauss et al., 2009). Therefore, the discourse presented in an online shop has to serve the purpose of following the 'consumer decision journey' (Gefen & Straub, 2000), i.e. keep the customer's attention on the web presence, build up a strong customer relationship and offer services that attract the customer to visit the website frequently and purchase products and services.

Finally, two types of websites that should be mentioned within this section are news websites and social networks. Since both are presented in separate sections in this book (#TheNews and #SocialMedia), they will not be elaborated further in this section.

#Screenplays

The most general definition of a screenplay or script is that it is the written text of a play, film or broadcast (in its broadest sense meaning any TV/radio/Internet programme or transmission) and they are often seen as a blueprint or a technical document (Baker et al., 2015; Batty, 2016). A more specific definition would be that it is the written product created by screenwriters needed for the production of a film, TV/radio/Internet programme, commercial or a video game which includes the dialogue of all characters, their movements, place setting descriptions and acting style indications. In addition, a screenplay often includes filmmaking instructions for camera operators and other members of the technical staff to follow.

Most screenplays are original creations, but some are adaptations of novels, plays, short stories or similar pieces of writing. Screenplays for films are often referred to as script while a TV screenplay is often termed a 'teleplay'. Scripts or screenplays are also written for animated shows, documentaries and commercials, nowadays even for animentaries, or animated documentaries (Plomp & Forceville, 2021). In addition, popular types of television production today are reality shows and docusoaps which, despite their primary aim to depict reality, also have a basic screenplay to follow. A final note to make here is that screenplays are subject to collaboration practices and multi-authorship conditions because the screenwriter is not the only one contributing to a screenplay (Conor, 2014). Often a second or third author is included as well as script editors, script consultants, producers, directors and financiers. Basically everybody participating in the production of a film, series, show, documentary or similar 'moving images' product may participate in the final screenplay, even after it has been written (Baker et al., 2015).

A common characteristic of films and TV series as well as documentaries and reality shows is that they are popular culture products appealing to large global audiences. Given that they construct or reflect realities (social, political, cultural, etc.) thereby (re)producing, (re)creating or (re)presenting societal beliefs, values, norms or even ideologies while engaging their audiences (as viewers, fans, critics, etc.) by means of language, screenplays may be considered a type of discourse. In addition to language, screenplays integrate multiple meaning-making resources (visual, aural, gestural,

etc.) which means that they are in fact a type of multimodal discourse. Although referring primarily to the language in the screenplays of films and TV shows, the term 'telecinematic discourse' that Piazza et al. (2011, p. 1) have coined may be used to refer to discourse in screenplays in general.

The debate whether storytelling principles in screenplays written for TV and film are the same is still open (Bednarek, 2015). There are, in fact, quite obvious reasons for this opposition to be grounded. The first and most important difference is that viewers do not spend equal amounts of time viewing a film and a TV series. A film, if not produced in sequels (e.g. *Matrix*, *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter*, *Avengers*, *Indiana Jones*, etc.), is a one-time thing. It takes the viewers to a specific place and time, allows them to meet a certain number of characters and participate in their lives for at least an hour and a half. Sometimes a film may span longer periods during which the narrative both tells a story and follows the development or transformation of a character. Unlike that, a TV series can go on for decades (e.g. *Doctor Who*, *All My Children, Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, etc.) or last for several episodes only, so-called mini-series (e.g. *Shogun*, *The Thorn Birds*, *North and South*, *The Queen's Gambit*, *Chernobyl*, *Big Little Lies*, etc.), and as such it engages viewers much longer in a narrative that, depending on the genre, may or may not offer character development or transformation. It might even be argued that TV series are meant to present characters who are stable so that the audience can get attached to them which will ensure continuous engagement. With the development of the Internet, the characteristic that series are written exclusively for television is no longer valid as nowadays streaming services (Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, HBO Max, etc.) produce their original high-quality content, including films and series which are being watched online.

An outstanding characteristic of screenplays is that they engage their audiences as soon as a film, series, show or documentary reaches the screen whereby, at the same time, this engagement exceeds the limits of the screen. In other words, the screenplay can involve audiences through different media after it has been presented to them in the form of a film, series or similar product (Creeber, 2004; Richardson, 2010). Fan communities, threads, blogs, Facebook groups, comment sections, review columns, etc. are all media which viewers can use to engage in the screenplay in an indirect way by passing comments, reviewing the narrative and sharing their opinions. The perks of the modern age even provide different apps (TV Time, TV Show &

Movie Tracker, Moviebase: Manage Movies & TV Shows, etc.) that lovers of films and series can use to discover, find and track their favourite films and TV shows as well as connect with like-minded people to share their thoughts and impressions regarding the content they have been viewing.

There is no doubt that screenplays fall into the category of multimodal discourse given that they rely on different sign systems, such as language, visual communication, gesture, proxemics, etc. (Bednarek, 2015) and as such they can be the subject matter of discourse analysis. Various topics related to screenplays can be explored and these topics will exceed the field of screenplay theory which reflects the development and production of films but has failed to take into consideration the effects a screenplay may have after the film or series have been made. Given that a screenplay is generated through various discourses, including the pre- and post-production stages as well as its engagement with the audiences after they have watched the film, series, documentary, docusoap, etc., it seems more than necessary to study all those discourses. After all, they complement the discourse presented in the screenplay and contribute to its meaning.

#VideoGames

Until recently, video games have been the subject matter of game studies or ludology (Engenfeldt-Nielsen et al., 2012; Juul, 2005) with research focusing mainly on types of games and the role of game players as well as the relationship between video games and society, culture and technology. Apart from researchers in the field of ludology, video games have been addressed by authors who addressed literary hypertext and are now shifting their research interest to gaming (Aarseth, 2004; Bogost, 2006). However, a few years ago video games entered the domain of other disciplines among which discourse analysis (Gee, 2015a, 2015b) and multimodality (Bateman et al., 2017; Stamenković, 2022; Stamenković & Jaćević, 2020; Stamenković & Wildfeuer, 2021; Wildfeuer & Stamenković, 2022) are the most potential ones in terms of providing relevant tools to study video games outside the field of game studies.

Within both discourse analysis and multimodality, video games are seen as semiotic systems (Gee, 2015b) and as such they incorporate various levels of analysis related to language, visual and aural representation as well as the relationship between the video games and the players, including the effect of the players' knowledge, beliefs and attitudes on video games and vice versa. While agreeing that video games consist of semiotic elements, Stamenković and Wildfeuer (2021) 'deliberately refrain from defining and analysing these elements as semiotic modes' because they believe that 'the identification of semiotic modes in general, and in video games specifically, will need further empirical examination on the basis of existing theoretical foundations and systematic definitions' (p. 259–260). Thus, at the very beginning of the exploration of video games as a type of digital media discourse, it is obvious that there are various aspects to understand and reconcile.

The understanding of video games being more than just entertainment has largely been influenced by the fact that video games are now seen as polymorphic, multidimensional and technocultural (Belyaev & Belyaeva, 2019), thus allowing the legitimization of video games as objects of scientific research. In the early 21st century, the Center for Computer Games Research (IT-University of Copenhagen, Denmark), the Digital Games Research Center (North Carolina State University, USA), and the Digital Games Research

Association (DIGRA) appeared. At the same time, *Games Studies* came out as the first specialised and most authoritative scientific journal dedicated to a multidisciplinary study of video games. The term 'game studies' was adopted to refer to research in the humanities which would specialise in the integrative study of video games. On the one hand, game studies marked the scientific institutionalisation of video games; on the other hand, it acknowledged the necessity to work out a special scientific meta-language for their explication (Vetushinsky 2015). Within this new framework, video games gained scientific recognition thereby becoming the subject matter of analysis in a broad cultural context.

Regarding the discipline of discourse analysis, Gee (2015b), a passionate gamer and discourse analyst, stated about seven years ago that the field of discourse analysis applied to video games did not yet exist. And, as he pertained, the problem was not whether we can analyse video games because we can analyse any semiotic system. The problem, in his opinion was that scholars in general insisted on the fact that discourse analysis starts with syntax and semantics, i.e. sentences and utterances put together in a text whereby constituting situated meanings within a certain context. Obviously, situated meanings depend on the shared cultural knowledge of the participants in discourse (speaker, writer, listener, reader, etc.). In one word, discourse analysis needs a text to start from and most video games are not seen as having much text. Therefore, when asking whether discourse analysis can be applied to video games, we have to ask ourselves whether video games have syntax, semantics, context, situated meanings as well as associated social and cultural knowledge (Gee, 2015b). Moreover, if we acknowledge that video games are like language, because they are, we may say that they are open to discourse analysis.

So, the question is how do we prove that video games are a type of digital media discourse worthy of study within the discipline of discourse analysis. An important fact to start from is that for human beings the world has both a syntax and semantics because our vision makes it that way (Marr, 2010). A rather simplified way of explaining will aid the understanding of how our vision enables the understanding of syntax and semantics in the world. Namely, we see images in 2D, the brain processes them into 3D and constructs spaces, objects and actions that relate to those images. That is the syntax of the world that we see. In the second step we assign names and concepts to what we see based on context, our cultural knowledge and the

social conventions we have accepted thereby creating the semantics for the syntax. If we start from the fact that video games consist of a flow of visual images within a certain context, we cannot but admit that they share the syntax and semantics of the human visual world. What is more, gamers relate both the syntax and the semantics of the visual world that they see to specific actions that they need to take, accomplish tasks within the game, solve problems as they play and eventually win the game (Gee, 2015b).

Nevertheless, it is not enough to say that video games have a syntax and semantics to actually create grounds for discourse analysis to study video games. What is needed for discourse analysis is language, that is words, phrases and relationships between them. If we acknowledge that games are 'multimodal forms of digital human interaction within a system with syntax and semantics and open to discourse analysis in a linguistic sense' (Gee, 2015b, p. 21), we can then go a step further and look for conversations and affordances, two additional elements to approach video games from the point of view of discourse analysis. The interaction in a video game mentioned by Gee in the words above is established between and among gamers but also between the gamers and the game itself.

For example, Wildfeuer & Stamenković (2022) provide an initial model of 'multimodal discourse pragmatics that accounts for the specifics of information communicated in and through video games' whereby they focus on 'a specific text type within these games, i.e., tutorials' (Wildfeuer and Stamenković, 2022, p. 29). Their primary aim is 'to analyse the initial stage of communication between a video game and the players and to show how the latter are taught to play the game' and to achieve that, they 'provide a framework for the analysis of both meaning-making units as well as the inferential steps needed to understand and interpret these units' (p. 29). As Gee (2015b) points out, the language needed for the discourse analysis to happen is practically being built as the game evolves creating conversations needed for discourse analysis. Finally, if we acknowledge that video games are good for something (if we add a value to the syntax, the semantics and the language existing in video games), we actually add affordances.

The fact that there are far too many open questions yet to understand is the reason why Gee (2015b) himself is only suggesting the possibility of incorporating video games into discourse analysis. Nevertheless, he does suggest that given that the necessary constituent elements needed for discourse analysis do exist in video games (syntax, semantics, language,

context, conversations, affordances) and if the pursuit to study these elements 'turns out to be meaningful, then discourse analysis could be generalized quite far, indeed' (p. 26). As it turns out, quite successful attempts have been made and documented so far (Stamenković et al., 2016).

The second approach that has begun to include video games in its research is multimodality and it does have serious potentials to actually provide the necessary tools to raise the study of video games to a new level of scientific research.

We can start from the assumption that video games are a multimodal artifact and as such they consist of multiple modes, of which the linguistic, the visual and the oral ones are most prominent. Together they convey the narrative, gameplay and ludonarrative meanings (Toh, 2019). In the context of this book, given that I established earlier that digital media discourse is multimodal (see #MultimodalDiscourse), the main focus regarding video games is on video game screens which Stamenković and Jaćević (2019) treat as multimodal documents. They analyse screens in video games relying on the multimodal document approach proposed by Bateman et al. (Bateman et al., 2002; Bateman, 2008, 2013, 2014) based on which document-like screens are seen as multi-layered semiotic artefacts. In addition, Stamenković and Jaćević (2019) as well as Stamenković and Wildfeuer (2021) lean on Bateman et al. (2017) proposing that the multimodal approach to video games should focus on canvases that depart from the 'normal view' (Bateman et al., 2017 as cited in Stamenković & Jaćević, 2018, p. 282). According to Bateman et al. (2017), such canvases employ written language, 3D illustrations, diagrams, etc.

Stamenković and Jaćević (2019) further suggest that screens in video games resemble real-world documents in formal and functional terms. They 'combine text, images, and other types of graphics in a manner typical of multimodal documents' but at the same time, when occurring in a game-world, they can have 'functions similar to those of real-world documents' (p. 283). In the context of the subject matter of this book, the screens in video games can be seen as digital media discourse which can inform, ask for information, or change the game reality within the digital realm so that in that respect they are like real-world-documents used in the digital media, i.e. digital discourse occurring in specific real-life situations, such as diplomatic negotiations or business transactions.

In Stamenković and Wildfeuer (2021) we can find a more elaborate explanation of canvases being, in fact, a way of presenting different communicative situations. 'A canvas is a site of semiotic activity, i.e. the place where meaning is constructed' which can be achieved 'through the interaction of spatially and temporally arranged units on the screen, through the interaction of these units with a player, or in the oral interaction of a player with another player' (p. 264). This means that both the screen and the interaction structures can be considered canvases while the semiotic elements occurring on them or initiating the situations can be examined as parts of those canvases. Therefore, by defining or choosing different canvases and subcanvases occurring in a game, various communicative situations, one of them being discourse, can be approached from various perspectives.

Much more research will be needed to explore video games from the point of view of either discourse analysis or multimodality, or the two combined which would then be from the point of view of multimodal discourse analysis or multimodal video game analysis. Any of these perspectives presupposes acknowledging the semiotic nature of video games, their multidimensional characteristics and their multimodality in general, while the discourse occurring in them will have to be treated as multimodal. The reason why is simply that the discourse identified in video games comprises more than one layer, or mode, or canvas on which we 'can inscribe material regularities' which we can then interpret 'regardless of whether [they are] actual, virtual (digital), simply produced, performed physically in time, or the result of a complex technological process' (Bateman et al., 2017, p. 87). Canvas is where the communicative situation is taking place which need not be a physical space only but can involve an area or region where semiotic activity is being displayed. Any analysis departing from that point of view will be able to provide a proper approach to the discourse in video games and all its specific trades and characteristics.

#MemesAnd/OrGifs

The main difference between memes and GIFs or simply gifs (Graphical Interchange Format pronounced /gif/) is that memes are static while gifs are moving. In other words, a meme is an image and a gif is a series of images which have been put together to loop continuously without requiring anyone to press play.

Oddly enough, the term meme (for more details s. Shifman, 2013 and 2014) was introduced by a biologist – Richard Dawkins – who in 1976 defined memes as small cultural units of transmission (Dawkins, 1976). The analogy to genes was on purpose and it was reflected not only in the sound of the term – meme rhymes with gene. More importantly, Dawkins recognized that memes are like replicators and they undergo variation, competition, selection and retention in the same way genes do. Memes are competing for the attention of the host but only those memes that are able to fit into their sociocultural environment will survive. The analogy to genes goes even further as Dawkins realized that co-adaptive memes replicate together thereby strengthening each other.

In comparison to that, a gif is considered an image format which was invented by Steve Wilhite in 1987. His intention was to find a way to animate images in the smallest file size so that we may actually say that we can take an animated gif, stick some topical words on it and create an animated meme. Or, vice versa, we can put together several images or memes, let them repeat in a loop and we will get a gif. Since it may be useless to refer to memes and gifs as separate occurrences, I will be using the term meme in this section because in the context of digital media discourse, memes and gifs are more or less the same. They both contain little or no text and they are both multimodal.

Memes are used to propagate content items, such as jokes, rumours, videos or websites from one person to others via the Internet (Shifman, 2013). As such, a meme can either spread in its original form or as user-created derivatives. This happens because the dissemination of memes is 'based on intentional agents with decision-making power' (Shifman, 2014, p. 12). In other words, memes are disseminated by members of society who are active participants in the society and who use memes to perform certain

social practices whereby altering the meaning of memes substantially during memetic diffusion.

For a long time memes were disputed in academia but are gaining importance as research subjects in more recent scholarly work (e.g. Grundlingh, 2018; Wiggins & Bowers, 2015; Yus, 2019). It is now recognized that the importance of memes cannot be neglected as they reflect how a particular idea is 'presented as a written text, image, language "move" or some other unit of cultural "stuff"' (Shifman, 2014, p. 13). It is this link to cultural 'stuff' that makes memes an important and necessary constituent of research in the domain of digital media discourse given that mechanisms of society and culture are more than ever enacted in the digital realm.

At first glance memes may rightfully be accused of being trivial and mundane, but they do reflect deeply rooted social and cultural structures. Various important ideas, norms and values may be constructed and disseminated with memes. The fact that a light and humorous presentation may be used for serious issues is what makes memes an important discursive vehicle. Topics of widespread concern, be it social, cultural, political, religious, etc. may be communicated with memes. For instance, the current hype about body image has generated numerous memes communicating that women should not worry about their appearance. Moreover, they should never succumb to the trend of staying young forever and subduing their body to endless operations and beauty procedures. The memes remind every young girl or mature woman to love themselves the way they are.

On a less global note, and probably not related to such a serious issue as body image, the famous 'Success Kid meme' was used and reused to transmit messages of taking pride in one's own achievement. The cuteness of the kid striking the specific pose signifying how proud he is with his own achievement triggered many memes. Sometimes the meme was used to transmit even idiotic quips. Nevertheless, this macro has been one of the most-used of its kind but always for a good cause – to pass optimism and to remind us of the little things that make life worth living. In other words, no matter how small or insignificant it might seem, every achievement in life counts.

For some time, some memes were directed at reminding people of how important it was to stick to honourable and noble things, to do simple yet valuable things in life. The memes created for this message invited

people to be nice and to focus on good deeds rather than wasting their time on superficial things (Figure 3).

Figure 3: The Be like Bill meme. Source: https://www.liveabout.com/internet-memes-that-have-won-our-hearts-3573553?utm_source=pinterest

The meme Be like Bill in Figure 3 was popular as it was easily generated and the message was always meant to be a simple piece of advice about how important it is to pursue simple things in life[1].

As a type of digital media discourse, memes deserve a place in scholarly research. Though they may be misunderstood to be nothing more than entertaining images, very powerful and important social, political, cultural, religious, pedagogical and many other messages can be transmitted easily and quickly to broad audiences. Memes can help the understanding of a wide range of behaviours and social practices mainly expressed in the online digital world. From political protests to odd dance movements, such as the Korean Gangnam style dance. What is more, memes reflect 'cultural and social collectives as well as the individual voices constituting them' and they play 'a key role in contemporary formulations of political participation and cultural globalization' (Shifman, 2014, p. 171–172). And these are the reasons why memes should be included in explorations of digital media discourse.

[1] More Be like Bill memes at: https://www.pinterest.com/brithefiddleplayer/be-like-bill/

#CommentSections

The role of comment sections on various websites has recently become a recurring focus of scholarly research in the field of media discourse analysis, especially when it comes to news websites (Barnes, 2018; Bruce, 2018; Đorđević, 2020b; KhosraviNik & Zia, 2014; Tenenboim & Cohen, 2015; Toepfl & Piwoni, 2015; Weizman & Dori-Hacohen, 2017; Yeo et al., 2019). Initially introduced to encourage public discussion and monitor reader engagement, comment sections often become a platform of derogatory and pejorative language rather than serving the purpose of civil debate. Such discourse necessitates closer research.

Readers' comments reflect a reaction to news content, thus creating a specific interface between a news article and its readership (Weizman & Dori-Hacohen, 2017). This interface is dominated by a dimension that relates discourse structures to social structures and shows the immediate effect of this relationship (Bruce, 2018; Toepfl & Piwoni, 2015). Thus readers' comments demonstrate how the information presented to them in the news affects their attitudes, ideologies and language use. Critical Discourse Studies relates the structural properties of text or talk to social structures, enables both the analysis of the discourse structure of a comment and its context and provides the grounds for an explicit viewpoint (van Dijk, 2018).

Most online news outlets have comment sections on their websites and readers use the possibility to post their comments in large numbers. However, many comment sections might not reflect the comments of actual readers, but of so-called bots and trolls. Internet slang defines a troll as a person who posts inflammatory, insincere, digressive, or off-topic messages in an online community. Their main intention is to provoke readers into displaying emotional responses, or manipulate others' perception. The origin of the noun bot is robot and it refers to a software application that runs automated tasks over the Internet. However, quite common nowadays are bots who are actual people who create fake accounts and act as social bots. They develop convincing internet personas who are well capable of influencing real people. In Serbia, for instance, a significant number of bots are employed by the government to comment news on a daily basis. According to unofficial resources (Kulačanin, 2018) the Serbian Progressive Party employs more than 3000 people who are part of the so-called Internet team.

Their job description includes commenting news on various websites, posting opinions on social networks, sharing news and posts, tweeting and retweeting tweets, reacting to comments and posts by clicking the relevant option provided by a news website comment section or by clicking the appropriate emoji below a post on social networks. Nevertheless, even bots and trolls generate discourse worthy of analysis.

Unfortunately, very often, the language used in comments ranges from polite and civilized to spiteful and offensive so that hate speech is a common occurrence on news websites. Thus, comment sections reflect personal frustration and aggression rather than public opinion and civil discussion. Employing hate speech seems to be a trend prevailing in public discourse, comment sections included (more details will be provided in the next section #HateSpeech). Comments with insulting, intimidating and harassing expressions indicating violence, hatred or discrimination are quite frequent. Readers openly show disrespect of other readers' opinions, argue about facts, accuse each other of lying and misrepresenting ideas, pass insults and use sarcasm with the aim to diminish opinions. In addition, the threat that news readers will cease to express their opinions in public is now more imminent than ever. One reason is that government officials are openly dismissive of public opinion if it opposes their own and the other is that the trend of muting personal opinions in comment sections as a forum of personal expression is growing on a daily basis. Nevertheless, comment sections are a corpus more than worthy of exploring as it is definitely a type of digital media discourse presenting the actual voices of many members of society at large.

#HateSpeech

Discourse in the digital media can create alliances within which people share beliefs, values and interests, but it can also contribute to forming opposing groups established by competitors, even enemies who are unable to communicate (see #InteractivityAndGroupForming). Alternatively, if they are able to communicate, they do so by relying on hate speech with the intention to offend each other and undermine everybody who does not share the same views (Đorđević, 2020b). Hate speech may be seen as a specific type of discourse especially prominent in the participatory online space which is often responsible for severe alienation.

A significant number of authors have put hate speech in the centre of their attention (Brown, 2018; Cammaerts, 2009; Đorđević, 2020b; KhosraviNik & Esposito, 2018; Lillian, 2007; Paasch-Colberg et al. 2021; Vollhardt et al., 2006). In addition, the incivility in expressions of personal opinions following news on Facebook profiles of various news organizations is a quite common research subject (Anderson et al., 2014; Ceron, 2015; Chaudhry & Gruzd, 2019; Muddiman & Stroud, 2017; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). These investigations show that the formerly praised function of Facebook serving as a platform of public discourse is now converting this popular network into a space where users can openly express hostility, contempt and disgust (Humprecht et al., 2020) enforcing the power of hate speech as a tool of harassment.

In the context of the European Union, various steps have been taken to control the appearance of hate speech. For instance, the Council of Europe Recommendation No R (97) 20 provides guidance as to defining hate speech stipulating that it is:

> '… covering all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, antisemitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin' (Weber, 2009).

This Recommendation was adopted almost 20 years ago and certain protected values were not included in it so that the General Policy

Recommendation No 15: Combating Hate speech from March 2016 has been added (Zubčević et al., 2017). The definition now includes

> 'the use of one or more particular forms of expression' and it comprises a long list of potentially harming hate speech, such as denigration, hatred, vilification, harassment, insult, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, threat, etc. which are based on a non-exhaustive list of personal characteristics or status that includes "race", colour, language, religion or belief, nationality or national or ethnic origin, as well as descent, age, disability, sex, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation' (p.11).

However, regulations regarding hate speech also implicate that laws on hate speech in national contexts are subject to objections (Langton, 2016). Restrictive laws on hate speech undermine the concept of freedom of expression, a right guaranteed in all democratic countries, the European Union included. Further, such laws do not respect the autonomy of the individual, they prevent the discovery of truth and knowledge as well as participation in shaping free thinking. Therefore, European Union legislation has been established to clearly define hate speech as opposed to the violation of freedom of speech. The main criteria that the European Court of Human Rights relies on when deciding whether a certain form of expression shows either one or the other are 'the purpose pursued by the applicant as well as the content of the expression and the context in which [hate speech] was disseminated' (Weber, 2009, p. 33). Additional conventions and declarations have been stipulated by the European Union to support lawful and just handling of hate speech without the risk of violating freedom of speech (Zubčević et al., 2017).

The implications of regulations regarding hate speech need more research because it depends on far too many different factors that need to be explored, determined and explained. An obvious problem is that hate speech is a product of a specific historical and cultural context and as such the content and meanings are related to that context. Therefore, what is hate speech in one context may not be considered hate speech in another one (Parekh, 2012) which is why legislators, linguists, social actors, political actors and other participants in society, politics and culture need to explore the concept of hate speech from various points of views to determine specific

circumstances, occurrences, forms and expressions with respect to a specific context and time.

A term that has recently been introduced and is a direct consequence of what KhosraviNik and Esposito (2017) identify as one of 'the most significant and complex drawbacks of the proliferation of user generated content, and the so-called *democratization* of access to symbolic resources' (p. 47) is online hate or cyberhate. The phenomenon is defined as a digital act of 'violence, hostility, and intimidation, directed towards people because of their identity or "perceived" difference' (Chakraborti et al., 2014, cited in KhosraviNik & Esposito, 2017, p. 47) and it is used to express hateful opinions, messages and attitudes about race, gender, politics, etc. Quite conveniently, participatory media allow for hateful speech otherwise not allowed or sanctioned in face-to-face communication. The perceived anonymity of the online space is boosting cyberhate to the extent that every boundary is lost. What is more, the seclusion of the digital media provides users with the perfect vessel not only to spread hateful discourse but to multiply it by reaching like-minded people who add both quantity and quality to the already hateful interaction. The consequences are often detrimental.

In a systematic review of 67 studies on online hate speech (or cyberhate) published between 2015 and 2019, Castano-Pulgarín et al. (2021) defined online hate speech as

> 'the use of violent aggressive or offensive language, focused on a specific group of people who share a common property, which can be religion, race, gender or sex or political affiliation through the use of Internet and Social Networks, based on a power imbalance, which can be carried out repeatedly, systematically and uncontrollably, through digital media and often motivated by ideologies' (p. 1).

The analysis of the selected studies yielded four main types of online hate speech: 1) online religious hate speech, 2) online racism, 3) political online hate and 4) gendered online hate which, according to the authors' findings, is mainly based on victim shaming (2021, pp. 2–3). In addition, victim blaming has become a social phenomenon rooted deeply in modern society, especially when it comes to so-called acquaintance rape which usually ends with raped women being accused of their own rape (Raphael, 2013).

As stated, hate speech is assumed to reflect abusive and harassing expressions of violence or discrimination. However, hate speech also has an

explicit reference to the emotion of hate (Brown, 2017a) which adds ambiguity to the definition of hate speech. For instance, in online user comments hate speech turns into a tool of harassment with the main goal to literary destroy the person who is the object of hate speech. In such case, the pure emotion of hate is driving the abuser. That is why the definition of hate speech varies and it depends on the particular aspect of hate speech in certain types of discourse. Sellars (2016) suggested that the definition of hate speech depends primarily on three aspects: 1) the intentions behind hate speech, i.e. regarding the abuser (the one who expresses hate speech), 2) the perception and possible damage of hate speech, i.e. starting from the abused (the target of hate speech) and 3) the content characteristics, i.e. the actual words and expressions used to communicate hate speech (s. Paasch-Colberg et al., 2021 for a more elaborate review of definitions of hate speech).

Being a discursive practice occurring quite frequently in participatory online media, hate speech (or cyberhate) may be analysed based on the reactions and debates among readers and users in the interactive digital media initiated by a piece of news, social network post or similar content published online. Since the second part of this book will be devoted to the various forms of analysis of digital media discourse, some suggestions regarding the analysis of hate speech in it will be provided as well.

#TheStudyOfLanguageInDigitalMediaDiscourse

Though the last section in this part may not be related to digital media discourse types *per se*, it is necessary to cover the issue of the study of language in digital media discourse before moving on to Part II and the approaches to digital media discourse analysis. Therefore, I regard this section as a transition to the second part of the book. After all, the question of language is the one enabling the expression of discourse as well as the analysis of such discourse in the first place.

A prominent problem about digital media discourse research, be it in the domain of linguistics, media studies or any other discipline is the apparent dominance of the English language, evident in the fact that English is 'both the medium of publication' and 'the subject of analysis' (Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011). A list of even the most relevant investigations of language in the context of digital media discourse would by far exceed the scope of this book which is why it should suffice to say that there are really a lot but surprisingly not many quite recent ones (e.g. Androutsopoulos, 2010; Dejica et al., 2016; Bucholtz & Hall, 2008; Georgakopoulou, 2006; Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011). However, as stated above, most of the studies are in English and about English. In the attempt to contribute to the field of digital media discourse by adding scholarly research published in languages other than English, Thurlow and Mroczek (2011) offered a collection that included research in Irish, Hebrew, Chinese, Finnish, Japanese, German, Greek, Arabic and French which I strongly recommend as an excellent resource.

Given the fact that I as the author of this book live and work in Serbia, I think I should make at least a short reference to that context. Digital media discourse research in Serbia has been a recurring subject especially in the last decade. This new trend has been induced by the tendency of the Serbian government to further digital literacy and to advance the field of ICT as well as its broad application and implementation in general. Probably one of the most important resources within the field of the digital media to be singled out is the series of conference proceedings *Bridges of Media Education*, published by the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad since 2010 under the title *Digital media technologies and socio-educational changes.* Quite a substantial number of authors from various disciplines have engaged in exploring the domain of digital media as well as the discourse and language occurring in

them whereby the Serbian language has been either their medium of publication or the subject of analysis. Apart from that, Serbian authors have analysed the English language in media discourse as well. Given that neither this book nor this section can possibly give enough credit to any of these authors, I will name a few while apologizing to all those I have left out: Andevski & Vučković (2012), Blagojević (2012), Ćirić (2010), Janjić (2015), Jovanović & Blagojević (2015), Kleut (2020), Martinoli (2018), Mesaroš-Živkov (2019), Milutinović (2016), Mišić Ilić (2020); Nešić (2016), Pejović-Milovančević (2019), Radojković (2017), Silaški & Đurović (2018), Spariosu (2012), Stamenković, Jaćević & Wildfeuer (2017), Starčević (2016), Stepanov, 2016; Tasić & Stamenković (2015); Todorović (2017), Valić Nedeljković (2011), Vidaković & Vidaković (2019), Vujaklija (2017), etc.

In a more global context, any study of language, the language of digital media discourse included, sheds light on social and cultural processes (Georgakopoulou, 2006). In the context of digital media discourse, the study of language is focused on the actual use of language in the digital media, i.e. the discourse as a reflection of the communicative intentions, beliefs and attitudes of the language users. Therefore, any type of linguistically oriented analysis of digital media discourse should pursue the same objectives as does discourse analysis in general which Thurlow and Mroczek (2011) define as 'a shared commitment to the following: the social function of language, the interactional accomplishment of meaning, the significance of communicator intent and the relevance of social/cultural context' (p. xxiii). In other words, research should be concerned with the situated language practices of the common communicator which is language in use and the linguistic ways of representing it in digital media discourse.

When analysing the language of digital media discourse, it is essential to understand that this analysis is primarily about illuminating the social and cultural processes that this type of language relies on in the digital media (Bucholtz & Hall, 2008). This means that the analysis will not be about the grammar or any other abstract trade commonly studied within linguistics (cf. Cameron & Panović, 2014), but rather about the functions and uses of language in the everyday environment of the digital media. However, it will also be about the abbreviated, contracted, hyperlinked, hashtagged and/or all other forms of violated language manifestations occurring in the communicative act of digital media users. Given that traditional approaches to language may not have the methodological framework to cover all the

various aspects of language in digital media discourse, language has to be observed from interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary points of view. Two of the most important trades of language in digital media discourse need to be examined in particular, language as a metadiscursive resource and language as a metrolingual resource.

As a metadiscursive resource language in the digital media is often seen as a threat to the standard forms of language and most often it is the younger generations who are blamed for ruining language by using abbreviations, contractions, emoticons and non-conventional spelling or by simply using a language of their own (Tagliamonte, 2016; Thurlow, 2014). However, fact is that the digital media cannot be a threat to any language since language lives and develops along with the community that it is used in, and the digital media constitute various communities, so that this changing aspect should never be considered a negative trade. The language used in the digital media is a powerful tool of representation of one's own identity, i.e. users of the digital media use language as a resource based on which they perform their own identities (Thurlow, 2018). That is exactly the reason why language in the digital media needs to be investigated within the context of people's actual practices which includes significantly more aspects than correct grammar and spelling.

As a metrolingual resource, the language in the digital media is just as dislodged and dislocated as ever (Thurlow, 2018). In other words, mixing of registers and styles as well as blending vernacular and standard forms have occurred many times so far (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010). Various social practices and contexts have shown that language is never standard and fixed, but rather fluid and changing. The digital media cannot be an exception to that. Different varieties and subcultural styles of language are common trades of language within certain communities so that the digital ones cannot be considered any different. This means that digital discourse analysis should not exaggerate the depicting of the notion of language and its preservation in terms of grammar, style and spelling but rather focus on the practice itself (Androutsopoulos, 2010; Bucholtz & Hall, 2008; Georgakopoulou, 2006; Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011). Moreover, digital media discourse may be considered heteroglossic which implies that it comprises multiple voices and multiple types of voices (Androutsopoulos, 2010). This also refers to the fact that digital media discourse is always multimodal whereby language is one of its modalities.

The next part of this book will be an attempt to provide approaches to digital media discourse from various points of view but always based on language as its primary vessel of expression. Hopefully, the presentation of the selected theories and analytical paradigms will serve both as explanations and illustrations of possible ways to approach digital media discourse in linguistic research within an interdisciplinary framework.

PART II: Theoretical Approaches to Digital Media Discourse

Now that I have established a working definition of digital media discourse, in Part II in this book I will try to provide some applicable approaches to digital media discourse in linguistic research. As stated, **digital media discourse is language expressed within a certain context (social, political, cultural, economic, etc.) while realized through binary code for the purpose of enabling socially induced online or offline communication**. However, given that digital media discourse is created by us, the actual users of the digital media, the discourse we present and share also reflects how we think about very intimate concepts (e.g. love, friendship, marriage), how we work and play (e.g. office life, parties, entertainment), learn and educate (e.g. classroom events, seminars, conferences) even hate certain concepts or think of politics and religion, to name but a few. We are, in fact, 'co-consumers and co-producers in their potentially endless diversification' (KhosraviNik, 2017, p. 584). Therefore, digital media discourse includes a range of social practices which challenges scholars engaging in discourse analysis, sociology, psychology, linguistics, communicology and many other fields and disciplines to think about texts, social interactions, the nature of language but also about the consequences that the affordances of digital media discourse provide. As Barton and Lee (2013) suggest, 'we need to both closely look at the texts and to observe users' lives and beliefs about what they do with their online writing' (p. 167).

Assuming that discourse analysis may be seen as the study of 'the ways people build and manage their social world using various semiotic systems' (Jones et al., 2015, p. 3), the approaches to digital media discourse may rely on different theories from different disciplines, thus facilitating a pool of interdisciplinary research extending beyond boundaries existing around disciplinary investigations. In the approach to digital media discourse, we must not forget two important facts, both of which have been put forward by Gee. The first is that interaction in its broadest sense is a key aspect in communication in the contemporary media space (Gee, 2015a). As Gee defines it, interaction is 'a field which is focused on meaning making' (p. 1) and as such, as he claims, it is the essence of discourse analysis. The second is

that digital discourse analysis is concerned with how multimodal, i.e. multisemiotic resources are employed to enact identities, activities and ideologies in the digital world, as part of a larger social world (Gee, 2005). And this world can be put into the context of issues analysed within media studies, culture studies, linguistics, sociology, psychology, pedagogy, business, marketing and probably many more but only in terms of interaction between discourse and society. Therefore, the second part of this book will also be an attempt to provide analytical paradigms that focus on digital media discourse from various points of view put into the framework of interaction between the discourse being analysed and the actors who both create and perceive that same discourse.

Nevertheless, a huge, almost unsurmountable issue in digital media discourse analysis is how to handle data. It is undeniable that digital media discourse occupies our daily lives to the extent that it is pervasive. What is more, we are not only observers of that discourse, but also users and participators. We read, experience, share, comment, like, tag while engaging in digital media discourse. That is why we have to bear in mind that digital media discourse establishes and maintains various platforms of socialization, public conversation, exchange of ideas, beliefs and opinions. This again means that a linguist who would engage in analysing digital media discourse would be confronted with huge amounts, scales and scopes of data which need to be handled by means of specific methodologies appropriate and adequate for both a qualitative and a quantitative analysis. Despite some really ground-breaking attempts in suggesting data analysis methodologies (e.g. Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2019; Sloan & Quan-Haase, 2017), such methodologies are still in the pipeline. Data analysis methods for digital media discourse have to include image, video, hashtags, text etc. all combined with the fact that some digital media discourse may not be published at one particular point in time but may in fact be edited several times even during a single day (e.g. reports on an ongoing election). This means that researchers need to familiarise with new techniques of harvesting, analysing and interpreting data as well as putting them into context.

What is more, data in digital media discourse does not emerge in one single context but in various social, historical, political, economic contexts. In addition, most digital media discourse is interwoven with interactions and engagement happening outside that discourse but still exerting an immense influence on it. A simple news article will be followed by a comment

section which means that the discourse presented in the news article should be observed together with the reactions it caused among its readership. All these factors (and probably some others, such as noise, sampling, coding, etc.) will directly influence the research design employed for a particular corpus of digital media discourse and ask for different critical perspectives. Nevertheless, until new methodologies for data analysis are established, we can most certainly rely on existing data analysis techniques and try to adapt them to the corpus of digital media discourse analysis we are analysing (details about data in digital media discourse analysis will be provided in Chapter Eleven).

Rather than offering textbook advice, this second part of the book will offer a theoretical review of theories which originated in various disciplines (primarily media studies) but deal with discourse in general from various points of view while being widely applicable specifically to digital media discourse. Given that the main objective of this book is to relate the study of digital media discourse to linguistic research in its broadest sense, the reviewed approaches will be illustrated by representative examples of solutions from actual research I have conducted within the study of linguistics. As Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (2019) state, the 'analysis of digital discourse lies at the intersection of (non)language resources, society, and technology' (p. 3) and as such it has to rely on language as its means of communication, society as its practitioner and recipient as well as on technology as its medium.

Chapter Three: Digital Media Discourse in Linguistic Research

The digital environment as well as all the technologies supporting it, allow for a completely new set of digital practices which not only challenge us as the creators and recipients of digital media discourse but also as discourse analysts who endeavour to discern the mechanisms and models based upon which discourse operates. Existing discourse analysis frameworks seem to be unable to provide comprehensive enough approaches and tools to enable the understanding and analysis of the complex relationships created between the creators of digital media discourse, the digital media discourse itself and the digital practices in the media relying on it. Obviously, the digital media discourse landscape is complex and fast-changing imposing the necessity of adapting and implementing existing theories and methods which have been developed for decades for analogue discourse to fit digital discourse. Based on them, by combining them and by reformulating them, discourse analysts will be able to offer new approaches to address all affordances and constraints digital media discourse may include. Alternatively, existing theories and methods may be ignored completely and new paradigms may be suggested. Either way, the discourse occurring in the digital media needs new approaches.

A suggestion made by Thurlow (2018) is that digital discourse studies, a term proposed to substitute Herring's (1996) Computer-Mediated Discourse Studies should attend more than anything to linguistic, sociolinguistic and discursive phenomena in new/social media. Similarly, Androutsopoulus (2006) suggests that a shift of focus is needed from medium-related to user-related patterns of language use. In addition, scholars investigating digital communication (cf. Thurlow, 2018; Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011) state that other modes of communication have to be included in the research of digital discourse. What they all have in common is that they suggest approaching digital media discourse in a different way than analogue discourse.

Before I begin the presentation of how various theories may be adapted to digital media discourse, I would like to state that this is not the

first time somebody has attempted to accomplish this. A volume that has basically inspired this one was offered by Jones, Chik and Hafner (2015) who edited a collection of fourteen chapters on how to do discourse analysis in the digital age. Written by scholars engaging in linguistic research and literacy studies, the collection considers how 'various practices people engage in using digital media can be understood using tools from discourse analysis' (p. 1). Each of the chapters in the volume focuses on a particular social practice, is then associated with digital technology and shows how certain tools from an existing approach to discourse may enable the understanding of that practice.

In a similar, more recent and equally inspiring volume edited by Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (2019), various scholars contributed investigations on discourse and communication in multiple languages and digital spaces. These range from consumer reviews and health forums to social networking and video interaction whereby both micro and macro levels are included. All the researchers relied on a range of socially-oriented language disciplines to investigate discourse as a social practice just as is the case with the volume offered by Jones, Chik and Hafner (2015). In both volumes social practice is understood as 'the ways people build and manage their social world using various semiotic systems (Jones et al., 2015, p. 3) but Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (2019) attempt to explore 'how multimodal, multisemiotic resources are employed to enact identities, activities, and ideologies in the digital world, as part of a larger social world' (p. 4). However, as stated at the beginning of this book, I felt that digital discourse, or digital media discourse as I like to refer to it, needs to be put into the context of linguistic research in terms of collecting language data presented in digital media discourse and analysing it based on an adequate methodology with the aim to discover the meaning such data may have.

Obviously, any step taking digital media discourse in linguistic research into a new direction cannot be done without at least a short review of Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA), first conceptualized by Herring in 1994 who then further developed it in the 1990s. Upon its first appearance (Herring, 1996) and then throughout the next decade, CMDA (Herring, 1996) was almost entirely textual thereby not allowing for data produced in any other way than occurring as typed text on a computer screen. This limitation of CMDA referring almost only to interactive textual communication may make this analytical paradigm inapplicable to digital

media discourse, which, as I tried to demonstrate in the first part of this book, exceeds the limits of text on a computer screen. Although Herring (2019) admits that CMDA is not able to cater for new affordances occurring in modern digital (media) discourse, she still believes that the principles of CMDA are applicable.

This belief of hers is, of course, grounded to some extent as CMDA does constitute a valuable methodological toolkit organized around four linguistic levels (Herring, 2019, p. 27): structure, meaning, interaction management and social behaviour. At the level of structure certain issues, such as orality, formality, genre, etc. are identified while the phenomena studied include orthography, syntax, formatting, etc. which are approached based on methods, such as text analysis, corpus linguistics or stylistics to name a few. Similarly, at the level of meaning, questions are directed at issues about what has been intended, communicated or accomplished. The phenomena pursued include the meaning of words and utterances while the methods rely on semantics and pragmatics. The level of interaction management includes issues, such as interactivity and coherence, the phenomena are, for instance, sequence and threads while the methods rely on conversation analysis and ethnomethodology. Finally, the level of social phenomena includes issues, such as social dynamics, identity or cultural differences, the phenomena being, for instance, conflict, play or discourse styles while the methods include interactional sociolinguistics, critical discourse analysis or ethnography of communication. We might argue that there seems to be nothing wrong with the CMDA toolkit itself as it does predict various issues, phenomena and methods. Probably the only limitation or disadvantage of CMDA as proposed by Herring is its name – it limits the issues, phenomena and methods to computer-mediated discourse only. In other words, it does not predict the analysis of digital media discourse mediated via smart phones, tablets or smart watches, media nowadays inherently present, used and considered essential for modern communication.

Herring (2019) admits that new methods for analysing online discourse have emerged over time and that their main intention has been to respond to changes in computer-mediated communication technology. Nevertheless, although Herring suggests that a reconceptualization of CMDA is needed, and she stresses that it needs to be fundamentally multimodal, she does stick to the argument that CMDA remains relevant as she believes that the principles of her methodological toolkit apply to interaction in

nontextual modes. To a certain extent, there are not too many arguments to counter this belief.

However, digital media discourse would again be confined to certain limitation considering that Herring identifies multimodality in modern discourse as being related to modes of transmission whereby she identifies text, audio, video, robot and graphics. She does recognize that text, audio and video have been around for quite a while but she focuses only on three newer phenomena within multimodal discourse: communication on interactive multimodal platforms, graphical communication including avatar-mediated communication and robot-mediated communication. In her opinion, these phenomena involve verbal language, mediate human-to-human communication and support social interaction. Therefore, that is what Herring (2019) points out, the discourse produced through them constitutes computer-mediated discourse (for a detailed review of Herring's ideas s. Herring, 2019, p. 42–46).

Despite the many merits of Herring's approach, I cannot but help siding with Thurlow (2018) that we need a new term for the discourse that we are investigating nowadays. Thurlow's term digital discourse studies is what I agree with but I do suggest we use digital media discourse analysis because, as I tried to present in the first part of this book, this term is more comprehensive. It allows for the possibility to include all types of discourse constructed, created or occurring both online and offline (though probably quite rarely offline) in all interactive communication via all the various modes existing today. In addition, the term digital media discourse analysis may be applied to linguistic, sociolinguistic, semiotic and discursive phenomena in new/social media in general while it may be an umbrella term to cover all forms of multimodal communication and, most importantly, keep its door open to almost any method or theoretical approach already available while not excluding the possibility of constructing even a new method or theoretical approach if adequate. I believe that my proposal to use the term digital media discourse analysis would also support Androutsopoulus' (2006) suggestion to shift our focus from medium-related to user-related patterns of language use. This would mean a focus on the actual creators and recipients of discourse as well as the relationships established between them and the discourse they create and receive but also among the users and creators who are being affected by the very same discourse.

Finally, and I consider this quite important, with the introduction of the term digital media discourse analysis we would move away from the somewhat unnecessary preoccupation with the technological aspects of discourse. I am not trying to diminish or exclude the aspect of technology from digital media discourse analysis as that would be absurd. However, I do believe that technology is not what constitutes discourse. It is just the vessel via which discourse is transferred, transmitted or communicated. Not that it does not influence discourse at all, but it does not contribute much to the way discourse operates in its relationship to its creators and consumers. Nor does it contribute to what constitutes the basic paradigm of any analytical approach to discourse. Questions, such as what the relationship between discourse and society is, how these two affect each other and what the consequences of this relationship are should remain at the core of digital media discourse analysis. Therefore, we need to go back to the basics of Critical Discourse Analysis but put them into a new perspective which will have to be interdisciplinary because discourse includes, depends on and is related to various disciplines (linguistics, culture, communication, media, sociology, psychology, pedagogy, politics, art, etc.).

Back to the basics also means reminding ourselves that discourse is a 'practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning' (Fairclough, 1992, p. 64). It is also the social use of language (Gee, 2007) but it is also a product of social interaction. And, as Scollon (1999) recognized at the end of the previous millennium, mediated discourse is social interaction whereby 'the texts are secondary to the ongoing social interactions among the producers of the texts' (p. 152). This point of view brings us yet another step closer to the need to use a new term for what we are doing nowadays when analysing digital media discourse especially in the context of linguistic research. Therefore, as stated in the first part of this book, if the digital media are a means of enabling interactivity and group forming via a digitally supported channel of communication, i.e. binary code in communication, digital media discourse is the social use of language via a digitally supported channel of communication. Therefore, as stated earlier, digital media discourse is language expressed within a certain context (social, political, cultural, economic, etc.) while realized through binary code for the purpose of enabling socially induced online or offline communication.

I must admit that I am not sure what a new theoretical approach to digital media discourse should be like. What is more, I am not sure whether we have arrived at a point where we could be able to provide such method, toolkit or approach because we are still arguing what the new type of discourse actually is. We should probably (re)evaluate how it operates in relationship to society, who is, after all, a major stakeholder in the realm in which discourse lives and operates. However, if I were to propose a methodological approach, I would primarily rely on Androutsopoulus' (2006) suggestion that it should be user-related and on Thurlow's (2018) suggestion that any analysis should be concerned with a particular phenomenon. That is why I tentatively propose that a methodological approach should be based at least on four aspects according to which the analysis of a particular type of digital media discourse could be conducted (Table 1).

Type of digital media discourse	Type of stakeholder (discourse creator, mediator, recipient)	Type of phenomenon	Theory/analytical approach used as framework
• text • gif/meme • video clip • social media post • social media comment • newspaper comment • podcast • etc.	• journalist • social media user • news reader • student/teacher • online shopper • online seller • influencer • blogger • vlogger • politician • PR • etc.	• linguistic • sociolinguistic • psychological • semiotic • discursive • communicative • multimodal • etc.	• Framing Theory • Newsworthiness • Spiral of Silence • Social Media Discourse Studies • Discursive strategies • Sociocognitive Discourse Studies • Multimodal Discourse Analysis • etc.

Table 1: Potential types of analysis for existing types of digital media discourse.

The suggestions presented in Table 1 should not be considered a close system. Many other types of discourse, stakeholders, phenomena, theories and approaches can be added here. The point is that the digital media analyst should bear in mind that the type of digital media discourse will most probably have a particular type of stakeholder thereby somehow imposing the type of phenomenon to be analysed. The relationship between, for

instance, memes and social media users will be quite specific and the phenomenon to be analysed could be psychological (e.g. anxiety). Such relationship would probably be approached best from the point of view of Framing Theory. But there are other relationships that may be approached aiming at different types of phenomena, such as political (e.g. presidential elections), social (e.g. child raising), cultural (e.g. gender equality), etc. Choosing an adequate theoretical approach would depend on the type of conclusions that are expected to be discerned from a particular relationship. For instance, newspaper comments would probably be related to news readers. The type of phenomenon in such a relationship may be almost anything. In a communicative context it could be the phenomenon of journalistic ethics. The theoretical framework might be the Theory of Newsworthiness. In any case, the analysis would be aimed at the relationship between the discourse and its creators, users or recipients. In addition, the results of such analysis would establish the impact of the particular social practice realized through the discourse presented and analysed as well as enable the determination of the ramifications of the causal relationships established within the analysis.

Therefore, in this second part of my volume seven different theories and approaches will be elaborated on as possible theoretical frameworks of digital media discourse in linguistic research. Each of these theories and approaches will be presented as a framework based on which discourse can be analysed based on language data in its broadest sense. The first will be Framing Theory, a theory from mass communication studies put forward by Goffman (1974) relying on the primary assumption that the media focus attention on certain events which they then put into a certain field of meaning. By identifying the meanings intended and realized through the language in the discourse, its effects on society can be analysed. The second one, the Theory of Newsworthiness is considered one of the most influential explanations of journalistic news. The theory is credited to Galtung and Ruge (1965) who first suggested twelve factors based on which the term newsworthiness was defined. By identifying the values of a certain discourse, expressed in a certain way by using language, the main intentions of the discourse creators can be determined. The third is Discursive Strategies which was suggested by Wodak (2001). This approach is based on the identification of discursive strategies expressed through language and used by the creators of discourse who aim at achieving a certain understanding among the recipients of discourse. The fourth approach presented is multimodal discourse analysis

which was initiated by Kress & Van Leeuwen (1996) who asked for analysis of discourse based on all modes of communication existing along with the linguistic mode of communication. The fifth approach is Sociocognitive Discourse Studies proposed by van Dijk (2017) who suggested that by relating discourse structures to social structures a complex sociocognitive interface could be discovered. Based on that approach subtle mechanisms reflected in a certain communicative common ground among the users and recipients of a certain discourse may be identified. Social Media Critical Discourse Studies, the sixth approach presented here was suggested by KhosraviNik (2017). Apart from Herring's approach to Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (1996), this is probably the only newer theory suggested solely for the purpose of analysing digital discourse. Based on this approach, general and specific affordances and constraints of discourse in the social media may be analysed. The last approach is the theory of the Spiral of Silence, a theory related to political science and mass communication which was put forward by the German political scientist Noelle-Neumann (1974, 2016). Based on this theory, an analysis may be conducted to identify subtle mechanisms expressed through language that discourse creators employ to silence discourse recipients if it suits their social, cultural, political or any other agenda.

Each theory or theoretical approach will be presented in a separate chapter focusing on the constituent elements of the theories. However, a more important emphasis will be put on how the approaches work when used for the analysis of digital media discourse in linguistic research. Illustrations from actual research will hopefully demonstrate the importance of choosing a certain theoretical framework when working with digital media discourse. In that way existing theories will not only be re-evaluated but also confirmed and validated in the context of digital media discourse. Hence, we could come to new conclusions opening a path to a methodologically unique and exclusive approach allowing for new affordances and constraints within the field of digital media discourse primarily in linguistic research, but probably equally applicable within communication and media studies as well.

To conclude this introductory chapter, it goes without saying that digital media discourse combines writing, images, sounds and other semiotic modes which is why research dealing with this type of discourse has to include all modes of communication and investigate them from points of view supporting these modes. Thus when I say that this book is meant to relate digital media discourse to various types of research what I actually

hope to accomplish is to offer user-related perspectives on the study of digital media discourse which foreground 'how individuals manage and exploit affordances to shape language use online' (Bolander & Locher, 2020). More than that, I would like to contribute an approach to digital media discourse which will no longer be confined to the exploration of how users engage in interaction while using technology. I would like this book to challenge discourse analysis to rely on traditional analytical tools, adapt them to digital media discourse in linguistic research and, if possible, open a door to formulating new theories and methodologies.

Chapter Four: Framing Theory

Framing research draws on literature from 'cognitive, constructionist and critical' studies (D'Angelo, 2002, p. 870); 'sociology, economics, psychology, cognitive linguistics and communication' (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 9) and 'political science, sociology and media studies' (Hertog & McLeod, 2001, p. 139). Such multiple approaches may seem complicating the conceptualization of the framing theory and indicate that the framing process is equally complex and comprehensive (D'Angelo, 2002).

When regarding the concept of framing within media studies, two broad foundations may be acknowledged: a) sociological (Entman, 1991; Goffman, 1974) and b) psychological (Domke et al., 1998). The sociological viewpoint is concerned with the words, images, phrases and presentation styles which are used to construct news stories as well as the processes that shape these constructions (Druckman, 2001). Psychological studies examine the effects of framing on the audience (Domke et al., 1998) (for additional details regarding different research on framing s. Borah, 2011). However, a general consensus among scholars is that the roots of framing theory may be attributed to the sociologist Erving Goffman who proposed that interpretative designs constitute central elements of cultural belief systems. Goffman (1974) referred to these interpretative designs as frames and he saw the conceptual roots of frames in phenomenology, a philosophical approach that argues that individuals perceive the meaning of the world based on their own beliefs, experiences and knowledge.

That is why mediated communication, communication via digital media included, delivers powerful frames of perception which both challenge and renegotiate experiences the audience might already have. In other words, frames are used to manipulate and coerce the public into understanding information in a certain way. Framing Theory has thus become very important in the media whenever they are aimed at constructing public opinion. For instance, media campaigns in public relations and political sectors will always resort to framing. So-called spin doctors will rely on framing whenever a political issue needs to be adapted to the objective of an elective campaign. Examples of such spins, i.e. the attempt to control or influence communication in order to deliver one's preferred message are rather common in the media. According to Britannica (*Britannica*, n.d.) a spin is very

common in a political context where it is often associated with government press conferences. Usually, the press secretary or some government official 'has a vested interest in communicating a political message to have a desired outcome, often to the neglect of delivering the full truth of a situation' (*Britannica,* n.d.). The outcome is that the press conference room is 'sometimes cynically referred to as the 'spin room' and the schedule of briefings as the 'spin cycle' which illustrates the manipulative nature of the framing process.

Media research in journalism and political communication relies on Framing Theory to analyse the imbalances and underlying power structures found in the mediation of political issues. For instance, the identification of frames may reveal how one story is presented in different media outlets. This is quite common in situations when pro and anti-government media write about politicians and their actions. Sometimes, stereotypical framing (e.g. gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, etc.) are used to provoke opinions in the audience. Cohen (1963) rightfully argues that the press might not be good at telling us what to think, but they will always be effective when telling us what to think about. What is more, the 'world will look different to different people, depending […] on the map that is drawn for them by writers, editors and publishers of the papers they read' (p. 13). In the domain of digital media discourse this is truer than ever given the widespread influence the media may have via their online outlets, social media profiles as well as the fact that their audiences willingly accept to disseminate the exact point of view – frame – imposed upon them by sharing content with other users of the digital media. Never have frames been so powerful as they are in contemporary media discourse.

In its beginnings, Framing Theory was focused on the different schemes in which certain issues were told. For instance, key frames were identified in television news while others were acknowledged in election campaigns (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). More recent research has been addressing sets of frames around elite discourses given that the perspective of powerful societal stakeholders is being favoured in the news. Research has also focused on content frames so as to identify how framing is represented in opposing opinions. Yet another direction framing has been taking is oriented towards determining how audiences interpret information, thus analysing the frames of references created for recipients of news stories. Contemporary research views frames 'as organizing principles that structure the social world' (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009, p. 409).

At this point it is necessary to focus a little bit more on what frames actually are. Goffman (1974) defines a frame as 'the principles of organization which govern events – at least social ones – and our subjective involvement in them' and this 'schemata of interpretation' helps people 'locate, perceive, identify, and label' everyday events (p. 21). We may say that frames are cognitive shortcuts that we use to help make sense of complex information, that they help us interpret the world around us and represent that world to others. They also help us organize complex phenomena into coherent, understandable categories. When we label a phenomenon, we give meaning to some aspects of what is observed, while discounting other aspects because they appear irrelevant or counter-intuitive. Thus, frames provide meaning through selective simplification, by filtering our perceptions and providing them with a field of vision for a problem. Goffman (1974) further explains that journalists use frames to 'organize strips of the everyday world, a strip being an arbitrary slice or cut from the stream of ongoing activity' (pp. 10–11). Apart from this point of view, similar definitions of frames are available in the literature (s. Linström & Marais, 2012 for a detailed presentation of definitions).

Framing as a process has been defined as an approach, a theory, a class of media effects, a perspective, an analytical technique, a paradigm and a multiparadigmatic research programme (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010). A broadly accepted definition is that framing is 'the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights the connections among them to promote a particular interpretation' (Entman, 2007, p. 4). As a methodological approach, news frame analysis is primarily a type of qualitative content analysis used to describe communicative content, to compare media content to the real world and to establish a starting point for studies of media effect (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). Based on this approach, keywords and metaphors are being analysed so as to identify what was included in the frame or what was left out of it. Either way, such analysis will inevitably lead to the identification of the respective frame imposed upon the content. Based on the identified frame, further pragmatic aspects of the media text may be identified and analysed (message, intention, effect, aim, etc.). Obviously, reliability and validity are often questioned in a qualitative framing analysis and D'Angelo and Kuypers (2010) even claim that researchers tend to 'reinvent the wheel' when identifying news frames. Thus, frame analysis is deemed subjective and it may be difficult to

relate collected data to results because often a coding scheme is missing or not evident enough (2010). That is why a combined qualitative and quantitative framing analysis is suggested to enable reliable and valid data collection as well as a presentation of results which will provide grounds for a meaningful analysis and final display of reliable conclusions.

The fact that frames may be subjective makes it extremely difficult to come up with a typology of media frames. Various scholars have suggested different classifications of frames and they may all be considered completely applicable and valid while at the same time they may be disputed as being inadequate. For instance, De Vreese (2005) suggests that frames should be classified into two main categories: 1) issue-specific which are related to specific topics and events and 2) generic frames which exceed thematic limitations but may be related to certain topics. Unfortunately, this classification has given scholars the freedom to come up with a new set of frames each time they conduct an analysis (Hertog & McLeod, 2001) which is why it is generally considered too broad and far too loose.

The classification proposed by Neuman et al. (1992) identifies five common frames in the media:

1. Human impact: focuses on descriptions of individuals and groups who have been or are affected by an issue.
2. Powerlessness: refers to the dominance of forces over weak individuals and groups.
3. Economics: reflects the preoccupation with profit and loss.
4. Moral values: refers to morality and social prescriptions.
5. Conflict: deals with the way media interpret the political world as a series of contests whereby constantly displaying winners and losers.

This classification, though quite detailed, was not adopted as readily as one might think. The frame of powerlessness is difficult to isolate while the frame of conflict was too narrow as it did not allow for the identification of conflicts occurring in other contexts other than the political one. That is why Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) suggested an adaptation by proposing five frames which differ only slightly from the ones suggested by Neuman et al. (1992): conflict, human interest, attribution of responsibility, morality and economic consequences. Semetko and Valkenburg's definitions for each frame do not differ very much from the ones proposed by Neuman et al.

apart from the human-interest frame which they define as providing a human face or an emotional angle to an event, issue or problem. Their conflict frame is also broader in the sense that it refers to conflicts between individuals, groups, institutions or countries. In addition, instead of powerlessness, Semetko and Valkenburg suggest attribution of responsibility which they see as a presentation of an issue or problem in such a way that it attributes responsibility to the government or some other authority for causing or solving said issue or problem.

None of the above-mentioned classifications may be considered perfect and final. However, research aiming at the analysis of frames employed in a particular digital media discourse within linguistic research may rely on any of them if it suits the objective of the research. The linguist will look for specific language units that reflect a certain meaning based on which frames can be identified. Alternatively, a linguist can first identify the frames employed in a certain discourse and then analyse its language properties. It will be up to the researcher to decide which classification to rely on, how to employ it or maybe even provide their own typology of frames. It would be far too rigorous to accept D'Angelo and Kuypers' (2010) opinion that new typologies might not be able to offer some new approach. In the next section, I will try to demonstrate how the analysis of frames based on specific language may rely on the typology proposed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) and offer some grounds for interpretation and even conclusions based on which the effect of the particular news items may be determined.

#FramesInNewsHeadlinesAndLeads

In the previous section I suggested that a rather applicable and relevant typology of news frames may be the one proposed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). However, in order to identify a certain frame, we need to rely on devices that are rooted in language based on which we can then decide what type of frame the author used for their article. Entman (1993) suggests rhetorical devices as being crucial for the analysis of frames which he identifies as keywords, stock phrases, sources of information or sentences which contain facts and judgements. Apart from rhetorical devices, Tankard (2001) suggests relying on technical devices as well whereby he suggests headlines, subheadings, photo captions, leads, source selection, quote selection and concluding statements and paragraphs. The most common technical devices in the analysis of frames are headlines and leads while the most common rhetorical devices are keywords. Obviously, both depend on the language employed to carry the message.

As indicated in Part I, headlines and leads if composed with a certain intention (and they usually are) can exert an enormous influence on the targeted readership. If the author of an article adds a certain frame to the headline and the lead, the effect will be multiplied. Given that Tankard (2001) suggests that headlines and leads are a solid technical device to base a frame analysis on, the following illustration of some commonly used frames in the news will be related to headlines and leads while the main rhetorical device will be the identification of the most striking keywords (Entman, 1993).

Of the five types of frames that Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) suggest, the most common one used in headlines and leads is that of attribution of responsibility. Sometimes, this frame may be accompanied by an additional frame, but its main purpose is usually to stress that the social actor mentioned in the headline did something because they had the responsibility to make a certain decision and often the social actors are presented as having no other choice. In other words, social actors, most often politicians or some other authority representing the government are presented in the media (usually pro-government ones) as doing something (good or bad) because they have the responsibility to make decisions which are for a greater good. In brief, the media use the frame of attribution of responsibility to justify the decisions social actors make even if those decisions are bad or having

terrible consequences. The frame of attribution of responsibility will convince readership that the decision had to made in the way it has been made.

For instance, the frame of attribution of responsibility is obvious in an article published on 19 April 2017 by Reuters. The headline stated: *Britain's May wins parliament backing for June 8 snap election*[2] and the lead following the headline was:

> Prime Minister Theresa May won parliament's backing for an early election on Wednesday, a vote she said would strengthen her hand in divorce talks with the European Union and help heal divisions in Britain.

Here the frame of responsibility was supported by the frame of economic consequences and both were meant to reinforce that May was completely right to want the snap election and to pursue it. The readership was not expected to question this political decision, but merely accept it. If May had not imposed the snap election, the consequences (of which economic ones most certainly) would have been detrimental for Great Britain. The most striking key words in the headline and the lead indicating the two frames are as follows:

1. Britain's May: Her loyalty was to Britain meaning that all decisions she made would be in the best interest of Britain.
2. strengthen her hand in divorce talks: It was her responsibility to do what was best for Britain and the parliament's support would present them as united and strong.
3. help heal divisions: A supporting vote would erase all conflicts among the British and May would prove that her idea of the snap elections was the best possible solution.

The two frames used in the headline and the lead were meant to help the audience realise that May had the responsibility to protect Britain's interest and that she had come up with the best possible solution to secure that.

Similarly, on 28 April 2017 Reuters published the article *British anti-terrorism police say plots contained after woman shot, arrests* which was introduced by the following lead:

[2] All examples presented here were part of a corpus explored in Đorđević, 2020a.

> British counter-terrorism police said on Friday they had thwarted an active plot after a woman was shot during an armed raid on a house in north London in the second major security operation in the British capital in the space of a few hours.

The frame of attribution of responsibility that was introduced here was meant to justify the act of violence committed by someone in authority, i.e. the police. What is more, the responsibility was reinforced by the repeated use of reported speech and by including reasons for the raid and the shooting. Again striking key words directly referring to the frame of attribution of responsibility can be singled out and they include the following:

1. plots contained: The two words clearly stressed that further attacks or attempts had been prevented by shooting a woman. Therefore, shooting her is justified.
2. thwarted an active plot: The act is further being justified – the woman had not been shot in vain.
3. major security operation: The importance of shooting a woman for a greater cause could not have been emphasized more.

Based on the frame of attribution of responsibility used here, the reader would not question the exerted violence but simply accept the fact that the woman had to be shot, i.e. the police had no other choice. If she had not been shot, the terrorist acts would have escalated, the terrorists would not have been arrested and the readership would have been reading about a negative outcome.

On 28 April 2017 Reuters published an article with the following headline: *Djokovic should seek Federer's advice, says former mentor.* The lead following the headline was:

> A floundering Novak Djokovic should seek advice from evergreen Swiss maestro Roger Federer in order to rediscover his vintage self, the Serb's former Davis Cup coach Bogdan Obradovic said.

In this example the frame of human interest was employed which was meant to put the consumer at the heart of a current event or personal story through making its content relatable to the viewer in order to draw their interest. In other words, the readership was meant to feel sorry for Djokovic because he had some setbacks so that the news suggested that he obviously did not know what to do to get back on the track of success. The

most striking key words referring to the frame of human interest are as follows:

1. should seek Federer's advice: The news is offering a solution to Djokovic which he should accept.
2. floundering Novak Djokovic: He is struggling to get back into the game.
3. to rediscover his vintage self: Following advice from Federer would help Djokovic achieve successes as he used to.

In the example presented here, the frame of human interest was obviously meant to raise empathy for Djokovic and give the readership some hope.

Another commonly used frame is that of economic consequences which is meant to draw the readers' attention to what might happen if certain things were not done. In other words, the readers are expected to believe that certain things should happen or be done to avoid some bad consequences which is obvious in the headline published by *Reuters* on 24 April 2017 stating that *Hollande urges French to reject Le Pen in presidential run-off vote.* The lead stated the following:

> France's outgoing president, Francois Hollande, on Monday urged people to back centrist Emmanuel Macron in a vote to choose his successor next month and reject far-right leader Marine Le Pen, whose place in the run-off represented a "risk" for France.

Though the example illustrated here did not refer to economic consequences in an explicit way, the whole situation around Le Pen and her points of view would have caused far too many negative consequences for France, economic ones included, should she have won the elections. Key words referring to the frame of economic consequences are as follows:

1. urges French to reject Le Pen: The invitation to vote for the better solution for France could not have been expressed more clearly.
2. to back centrist: Again, the better solution without any negative consequences would be to vote for Macron.
3. represented a "risk" for France: The risk would be the downfall of France in every single way, the economic one included.

Le Pen based most of her campaign on the promise to 'liberate France from the European Union'. However, this liberation would have posed a certain threat to the economic stability France had managed to build since entering the EU. Given that people are generally concerned about their economic situation, the frame of economic consequences is the most effective which is why Hollande urged people not to vote for Le Pen as he believed that choice to be bad for France.

In the examples illustrated in this section, the frames tied to the headlines and leads indicate the intention of news creators to construct some kind of systems of pre-conceived ideas. News readers are expected to rely on the frames so as to organize and interpret the information presented to them in a certain way. To some extent it may be assumed that journalists are believed to make sense of events, situations and actions. However, they may also be accused of distorting the same events, situations and actions when following a certain agenda (Reese et al., 2001) and frame analysis is an ideal theoretical framework to question the process of news making, i.e. the process of manufacturing and disseminating news.

To conclude, despite the fact that news frame analysis is prone to subjectivity and that a standard frame typology is still missing, the analytical framework does provide a solid paradigm which supplies the necessary approach and devices to define problems, diagnose a course, enable values judgements and even to suggest remedies (Entman, 1993). What is more, frame analysis can be used to provide detailed descriptions of communicative content and secure relevant points based on which media effects can be studied (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). Therefore, frame analysis is a valid theoretical approach to be implemented in the context of digital media discourse in linguistic research.

Chapter Five: The Theory of Newsworthiness

What news will ultimately be published or not depends on a rather complicated news selection process which takes place within a complex framework. Shaped by socio-cultural, economic, political, organizational or psychological variables, this framework depends on factors that constitute the extent to which a news item will be considered newsworthy (Schwarz, 2006).

The Theory of Newsworthiness is an interdisciplinary approach which integrates a set of journalistic routines including perception, professionalism and organizational skills on the one hand, and the projected anticipation of what audiences might be interested in, on the other. Basically, whether or not an event, person or fact will eventually make the news is a decision based on the gut feeling of the newsmakers about the preferences of their audiences. Thus the first question asked by journalists is: Will there be anybody to read about this? Kepplinger and Ehmig (2006) suggest that newsworthiness has two components – news factors and news values. In their opinion, news factors are the qualities of a news story whereas news values entail the journalistic assessment of how important these factors are.

The first to use the label of news value was Lippmann (1922) who defined it as the property of an event that determines its probability of becoming news. In other words, if an event was deemed interesting, appealing, provocative, intriguing – worthy – it would encounter the fate of being published. If not, it would be dismissed as unworthy of further attention. Obviously, such selection criteria might have caused the dismissal of important news because somebody believed it to be boring or simply not generating readership. This notion is somewhat disturbing but it is the reality of the news publishing business. Lippmann's idea of newsworthiness was further developed by Östgaard (1965) as well as by Galtung and Holmboe Ruge (1965).

Galtung and Holmboe Ruge (1965) offered a classification which was mostly adopted in European research. In fact, they proposed a list of twelve factors which they concentrated on in their own investigation of newsworthiness. The list comprises twelve main factors among which several have subfactors:

1. frequency,
2. threshold,
    2.1. absolute intensity,
    2.2. intensity increase,
3. unambiguity,
4. meaningfulness,
    4.1. cultural proximity,
    4.2. relevance,
5. consonance,
    5.1. predictability,
    5.2. demand,
6. unexpectedness,
    6.1. unpredictability,
    6.2. scarcity,
7. continuity,
8. composition,
9. reference to elite nations,
10. reference to elite people,
11. reference to persons and
12. reference to something negative.

Eight of these factors are considered anthropological, i.e. culture-free (factors 1–8), and four (factors 9–12) are culture-bound factors meaning that they may or may not be related to certain cultural settings (e.g. some news may be more newsworthy in the USA than in Europe and vice versa).

In the 1970s, Schulz (1990) suggested a reconceptualization of news factors stating that they should be considered hypotheses based on which journalists perceived reality in a certain way and made decisions about which event or aspect of event deserved to be newsworthy. According to Schulz (1990) news factors are characteristics that journalists attribute to reality so that news is actually a social construction. What is more, news factors are the criteria based on which journalists ascribe meaning to news and construct the newsworthiness of the reality they themselves observe. To put it simple, the audience is presented with a reality which has been filtered, or sieved, by journalists. However, the decision to publish a certain news item or not is the first step towards awarding news with the attribute newsworthy. The second important decision is to emphasize a news item by choosing

a particular place in the newspapers (e.g. front page), position on a page (top, middle or bottom), size and visual emphasis (caps, bold letters, accompanying picture). However, more refinement of the concept of newsworthiness followed Schulz's ideas so that Staab (1990) suggested that news factors are a result of the decision to publish a news item. In his opinion, journalists select news stories based on the criterion whether or not they conform to political goals which basically means that news factors are assigned to news stories after they have been selected as if journalists wanted to legitimize their initial selection (O'Neill & Harcup, 2009).

Yet, the question of newsworthiness has inspired further elaborations. Eilders (1997) supports the idea that news factors are related to editorial emphasis and that news factors steer both journalists' perceptions as well as audiences' selection and perception of news. A decade later Eilders (2006) even identified seven factors she thought are repeatedly involved in journalistic considerations of what might constitute newsworthiness:

1. personification (possibility of showing the 'human face' of an event; also with eye-witness reports),
2. damage or, more generally, negativity,
3. eliteness (presence of individuals or organizations with great societal power),
4. influence and relevance (having consequences for society),
5. controversy (conflict),
6. geographical proximity and
7. continuity (having been in the news before) (p. 8).

This set of news factors has been proven applicable in a wide variety of countries (Masterton, 2005) and may thus be considered highly relevant. What is more, in the context of digital media discourse, Eilder's position on newsworthiness may be considered crucial given that the same news factors that motivate the journalist to publish a news story will most probably influence the audience's decision to share that story or not (Trilling et al., 2017).

In a broader context of research on news factors and newsworthiness, these two concepts may be approached from the perspective of a causal or a functional model (Staab, 1990). The first entails that news factors are seen as inherent characteristics of an event based on which journalists choose whether to cover a story or not as well as to what extent. The rule is

simple: the more news factors apply to an event, the more newsworthy it becomes and the higher the probability the event will generate certain readership (Tumber, 1999). This means that in the causal model news factors are the cause of newsworthiness and they are independent variables that influence journalistic decisions (dependent variables) while journalists are considered passive actors. Nevertheless, the causal model does include the possibility of some subjective dynamics apart from news factors influencing the decision to cover a story (Boukes & Vliegenthart, 2020; Caple & Bednarek, 2016; O'Neill & Harcup, 2009) including practical considerations, journalistic instinct, commercial motives, etc.

In comparison to that, in the functional model (Staab, 1990), news factors are dependent variables and they are considered the outcome of journalistic decisions (independent variables). In this model, journalists are active and they establish the newsworthiness of an event based on their decisions so that newsworthiness is discursively constructed turning into a quality of a text (Caple & Bednarek, 2016). With the functional model, news factors are subjective aspects which depend entirely on the journalist's perception (Boukes & Vliegenthart, 2020; Staab, 1990). What is more, we may conclude that journalists do not select events based on the criterion whether those events have a set of news factors or not but rather journalists construct and put together stories together by adding news factors in the process to construct newsworthiness (Boukes & Vliegenthart, 2020; Caple & Bednarek, 2016).

There are arguments that some outlets, presumably tabloids, seem to rely on different sets of news factors. However, research clearly confirming that certain outlets follow different standards has yet to be conducted (Boukes & Vliegenthart, 2020). Generally speaking, there are three types of media: print, broadcast and internet media. A more detailed breakdown will render a more detailed classification of news outlets: newspapers (broadsheets and tabloids), television, radio, magazines and social media. Each of these types approaches the news in their own way while following certain standards deemed crucial in news creation and publication. These standards may be summed up as the core principles of journalism which include:

1. truth and accuracy,
2. independence,
3. fairness and impartiality,

4. humanity and
5. accountability (*Ethical Journalism Network*, 2021).

Journalists are expected to rely on these principles because without them, they would not be able to present real world events. In other words, their news would be clouded by subjectivism and personal interpretation which is considered unacceptable in the news business (despite the almost opposite impression we might have that most news nowadays are in fact subjective and interpretative rather than objective and informative).

However, it is the concept of newsworthiness itself which may explain why different outlets follow different news factors. In practice this means that an event becomes newsworthy only if the journalist sees some value in the news factors recognizable in the news event. Or, journalists of different outlets may attribute different values to one and the same event which is why tabloid newspapers sometimes seem to present news in a more exaggerated, sensationalist way than broadsheets (O'Neill & Harcup, 2009). Therefore, we may conclude that tabloids do not necessarily lie about some event, they just make it more appealing by adding and foregrounding those news factors deemed to attract a broader readership. Even though sometimes the tabloids risk lowering the news value of the news they present, they will primarily follow commercial considerations and deliberately emphasize those news factors that will appeal to the orientation and interest of the audience (Boukes & Vliegenthart, 2020). What is more, some outlets will resort to a certain way of framing an event (McMenamin et al., 2013) to achieve that their news reach a broader audience.

In their research, Bednarek and Caple (2014) agreed with the definitions provided in journalism/communication studies that 'news values are properties of events or stories or as criteria/principles that are applied by news workers in order to select events or stories as news or to choose the structure and order of reporting' (p. 136). What they did not agree with was that news values have not been the focus of critical linguistic analyses of news discourse. Despite the fact that news values are seen as bearing ideological aspects, therefore, being of interest to Critical Discourse Analysis, they seem to have been avoided by linguists. Exceptions have been attempts made by few linguists, such as, Fowler (1991), Richardson (2007) and van Dijk (1988) but a readily available linguistic framework for analysing news values is still missing (Bednarek & Caple, 2014). News values are seen as

culturally and socially constructed (Fowler, 1991), reflecting ideologies and priorities in society (Bell, 1991) or important ideological factors (Cotter, 2010). Yet, news values have not been the subject matter of Critical Discourse Analysis, at least not as much as Bednarek and Caple (2014) consider them bearing academic merits to the extent that they can initiate the shift of research on news values to the domain of linguistics.

Obviously, important criteria determining the choice of a particular news article are the news values which are discursively constructed and are defined as the 'newsworthy aspects of actors, happenings and issues as existing in and constructed through discourse' (Bednarek & Caple, 2014, p. 138). That is why Bednarek and Caple suggested an analytical framework for the linguistic analysis of news values. Their intention was not to replace existing Critical Discourse Analysis tools (e.g. transitivity analysis) but rather to contribute an addition to the toolbox. In their opinion, certain news values are more provocative than others. Among the various devices based on which news values may be constructed, linguistic devices are most easily to apply within a specific discursive approach. Their approach is constructivist so that certain news values can be foregrounded or backgrounded in texts. In addition, their approach can enable the identification of how news values can be construed, constructed or established through linguistic and non-linguistic devices. The need to analyse news values from a linguistic point is based on the necessity to determine how they are established in discourse, i.e. how news values have been put into words. As Bednarek & Caple (2014) point out, news values are the socially-shared cognitive representation while linguistic devices are the tools for construing news values that provoke readers' reactions.

That is why Bednarek and Caple (2014) made a list of news values which they believed crucial for the purpose of analysing news values:

1. negativity,
2. timeliness,
3. proximity,
4. superlativeness,
5. eliteness,
6. impact,
7. novelty,
8. personalisation and

9. consonance.

In order to identify, determine and analyse the proposed news values, Bednarek and Caple (2014) suggested a list of key linguistic devices:

1. negative evaluative language;
2. reference to the past, present or future;
3. reference to place;
4. quantifiers, intensifiers, comparative and superlative adjectives as well as metaphors and similes;
5. labels and assessment;
6. evaluative language;
7. indication of newness, comparisons and references to happenings;
8. reference to emotion and quotes;
9. evaluative language expressing expectedness.

In the attempt to contribute to the discussion of news values, Harcup and O'Neill (2017) provided a list of 10 requirements out of which news stories should satisfy at least one to attract interest:

1. power elite,
2. celebrity,
3. entertainment,
4. surprise,
5. bad news,
6. good news,
7. magnitude,
8. relevance,
9. follow-up and
10. newspaper agenda.

If conducted from a linguistic point of view, an analysis of news factors and/or news values should most certainly be based on the corner stones set up in communication and media studies but lean on linguistic devices as well. The ones proposed by Bednarek and Caple (2014) may serve as a good starting point. Such combined approach might enable new insights into the newsworthiness of news events and provide perspectives otherwise not possible if news events are analysed outside the framework of linguistics altogether. Given that none of the provided lists of news values and

news factors are considered final or complete, analyses conducted from a linguistic aspect might in fact lead to the identification of different and more state-of-the-art news values and news factors thereby contributing to a broader application of the Theory of Newsworthiness.

To conclude, the Theory of Newsworthiness may be applied to a corpus of news to confirm what news factors influence news selection in a certain audience (Eilders, 2006). Being characteristics or qualities of news stories, news factors (timeliness, objectivity, value, truthfulness, etc.) have a relative impact on the selection of news stories. In other words, audiences opt for a certain type of news based on what they consider worthy of their attention. Apart from the news factor, a second criteria determining the choice of a particular news article are the news values which refer to the journalists' qualities and characteristics (integrity, ethical standards, conformity, etc.) as well as their judgement about the relevance of news factors (Kepplinger & Ehmig, 2006).

The next section will be an attempt to present how the Theory of Newsworthiness may be applied to the analysis of digital media discourse from a linguistic point of view.

#NewsworthinessInDigitalMediaDiscourse

Based on Bednarek and Caple (2014), as presented in the previous section, news values can be analysed from a linguistic point of view by identifying linguistic devices that comprise news values. As an example, I would like to present a corpus comprising 77 news articles published on *politika.rs* (the website of the Serbian online news outlet *Politika*) on 14 December 2018, the day after Priština announced the transformation of the Kosovo Security Forces (KSF) into a regular army.[3]

The website *politika.rs* was used as a source for the corpus because Politika is the oldest newspaper in Serbia with the longest tradition of news publication and a circulation of the print edition estimated at around 100,000 copies a day. The website's readership in 2018 counted almost 50,000 average daily real users (at the moment this chapter was written, fewer than 40,000 according to *Gemius Audience*, 2022) while the profile of the readership includes mainly highly educated middle-class members, most of whom have been loyal to *Politika* for decades. Paradoxically, though claiming to be neutral, the news outlet *Politika* has always been perceived as pro-governmental but has rarely been denied their professionalism. Based on the readers' comments in the comment sections, audiences seem to trust *Politika* mainly because it has such a long-lasting tradition. Still, the news values constructed in the articles published in *Politika* are perceived as leaning towards siding with the government. Nevertheless, when it comes to matters of national interest jeopardised by international actors, as is the case with the news presented here, the news values are obviously meant to provoke patriotism so as to create a united front against those factors which might put national interests into danger. This seems to have been the case when Kosovo announced the formation of a regular army which was not part of the many agreements drafted under the supervision of Brussels and the EU.

The distribution of news values in the 77 analysed articles showed that six recurring news values listed by Bednarek and Caple (2014) dominated the articles published on that day: negativity, proximity,

[3] All examples presented here were part of a corpus explored in Đorđević, 2020b. The examples will be provided in a gloss translation in English only.

superlativeness, prominence, impact and personalisation. Each of these will be presented in more details.

1. Negativity occurred 26 times in articles from the sections Politics and World. The linguistic device that was used to construe this news value was negative evaluative language, such as *torture*, *ruin*, *crazy*, *Nazi terror*, *risk*, *illegal*. All these instances of negative evaluative language referred to representatives of the Kosovo government but also to representatives of the EU who were portrayed as supporting the Kosovo government. The news value constructed here is that this one-sided proclamation of the Kosovo Army was to be considered a bad thing. In fact, it was to be seen as a betrayal of what had been agreed on but it was also meant to draw the public's attention to the fact that the international community was not going to do anything about it, a fact that bothered both the journalists constructing the news as well as the audience reading it.
2. Proximity occurred 38 times in articles from the sections Politics, World, Region and Society. The linguistic devices were references to 1) place: *Kosovo*, *Serbia*, *EU*, *USA*, *UK*, *Germany*, *France* and *Brussels*; 2) nation: *Albanians*, *Serbs*, *Americans* and 3) the inclusive first-person plural pronoun: *we* referring to the Serbian government. Each of these linguistic devices was meant to establish a closer proximity to the countries surrounding Serbia implying that the problem was not a problem pertaining to Serbia only. At the same time, the mentioning of countries further away from Serbia may be seen as a direct reference to the involvement of those countries in the Kosovo issue. What is more, it seems that even the rule 'out of sight, out of mind' might not apply in this case given that the interest in an independent Kosovo is extending to communities even beyond the limits of the EU (the USA to be precise).
3. Superlativeness could be identified 22 times in articles from the sections Politics, World, Region and Society. Two linguistic devices could be identified: 1) intensifiers: *extremely*, *heated*, *urgent*, *meek* as well as 2) metaphors: *Kosovo sponsors*, *little Serbia*, *backbencher*, '*titans*'. The news value of superlativeness is meant to

provoke the readership to get angry at the fact that Serbia does not enjoy the same protection as does Kosovo and double standards are being applied when it comes to what Kosovo wants to achieve.

4. Prominence occurred 27 times in articles from the sections Politics, World and Society. The linguistic device referred to high status role labels, such as *Church*, *Patriarch*, *President* and *Ambassador*. Each role referred to some important stakeholder in the story about Kosovo and each of them had to say something about the KSF thereby contributing to the newsworthiness of the news story. Of course, both sides were represented, i.e. those in favour of the move made by Kosovo and those against it.
5. Impact could be identified 29 times in articles from the sections Politics, World and Region. The linguistic device was description of significant or relevant consequences, such as *gradual increase of minimum wage*, *sort out situation within the church*, *will defend their own people*. This news value added the element of the social importance of the newly-formed Kosovo army and its impact on the Serbian society.
6. Personalisation was identified 13 times in the section Politics. The linguistic device was references to emotion, such as *frighten*, *calm*, *tranquil*, *dignified*, *proud*. This news value was meant to make the news about the transformation of the KSF more personal and thus more relevant to every single reader of the particular news story.

The illustrated news values together contribute to the newsworthiness of the fact that Kosovo decided to transform their Security Forces into a regular army against all international agreements that Kosovo had signed with Serbia. However, this news event is even more important – thus more newsworthy – as it is meant to draw attention to the fact that the international political community was not doing anything to prevent this act nor did it do anything to revert the decision Kosovo made. The journalists wanted their readership to feel betrayed, violated, appalled, even angry which is why they attributed those news values to the news event that would provoke such feelings.

Bednarek and Caple (2014) explained that by offering a theoretical framework to enable the study of news values from a linguistic point of view they did not mean to reduce news values to discourse or to propose that news values can be constructed only through discourse. They wanted to provide a way to incorporate a more systematic analysis into the study of news values so as to determine how they are established in discourse. Such investigations, according to Bednarek and Caple (2014) could be related to ethnographic, cognitive or sociocognitive research to provide insights otherwise difficult to achieve. From a linguistic perspective, language expresses, indicates, emphasises and highlights news values (Bell, 1991). This means that language can be used to identify exactly those places in the news where some fact or event has been emphasised in a particular way. Such identification may then shed new light on the reasons why a fact or event has been chosen to be emphasised more than some other, what the impact of that fact or event might be, even what the audience is expected to feel like when reading about that fact or event. Cotter (2010) even suggests that news values may be seen as embedded in language while Bednarek and Caple (2012) suggested in their earlier research that news values may be defined as values that are construed in and through discourse. With all this in mind, the endeavour of analysing news values from a linguistic point of view may be both important and insightful; therefore, such research may be worthwhile.

Chapter Six: Discursive Strategies

Various analytical approaches can be applied to reveal and understand the subtle meanings of news texts (O'Keeffe, 2011; van Dijk, 2013). Reisigl and Wodak (2001) suggest studying the discursive strategies of texts, and have thus considered discourse-analytical approaches to racism, antisemitism and ethnicism. Since these strategies are described as 'possible methods of linguistic analysis that permit the identification of manifest and latent discriminatory meanings of texts and discourses' (2001, p. xi), we may assume that the study of these strategies may be extended to other topics present in media discourse, such as political decisions, economic issues, diplomatic actions and so on.

With the aim of providing a more thorough and more subject-specific approach to discursive strategies, Reisigl and Wodak (2001) investigated discourse with racist, anti-Semitic, nationalist or ethnic ingredients. Their decision to choose such discourse was based on the assumption that racism, ethnicism, and antisemitism are produced and reproduced discursively, which is why they concluded that 'the discourse-analytical approach is very rewarding when dealing with these forms of social discrimination' (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001: xi). The complete number of discursive strategies that have been defined by various authors exceeds the strategies selected by Reisigl and Wodak. Based on their selection of strategies, the following four types of discursive macro-strategies may be singled out:

1. Constructive strategies (aiming at the construction of national identities);
2. Preservative or justificatory strategies (aiming at the conservation and reproduction of national identities or narratives of identity);
3. Transformative strategies (aiming at the change of national identities);
4. Destructive strategies (aiming at the dismantling of national identities) (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 43).

Obviously, the criterion that the strategies rely on is the context, i.e. the specific 'social field or domain in which the "discursive events" related to the topic under investigation take place – one or another of the aspects

connected with these strategies is brought into prominence' (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 43).

In order to arrive at a set of relevant strategies that would serve the purpose of analysing the topic of racism and discrimination, Reisigl and Wodak (2001) selected five questions they wanted to pursue:

1. How are persons named and referred to linguistically?
2. What traits, characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to them?
3. By means of what arguments and argumentation schemes do specific persons or social groups try to justify and legitimise the exclusion, discrimination, suppression and exploitation of others?
4. From what perspective or point of view are these namings, attributions and arguments expressed?
5. Are the respective discriminating utterances articulated overtly, are they even intensified or are they mitigated? (pp. 44–45)

According to these questions, the Reisigl and Wodak (2001) chose five discursive strategies, i.e. discourse-analytical approaches to racism, antisemitism and ethnicism. As the strategies address the most important issues related to news items in general, they may easily be extended to other topics pursued in (digital) media discourse and they include the following:

1. Reference or nomination – indicates how social actors, objects, phenomena and events are named and referred to linguistically.
2. Predication – shows which characteristics and features are attributed to the actors, objects and phenomena.
3. Argumentation – reveals how claims of truth are justified.
4. Perspectivization – identifies how the point of view of the producer of a text is positioned.
5. Intensifying and/ or mitigating – presents to what extent the force and status of utterances are modified.

An analysis based on the study of discursive strategies may contribute to the identification of 'a more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practices (including discursive practices) adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic aim' (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 44). Discursive strategies are located at different levels of linguistic

organization and complexity. Different 'types of discursive macro-strategies' may be identified whereby each pursues 'a specific aim' (p. 43).

The most effective and the most frequently used strategy is argumentation (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001, pp. 44–45), and it involves the assignment of positive and negative attributions by providing argumentative justification for claims of truth based on various types of arguments. Argumentation relies on topoi, which are defined as the components of argument schemes that can connect the premise of an argument to its conclusion (Kwon et al., 2014). Topoi are 'contained in utterances as content-related warrants or conclusion rules in the form of a condensed argument (i.e. *enthymeme*) which refer to common sense or implicit presupposed knowledge that every participant understands within certain groups in specific contexts' (2014, p. 7). Common topoi reflect authority, burden, reality, threat and urgency.

When using topoi as tools of analysis, all the attitudes, values and predispositions elicited in an argument are interpreted in a manner that Wilder refers to as 'after-the-fact' (2012, p.19). This means that an argument is reconstructed based on lexical items that refer to a certain enthymeme (i.e. reflect a certain topos). The lexical items are identified either as individual instances clearly referring to a certain topos or as being located within a broader context where an argument may be suspected. For instance, an argument may contain lexical items referring to social actors (e.g. politicians, victims, attackers, police, government officials, etc.) or their representation in a context (e.g. individual, collective or impersonal), thus indicating authority or burden. The mentioning or description of a social event may refer to the topos of reality (e.g. demonstrations, riots, elections, etc.), while lexical items indicating evaluative and emotional representations may refer to the topoi of threat or urgency (e.g. verbs such as urge, warn, state, etc., or adjectives such as important, imperative, dangerous, etc.). Therefore, the analysis is aimed at establishing the argumentation scheme (i.e. topoi) relevant to a certain content by identifying the links between the lexical item, the context and the argument implied (Krzyżanowski, 2010). The next section will present a more detailed example.

#StrategiesInRealCorpora

An effective presentation of discourse in the digital media will depend mostly on how effective the headline and the lead are. Readers skim through the content represented to them in the media by reading the headlines first and if they are interested, they read the lead and if they are still interested, they read the entire article (see #HeadlinesAndLeads). Therefore, the strategies employed in the discourse of the headline and the lead have to be as effective as possible to draw the readers' attention and to be powerful enough to keep their focus on the discourse presented to them in the article. This section will provide a more detailed presentation of the five strategies outlined by Reisigl and Wodak (2001) presented in the previous section (reference or nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivization and intensifying and/or mitigating).[4]

Reference or nomination

The discursive strategy of reference or nomination is used to name and refer to social actors, objects, phenomena and events linguistically. This is achieved in various ways, such as the use of metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche or by employing membership categorization devices (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 45). For instance, on 27 April 2017, *BBC News* published an article with the following heading and lead:

> Pawternity leave - firms with unusual staff benefits.
>
> Gia is going to take a week's paid leave to house train her puppy Rye. As anyone who has had a new puppy will understand, 24-year-old Gia Nigro has got her hands full.

The heading illustrates the use of blending, a word formation process for the purpose of referring to a rather new type of paid leave available to employees in some companies. The blend *pawternity* was created based on the nouns *paw* and *maternity*. The blend yielded the noun "paw+ternity" with the aim to show that some companies allow staff to take a leave of

[4] All examples presented here were compiled for two separate explorations published in Đorđević, 2018 and Đorđević, 2020a.

absence to take care of their pets. However, in the lead, the strategy has been deviated from as the newly blended noun is no longer used. Instead, *pawternity* is referred to as paid leave. On the one hand, the author might have resorted to a familiar word to make sure readers know what *pawternity* is about. On the other hand, the author has actually legitimized the term *pawternity* by no longer referring to it as if being something new. In other words, the lead is now referring to this type of paid leave as a benefit employees are legally entitled to.

Predication

Based on predication, particular characteristics and features are attributed to the actors, objects and phenomena mentioned in an article. A certain type of predication can 'be realised as stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative and positive traits in the linguistic form of implicit or explicit predicates' (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 45). Predication cannot always be separated from nomination because referential identification may involve a form of denotation or connotation with more or less deprecatory or appreciative labelling of actors, objects and phenomena. In the article published by *BBC News* on 27 April 2017, the headline and lead indicate that an inanimate object may be attributed a certain trait:

> The mother of all bombs: How badly did it hurt IS in Afghanistan
>
> On 13 April the US dropped one of its largest non-nuclear bombs on a tunnel complex used by so-called Islamic State militants in eastern Afghanistan. It was the first time such a weapon had been used in battle.

The bomb mentioned in the headline is referred to as *mother*, thus the fact is reinforced that it is an extremely strong weapon. It is an inanimate object given additional strength by being called *mother*. In this way, the noun exerts respect. In the lead, the noun *mother* is no longer used. The author is being rather factual by stating actual specifics about the bomb. The predication involved in the headline, yet not fully pursued in the lead, is supposed to draw attention but not to the extent that it is labelled as exaggeration.

Argumentation

The strategy of argumentation may justify positive and negative attributions by providing argumentative justification for claims of truth. Since various arguments may be used to justify claims, argumentation relies on topoi, or argument schemes that can connect the premise of an argument to its conclusion (Kwon et al. 2014). The most common topoi reflect authority, burden, reality, threat and urgency.

Topos of authority

Based on the topos of authority, an 'action is legitimate if mandated by someone in authority' (Kwon et al., 2014, p. 271). The argument involves lexical items that refer to a social actor or their representation in a context. Usually, politicians, victims, attackers, police, government officials and so on are represented as individuals or a group who have been granted the authority to perform an action. An example presented in Chapter Four shall serve as an example here as well. Namely, *Reuters* Published on 28 April 2017 the following news:

> British anti-terrorism police say plots contained after woman shot, arrests
>
> British counter-terrorism police said on Friday they had thwarted an active plot after a woman was shot during an armed raid on a house in north London in the second major security operation in the British capital in the space of a few hours.

As has been stated in Chapter Four, the frame of attribution of responsibility was used to indicate that the shooting of a person may be justified if the shooter is some kind of authority who can perform such an act in the name of some grater good. The exact same meaning is transmitted with the use of the topos of authority as it legitimizes an act, even as violent as shooting an innocent person, if the shooter is the police or some other representative of the law or the government. The headline relies on reported speech thereby assigning authority to the anti-terrorism police, who explain what happened. If the anti-terrorism police say they had to shoot the woman, it must be right. In the lead, authority is reinforced by the repeated use of reported speech and by including reasons for the raid and the shooting.

Topos of burden

The topos of burden is similar to the topos of authority in the sense that an argument also involves lexical items referring to social actors or their representation in a context. However, the topos of burden may be regarded 'as a specific causal topos (a topos of consequence)' (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 78) as it indicates that a 'problem needs to be acted on if a person or institution is burdened by it' (Kwon et al., 2014, p. 271). In other words, the argument implies that if a social actor is burdened by specific problems, they should act accordingly to diminish the burden, suggesting that the social actor has been forced into a decision (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). Again, an example mentioned in Chapter Four as an example of the frame of responsibility can be used here to illustrate the topos of burden. In the article published by *Reuters* on 19 April 2017 about the British Prime Minister deciding on a snap election, in both headline and lead is obvious that the overall situation in Britain at the time burdened May with the decision to call an early election:

> Britain's May wins parliament's backing for June 8 snap election
>
> Prime Minister Theresa May won parliament's backing for an early election on Wednesday, a vote she said would strengthen her hand in divorce talks with the European Union and help heal divisions in Britain.

The headline in particular presents the argument that the decision about the snap election was taken jointly by both parliament and Prime Minister. The burden that May had to carry is presented as being shared by both Prime Minister and the Members of the Parliament. The strategy of argumentation is thus intensified and the same idea is explored further in the lead. Both May and the parliament, as the highest decision-making authorities, had to opt for a snap election because Britain needed a strong position in the negotiations with the European Union.

Topos of reality

The topos of reality involves lexical items that refer to social events such as demonstrations, riots, elections and so on. The event is perceived as a crisis and argumentation is provided by implying a 'particular action needs to be performed given the way reality is as it is' (Kwon et al., 2014, p. 271). The example published by *Reuters* on 19 April 2017 refers to an economic

crisis in former Yugoslav republics triggered by a major supermarket chain store in Croatia:

> Ex-Yugoslav republics try to shield themselves from Agrokor crisis
>
> Four former Yugoslav republics agreed on Wednesday to coordinate efforts to save jobs and protect suppliers of Croatia's Agrokor to shield their own economies from the crisis engulfing the food and retail group.

The headline speaks of former Yugoslav countries wanting to protect themselves from the negative effect of the downfall of the supermarket chain store. The topos of reality is practically an excuse for the actions taken by all former Yugoslav republics. Given the crisis provoked by Agrokor, a real fact with real consequences, the reaction had to be real as well. The details presented in the lead refer to the fact that the countries affected by the Agrokor crisis are uniting their strengths to 'shield their own economies'.

Topos of threat

The topos of threat involves lexical items indicating evaluative and emotional representations that refer to a threat. Argumentation is provided by suggesting that an 'action should be performed to mitigate the consequences of a specified threat' (Kwon et al., 2014, p. 271). Most frequently, nouns explicitly referring to a threat, conflict or problem are used, but often lexical verbs (e.g. warn, alert, state, etc.) or adjectives (e.g. dangerous, critical, threatening, etc.) are added to make the threat apparent. In the example published by *Reuters* on 28 April 2017, the immediate threat comes from North Korea and the US President is warning against it:

> Exclusive: Trump says 'major, major' conflict with North Korea possible, but seeks diplomacy
>
> U.S. President Donald Trump said on Thursday a major conflict with North Korea is possible in the standoff over its nuclear and missile programs, but he would prefer a diplomatic outcome to the dispute.

The headline states it is 'exclusive' news, and by quoting Trump's 'major, major conflict' the notion of threat is established. In the lead the topos of threat has been exploited further signalling that a major conflict is possible so that the threat is there. The additional strategy of mitigation can be identified in the lead – it is obvious in Trump's reference to diplomatic

negotiations. In other words, the threat is there, but it need not necessarily lead to a war.

Topos of urgency

The topos of urgency is similar to the topos of threat; the difference is that argumentation is provided by suggesting that a 'decision/action needs to be made if an event requires such a response' (Kwon et al., 2014, p. 271). The argument involves lexical items indicating evaluative and emotional representations that refer to some urgent matter. To achieve that, modal verbs (e.g. should, ought to, could, etc.), lexical verbs (e.g. urge, advise, prompt, etc.) or adjectives (e.g. important, imperative, crucial, etc.) are used to highlight the urgency of a certain problem, issue or matter. An example mentioned in Chapter Four where the frame of human interest was presented may serve the illustration of the strategy of urgency as well. The article published by *Reuters* on 28 April 2017 refers to the need for Novak Djokovic to seek advice in order to improve his career:

> Djokovic should seek Federer's advice, says former mentor
>
> A floundering Novak Djokovic should seek advice from evergreen Swiss maestro Roger Federer in order to rediscover his vintage self, the Serb's former Davis Cup coach Bogdan Obradovic said.

In the headline, the topos of urgency relies on indirect speech and on the modal verb 'should'. The lead reinforces the topos of urgency by quoting the former coach. Practically, the article pursues the idea that if Djokovic wants to get back onto his track of success, advice from those who are successful is more than necessary. It is urgent.

Perspectivization

The strategy of perspectivization undoubtedly refers to the way the point of view of the producer of a text has been positioned. In addition, this strategy may include framing or discourse representation (Reisigl & Wodak 2001: 45), which implies that speakers express their involvement in the particular discourse by reporting, describing, narrating or quoting events and utterances. This is obvious in the headline and lead published on *CNBC* on 27 April 2017:

> What Macron's victory means for Brexit
>
> Macron's election throws new uncertainty over on-going Brexit negotiations. The president-elect's adviser has said he will have to be tough on talks.Le Pen's loss could provide less cause for hard Brexit

The perspective of the author of the text is evident in the word *means* used in the headline. In fact, the headline immediately points to the author's opinion and their intended point of view, since it clearly suggests that Macron's victory does mean something for Brexit. The point of view is reinforced in the lead by the fact that the author immediately lists the reasons why the victory is important. Therefore, the lead is actually a list of arguments. However, the reasons are not listed in an explicit way, i.e. the author does not clearly indicate what exactly Macron's victory means, as nobody could predict that at the time. Nevertheless, the author suggests that Macron's victory *throws uncertainty*, the president is expected to be *tough* and the statement that *Le Pen's loss* weakens Britain's position in Brexit negotiations just adds to the fact Macron as President might not improve Britain's overall situation.

Intensifying and Mitigating

By means of the strategy of intensifying and mitigating, the force and status of utterances are modified to a certain extent. To be precise, they may help to qualify and modify the 'epistemic status of a proposition by intensifying or mitigating the illocutionary force' of utterances (Reisigl & Wodak 2001: 45). This also means that they can play a significant role in a certain discursive presentation, because they can set the tone and thus exert certain opinions, even beliefs. The utterance in the headline published by *The Guardian* on 27 April 2017 highlights as follows:

> Ridley Scott: Aliens are out there and one day they'll come for us
>
> Director says it is 'ridiculous' to think that we are alone in the universe and believes 'superior beings' will one day visit Earth

The news points to Ridley Scott's opinion about aliens and it is immediately clear that the strategy of intensifying has been employed. As can be seen in the headline, direct speech has been used. This may also be an example of the strategy of argumentation based on the topos of authority, because the headline is exerting the belief that the statement must be true, as it

comes from Ridley Scott. With respect to the strategy of intensifying (mitigation is not the case in this example), the Present Simple Tense has been used (*aliens are*) which is meant to indicate that this is a fact. In addition, the Future Simple Tense (*they'll come for us*) adds up to the strength of the headline – it is almost like a promise. In the lead, a commonly used argument has been resorted to by indicating that it is ridiculous to think we are alone in the universe. These words have been used quite often, even by scientists, to support the fact that there are aliens out there. The adjective is put between inverted commas so that the audience can still believe this is what Scott said. The same tenses, Present Simple and Future Simple, have been used in the lead to reinforce the intensifying, i.e. force and status have been added to the utterance.

All the examples provided here should be taken as examples only. They are meant to illustrate yet another approach to digital media discourse. The analyses presented show how strategies may be used to support facts, justify actions, intensify meaning. In particular, establishing a certain argumentation scheme based on topoi may be seen as an identification of specific links between the lexical item used by the author, the context and the argument implied. This is exactly what digital media discourse in linguistic research is meant to be about.

Chapter Seven: Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Providing a thorough and comprehensive presentation of multimodal discourse analysis would take a whole volume and a few pages in my book will not give enough credit to this emerging field within discourse analysis. However, I will try to provide at least some general insight into how multimodal discourse can be analysed within linguistic research.

To begin with, it is difficult to say who started the first investigations of multimodal discourse, who contributed to its inception, or, who initiated the many different contemplations of multimodal discourse analysis. As pointed out in the first part of this book, it all started with the term 'multimodality' which linguists and discourse analysists started to use about 20 years ago to refer to different communicative resources, such as language, sound, image, music, gesture or spatial elements in multimodal texts and communicative events (van Leeuwen, 2012). That is also the moment when linguists finally acknowledged what had been obvious for so long that communication is multimodal and that language (speech or writing) does not exist without nonverbal communicative elements, i.e. sound, music, visual layout, *mise-en-scène*, colour, gesture, etc. In the 1960s French structuralists turned to analysing different media, such as the news, advertisements and films thereby initiating a shift of interest from monomodal discourse analysis focusing only on isolated strings of text to more complex representations of semiotic modes. The most inspiring was Halliday (1978) with his 'grammars' of semiotic modes who initiated research of visual images (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996), sound and music (van Leeuwen, 1999) or body action (Martinec, 2004) among others.

The most important aspect of multimodal discourse is that it is not just discourse including semiotic elements other than language, speech or writing. Just a simple look at one's own social media account, any account at all – Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc. – will reveal the striking fact that the multimodal discourse we engage in on a daily bases consists of meaning bearing forms or communicative resources 'which are indigenous to participatory web such as tagging, likes, annotation, sharing, hyperlinks, etc. that need to be accounted for' (KhosraviNik, 2017, p. 587). In other words, there is much more to multimodal discourse than the various modes of communication occurring in it. Although language will be the basic mode

employed in multimodal discourse, all other modes used in it will bear affordances which will have to be accounted for; therefore, they will have to be analysed. That is why, rather than citing various authors who have contributed immensely to the development of understanding multimodal discourse, I would like to devote this chapter to present some solutions proposing how to actually conduct multimodal discourse analysis in practice. In addition, I presented some of the research on multimodality and multimodal discourse in the first part of the book (#Multimodality and #MultimodalDiscourse). Therefore, for a more detailed review of approaches to multimodal discourse in the past 20 years, I would recommend LeVine and Scollon (2004), Bateman (2008), Kress (2011), Bateman et al. (2017), to name a few whereas I will try to devote this chapter to the rather ambitious idea to present possible forms of analyses of multimodal discourse within linguistic research.

Among the most important scholars who proposed an approach to multimodal discourse analysis, I would like to point out the work provided by Kress (2011). Though his approach does not offer an actual toolbox for the analysis of multimodal discourse, he does offer a somewhat detailed explanation of how to approach such discourse. I do not think I will be able to give Kress the credit he deserves, but I would like to try to present at least the gist of what he suggested.

To begin with, Kress (2011) pointed out that in multimodal discourse analysis there are many different textual 'threads' which are materially diverse. He suggested gesture, speech, image (still or moving), writing, music, etc. and he saw them as three-dimensional entities which 'can be drawn into one textual/semiotic whole' (p. 36). The whole, or 'text' as Kress refers to it, is 'a multimodal semiotic entity in two, three or four dimensions' so that all texts are 'the result of the semiotic work of design, and of processes of composition and production' (p. 36). Texts are 'ensembles composed of different modes, resting on the agentive semiotic work of the maker of such texts' (p. 36).

This means that the text realises the interests of its author who employs different semiotic resources to make the text coherent. An important fact to bear in mind is that coherence exists 'both internally, among the elements of the text, but also externally, with elements of the environment in which texts occur' (Kress, 2011, p. 36). The analysis of that text along with all its semiotic resources will be a kind of interpretation given by its analyst

which might create a completely different coherence than the one intended by its author. What is more, the coherence that the author established will be a reflection of the social environment that it has been created in, but it will also project either that same social environment or the way it is being interpreted. In other words, the principles of coherence rely on a particular social order but at the same time ask questions about that same social order thereby facilitating the understanding of all the relationships existing in that order. Therefore, being a textual characteristic, the coherence established within a text serves as a starting point for analysis as it reflects 'the conceptions of order of the community that has elaborated these principles of order, and which uses them as a resource for establishing and maintaining cohesion and coherence in the community' (p. 36).

Based on Kress (2011), multimodal discourse analysis aims at finding the tools which could provide insight into the relations of the meanings of a community and its semiotic manifestations. The primary assumption to keep in mind is that in the multimodal approach, language (speech or writing) is only one means that is used in the process of representation and meaning making. We might as well conclude that any other type of discourse analysis is in fact revealing only partial meanings because they rely only on language. As we have seen, discourse cannot be considered monomodal since there is never only speech or writing. There will always be at least one additional mode accompanying discourse. If it is speech, there will be at least gestures and facial expressions, and if it is writing, there will be a particular font (bold or regular or italics), a certain layout or any other visually transferred meaning. That is why multimodal discourse analysis regards a text as a coherent semiotic entity which includes various meanings elicited from the semiotic resources existing in the text. Based on such approach, important conclusions about various issues concerning society, politics, culture or any other issue implemented in a text and expressed through multimodal discourse can be analysed, interpreted, explained or put into a broader context.

Another attempt at defining multimodal discourse analysis has been provided by O'Halloran and Fei (2014) who proposed the Systemic functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SF-MDA) which they saw as an extension of Halliday's (1978) Systemic Functional Theory (SFT). In the essence of Halliday's SFT is the concept of social semiotics based on which semiotic resources are used both to produce communicative artefacts and events as

well as to interpret them. SF-MDA focuses on the 'grammatics' of semiotic resources with the aim to understand how different resources contribute to a multimodal phenomenon but also how they combine with the meanings that arise as semiotic choices from that phenomenon. The basic premise of SF-MDA is the same as the one Halliday (1978) suggested – 'the organization of semiotic resources reflects the social functions which the resources are required to play' (O'Halloran & Fei, 2014, p. 137).

The concept of systemic in SF-MDA follows Halliday's (1985) approach to social systems and 'modes of cultural behaviour' (p. 4). These are inter-related systems of meanings based on which social interactions and practices as well as society itself are construed. Both semiotic resources and society make up a unified whole which needs to be investigated as such. The concept of functional in SF-MDA again leans on Halliday's (1994) view that the framework of SFT is functional and not formal because texts are created in a certain context bearing a specific meaning. Therefore, meaning can be interpreted only within that same context. SF-MDA goes a step further and describes the meaning potential of a text metafunctionally thereby allowing a comparison between the semiotic resources identified in the text as well as between the meanings that the semiotic resources carry when integrated in a multimodal text.

Regarding the final three terms in SF-MDA, O'Halloran and Fei (2014) rely on existing discussions. For instance, considering the term multimodal, they point out that in their approach the term refers both to the nature of the discourse analysed as well as the type of approach. Though it seems unnecessary to specify that discourse is multimodal – given that it cannot be anything else but multimodal – O'Halloran and Fei (2014) believe it is necessary to keep the term in SF-MDA. It stresses that language is just one semiotic resource which is based on Halliday and Hasan (1985) who recognize different modes of meaning but also the fact that culture as a whole can be defined as 'a set of semiotic systems, as a set of systems of meaning, all of which interrelate' (p. 4). As far as the term discourse in SF-MDA is concerned, O'Halloran and Fei (2014) rely on Gee (2008), Jewitt (2009) and O'Halloran (2011). They stress that a distinctiveness of SF-MDA is its fine-grained analysis but the 'discourse is also related to the macro-social context and vice versa, following the underlying principles of SFT' (O'Halloran & Fei, 2014, p. 241).

This means that SF-MDA reveals how various semiotic choices function inter-semiotically which then provide answers to larger patterns of social context and culture. Finally, the term analysis in SF-MDA implies that semiotic resources, metafunctions, systems (at different levels), system choices and the inter-semiotic relations in multimodal texts are all part of the analysis. This further implies that SF-MDA exceeds a discursive description based on reviewing data or unusual occurrences in the sense that it implements the 'analysis of the actual choices made against the backdrop of other possible choices which could have been made' (O'Halloran, 2009, p. 101).

Another relatively new approach to multimodal discourse was introduced by Bednarek and Caple (2017) who stress that the analysis of such discourse involves multiple methods of which expertise in corpus linguistics and the use of special software for both analysis and presentation of data are essential. These then have to be combined with a specific multimodal approach which can detect the various aspects of the multimodal sample. In addition, when conducting a linguistic analysis of multimodal discourse the most difficult question is what is the unit of analysis. On the one hand, the linguist can separate the different semiotic modes identified in the text and examine them individually. On the other hand, the linguist must view the text as a single multimodal communicative act and examine the combination of the semiotic modes in the text (van Leeuwen, 2005). What is more, the linguist will then have to decide whether to conduct a 'text-as-corpus' perspective (focus on the patterns across the text) or a 'text-as-text' perspective (focus on the patterns within the text).

Bednarek and Caple (2017) wanted to offer a new topology which would allow the researcher to analyse multimodal discourse based on a new tool for visualizing results which is presented in Figure 4 and consists of four quadrants within which the analysis of some multimodal discourse can be centred on.

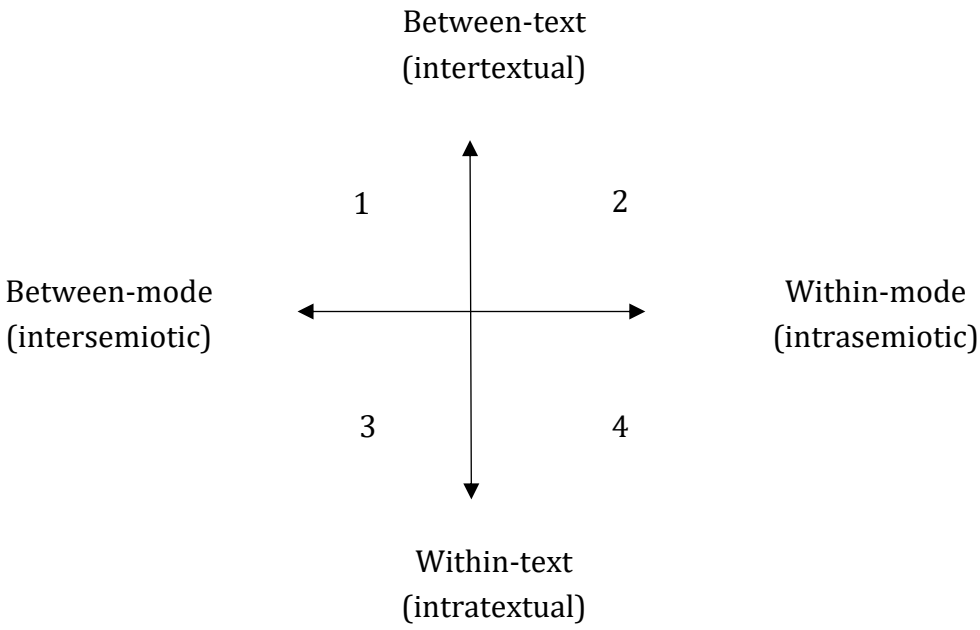

Figure 4: A new topology for situating research (Bednarek & Caple, 2017).

The first step is to position the prospective analysis within one of four quadrants or zones of analysis that Bednarek and Caple defined in their model (2017) (Figure 4). They suggest that research can follow two possible axes. The first establishes whether the research focuses on one semiotic mode (intrasemiotic) or more than one (intersemiotic) while the second establishes if the research focuses on patterns across text (intertextual) or within text (intratextual). As presented by Bednarek and Caple (2017), research can follow either axis, horizontal or vertical thereby positioning itself as intersemiotic/intrasemiotic and intertextual/intratextual. The authors point out that the zones should not be perceived as strict or separate categories, but rather as regions within which a particular research can be analysed. Therefore, the topology that Bednarek and Caple (2017) suggest is rather scalar and not categorical, which would be the case in a taxonomy because in that way the approaches to specific research would be mainly intrasemiotic and more intertextual. Recently, Calvo-Maturana and Forceville (2021) based their analysis on the intra- and intertextual corpus-driven approach with the aim to investigate how the family and the self are presented in children's picture books. Their analysis was qualitative and they managed

to draw important conclusions regarding gender issues, the role of grandparents in relationship to identity issues, sibling relationships, etc. presented in children's picture books, i.e. multimodal discourse.

Bednarek and Caple (2017) have conducted quite a few studies based on their topology. Their conclusion was that a topology may aid the distinguishing of 'different strands of analysis in discourse analytical projects that bring together multiple approaches' (p. 23) but the display of results of such complex analyses is difficult to achieve. The reason why is that it is difficult to present all the patterns across modes and within texts as well as patterns across texts. To that end, Caple et al. (2018) created a visualisation tool that is capable of visualising such patterns which they referred to as Kaleidographic builder.

The tool Kaleidographic builder is free-to-use and publicly available[5]. It enables the production of 'dynamic and interactive visualizations that facilitate the observation of complex relations within and across text in a dataset' (Caple et al., 2018, p. 462). Just as a regular kaleidoscope, the Kaleidographic builder comprises segmented circular layers of different colours (an example is provided in Figure 5 in the next section). The multiple reflections in the Kaleidographic builder enable multiple perspectives thereby representing the relations between data units. Each colour may refer to a variable and various levels of brightness may indicate finer nuances within a variable. The visualisation is entirely user-defined and self-contained. It is created based on HTML, CSS and Javascript technologies and the tool accepts data in standard CSV or TSV formats. In a dataset, the columns correspond to variables, the rows to data points and the values can be a numbered from 0 to 100. In the Kaleidographic tool, each of these can be represented by a colour, a different hue and saturation scheme. This means that all categorical, original, interval as well as ratio values can be represented.

An important aspect about Kaleiodographic is that it is dynamic meaning that various data points can be played in a sequence or initiated manually. A researcher can have multiple data points along a specific set of variables and elements. Within each data point, the variables will practically light up as the data point is presented. Kaleidographic can also be used to focus only on certain segments or layers of analysis as these options can be

[5] The tool is available here: https://www.kaleidographic.org/

chosen in the tool itself. Thereby the tool may present multiple perspectives on different relations between elements in a text (e.g. between text and image) otherwise difficult to present in a static diagram. Obviously, this tool may be extremely useful for the qualitative analysis of multimodal discourse but it can also be adapted for use with other types of data, such as survey data based on answers given by different respondents from different demographic backgrounds (Caple et al., 2018).

The final approach to multimodal discourse analysis which I would like to present here is the one proposed by Bateman et al. (2017). The primary assumption in this approach is the notion of canvases, which are identified as different dimensions of communicative situations which carry meaningful regularities. In particular, a canvas can be 'anything where we can inscribe material regularities that may then be perceived and taken up in interpretation, regardless of whether actual, virtual (digital), simply produced, performed physically in time, or the result of a complex technological process' (p. 87). Every canvas can make its own meaning(s) while we, the observers or the discourse analysts of the canvas, can build different relationships with the canvas and try to identify and analyse the meaning-making process of the multimodal discourse presented based on it.

Multimodal discourse analysis based on canvases can easily be demonstrated on the example of filmic discourse because its structure 'constructs an unfolding and dynamic representation of a viewer's possible interpretation of the scene's coherence' (Bateman et al., 2017, p. 335). Based on that construction, separate shots within a scene can be identified and analysed in more details. A shot is a single 'take' or a single recording that starts when the camera is started and ends when the camera is stopped. However, in terms of multimodal discourse analysis a shot can be seen as a 'perceptual unit' (p. 329) because 'it is generally advisable to work only with perceptual units since it is only these that provide the material distinctions that a semiotic mode has to operate with' (p. 329). These shots can be regarded as parts of larger canvases whereby identifying canvases and shots implies some kind of deconstruction or dissection of existing communicative situations. Bateman et al. (2017) presented this visually in the form of slices representing single canvases containing crucial elements (semiotic resources) of a communicative situation (Bateman et al., 2017, Figure 7.4, p. 218 and Figure 7.5, p. 219).

Unfortunately, performing an analysis based on shots and canvases with long sequences of filmic content will most certainly yield enormous data sets for analysis which is why such approach may seem quite demanding. But, as stated by Bateman et al. (2017), 'the analyst also needs to be able to make sensible decisions about where to stop and where to begin: and this depends on the research questions being pursued' (p. 221). This means that the approach can be adapted to the purpose of a single study by identifying a smaller number of canvases based on certain pre-established criteria. For instance, a successfully realised analysis of larger multimodal content has recently been performed by Stamenković and Wildfeuer (2021) who analysed a video game based on the notion of canvases which they adapted to the purpose of their study. The next section will demonstrate how a commercial may be analysed based on canvases and shots.

#MultimodalDiscourseAnalysisOfACommercial

In the previous section I presented four approaches to multimodal discourse analysis (Kress, 2011; O'Halloran & Fei, 2014; Bednarek & Caple, 2017 and Bateman et al., 2017) which have in common that they rely on the meaning-making process based on different modes evident in a piece of discourse. For the sake of illustration in this section, I will rely on a combination of the approaches proposed by Kress (2011) and by Bateman et al. (2017). The first is most general and it is meant to enable the identification of materially diverse 'threads' (speech, writing, gesture, image, music, etc.) which comprise the semiotic whole – the multimodal discourse to be analysed. This whole/discourse can be realised as a text but it can also be a semiotic entity in more than one dimension. The second provides the necessary analytical units to base an analysis on, namely the units of the canvas and the shot. Both approaches have in common that they can easily be adapted to film content. At this point I would like to remind that I use the term *film* as a generic term referring to films (movies), documentaries, TV and animated shows, commercials, musicals or similar film content which are all basically multimodal. Obviously, any film depends on a screenplay or script which is a technical document containing all the information needed to make a film and it includes everything that is seen or heard on screen: locations, character dialogue, action, etc. The part of the screenplay that is put in words is the text whereby the text itself is not the multimodal discourse – the entire screenplay is.

In terms of Kress's approach (2011), the screenplay – the multimodal discourse – realises the interests of its creator, i.e. it presents a certain coherence that will be a reflection of the social environment it belongs to. The job of the analyst of such multimodal discourse is to discern that coherence, understand it and interpret it so as to find the mechanisms based on which the meaning of a community is presented in its semiotic manifestations. However, since the approach suggested by Kress (2011) is rather general and does not allow for the identification of more specific elements in a multimodal discourse analysis, I will combine Kress's ideas of threads with the analytical approach relying on canvases and shots as smaller units of analysis proposed by Bateman et al. (2017).

Choosing one single example to illustrate multimodal discourse analysis in practice based on Kress's (2011) and Bateman et al. (2017) has not been easy as I had to find an example which would provide enough material to present several textual threads, i.e. modes that are communicating different meanings while leading to one single meaning whereby being a reflection of a specific social environment. I have chosen a commercial for a specific washing powder that was broadcast in Serbia around 2010. As commercials for washing powder are generally annoying, I do not pay much attention to them. However, after seeing the one I am going to describe here, I became a little bit more alert to potentially problematic content in daily television. Unfortunately, the commercial cannot be found anywhere, but I do remember it very well because I have watched it a few times and retold it probably a million times because I was very upset by the message that I interpreted from the commercial. That same message must have become problematic to the authors of the commercial as well because the commercial simply disappeared from all television channels after only a short time, unlike other washing powder commercials which would be shown repeatedly over several months. After that, the particular brand advertised in the commercial I am referring to was presented in a new, obviously less problematic, yet equally annoying commercial.

As stated, I cannot provide a link to the original commercial as it is no longer available. In addition, I have to make sure not to violate any copyright issues which is why I will refer to the brand displayed in the commercial as 'Washing Powder'. Hopefully, my analysis will be accepted as illustrative and valid despite this somewhat unorthodox way of presenting my 'corpus' (if I can refer to it like that). Nevertheless, I will stick to this example because it is really representative of what different semiotic modes (or threads) can accomplish when put together.

In the case of my example presented here, I have first relied on Kress's (2011) threads. As I wanted to go into a more detailed analysis of the multimodal discourse in the commercial, I resorted to the analytical approach proposed by Bateman et al. (2017). Thus I could identify larger, more general canvases which include several different shots. As I wanted to avoid ending up with a far too large data set, I did not analyse each canvas in the commercial in more details nor can I present all the sub-canvases. It would have been convenient to have a recording of the actual commercial because I could have presented the separate canvases and shots in the same way

Bateman et al. (2017) suggest in their example. Nevertheless, I could adhere to the procedure they suggested so that I could:

1) Identify four general canvases based on the four most important messages each is carrying,
2) Identify 21 shots as smaller units carrying semiotic resources,
3) Use these shots as units of analysis,
4) Follow the threads presented based on the shots (Kress, 2011) and
5) Present my interpretation of the separate meanings depicted in the discourse structure of the commercial.

The four canvases and 21 shots that I identified can be described as follows:

Canvas 1: The commercial starts by presenting the familiar scene of an almost stereotypical, happy family sitting in their kitchen. This canvas contains five shots:

(1) three characters, mother, daughter (about 10 years old) and son (a little bit younger) are sitting at the table;
(2) the table is set for a family meal;
(3) the mother looks lovely, the children are happy, dangling their feet;
(4) all three are smiling and clearly showing admiration for the father;
(5) the father is standing at the stove, wearing an apron and making pancakes while the mother's face is bearing an expression of affection and admiration for her husband, who appears to be the hero of the family.

This extremely positive atmosphere is enhanced by additional semiotic signs included in the shots, i.e. beautiful music, very bright lighting, a pristine looking dining room, a white and red chequered table cloth, white plates, flowers in a vase, the sun shining through the window. Everything is perfect.

Canvas 2: Suddenly, there is a severe cut into this beautiful image emphasised by a high-pitched screechy sounding scratch cutting off the music. Here I could identify the following two shots:

(6) the father drops a pancake on the pristine table cloth instead of on a plate;

(7) the atmosphere gets dimmer, the music almost abominable, the children's facial expressions switch to disappointment and the mother's face is showing dismay, even resentment obviously induced by her husband's mistake, almost to be interpreted as betrayal.

Canvas 3: The whole scene threatens to escalate into sheer disaster evident in the following shots:

(8) a cloud of fog is accompanied by loud effective music indicating there will be some surprising appearance;

(9) a new character appears out of the blue: Mr Washing Powder;

(10) he is wearing the suit of a superhero, red and blue as in most cliché representations of superheroes (e.g. Spiderman, Superman, Captain America), with the name of the washing powder on his broad chest;

(11) he smiles at the mother;

(12) she immediately lightens up in admiration, but this time for her saviour – Mr Washing Powder;

(13) the children start dangling their feet again, admiring uncle Washing Powder;

(14) the hero takes the table cloth from the table with great assurance;

(15) he carries it solemnly to the washing machine followed by the mother who cannot believe her luck;

(16) Mr Washing Powder's facial expression is showing assertion and confidence so that everybody at the table may be sure that everything will be alright;

(17) the mother is looking at him in thankful adoration knowing that the perfect order will be restored and the children cannot hide their happiness;

(18) the father is at the table, head down, drowning in shame and a sense of failure.

Canvas 4: The final canvas presents the shots which were probably meant to carry the main message:

(19) Mr/uncle Washing Powder, still in his superhero suit but wearing the apron the father wore in the previous shots;
(20) he is standing next to the stove making pancakes for a family of four, the father included;
(21) all four family members are admiring and worshipping the superhero for saving their table cloth, their family and their lives.

Quite a number of meanings can be inferred from the semiotic resources employed in the commercial. A starting point is to present the obvious threads (Kress, 2011) realised by means of the four identified canvases (Cs) and the 21 shots (Ss) (Bateman et al., 2017) based on the semiotic resources employed throughout the commercial (Table 2). As can be seen in Table 2, one semiotic mode is used very sparingly in the commercial – language. Speech or writing are used in the commercial in three instances only: 1) in writing on Mr Washing Powder's shirt, 2) in writing on the bag containing the washing powder (two times) and 3) in speech at the end of the commercial when the narrator refers to the brand as a must-have product. The seemingly odd lack of language (both speech and writing) stresses that other modes of communication surely have been given preference – the visual, aural, gestural and spatial.

The visual thread is evident in many details throughout the commercial: the white colour, the brightness of the day, the reoccurring chequered table cloth, the pristine looking space, the red and blue of the super-hero suit, etc. The aural thread is evident in the pleasant music, the screechy sound, the abominable music. In addition there is the gestural thread – cavalier movements of the superhero, exaggerated walk to the washing machine, the happy faces, the expressions of admiration and adoration on all the family members' faces, the expressions of dissatisfaction, etc. And finally there is the spatial thread evident in the entire layout of the scene.

Threads						
	Language		Visual	Aural	Gestural	Spatial
	Speech	Writing				
C			Semiotic resources and shots			
1			bright & pristine space [Cs1–4] table cloth, [Ss1–5] seating arrangement [C1, Ss1–5 vs C4, Ss19–21]	pleasant music [Ss1–5]	facial expression 1: admiration and adoration for the father [Ss1–5]	father standing at the stove [S5]
2			table cloth [S6]	abominable music [Ss6–7] screeching sound [S6]	facial expression 2: reproach for the father [CS7]	
3		brand of the washing powder on the superhero's chest [S10]	white fog announcing arrival of super hero [S8] superhero suit [S10] table cloth [Ss14–15]	sound of an explosion when the super hero appears [S9]	theatrical gestures [Ss14–16]	superhero & mother walking to the washing machine [S15]
4	narrator mentioning the brand of the washing powder and how effective it is [S21]	brand of the washing powder on the bag of the washing powder [S21]	kitchen apron [C1, S5 vs C4, S19] pancakes [C1, S5 vs C3, S6 and C4, S20] table cloth [S21]	pleasant music [C4]	facial expression 3: admiration and adoration for the superhero [S12, 13, 17] dangling feet [C1, S3 vs C4, S13]	superhero standing at the stove [S19]

Table 2: The multimodal threads, canvases, shots and the semiotic resources identified in the commercial.

Each of the identified threads and canvases, along with the semiotic resources presented based on them, is meant to reinforce a certain message. In the first canvas, the message is that of happiness and pleasure about the father being the hero of the family and the fact that this traditional image of a happy family is what we should all be striving for. But then, a single mistake, a pancake dropped on the table cloth, destroys the image of the father as the hero figure. The next two canvases are a result of his clumsiness which degrades him to a minor position at the table where he is no longer a hero, not even a husband or father! Instead, a stranger has entered the family taking the position of the husband and the father, thus destroying the family integrity and imposing the image of an almost useless father and husband.

Before I move on in my analysis, I would like to point out that I do admit that my interpretation of this entire commercial is harsh and probably too critical, but I cannot but wonder what the producers of this commercial had in mind when putting together this story. Obviously, their main intention must have been to sell the washing powder. However, the way they have realised their intention is dubious, to say the least.

In addition to the presented analysis, I wanted to see what my interpretation would look like in the form of a visual presentation. That is why I decided to try out the Kaleidographic builder tool (Caple et al., 2018) (Figure 5). The instructions how to prepare the data for the tool are simple and provided on the web page. Video tutorials are available offering a step-by-step explanation of how to define both elements and variables to be included in the final presentation. Though the result might not be something discourse analysts have been used to see in traditionally presented statistics based on SPSS or any other data processing tool, the Kaleidographic builder does offer a valid presentation of multiple data otherwise difficult to process given the many multimodal layers that need to be included in multimodal discourse analysis.

As I had only one sample of multimodal discourse, i.e. one commercial that I analysed, my visual presentation is a little bit simple. As can be seen in Figure 5, there is only one circle with coloured fields. Nevertheless, it presents the identified elements and variables in different colours thereby providing a quite different presentation from a table which most studies rely on. The elements are the threads that I used as the headings of the columns presented in Table 2 (speech, writing, visual, aural, gestural and spatial)

whereas the variables are the individual details that I identified in the commercial (lighting, abominable music, etc.). As it is now, all fields in the Kaleidographic tool are coloured because the variables are all present in the sample. However, if I had more than one commercial, not all fields in the Kaleidographic tool would be coloured as some variables would probably be missing in the various samples of multimodal discourse.

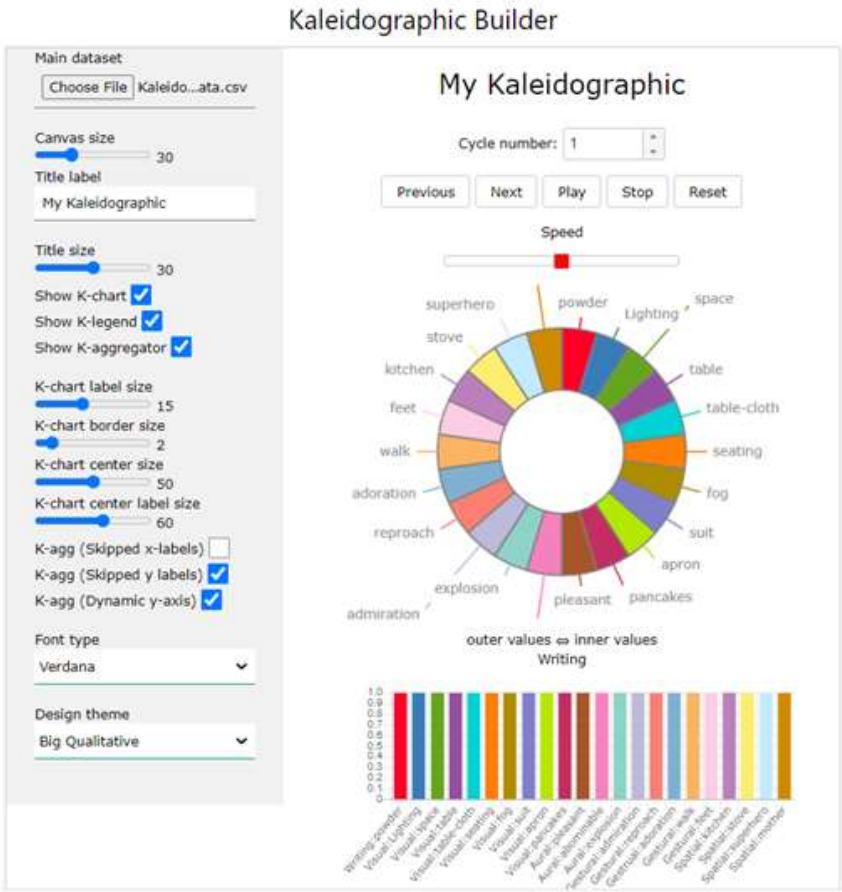

Figure 5: Illustration of the Kaleidographic tool (Caple et al. 2018) in practice.

As I mentioned in the previous section, Kress (2011) stated that the coherence established within a text serves as a starting point for analysis as it reflects 'the conceptions of order of the community that has elaborated these principles of order, and which uses them as a resource for establishing and maintaining cohesion and coherence in the community' (p. 36). If I were to determine the meaning manifested by the semiotic representations in the

multimodal discourse I presented, I would say that the coherence that the creators of this commercial seem to have wanted to illustrate is that the happiness of a family depends on how clean their laundry is. The order (based on the community that the family in the commercial belongs to) is simple: the integrity of the family depends on a capable father, a mother who is aware of that and at least two children who feel safe and secure in such a family. To stress this idea, the creators of the commercial decided to raise the washing powder (embodied in the superhero figure) to the level of a must-have product which has the qualities to maintain the order of the family. To achieve that, the creators used different semiotic elements – visual, aural, gestural and spatial. Unfortunately, the whole presentation seems to have gone a little bit overboard.

In all fairness, it might be that the creators of the commercial might not have had the intention of demolishing the image of the husband and/or father figure. But they seem to have got carried away when adding all the different semiotic modes, thus enabling the triggering of the meanings that I perceived, i.e. that a stranger can take the place of the husband/father and restore order just because he knows how to wash a table cloth. Maybe other people might not see the things I saw in the commercial and maybe I am reading to many meanings into it. Nevertheless, the point of my illustration is to show what can be achieved when putting together semiotic elements in multimodal discourse, a manifestation of digital media discourse which can be a powerful tool to exert a certain effect if intended.

To conclude, given that a systematic approach to multimodal discourse analysis is yet to be formulated, I had to present my analysis in the easiest way possible by adapting the basic rules of Critical Discourse Analysis to an example of multimodal discourse while relying on Kress's (2011) idea of threads as expressions of semiotic modes and on Bateman et al. (2017) and their idea of canvases and shots. This combined approach made it easy for me to stick to a simple terminology while illustrating a rather complex issue. However, this does not mean that there is no other way. As stated, multimodality is a rising star in contemporary discourse analysis and more attention of the multimodality scholarship towards discourse can be expected in the near future which means that more systematic approaches, topologies and theories will certainly appear.

Chapter Eight: Sociocognitive Discourse Studies

The sociocognitive approach establishes the discourse-cognition-society triangle underlying all analyses in Critical Discourse Analysis and it provides the relevant tools to explore the cognitively mediated relations between discourse and society (Van Dijk, 2018). Since discourse structures and social structures are different, a relationship between them can be established only through the mental representations of language users who are both individuals and social members. Therefore, their ideas, knowledge and opinions are an interpretation of the mutual relationship between social structures and discourse structures. More than that, social structures influence discourse structures through people's interpretations of the social environment they are part of and vice versa, discourse structures can only influence social structures through the same cognitive interface of mental models, knowledge attitudes and ideologies (2016).

Sociocognitive Discourse Studies (SCDS) 'relates discourse structures to social structures via a complex sociocognitive interface' (Van Dijk, 2018). The main subjects of SCDS are the ongoing communicative Common Ground, the shared knowledge and the attitudes and ideologies of language users who are both participants of a particular communicative situation and members of social groups and communities (2018). In order to approach these topics properly, SCDS makes 'explicit the fundamental role of mental representations' and it 'shows that many structures of discourse itself can only (completely) be described in terms of various cognitive notions' (2018, p. 28). Therefore, SCDS relies on 'explicit psychological theories of mental representations of journalists or other language users' as well as on 'the ways these models *mediate* between shared social cognition (knowledge, attitudes, ideologies), social structures and actual text and talk' (p. 28).

In addition to approaching discourse based on the social and political contexts, SCDS includes the cognitive interface between discourse and society. The sociocognitive approach does not accept that there is a direct link between the structures of discourse and society, but supports the notion that there is a cognitive interface where the two meet and interact. The result of the interaction between discourse and society via the cognitive interface constitutes the sociocognitive dimension of the sociocognitive approach to discourse analysis. This means that the sociocognitive approach assumes

that structures of society can only 'affect text and talk through the minds of language users' because 'social members represent both social structures as well as discourse structures in their minds, and thus are able to relate these mentally before expressing them in actual text and talk' (Van Dijk, 2018, p. 28).

A full explanation of the sociocognitive dimension as proposed by Van Dijk (2018) would exceed the purpose of this chapter; therefore, only a brief review of the most important notions will be provided here. First, the notions of mind, memory and discourse processing are crucial since 'cognitive processes take place in the mind or memory of individual social actors as members of social groups and communities' (2018, p. 29). The way discourse is produced and comprehended is related to the way linguistic and discursive knowledge systems are applied by language users so that the processing of lexical items, syntactic structures and various meanings of discourse is closely related to grammar, the lexicon, semantics and different forms of interaction. Since local and global meanings attributed to discourse are based on underlying mental models as subjective representations of events or situations, a crucial aspect of the sociocognitive dimension is how the production and comprehension of discourse will involve the particular expression of a mental model regarding an event, person, opinion, belief, etc.

The direct communicative intention of discourse is mainly to transmit the mental model of a speaker or writer. However, the way the hearer or reader will understand the transmitted discourse depends on how they will interpret it based on their own mental models which can be 'individual, personal, subjective and multimodal' (Van Dijk, 2018, p. 30). These models go beyond the subjective representation of a situation or event and they include opinions and emotions of both the ones who create discourse and those who read or hear it. In other words, these models reflect the social cognition of the members of the linguistic and discursive communities who share their knowledge of language and discourse, their sociocultural knowledge of the world as well as attitudes, ideologies, norms and values.

As far as the practical validation of SCDS is concerned, I have applied the approach in several of my investigations. For instance, I investigated the sociocognitive dimension of hate speech in readers' comments (Đorđević, 2020b), how the media use specific discourse structures to present the suffering of natural disaster victims to attract readers (Đorđević, 2021) or how suffering during the Corona crisis has been presented in the media again

with the aim to attract more readers (Đorđević & Šorgić, forthcoming in 2022). All these investigations had in common that three discourse structures were most frequent: 1) opinion and emotions words, 2) ideological polarizations and 3) metaphors. A similar conclusion was made by Davidović (2022) whose research I came across only recently. By relying on SCDS, she analysed news items reporting on sex-selective abortion in Montenegro. Her conclusion was that the media have a strong potential to both enable and disable the reproduction of patriarchy by triggering different cognitive responses among their audience. In her analysis, these rely on opinion and emotion words as well as metaphors.

To conclude, the sociocognitive dimension that SCDS relies on constitutes a complex interface that establishes a common space between discourse and society where different elements interact. These elements combine various forms of social cognition (attitudes, ideologies, norms and values based on sociocultural knowledge of the world and knowledge of language and discourse) that is being created in that commons space. At the same time the social cognition of the members of linguistic and discursive communities (social actors, news readers, participants in events, etc.) influences and shapes that very same space. Therefore, the sociocognitive approach establishes the discourse-cognition-society triangle and it provides the relevant tools to explore the cognitively mediated relations between discourse and society (Van Dijk, 2018). Since discourse structures and social structures are different, a relationship between them can be established only through the mental representations of language users who are both individuals and social members. Therefore, their ideas, knowledge and opinions are an interpretation of the mutual relationship between social structures and discourse structures. More than that, social structures influence discourse structures through people's interpretations of the social environment they are part of and vice versa, discourse structures can only influence social structures through the same cognitive interface of mental models, knowledge attitudes and ideologies (2018). The next section will illustrate how the analysis of digital media discourse can be performed based SCDS within linguistics.

#IdentifyingDiscourseStructuresInPractice

Van Dijk (2018) proposed the following discourse structures: stress, intonation, word order; meanings of words, sentences or sequences of sentences; coherence; opinion and emotion words; global topics or themes; deictic or indexical expressions; speech acts; evidentials; conventional, schematic, canonical structures; metaphors and ideological polarizations. However, when analysing a certain discourse based on van Dijk's SCDS, the identification, description and interpretation need not involve all discourse structures, but can be based on a number of selected structures which will contribute to the overall analysis. In addition, SCDS can be accompanied by an additional theory which will serve as a framework for the analysis of a certain corpus, while SCDS will be employed as an analytical tool. As stated in the previous section, some illustrations of how SCDS may be employed with other theories are available in Đorđević (2020b, 2021), Đorđević & Šorgić (forthcoming in 2022) as well as in Davidović (2022).

The identification of discourse structures is similar to the identification of topoi (see Chapter Six), which means that the analyst identifies lexical items perceived as individual instances of words and phrases with specific sociocognitive references to a certain discourse structure within a broader context. For instance, lexical items may refer to social actors (e.g. politicians, government officials, murderers, victims, rapists, entertainers, etc.) or their representation in a context (individual, collective or impersonal). The mentioning or description of a social event may refer to a global topic or event (e.g. demonstrations, riots, elections, etc.) or an event that has gained certain momentum in the daily news because of its appalling nature (murder, rape, victimisation, grooming, etc.), while lexical items indicating evaluative and emotional representations may refer to ideological polarizations (e.g. verbs such as speak out, report, admit, or adjectives such as horrible, gruesome, dangerous, etc.).

Quite often, certain discourse structures are more frequent than others. In other words, an analysis of a certain corpus may reveal a rather frequent occurrence of metaphors or opinions and emotion words. They usually indicate a close connection to individual actors, collective actors, political relationships, social/cultural/economic issues and country. The main

reason for this occurrence is that the relationship between social actors and the specific context that the relationship is occurring within is ideologically based (Van Dijk, 2018).

A common way to present this relationship is through the media whereby the audience, as a recipient, may react to the news in a certain way or not. Therefore, the discourse structures identified in a corpus, along with the cognitive basis reflected in it, provide evidence of the sociocognitive dimension via which the discourse of the presented news is connected to the readers as representatives of the social group that the news are being written for and directed at. In brief, the identified discourse structures serve the purpose of both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis enabling the broader analysis of the mental representations and the socioculturally shared knowledge identified in a sample of discourse. The outcome is that the relationship between discourse and society is both quantified and qualified through the sociocognitive interface between them.

I would now like to present how the analysis of discourse structures can be applied in practice. The research in question was conducted in the summer of 2021 (Đorđević, 2021) and it was based on a corpus of 205 articles on the topic of bushfires in Australia published from June 2019 to May 2020 in the Canadian *The Globe and Mail.* The motivation for the study that I conducted was that media trust is decreasing (Strömbäck et al., 2020), that the collapse of traditional financial models in the media has brought about an existential crisis in the media (Fisher, 2018), that audiences are literally drowned in news (Friesem, 2016) and that audiences from a higher economic and social standard show less empathy for victims in countries of lower economic and social standard (Ong, 2015). Because of this lack of empathy, in order to draw the attention of people from a higher standard to the suffering of people in countries from a lower standard, the media will go to any length. Therefore, an additional intention I had was to show that the presentation of suffering as a consequence of natural disasters in the media does not follow the basic principles of journalism (as identified by the Ethical Journalism Network, 2021) and they are as follows:

1. Truth and accuracy which implies that journalists should always try to get their facts right. If information cannot be corroborated it should not be presented as truth.

2. Independence means that journalists should not act on behalf of anybody's interests (political, corporate or cultural). Political affiliations and financial arrangements, if any, should be declared so as to avoid a conflict of interest.
3. Fairness and impartiality presuppose that there are at least two sides of a story. Although journalists do not have the obligation to present both sides, they should try to provide some context so as to add objectivity to their reporting.
4. Humanity implies that journalists should never inflict any harm with their disclosures. In other words, some content published in the news can be hurtful, inflict pain or even cause misery to a person which is why journalists must carefully select what and the extent to which they will publish something.
5. Accountability is the one and only principle that reminds journalists of their responsibility. This means that journalists should own their mistakes, show sincere regret and try to amend their mistakes if possible.

In particular reports on suffering do not follow the principles of a) fair and impartial and b) humane approach to reporting. It has become obvious that news agencies frequently violate these principles in the attempt to increase readership.

Therefore, my aim was to explore how sociocognitive discourse structures are employed to attract readers' attention and sell the story no matter what even when the news is to orientate a Western spectator towards the suffering of 'Others' who belong to the same category of the economically and politically strong world. My primary assumption was that news agencies choose to violate the core principles of journalism in the attempt to attract readership rather than boost confidence and trust in the presented news, let alone motivate the spectator for civic action, which used to be the primary goal of confronting Western spectators with suffering of less fortunate people (Chouliaraki, 2008). News agencies will resort to whatever resource possible, even violate the core principles of journalism just to sell their story. By identifying sociocognitive discourse structures that clearly reflect a mediated representation of distant suffering, my research was expected to demonstrate that news agencies will try to overcome the

'out-of-sight-out-of-mind' phenomenon even in cases when economic and political power relations are equal.

In my research I used SCDS as an analytical tool while I based my premises on the Theory of Mediation of Suffering which 'problematizes the nature of public action under conditions of mediation' (Chouliaraki, 2008, p. 2). It involves audiences both emotionally and culturally with distant 'Others'. The news media have the advantage of being in the position to locate suffering anywhere in the world and present it to audiences everywhere in the world. Such mediation overcomes both geographical and moral distances between people living far away from one another. At the same time, modern technology contributes to the presentation of suffering by adding effects, sound, image and other semiotic modes which may raise doubts among audiences about the trustworthiness of the suffering presented to them, as they can never be sure how much is real and how much has been fabricated (Tomlinson, 1999). Using SCDS along with the Theory of Mediation of Suffering enabled me to problematize and confirm my primary assumption that the media will do anything to get to their readership.

News outlets pursue different strategies in their attempt to create a kind of 'politics of pity' (Boltanski, 1999, p. 7). These strategies may not always have been ideologically motivated but have been meant to provoke the audience to relate to the sufferer in a certain way and position media texts into a broader context of social practice and public conduct (Corner, 1995). Wiith the overflow of information about various issues and problems, suffering included, it is now questionable whether the ethical values embedded in news discourse really provoke the audience to take action and relieve the suffering of the misfortunate people presented to them in the news. It seems that the 'spectacle of suffering becomes domesticated' and 'suffering is met with indifference or discomfort, with viewers switching off or zapping to another channel' (Chouliaraki, 2008, p. 18). Thus the news outlets are pursuing the same strategies to attract audiences, not with the same intentions, though. Nowadays, what matters is to have the broadest possible audience and whether they are going to be affected by the news seems less important.

The primary premise of the mediation of suffering is the notion of pity (Boltanski, 1999) and it is employed by journalists not as a human sentiment but as a sociological category embedded in media discourse. By raising pity among audiences, 'the meaning-making operations by means of which sufferers are strategically, though not necessarily consciously,

constituted' make spectators engage 'in multiple forms of emotion and dispositions to action' (Chouliaraki, 2008, p. 19). Two dimensions may be defined in the spectator–sufferer relationship based on pity, that of proximity–distance and that of watching–acting (2008). The former overcomes the geographical and moral distance (Tomlinson, 1999) whereas the latter motivates spectators to civic action (Corner, 1995). Nowadays, the second dimension seems less frequent.

My hypothesis was that sociocognitive discourse structures are employed in headlines referring to some natural disaster with the intention to attract readers, thus confirming a mediated representation of distant suffering as well as the violation of at least two core principles of journalism. The context for my research was the Australian bushfire season in 2019/2020 which started in June 2019 peaked in December 2019/January 2020 and ended in May 2020. During that time, 19 million hectares of land burned, a total of 20,000 buildings were destroyed and almost 500 people died. In my study, I first read 205 articles in all sections in the *Canadian Globe and Mail*. Then I identified 24 articles explicitly dealing with the bushfire which I then coded and analysed. After that I identified the most prominent discourse structures which I could clearly allocate to the representation of 'suffering' and 'relief'. The reason why I chose the *Canadian Globe and Mail* is that it is read by an audience (the spectators) of a similar economic standard as the people in Australia (the sufferers). It may be assumed that no additional boost of sympathy among the Canadians for the suffering in Australia is needed as would have been in the case of suffers in a socially and economically disadvantaged position.

In the identification process I followed a certain colour coding system (Table 3), a system I normally apply when searching for discourse structures.

Colour	Discourse structure
blue	opinion and emotion words
yellow	evidentials (numbers)
green	metaphors
purple	ideological polarizations
underlined	cause of suffering
bold	relief

Table 3: Colour coding system for the identification of discourse structures.

As can be seen in Table 3, I did not identify all discourse structures van Dijk (2018) suggested but only those that clearly served the aim of my research. I had two main objectives: (1) Identify the sociocognitive discourse structures employed in the headlines. That is the reason why I limited the identification to opinion and emotion words; deictic or indexical expressions; evidentials; metaphors and ideological polarizations. (2) Establish which of the identified discourse structures reflected the mediated representation of suffering which is why I opted for the additional identification of words and phrases referring to the cause of suffering as well as the attempts to relieve suffering. Some of the most representative examples of discursive structures referring to suffering, relief or both are presented in Table 4[6].

Month of publication	Code in discourse	Headline	Meaning of Sociocognitive discourse structure	Suffering/ relief
December 2019	[AF22DEC05]	Sixty-nine Canadians giving up holidays to **help** with Australian wildfires	number sacrifice	suffering
	[AF23DEC07]	Australian PM defends his climate policies, as **cooler weather** lets firefighters reach burnt towns	justification couldn't do so	both
January 2020	[AF3JAN09]	Military ships, helicopters help **rescue** the stranded as thousands **flee** wildfires in Australia	victims number	both
	[AF5JAN10]	Two more missing in Australian wildfires as rain	number	both

[6] More examples are available in Đorđević (2021).

	brings **relief**; Australian PM Scott Morrison defends response to fires	hope justification	
[AF11JAN14]	Australia's bushfire crisis: The latest, and how you can help (11)	invitation	suffering

Table 4: Illustration of identified discourse structures.

My findings suggested the following:

1) The first explicit mentioning of the bushfires was on 14 November (3 mentionings), then in December (5) and January (12).
2) In January the last 4 articles were published about issues caused by the bushfires: worries whether to Travel to Australia (Travel section), the world market (Investment ideas section), Greta Thunberg criticizing Roger Federer (Tennis section) and worries about Australian Open (Tennis section).
3) Almost all articles about bushfires occurred either in the section World (17) or Canada (3).
4) Articles in the section Canada were all about the Canadians contributing to the relief of the suffering: volunteer firefighters going to Australia, exact numbers, even sacrificing Christmas.
5) The cause of suffering was explicitly mentioned usually at the end of the headline: *bushfire threat*, *Australian bushfires*, *bushfire crisis*, *Australian wildfires*, *wildfire battle*, etc.
6) Relief was mentioned for the first time on 22 December: *help*, *cooler weather*, *save*, *rescue*, *flee*, *relief*, *offence*, *fight*, *tailored tactics*, *battle*, *aid*, *recede*, *rainy respite*, etc.

What I could conclude from this research was the following:

1) Sociocognitive discourse structures have been employed in a total of 24 headlines referring to the Australian bushfire crisis in 2019/2020 with the intention to attract readers, thus confirming a mediated representation of distant suffering as well as the

violation of at least two core principles of journalism of a) a fair and impartial and b) a humane approach to reporting.

2) The media do not present suffering to their audiences with the primary goal to influence the public ethics and motivate audiences to civic action (Chouliaraki, 2008).

My overall conclusion based on this research was that because of the almost blatant use of the identified discourse structures, even the slightest trace of empathy will vanish as soon as the reader has seen the headline because there will be another channel or news item to click on. Though the news might even want to move their audiences to some kind of broad actions of raising money, offering relief, providing solutions, etc., they are not inviting them in any way whatsoever. Therefore, because of the negative climate spreading through the media all over the world induced by the bad economy and with the fierce competition (Fisher, 2018), it seems that the news resort to the mediation of suffering just to secure a click (s. Đorđević, 2020d about the power of clicks in the news). In other words, the media employ the concept of pity with the intention to sell their news rather than motivate civic action in any way whatsoever. The final outcome is that the trustworthiness of the news is now more questionable than ever (Strömbäck et al., 2020).

Obviously, this was a small-scale research and more elaborate research is needed. My colleague and I conducted a similar research which was much more elaborate (Đorđević & Šorgić, forthcoming in 2022). Both in the research presented here and the one to be published, the objective of identifying sociocognitive discourse structures in the compiled corpus as well as establishing which of the identified sociocognitive discourse structures reflected the mediated representation of distant suffering employed with the intention to attract readership was accomplished. Based on the quantitative and the qualitative analyses, the hypothesis was confirmed that sociocognitive discourse structures were employed in headlines referring to a certain crisis with the intention to attract readership, thus confirming a mediated representation of distant suffering as well as the violation of at least two core principles of journalism. The identification of discourse structures can be applied for almost any topic. I have used it so far in some of my studies (e.g. Đorđević, 2020b) and each time the identification of discourse structures as proposed by van Dijk (2018) proved more than valuable.

Chapter Nine: Social Media Critical Discourse Studies

Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) (e.g. Fairclough, 2013; Gee, 2014; van Dijk, 1997; Wodak, 2006) has relied on the idea that mass media are 'an obvious powerful site where discursive power is exploited to (re)construct and (re)define social realities' (KhosraviNik & Esposito, 2018, p. 54) and as such it has been preoccupied with the notion of the power of discourse in affecting and shaping society and socio-political orientations (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). However, the development of participatory media and social networks as a new communication environment has resulted in a substantial increase of online discursive practices. This new development has instigated the necessity to (re)evaluate CDS and its applicability to the concept of different online discursive practices which is why CDS should pursue new interdisciplinary synergies with other disciplines (KhosraviNik & Esposito, 2018).

As stated by KhosraviNik and Zia (2014), participatory media provide a space for 'non-elite text producers resisting the discourses of established institutions' (p. 757). Thus participants in the digital space create a valuable data repository which can be compiled from discourse found in the comment sections of shared news and posts on social networks. The quite excessive amount of data compiled from online communication is difficult to manage which is why KhosraviNik and Zia (2014) suggest 'down-sampling' it in order to perform a 'qualitative detailed textual analysis' and to keep it 'under control for CDA contextualisation purposes' (p. 764). All discursive practices occurring in participatory media may be analysed based on the reactions and debates among readers and users in the interactive digital media initiated by a piece of news, social network post or similar content published online.

Given the necessity to explore how social media may shape and influence society, KhosraviNik (2017) introduced Social Media Critical Discourse Studies (SM-CDS) which 'endeavours to implement the principal parameters of the CDS movement as a socially-oriented, discourse-centred, interdisciplinary approach' thereby 'providing new readings of established notions, suggesting new outlooks and engaging in effective interdisciplinary outreach within a CDS principled perspective' (KhosraviNik, 2020, p. 2). However, SM-CDS may also be related to Critical Social Media Studies, thus

encourage particular attention to questions so far not covered within CDS, including exploration of how Social Media Communication platforms 'exert power by algorithmic topic management, how representational resources, i.e. meaning-making materials, are strategically and uniquely deployed for individual users, what discursive opportunities are provided by new communicative affordances, new tools, and new resources' (p. 2).

In order to understand KhosraviNik's SM-CDS, a short review of his definition of Social Media Communication (SMC) is needed. According to KhosraviNik (2017), SMC is 'electronically mediated communication across any electronic platforms, spaces, sites, and technologies' (p. 582). Based on SMC, users can cooperate to produce and compile content, perform interpersonal and mass communication (simultaneously or separately) and they can respond to content generated in various ways and by different actors. To be more precise, KhosraviNik limits SMC to Social Networking Sites (SNSs) (Facebook and Instagram), crowd sourcing content websites (Wikipedia, Forums), link sharing sites, micro/blogging sites and Instant Messaging Apps. KhosraviNik (2017) further relies on Seargeant and Tagg (2014) by stating that all these have in common that they facilitate participation and interaction of users while the content that it produces, shares and develops within the users' communication is a product of both their participation and the publishing or broadcasting processes of the media representatives.

When formulating SM-CDC, KhosraviNik (2017) started with the assumption that classic discourse analytical approaches when applied to discourse analysis in Social Media (e.g. Barton & Lee, 2013; Herring, 2014; Jones et al., 2015) start from the text and then analyse the layers of media and socio-political contextualisation. However, KhosraviNik (2017) believes that an 'observational/communicative practice-based approach would fit more efficiently for discourse analysis on Social Media' (p. 584). This in fact means that the analyst will have to look at the text but also observe the users' lives and beliefs regarding the result of their writing.

Therefore, SM-CDS is 'not only interested in what happens in media per se but in how it may shape and influence the social and political sphere of our life worlds' (KhosraviNik, 2017, p. 586). SM-CDS may be used to investigate 'what goes on online in such a way that the availability of technological affordance per se is assumed to be the ultimate sufficient context *and* force for actual social, political, and cultural change in society' (p. 586). KhosraviNik further suggests that all media practices and the content

presented in the media 'should be interpreted within a wider socio-political context of a given society' which is where 'a social, historical, cultural, psychological, or political account is provided for explication of the discourse under investigation' (p. 586).

In a practical sense, SM-CDS should assume a more observational approach which would be focused less on locating relevant data and sampling justification. KhosraviNik (2017) does not deny existing CDS methods and approaches. He even states that audience methods could be extremely beneficial to the social contextualisation in an analysis of communicative content occurring in SM-CDS. Nevertheless, KhosraviNik (2017) believes that the focus in SM-CDS should be on the 'form, processes and projected meanings of the content itself and their calculated impacts in society' (p. 587). What is more, KhosraviNik and Amer (2020) suggest that a working model for SM-CDS should be 'case studies combined with observational approaches of screen data, e.g. online ethnography' (p. 2). In addition, they suggest adding approaches to the toolkit of CDS to facilitate the dealing with meaning-making artefacts (e.g. smileys) if and when relevant.

KhosraviNik (2017) further suggests that macro-contextual issues referring to a society should be part of analyses in SM-CDS because such approach would enable the critical evaluation of 'social and political asymmetries as well as qualities, viability and availability of public spheres' (p. 588). This is particularly important because meanings constructed by users of social media exist only in the society and the social context that the users belong to. Based on this premise, SM-CDS could investigate micro-level interactional and textual practices which obviously depend on factors, such as social order and systems of belief (Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011, p. xxvii).

Though KhosraviNik has not established a topology or specific methodology based on which SM-CDS could be implemented in practice, he himself has conducted several studies based on the premises elaborated here (e.g. KhosraviNik & Amer, 2020; KhosraviNik & Esposito, 2018; KhosraviNik & Zia, 2014; Sarkhoh & KhosraviNik, 2020). For instance, in Sarkhoh and KhosraviNik (2020), the data collection is described as 'an ethnographic endeavour' (p.4). This approach is based on Androutsopoulos (2008) who suggests that the examination of participants' discourse practices and perspectives as well as relating them to observable patterns of language use should not be based only on log data. It should also include people's motivations for

the use of a certain linguistic resource in the online space, the meanings they attach to those resources, their awareness and evaluation of linguistic diversity online, their knowledge about linguistic innovation in Computer Mediated Communication as well as the relationship between the interpretations that both participants and researchers may provide. For that reason, Androutsopoulos (2008) suggests discourse-centred online ethnography (DCOE) as a combination of 'a systematic observation of selected sites of online discourse with direct contact with its social actors' (p. 2). DCOE relies on ethnographic insights that serve as a backdrop to the selection, analysis and interpretation of log data which may allow the identification of relations between digital texts and their production and reception practices.

Androutsopoulos (2008) points out that ethnography in his approach is understood as a method based on which 'patterns of communication and social relationships accomplished through language in a community or group' (p. 3) can be studied. The method takes into account the participants' awareness and interpretation of their practices while it relates language to the social categories and activities of a community. In practice, DCOE follows two main sets of guidelines: 1) Practice-derived guidelines for systematic observation and 2) Practice-derived guidelines for contact with Internet actors. The first set of guidelines enables sampling and it comprises six guidelines:

1) examine relationships and processes rather than isolated artefacts;
2) move from core to periphery of a field;
3) repeat observation;
4) maintain openness;
5) use all available technology and
6) use observation insights as guidance for further sampling.

The second set of guidelines is expected to enable data collection from the actual participants and it also includes six guidelines:

1) contacts should be limited, non-random and include various participation formats;
2) pay attention to the initial contact;

3) formulate and customise interview guidelines;
4) confront participants with (their own) material;
5) seek repeated and prolonged contacts and
6) make use of alternative techniques whenever possible (p. 6).

Androutsopoulos (2008) further suggests the application of interviews, questionnaires or surveys for the direct contact with the participants.

In their research of Arabism and the negotiation of self in the Middle East (Sarkhoh & KhosraviNik, 2020) explored various discursive manifestations of an imagined pan-Arab identity in a body of user generated content on digital platforms. They aimed at integrating social media theories with critical discourse studies to explore linguistic, technological and argumentative aspects. For that purpose they relied on DCOE but analysed their corpus from the aspects of framing and discursive strategies. They managed to present how 'social media communicative spaces facilitate, consolidate and integrate identity discourses within a bottom-up discursive dynamic' while illustrating 'how digital affordances function as meaning-making resources in addition to classic materiality semiotic resources' (p. 11). As a result, their study illustrates how stance-taking is practiced both directly and indirectly in two ways. The first is through 'membership affordances, such as following, liking, sharing, commenting, or otherwise engaging with a community page with an on-the-record stance on the discursive conflict over the Gulf naming'. The second is 'via meaning-making content – language – through the use of a series of referential/predicational, active process and argumentation strategies, as well as specific transliteration choices with important in- and out-group patterns' (p. 11).

To conclude, KhosraviNik's suggestion of approaching social media discourse based on SM-CDS may be considered an addition to existing methodologies used for the purpose of analysing discourse occurring in the social media. His approach does not provide a completely new solution how to conduct SM-CDS but relies on existing approaches of which Androutsopoulos' (2008) DCOE may be considered systematic and detailed enough to enable a focus on screen-based data and practices which, according to KhosraviNik and Amer (2020) should be observed 'as distinct from (a) analysing content in isolation and (b) focusing on the ethnographies of participants rather than

discourse-oriented visible practices' (p. 6). The next section will illustrate how KhosraviNik's approach may be employed in the case of a corpus compiled from discourse published in a social media context.

#SM-CDS_OnFacebook

For the purpose of illustrating SM-CDS in practice, I will present the results of a research investigating the issue of hate speech expressed by Serbian social media users. The illustration is, in fact, part of a larger research conducted in 2018–2019. I compiled my data by observing social media content across one social media platform – Facebook – during a rather short period (14 to 30 December 2018). My initial idea was to compare the hate speech of audiences responding to the same piece of news published by the Serbian daily newspaper *Politika* on 14 December 2018, once in the comment section on the outlet's website *politika.rs*, based on van Dijk's Sociocognitive Discourse Studies (2018) and once in the posts on the outlet's Facebook page *Politika* based on SM-CDS. However, in the final article (Đorđević, 2020b) I did not include the data based on SM-CDS because it would have been too elaborate to present both the SM-CDS-based dataset and the one presented in the final article (based on *politika.rs*) which would have exceeded the scope of the article.

For the dataset based on the SM-CDS approach, I followed the principles of KhosraviNik's SM-CDS (2017) and I relied on the first set of practice-derived guidelines for systematic observation suggested by Androutsopoulos (2008) in his elaboration on DCOE. Unfortunately, I could not implement the second set of Androutsopoulos (2008) guidelines, i.e. practice-derived guidelines for contact with Internet actors because there was no way to establish contact with the exact users who posted the comments I analysed. However, since I followed the user's posts for about half a month, I could gain some deeper insight into some of the users' opinions as they posted them in the same thread several times.

Since KhosraviNik (2017) suggested that SM-CDS should, in fact, make use of existing approaches within CDS, I decided to compensate for the second set of Androutsopoulos' (2008) guidelines by relying on the Theory of Newsworthiness, i.e. news values (Bednarek & Caple, 2014) and on van Dijk's (2018) Sociocognitive Discourse Studies (SCDS) (as I did for the dataset based on *politika.rs*). Based on Bednarek & Caple (2014) I could identify the set of news values constructed by journalists in the users' posts. Given that news values are expected to attract readers' attention, instigate meaning and motivate action, such as posting an opinion referring to a

specific news item, I assumed that the identification of linguistic devices (2014) in the users' posts would be a reflection of the news values created in the article. Furthermore, I assumed that the reflected news values in the users' posts would reveal a specific interaction between discourse structures and social structures via a sociocognitive dimension, a notion expressed within SCDS (van Dijk, 2018). In other words, the identification of discourse structures would establish the Common Communicative Ground that the users created based on their hate speech expression, thus revealing the sociocognitive dimension created among them.

Chapter Five in this book is devoted to the Theory of Newsworthiness and Chapter Eight to SCDS. Therefore, at this place I will refer briefly to both in the context of the illustration presented here. The Theory of Newsworthiness (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017) may be applied to a corpus of news to confirm what factors influence news selection in a certain audience. An important criteria determining the choice of a particular news article are the news values which are discursively constructed and are defined as the 'newsworthy aspects of actors, happenings and issues as existing in and constructed through discourse' (Bednarek & Caple, 2014, p. 138). Since the hate speech in readers' posts and/or comments is a reaction to a particular news items, certain news values are more provocative than others. SCDS does not accept that there is a direct link between the structures of discourse and society, but supports the notion that there is a cognitive interface where the two meet and interact (van Dijk, 2018). The result of the interaction between discourse and society via the cognitive interface constitutes the sociocognitive dimension created among the audience.

Linking the Theory of Newsworthiness and SCDS to SM-CDS seems to make perfect sense because SM-CDS is meant to enable 'arriving at a viable account of the discursive impact of social media' (KhosraviNik, 2020, p. 2) on users whereas the identification of linguistic devices based on the Theory of Newsworthiness and discourse structures based on SCDS facilitate the identification and interpretation of a sociocognitive interface created by the users based on the discourse they perceive and interpret. What is more, the way discourse is produced and comprehended is related to the way linguistic and discursive knowledge systems are applied by language users so that the processing of lexical items, syntactic structures and various meanings of discourse is closely related to grammar, the lexicon, semantics and different forms of interaction. Since local and global meanings attributed to discourse

are based on underlying mental models as subjective representations of events or situations, a crucial aspect of the sociocognitive dimension is how the production and comprehension of discourse will involve the particular expression of a mental model regarding an event, person, opinion, belief, etc. (Đorđević 2020b). The conclusion is that both news values (based on linguistic devices) as well as discourse structures (based on the language) reflect the sociocognitive interface created among users as a direct result of the social media (SM-CDS).

Before I move on to elaborate on the research itself, I would like to say a few words about Facebook posts in the context of Serbian media outlets. Facebook posts, like comment sections, serve users to express their opinions. Topics that are most often commented on in the Serbian media as well as their respective Facebook pages refer to government officials' activities. Currently, the Serbian President's activities dominate both the news and the comment sections. The language used in comments/posts ranges from polite and civilized to spiteful and offensive so that hate speech is a common occurrence on all Serbian news websites and, accordingly, in the social media. Readers openly show disrespect of social actors and other readers' opinions, argue about facts, accuse each other of lying and misrepresenting ideas, pass insults and use sarcasm with the aim to diminish opinions. Therefore, comment sections and Facebook posts reflect personal frustration and aggression rather than public opinion and civil discussion (for a more detailed elaboration on hate speech, see #HateSpeech in this book).

My research design was based on the hypothesis that hate speech in users' posts on Facebook reflects the way news published on Facebook affects the readers' cognitive notions of information, beliefs and knowledge (Bednarek & Caple, 2014; KhosraviNik, 2017; van Dijk, 2018). I assumed that users feel free to express open criticism or insult (Tenenboim & Cohen, 2015) given that some of them even use fake profiles on Facebook so that I expected even derogatory and pejorative language in their posts which, in my opinion, would additionally highlight the fact that the news, obviously based on a certain set of news values, affects the sociocognitive interface between discourse and society in a negative way.

As announced, the corpus compiled for this illustration of SM-CDS was based on the observation of Serbian Facebook users' attitudes following one piece of news published on the Facebook page of the Serbian news outlet *Politika.* The corpus comprised a total of 1256 posts which users posted

in the period from 14 to 30 December 2018.[7] The period was chosen because on 14 December 2018 *Politika* published the news that Priština had announced the transformation of the Kosovo Security Forces (KSF) into a regular army the day before. On average the posts consisted of 35 words, ranging from one word only to even up to 350 words in a single post.

The news outlet Politika was a deliberate choice. Despite a rather high number of users, I opted against the Facebook pages of influential news outlets (e.g. *Blic*, *Telegraf*, *Novosti*, etc.) because the administrators of their Facebook pages quite frequently tolerate profanity and vulgar language. Since my aim was to explore how news affects the readers' cognitive notions of information, beliefs and knowledge, examples of profanity and vulgar language would not have provided a relevant corpus. I also opted against the Facebook pages of two other highly influential news outlets in Serbia (*N1* and *Danas*) because they are considered anti-government and a large number of bots (see #CommentSections for a definition of bot) are actively posting comments on their pages. This fact makes it difficult to distinguish real comments from the comments posted by bots.

Based on all of Androutsopoulos' (2008) guidelines from the first set, I compiled a total of 1456 posts which I then coded and categorised based on linguistic devices (Bednarek & Caple, 2014) and discourse structures (van Dijk, 2018) clearly reflecting instances of hate speech. I did not mark lexical items containing sarcastic remarks or ironic statements as instances of hate speech because I did not think that the sarcasm and irony identified in the comments explicitly reflected a clear intention of hatred, offense or abuse.

Based on the identification of the linguistic devices in the users' posts, I could identify almost all news values suggested by Bednarek and Caple (2014) which coincided with the news values identified in *politika.rs* (Đorđević, 2020b) (Table 5).

[7] See Đorđević, 2020b for details regarding the dataset compiled from *politika.rs.*

News value	Linguistic device	Example
Negativity	Negative evaluative language	torture, ruin, crazy, Nazi terror, risk, illegal
Proximity	References to place	Kosovo, Serbia, EU, USA, UK, Germany, France, Brussels
	Nation	Albanians, Serbs, Americans
	Inclusive 1st pers. pl.	We (Serbian government)
Superlativeness	Intensifiers	extremely, heated, urgent, meek
	Metaphors	Kosovo sponsors, 'titans'
Prominence	High status role labels	Church, Patriarch, President, Ambassador
Impact	Descriptions of significant/relevant consequences	will defend their own people
Personalization	References to emotion	frighten, calm, tranquil, dignified, proud

Table 5. The most frequent news values and linguistic devices identified in the articles.

The identified news values indicated that the individual instances of hate speech expressions, as will be presented below, referred mainly to the users' belief that the Serbian government was unable to convince the European Union of the fact that a Kosovo Army would be a threat to the Serbian people. In addition, the hate speech expressions identified in the posts also indicate a strong dissatisfaction with the reactions coming from the European Union as well as the belief that EU authorities are tolerating Kosovo authorities while forcing Serbia into accepting whatever Kosovo decides. I reached the same conclusion based on the dataset compiled from *politika.rs* (Đorđević, 2020b).

In the next step, I wanted to provide evidence that derogatory and pejorative language are a reflection of the negative impact of news on the

cognitive interface between the online discourse presented in the news and the Serbian society. Therefore, I analysed van Dijk's discourse structures (2018) in reference to individual actors, collective actors, political relationships, social/cultural/economic issues and country (Table 6).[8] Two reasons imposed this decision. The first is that the relationship between social actors in Serbia and the specific context that the relationship is occurring within is ideologically based (van Dijk, 2018). The fact that a substantial number of people in Serbia do not want to accept Kosovo as separate country but see it as an integrative part of Serbia is a strong ideology. A common way to present the relationship between the actors and the context is through the media whereby the audience, as a recipient, has the right to react to the news or not. One way of reacting to it is by posting their opinion about this relationship on the Facebook page of a news outlet. In the corpus analysed here, the readers frequently opted for hate speech in their posts (as stated, a total of 356 instances could be identified based on the Facebook page in comparison to 182 identified based on *politika.rs*). This choice indicates that the relationship between the social actors and the context that it was occurring in was not only provocative enough to motivate the readers to communicate their attitudes in their comments but it also implicates that the said relationship impacted them in a negative way.

The second reason for the broader analysis of van Dijk's discourse structures was that the attitudes of the readers who post comments occur in an online space where there are neither constraints nor repercussions (Tenenboim & Cohen, 2015). The online environment practically serves as a platform for the instigation of hatred that the readers communicate in their comments (Cammaerts, 2009). Therefore, the discourse structures identified in this research, along with the cognitive basis expressed within the anonymity of Facebook posts, provided evidence of the sociocognitive dimension via which the discourse of the presented news was connected to the readers as representatives of the social group that the news were being written for and directed at.

[8] Table 6 was used in Đorđević, 2020b.

Reference / Discourse structure	Actors (individual)	Actors (collective)	Political relationships	Social/cultural/economic issue	Country
Opinion and Emotion Words	Vučić, Tači, Macron, Chepurin, Kocijančić, Sela, Zaev	EU, USA, NATO, Russia	Serbia-Kosovo, Vučić-EU, Vučić-Merkel, EU-Serbia	TV subscription, university teachers, education system, salaries, religion, gender	Kosovo, Serbia
Metaphors	Vučić Merkel	EU, USA, NATO, Kosovo gvt, Serbian gvt	Kosovo-Serbia	education system, gender	Kosovo, Serbia

Table 6: The most frequent discourse structures in the corpus.

As can be seen in Table 6, the two most frequent types of discourse structures were opinion and emotion words as well as metaphors. Again, this result was consistent with the findings presented in Đorđević (2020b). Since metaphors are 'based on multimodal structures of mental models of experience' (van Dijk, 2018, p. 11), they are indicative not only of the readers' creative use of language but also of the general sociocultural knowledge the readers share. Most of the identified instances of hate speech expressions in the corpus analysed here mainly refer to Kosovo, Serbia, President Vučić and his relationship to the EU as may be seen in the following examples. Some of the expressions presented here overlap with examples identified in Đorđević (2020b). My first assumption about the reason for this overlap is that the same readers seem to have reacted to the news both on the Facebook page of *Politika* as well as in the comment section of *politika.rs*. My second assumption is that most of these expressions have been occurring in the online media for quite some time so that users seem to be 'recycling' them. This applies especially to those referring to Vučić.

[1] Kosovo

šiptarski brlog [shiptar lair], dvorište Srbije [backyard of Serbia], nazovi država [so-called country]

[2] Serbia

cirkus [circus], banana država [banana country], privatna država [private country]

[3] EU

sponzori srpske vlade [Serbian government sponsors]

[4] Vučić

veliki vođa [great leader], prestolonaslednik [crown prince], vrhovni komandant [supreme commander-in-chief], veleizdajnik [worst traitor], žvalavi [slobberer]

[5] Actors (collective)

šiptari [shiptars], žuti [yellow (referring to the Serbian opposition)], NATOvci [NATOplayers], Vučićevi poslušnici [Vučić's servants (Serbian government)]

[6] Actors (individual)

sendvičari [sandwich eaters (paid by the government to support Vučić)], botovi [bots].

Examples of Opinion and Emotion Words could be identified mostly in reference to the way Vučić speaks when addressing the press, as may be seen in the following examples:

jadikovanje [lamentation], kukanje [sobbing], patetika [pathetic], žalopojka [dirge], prenemaganje [affectation], zamajavanje [time-wasting], žvalaviti [slobber].

The presented examples show a generally negative impact of news and news values (Bednarek & Caple, 2014) on the cognitive interface between discourse and society (van Dijk, 2018) which is reflected in the fact that the Facebook users (KhosraviNik, 2017) share a negative opinion about almost all actors and relationships involved in the decision about the transformation of KSF. Even more prominent is that the Kosovo government as well as those who support them are seen as mutual enemies. It may be concluded that the sociocognitive dimension in the analysed corpus establishes a negative common space between the analysed Facebook discourse (SM-

CDS) and the Serbian audience as the representatives of society. The format of online posts may be seen as a means of communication employed by social media users to freely express their negative opinion. The various elements that interact in the identified sociocognitive dimension combine explicit forms of a negative social cognition, including attitudes about political issues, norms and values referring to historical, social and political problems and ideologies beyond individual problems.

Chapter Ten: The Spiral of Silence

A rather frequent result of the dilemma whether to speak up once mind or just keep silent is the decision to do nothing and thus contribute directly to the suffocation of the freedom of speech. A theory that has focused on the implications of the individual's willingness to express opinions on controversial issues or not is that of the Spiral of Silence (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 2016). Although the theory was originally related to face-to-face communication, its relevance has been examined regarding digital interpersonal communication (Liu & Fahmy, 2011), social networks (Stoycheff, 2016) and comment sections (Đorđević, 2020b; Soffer & Gordoni, 2018). Therefore, the theory serves both methodologically and theoretically the purpose of analysing whether opinions posted by news creators and the readership of news websites (a very influential type of digital media discourse) may result in silencing the freedom of speech in public discussions.

In the context of traditional mass communication the theory of the Spiral of Silence focuses on the tendency of people to conceal their opinions when they feel that their views are in opposition to the majority view on a subject (Gearhart & Zhang, 2015; Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 2016; Scheufele, 2008; Scheufele & Moy, 2000). According to Noelle-Neumann (1974), a person's decision to remain silent on a specific topic depends primarily on what the accepted viewpoint regarding a certain matter is. In other words, if an individual feels that their opinion is against the dominant viewpoint, they are likely to decide to remain silent rather than express their opinion. There are two main reasons for this tendency: a) fear of isolation and b) fear of reprisal (Noelle-Neumann, 2016).

The main stipulation of the theory is that individuals decide to hide their opinion if they think they are in a minority and vice versa, they are more likely to express their opinion if they believe it conforms with the dominant viewpoint (Noelle-Neumann, 2016). Given that individuals assess the public opinion climate based on what the media say, a significant aspect of the media is that they can directly contribute to the individual's decision to express their opinion or not. If a certain topic is prioritized in the media and if either agreement or disagreement are expressed explicitly, the level of pressure is raised among individuals to question their willingness to speak

up if their opinion opposes the opinion of the majority (2016). Therefore, both fear of isolation and reprisal will be the dominant criteria influencing the individual's decision to rather remain silent than speak their mind in case they do not share the point of view of the majority.

The backbone of Noelle-Neuman's Spiral of Silence theory (1974) is the causal relationship between exposure to particular media content and opinion expression in public. The public is exposed to the media as well as the various topics, themes and opinions presented in them. Whether an individual consumer of the news will side with a certain topic and accept a specific opinion presented in the media depends on the individual's assessment of what other consumers of the news think. According to the Spiral of Silence, the perception of the opinion climate first links cause and effect and then guides people's communicative behaviour (Porten-Cheé & Eilders, 2015) because individuals will first assess what others think of a topic and then act accordingly – say something in favour of a certain opinion, say something opposing that opinion or keep silent. According to Noelle-Neuman (1974) a substantially large group of people will remain silent.

That is the reason why a distinction has to be made between public opinion and the opinion climate. The former is a normative concept whereas the latter is an aggregate of individual opinions where majority and minority opinions are confronted (Scheufele & Moy, 2000). What is more, public opinion is the safer choice as an individual can simply share a public opinion, be it positive or negative, and not fear being isolated – after all, it is what everybody says, thinks or claims to believe. Siding with people supporting a public opinion is harmless. However, the opinion climate is a different notion entirely as it presupposes at least two opposite opinions and siding with one or the other would entail criticism or support, depending on where the majority is (Porten-Cheé & Eilders, 2015). This means that the perception of the opinion climate is what individuals engage in on a daily basis so as to decide whether to utter their own opinion in public or not (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). If an individual perceives an opinion climate as bearing any potential of isolating the individual from a majority of not like-minded people, the individual will remain silent regardless of the fact that their opinion might be the right one.

When Noelle-Neumann (1974) proposed her Spiral of Silence theory she relied on two key hypotheses. The first was the perception hypothesis based on which she postulated that individuals are quite likely to scrutinize

their social environment so as to get a glimpse of what the opinion climate is. What is more, this scrutiny will provide news readers with the needed insight into the prevailing trends regarding a certain matter, most likely a controversial one. In the context of the digital media, news creators may exert a strong influence on public opinion by manufacturing tailor-made news which will resonate a certain agenda, belief or point of view (as presented in Chapter Four, framing is a way to achieve that). The individual reader being bombarded with news that are aiming at establishing some common ground will most likely want to gain an overview of what the public opinion regarding a matter is.

In the digital media, a valid source of public opinion are comments and discussion posts following a news article or announcement as they provide a discussion arena in which everybody can say whatever they want. Quite a lot of people hide behind fake profiles so as to feel safer when stating their own opinions. However, Noelle-Neumann (1974) added a second hypothesis, namely the conformity hypothesis because she realized that readers are reluctant to express their own opinions since they do not want to be sanctioned for it. The result is the same as many readers will not express their opinion if they feel it might be opposing the general opinion climate among a certain community of readers. The effect of this process of weighing one's own opinion against the perceived opinion climate is a spiralling process in which minority opinions are seen as weak so that the minority eventually decides to keep quiet and not utter their opinion at all (Scheufele & Moy, 2000).

When social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter came into being, researchers of communication hoped that these platforms would become discussion venues for those with minority views to feel free to express their opinions (Muddiman & Stroud, 2017). However, instead of contributing to a broadened public discourse and providing additional perspectives about common issues, social media do not at all provide a space for those who would otherwise remain silent (Hampton et al., 2014). The majority-minority opinion gap seems to increase and turn into a global silence of the minority when opinion representations of mass media become extremely homogeneous (Sohn, 2019). In other words, the louder the majority agrees on an issue, the more silent the minority is about it. However, this proves incorrect when the vocal minority are comfortable expressing unpopular views, such as racism, gender inequality or sexual orientation to

name a few, because then the Spiral of Silence will remain ineffective since those who hold such negative viewpoints do not seem to fear social isolation (Chaudhry & Gruzd, 2019). Or, they do not care. This, of course, is a completely new subject matter which needs investigating as it introduces the notion of hate speech, a topic elaborated in the first part of this book (s. section #HateSpeech).

Yet, there is criticism directed at the validity of the Spiral of Silence theory in culture-specific contexts. Fung and Scheufele (2013) demonstrated that the theory showed weaknesses when examined in cross-cultural research. They cited three different explorations (Huang, 2005; Lee et al., 2004 and Spencer & Croucher, 2008) which were directed at comparing the effect of the Spiral of Silence between two cultural contexts each (see Fung & Scheufele, 2013 for details). The conclusion all three analyses proposed was that the spiral-of-silence-effect differed across geographical and cultural boundaries. In other words, this effect may not be considered universal. Given that only three comparative studies across different cultures have proven that the Spiral of Silence has different effects in different cultural contexts, this conclusion needs further validation.

Despite the argument that the Spiral of Silence lacks relevant and valid empirical support, its fundamental ideas remain compelling. The theory does propose a sound theoretical basis for the investigation of the effects media have, especially in the context of digital media discourse. In the contemporary online space, exposure to different media and thus opinions is now characterised by many different factors. First, audiences have a myriad of online media at their disposal. Individual news consumers can be more selective and opt for only those media that are in line with their own perception (Schulz & Roessler, 2012). Second, everybody can now state their opinion and be heard given the endless possibilities of commenting, posting and sharing options in the online media. And third, probably the most important aspect, the seemingly seductive anonymity provided in the digital realm allows for a safe space in which everybody can say whatever they want without being recognised (Đorđević, 2020b). The comment sections following articles in news outlets as well as posts on social media profiles that almost all news outlets nowadays have are favourite venues for the expression of one's opinion. An example from actual research will be presented in the next section.

#SpiralOfSilenceInComments

The Spiral of Silence theory may be implemented in digital media discourse within linguistic research as a backdrop for the analysis of opinions in the comment sections of online news outlets or in users' posts on social media. A good illustration of how the theory operates is how the public reacts to news about sexual abuse in their comments or posts (below the news item).

A common reaction of a person who has just read or heard about a victim of sexual abuse will most often be sympathy for the victim, but their decision whether to say something or not will depend on the prevailing attitude of the majority. Thus, the reader will hide their opinion if they think they are in a minority and vice versa, they are more likely to express their opinion if they believe it conforms with the dominant viewpoint after they have read through the comments already posted. The reason why is probably the fact, as has been presented in the previous section, that individuals assess the public opinion climate based on what they observe in the media, which determines their decision to express their opinion or not (Noelle-Neumann, 2016). In the case of a report on a female sexual abuse victim, the prevailing choice is to keep silent whereas the second choice may be to express hate speech because it has become the language of those readers who have no sympathy for the sexual abuse victim (Brown, 2018). Thus, hate speech turns into an intimidation strategy ensuring further silencing of those readers who have sympathy for the rape victim as well as the silencing of the victim themselves (Lumsden & Morgan, 2017).

Given such atmosphere, when it comes to sexual abuse, a conclusion may be that the Spiral of Silence has an additional implication – it turns into a strategy of silencing the victims. Not only are observers silenced and practically deprived of expressing their own opinion, but so are the victims because they stop reporting rape given the open hostility previous victims have encountered. Quite often, news about a sexual abuse victim generates negative comments, so that the public opinion climate instead of providing support for the victim, repeatedly comprises expressions of accusations, doubt, public humiliation and blunt animosity (Humprecht et al., 2020) which is why the victims, out of fear of isolation and fear of reprisal, decide to keep silent.

Nowadays, sexual allegations implying influential and famous people resonate strongly in the public almost all over the world. Although a lot of (not so famous) sexual abuse victims are still undocumented, the fact that famous people, especially in the entertainment industry, have been accused of sexual abuse allegations does raise at least some hope that other less prominent victims will be heard as well. The so-called post-Weinstein world has witnessed a significant number of women wo have felt empowered to speak out and share their own #MeToo stories. For instance, a large number of actresses have expressed sexual abuse allegations against Morgan Freeman (Academy award winner), R. Kelly (R&B icon), John Bailey (president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences), Dustin Hoffman (actor), Steven Seagal (actor), James Toback (screenwriter and director) to name a few. The consequences of some of those allegations are yet to be seen while some of the perpetrators have faced severe consequences.

It all started in 2017 with Harvey Weinstein who was accused of multiple cases of sexual abuse allegations by more than 80 women. Weinstein was dismissed from his company and expelled from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. He was found guilty of two of five felonies and sentenced to 23 years in prison. A similar case, on the other side of the globe was that of Miroslav Mika Aleksić, a renowned Serbian film and TV director, national television art director and owner of a famous acting school in Belgrade who was accused of multiple sexual abuse allegations by some of his former female students at the beginning of 2021 (Aleksić is currently under trial). It turns out that both Weinstein and Aleksić were so influential that they could destroy a young actor's or actress's career which is probably why none of their victims had the courage to speak out earlier.

Yet, reality keeps reminding us that many sexual abuse victims remain silent. According to World Population Review (2021) tracking down truthful rape statistics is 'notoriously difficult' because 'most victims of sexual violence choose not to report it. Possible reasons for such a decision are 'embarrassment, victim shaming, fear of reprisal from the rapist, even fear of how the victim's own family will react'. Fact is that rape is still the least reported type of crime (Truman & Langton, 2015). Even when reported, rather than getting support by law enforcement officials and the general public, rape victims often have to deal with a prevailing lack of sympathy as well as open victim shaming (McMahon & Farmer, 2011) and victim blaming (Taylor, 2020). Both authors point out that women are made responsible for

being violated. Moreover, victim shaming and victim blaming are normalized in society so that when rape survivors speak out about their assault experiences, they are punished for it by negative reactions in their environment (Ahrens, 2006). Such atmosphere becomes detrimental since the expression of oppressive attitudes, sexist beliefs and approval of interpersonal violence is not only adding to the female rape victim's aggravation but also directly leading to their decision not to report a rape.

Recently I conducted a pilot research for the purpose of validating the Spiral of Silence effect in the case of victim shaming (the research is part of a larger project yet in the pipeline). My preliminary analysis showed that most of the news which announced the horrible crimes in the entertainment industry, regardless of where the sexual abuse had been reported, had two similarities: a) powerful men raped female actresses and b) the news provoked a disturbingly large number of comments expressing victim shaming. The analysis included comments following twenty different news items published on online news websites about famous actresses finally accusing actors, film directors and producers (as well as other influential men in the entertainment sector) of sexual abuse, rape being a rather frequent allegation. The first set of comments was compiled from two US-based news websites (*NBCNews* and *CBS*) and the second from two Serbian-based news websites (*Nedeljnik* and *N1*). The primary objective was to investigate the extent to which the rape of several young female actresses in two different social contexts provoked readers to express hate speech in the form of excessive victim shaming. The main assumption that the analysis relied on was that in both contexts (US and Serbian) the excessive victim shaming may result in silencing not only those readers who might want to show compassion but also the victims themselves as they may decide not to defend themselves. At the same time, the atmosphere of isolation and reprisal (Noelle-Neumann, 2016) is discouraging other potential victims of speaking out thereby perpetuating the Spiral of Silence.

The analysis of the comments was based on three discourse structures proposed by van Dijk (2018): 1) opinion and emotion words; 2) metaphors and 3) ideological polarizations. In the analysis, I relied on a simple criterion: if I could determine that some or all of these three discourse structures were used for the purpose of victim shaming, I coded them as such. For instance, opinion and emotion words, such as 'they had it coming', 'they wanted a career in the film industry', 'when you shove your breast into

somebody's face', 'they asked for it', 'a dog won't come if you don't call him', 'now that they are famous, they complain', etc. were some of them. Similarly, ideological polarizations, such as 'you shouldn't believe their tears', 'why did they wait to become famous and then speak out?' or 'something is not right about this' occurred when other readers tried to defend the victims so that those who doubted the victims tried to pile up arguments to substantiate their doubt. Quite a few metaphors that the readers coined to offend the victims could be found as well. For example, 'through the bed to the stage', 'hold on to the arm of support and then bite it' or 'all the Jolies and Roses'.

All in all, the results obtained from this pilot research point to the rather disturbing fact that a lot of readers have little compassion for female sexual abuse victims. In both contexts explored in this research, the US and the Serbian one, a large number of readers turned out to be disrespectful of female sexual abuse victims. They were accusing the victims of being indecent implicitly telling them that they themselves were to blame for what had happened to them which is why they should keep quiet about it. A result to be expected from victim shaming is that the Spiral of Silence will be perpetuated (Noelle-Neumann, 2016) and rape will be reported in even fewer occasions than it has been so far (Truman & Langton, 2015) since society is not protecting its victims but shaming them.

The atmosphere created in this way is counter-productive as it intimidates other sexual abuse victims to speak out about rape in the future. More importantly, a majority-minority opinion gap opens up (Sohn, 2019) and it is twofold. On the one hand, it is created between those who support the victims, and those who do not. On the other hand, it is created between the minority – the victims – and the majority – the accusers. The opinion gaps need not be obvious in a quantitative way, i.e. the numbers of the ones not supporting the victims need not be large (Chaudhry & Gruzd, 2019). Nevertheless, the harm they are inflicting is detrimental as their hate speech is resonating much louder than the support coming from those who sympathize with the victims. Such atmosphere may bear tragic consequences (Kowalski et al., 2014) as it makes victims believe that they have to be ashamed of what has happened to them driving them into silence in addition to silencing other people who might feel compassion for a victim (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 2016).

In order to understand the trend of public expression, the role of the public opinion climate in relation to the willingness to express opinions is

crucial. Obviously, the secluded and anonymous space of the comment sections on news websites offers users the possibility to state openly what they think as opposed to face-to-face communication where the risk of retribution is high. Thus the behavioural act of expressing an opinion by posting a comment on a news website is becoming a favoured form of social behaviour within an immediate physical and geographical space otherwise deemed threatening. Unfortunately, such space allows the Spiral of Silence only to flourish even more and become more potent than ever directly contributing to the silencing of more people and to the construction of more hate speech and abusive language in digital media discourse.

Chapter Eleven: Data in Digital Media Discourse Analysis

This last chapter will be an attempt to summarize standpoints about data analysis methods which could be used with corpora compiled for the purpose of digital media discourse analyses in linguistic research. Obviously, neither the scope of this book nor this chapter provide a broad enough venue to dig deeper into the various methodologies. Nevertheless, I will try to present some of the most important standpoints regarding data analysis in discourse analysis in general, thus (hopefully) providing some options for data analyses in digital media discourse.

As has been presented in this book, discourse is considered to have many meanings which is why we may assume that numerous definitions support this statement. Discourse may now extend to include natural language, speech and writing, but also social and political practices as well as discourse as an ontological horizon. In one word, discourse may be anything that acts as a carrier of signification thereby bearing meaning. That is why discourse analytical approaches are directed at questions of meaning and the way it is constructed and apprehended. These questions may be approached based on a qualitative, quantitative or a combined methodology.

Within the various approaches that have been developed so far, discourse analysts have based their investigations mostly on a linguistic perspective on issues, such as context, information structure, reference, coherence, speech acts, speech events (Lazaraton, 2002). Within these, more specific analyses have been developed, such as ethnography of communication, variation analysis, conversation analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, etc. Nevertheless, a broader methodological basis for either qualitative or quantitative discourse analysis seems to be missing.

According to Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), a basic distinction between qualitative and quantitative research methods in linguistic research in general is based on dichotomies, such as naturalistic and controlled, observational and experimental, subjective and objective, descriptive and inferential, process-oriented and outcome-oriented, valid and reliable as well as holistic and particularistic. Data harvested in qualitative research are mainly real, rich and deep, usually ungeneralizable and obtained from case analyses. In quantitative research, data are hard, replicable and generalizable while obtained from aggregate analyses. Within discourse

analysis, investigations do not seem to fit the model outlined by Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) because most discourse analyses make use of interdisciplinary approaches which is why a clear-cut differentiation seems inadequate.

A more general differentiation between qualitative and quantitative discourse analyses may be based on whether the analyst works with data in a nonnumerical or numerical form. This means that the discourse analyst can answer their research question in mechanical ways by counting instances, calculating statistics and using statistics to establish how often certain instances occur or they can use nonmechanical ways and rely on observation, asking, listening to phenomena, etc. to determine how and why these instances occur (Johnstone, 2000). Similar to research in language learning, a further differentiation may be made based on whether the data are elicited or naturalistic, whether the data are in the form of speech or writing, whether the units analysed are linguistic or non-linguistic and whether the analysis is categorical or interpretative (Nunan, 1992). Obviously, a meaningful approach to digital media discourse analysis is a combination of the two.

In practice, both quantitative and qualitative approaches nowadays make use of technology. Processes, such as sampling, coding and analysing rely on some kind of software and in quantitative approaches they are primarily focused on the question how often certain features of interest occur. For instance, spoken discourse needs to be recorded and transcribed, then coded for features of interest which are then counted and analysed based on various statistical procedures. Written discourse again has to be sampled, coded and analysed based on some statistical procedures. As far as qualitative approaches are concerned, although they benefit from technology to a large extent, especially in the sampling and coding phase, they are not interested in the frequency of occurrences and phenomena, but on uncovering some systematic properties of discourse in interaction which depends on the researcher's ability to observe issues, identify relationships and discern conclusions based on the sampled units of analysis.

Among the various aims stated at the beginning, I wanted this book to show that digital media discourse analysis should by all means merge the hermeneutical tradition of social sciences and humanities with the functional and structural tradition of language studies as expressed in the digital world. This means that on the one hand, digital media discourse analysis

depends on the meaning of social practices and institutions; on the other hand, it cannot work without the description of different aspects of language use (Duchastel & Laberge, 2019). Given that digital media discourse is created and maintained in the digital realm, the aspect of technology has to be added to the two traditions.

Obviously, digital media discourse is created by social actors for specific audiences belonging to specific social groups with a certain intention which is why simply counting units of interest without an accompanying interpretation of the respective relationships formed between the units would be more or less meaningless. That is exactly why digital media discourse analysis should follow a paradigm based on a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Therefore, the analyst may opt for established qualitative approaches, such as case study, ethnography, participant observation, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, grounded theory, biographical method, action research and clinical research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) and combine it with some mathematical and statistical tool. Based on such combination, the digital media discourse analyst will be able to identify and describe the meaning of social practices as well as aspects of language use while describing, explaining and predicting phenomena through measurable variables.

As far as the epistemological level is concerned, the quantitative approach pursues a positivist perspective and the qualitative promotes empathy and subjectivity. Further on, in the quantitative approach the researcher aims at formulating positions that are general and universal whereas in the qualitative approach the researcher aims at uniqueness and context. Finally, quantitative research insists on validity and neutrality while qualitative research prefers transferability and credibility. At the analytical level, quantitative methods aim at reducing complexity, they promote a deductive approach and they encourage a wide, somewhat thin analysis. Unlike that, qualitative methods aim at apprehending complexity, they promote induction or abduction and they encourage a deep, i.e. thick analysis. Finally, at the level of operations, quantitative research relies on variables, measurement and confirmatory statistical tests while qualitative research is interested in intentional actions, qualitative processes and exploratory procedures. Bottom line, the purpose of quantitative research is causal explanation and that of qualitative research the understanding of meaning.

Given that by definition all discourse analyses, digital media discourse analyses in particular, explore phenomena that comprise both a quantitative and a qualitative aspect, digital media discourse analysis may benefit from a combination of qualitative and quantitative paradigms by choosing those aspects from either approach which are fitting the researcher's aims and hypotheses as well as the nature of their data. In other words, digital discourse analysis can discern the meaning of phenomena, provide uniqueness and credibility based on induction to discover intentional actions while being objective, relying on measurement, providing statistically significant, even causal explanations. Basically, a mixed approach would mean assuming a more pragmatic attitude while relatively weakening the paradigmatic oppositions between the two methods. Especially with large data sets, digital media discourse analysis may benefit from extending qualitative methods by quantitative means (O'Halloran, 2020; O'Halloran et al., 2018).

When it comes to analysing data, a digital media discourse analyst can practically rely on any statistical approach they find applicable. The basic approach would be descriptive statistics which means that the researcher simply counts the occurrence of instances of a feature of interest in order to confirm that there is either a high or a low frequency of occurrence. More complex statistical analyses would include, for instance, discovering how those instances of a feature of interest correlate. The researcher will probably want to describe the linear relationship between two continuous variables (e.g. opinions of social actors and actions taken following a certain announcement). A correlation analysis can, in fact, measure the strength and direction of any linear relationship between two or more variables. Conclusions drawn based on such analysis could, for instance, provide answers as to why certain events provoke certain actions.

A rather common statistical approach is Analysis of Variation or ANOVA which is mainly used in sociolinguistics and is based on social and linguistic factors to understand patterns of language variation and change. Being basically a multivariate statistical procedure it requires a fairly even distribution of observations across represented cells. With this approach, the researcher can easily rely on a case study research design, collect data based on observation (not only of behaviour but also written materials created by the participants if needed), surveys and/or interviews. Verbal interactions between participants can be transcribed, thus providing data that

can be analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. In other words, the researcher may come to inductive conclusions about certain actions and support them statistically with, for instance, a chi-square test.

Obviously, computer software plays a crucial role in any type of research today which means that digital media discourse analyses should rely on the possibility of evidencing data as well. Large quantities of data, regardless of the way the data have been harvested, can be dealt with in a much easier and straightforward manner. Corpus linguistic methods may also be implemented as they can provide both an interpretation and contextualisation of data thereby enabling an adequate reconstructive analysis of the construction of meaning in a social context (Dang-Anh & Rüdiger, 2015). It seems that the evidencing of two important factors in digital media discourse, that of salience and frequency may prove particularly important. By focusing on salience, the researcher can identify and interpret the prominence of certain features of interest and by focusing on frequency they can provide evidence for the number of occurrences of the identified salience.

However, the decision regarding the issue what may be considered a salient utterance, sentence or simply occurrence in digital media discourse is still a point of discussion and Klein (2014) suggests that three basic features are required to make a sentence salient: 1) a considerable speaker, 2) a politically relevant topic and 3) a special situation (p. 123). Klein further explains that the speaker can even be a group, that the politically relevant topic will most probably be a controversial one and that the special situation will have been evoked by public attention, even aggravation so that it will probably arouse latent controversy. Nevertheless, Klein acknowledges that salience can also be attributed to speakers who are not prominent, that topics need not be current as public debates may be triggered even in situations that do not fulfil the three criteria he proposed. In my opinion, Klein's categorisation of salient occurrences should be taken as a starting point helping the digital media discourse analyst decide on the criteria which they would like to analyse should they pursue salience as a (key) concept to identify distinct communicative sequences from large data sets.

To conclude, digital media discourse analysis should not rely on a single approach but should make use of the possibilities provided by both qualitative and quantitative methods, i.e. provide numerical evidence and an adequate (probably heuristic) analysis. In that way, the researcher will fulfil

three main tasks which are crucial in digital media discourse analysis: 1) collect data, 2) provide relevant evidence and 3) interpret the data.

In respect of the first task, the researcher will have to follow a certain data collection approach they believe most suitable to the research aim. The decision will most probably depend on the features of interest that are being pursued. Obviously, the main steps will be sampling and coding which will have to be based on the identification of significant terms and entities while also providing a time span for the corpus the researcher compiled with the intention to analyse. As regards the second step, i.e. that of providing evidence to the data, the researcher will have to decide on the variables that will suit their dataset as well as their research aims and hypotheses (e.g. social agent, situation, event, linguistic feature, utterance, etc.). After that, statistical analyses can be applied (frequency analysis, conditional probability, regression, correlation, multivariate analysis, etc.). This step will add significance, validity and reliability to the researcher's data. The third step will provide the necessary explanations regarding the sequentiality and situatedness of the features of interest (e.g. communicative intent, news values, attitudes, beliefs, speech acts, etc.) as well as establish a grounded relationship with the research aims and confirm the initially stated hypotheses.

Newer approaches to digital media discourse focus on features of digital media discourse inherent in its multimodality. In Chapter Seven, for instance, I presented the Kaleidographic builder (Caple et al., 2018) as a visual data presentation tool which may aid qualitative analyses immensely without necessarily relying on numerical data presentation. A similar data visualisation approach has recently been proposed by Hiippala (2020) who suggests how static information graphics, non-interactive and interactive dynamic data visualisation can be performed based on identifying different semiotic modes and presenting them as several overlapping canvases. Hiippala (2020) provides three example analyses. The first is static information graphics. It contains primarily visualised data but also combines various modes of expression (written language, illustrations, etc.) which are organised on several overlapping canvases. The second example is non-interactive dynamic data visualisation which is very similar to the Kaleidographic builder proposed by Caple et al. (2018). The difference is that it is static, i.e. presenting only one circular structure with data presented in coloured bars and their respective labels presented on concentric circles around the bars. The third example Hiippala (2020) provides is an interactive dynamic data

visualisation illustrated on the case of plastic debris in the oceans. It provides two distinct views, one based on a map and one on source views. Each is presented on their own canvases which can be viewed via the options provided in the interface in addition to various levels of interactivity based on large-scale hydrodynamic models simulating global oceanic circulation.

Though Hiippala's (2020) approach is not specifically related to discourse, but rather to multiple modes of expressions in general (written language, photographs, diagrammatic elements, illustrations, etc.), it can also be applied to digital media discourse given the fact that it is multimodal. The main drawback of using visual presentation tools in digital media discourse analysis is the abundance of data to be presented. As illustrated by Hiippala (2020), a single photograph may have dozens of canvases and sub-canvases. Applying a data visualisation tool to a larger corpus of digital media discourse would probably yield hundreds of canvases. Nevertheless, if a corpus is downsampled in an adequate manner, Hiippala's (2020) approach may provide a general guideline how to approach digital media discourse based on data visualisation if such approach should serve a researcher's aim.

For example, if a researcher wanted to analyse the reasons for the creation of a certain sample of digital media discourse, the sample should probably not be too long as the amount of data could be overwhelming. The first step would be to identify the canvases and describe their properties. Then a more comprehensive analysis of the production processes assumed to underly the creation of canvases could follow. As Hiippala (2020) points out, canvases inherit affordances from the materiality of the medium that carries them, which indicates that they must have been manipulated in a certain way to convey different communicative purposes. The researcher could thus discover what has motivated the producers to create these canvases in the way they have. The material affordances could then be revealed by means of ethnographic methods (for an illustration see Chapter Nine).

Given the interdisciplinary nature of digital media discourse analysis, the digital media discourse analyst can rely on concordance analysis as well. In a concordance analysis every corpus occurrence of a keyword of interest is displayed along with its context. The analyst may then try to discover the linguistic properties of the keyword as well as the contextual patterns which predict them. Such analysis would be based on the identification of the frequencies of occurrence in the keyword's context but also those of words (collocations), word combinations, parts of speech or other lexical

classifications (Scott, 2010). Concordance analyses may be performed by means of text visualization tools, such as the Concordance Mosaic, Metafacet and ComFre (Sheehan & Luz, 2019). The Concordance Mosaic visualization facilitates the investigation of collocation patterns. It is used to encode word positions in a concordance list by means of which a quantitative analysis of frequency or collocation statistics may be conducted. Metafacet relies on meta-data so that concordance lists may be investigated. ComFre enables the comparison of word frequencies between two corpora of different size. Based on this tool, terms representative of the analysed corpora can be identified. The combination of various tools might even prove more beneficial as it could provide deeper insight into the issues chosen as the subject matter in a digital media discourse analysis.

One more data analysis model worth mentioning was recently presented by Wildfeuer and Stamenković (2022). The authors' aim was to analyse the discursive structures occurring in the tutorials for two video games thereby proposing a multimodal semantic approach and providing a discourse pragmatic analysis of the game canvases in the tutorials. The authors constructed logical forms and produced graphical representations in LATEX based on narrative eventualities that construct the beginning of the storyline unfolding in the game. The identified logical forms display the interplay of both resources and referents occurring in the game and presented in the tutorial which can now be related to each other based on discourse relations. After that, the authors constructed the unfolding of the discourse structures occurring in the tutorial whereby they included the embedding and subordination of various substructures. This method of analysis relies heavily on an accurate coding structure and if conducted properly, it may offer elements crucial for the identification of discourse relations and a graphical presentation of the discourse structure in a sampled extract (Wildfeuer & Stamenković, 2020, p. 40).

As I could go on forever, I believe I should conclude both this chapter as well as this book right here by stating that digital media discourse analysts are in the unique position to rely on existing research methods, adapt them to the newly-established types of digital media discourse and, at the same time, propose new approaches. Discourse analysis in general is about how people use language in communication and digital media discourse is about how people use language in communication in the digital (mostly

online) realm. When conducting digital media discourse analyses in linguistic research, language (both speech and writing) as well as verbally and non-verbally based signs, have to be seen as general vehicles via which communication and interaction are carried out. Therefore, language is one of the many foci of attention if not even the central focus of such research. This means that digital media discourse in linguistic research has to rely on a combination of research approaches whereby presupposing that the effect technology may have on such discourse and its analysis is essential.

Hopefully, I have managed to fulfil my main intention: provide a resource that will help researchers conduct digital media discourse analysis in linguistic research.

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Index

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IN LINGUISTIC RESEARCH

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