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ADDRESSING TRUTH VALUES IN WRITTEN CORPORA - A B&H CASE STUDY²

Abstract: This paper approaches the notion of truth (fulness) within the written media discourse, namely the three B&H daily newspapers. Aimed at researching computer-accessible online articles published in the chosen three time frames, the paper focuses on narratives containing the keyphrase "Alan Šeranić" and the representation of the notions of values of trust and confidence found in extracts which contain both the chosen keyphrase and examples of news values. The results show that the attitude towards the researched keyphrase changes both in accordance with the time frames of its use and in accordance with the geographical area of the publication source.

Keywords: corpora, B&H newspapers, trust, confidence, news values.

1. Introduction

The specificity of the Bosnia and Herzegovina region calls for considering some issues concerning the media's behaviour during the Covid-19 pandemic and the overall notion of trust and confidence the general public have in them. The inexistence of one course of delivery of information and the existence of a possible high influence of different outer sources (geographical, political, ethnical, etc.) opens up the question of existence of one or more truths, and, therefore, of the connection of news values with these sources.

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2. Methodological Considerations

The particularity of the researched geographical area calls for a closer look at the postulates (linguistic and non-linguistic) which lie in the foundations of the research. It is, therefore, necessary to give some background information prior to immersing into methodological considerations.

2.1. Bosnia and Herzegovina Written Media as a Research Framework

Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) in its present form makes an interesting basis for postulating a presence of invisible boundaries in the area of media presentation on specific issues. There is a clear division between the entity and cantonal media services. The situation with printed and online media is almost the same, the only difference being that there is no specific state printed or online newspaper or journal. Such a situation made the choice of corpus a bit difficult, for I decided to choose one newspaper from each region as a representative. The choice is also influenced by the fact that there is no overtly visible difference between the official partisan media and the oppositional ones. As noted in our previous research (Babić, Muhić & Tica, 2021), the content of the newspapers also heavily relies on their owners and on the policy they decide to follow and pursue.

These introductory notes are here to emphasise the amount of (dis)trust in every and all of the Bosnian and Herzegovian peoples, who are also well-known in the Western Balkans Region for their brisk and overtly expressed opinions and humour, which, for a purely linguistic research, may sometimes present a problem if corpora are researched as translated and annotated texts. Nevertheless, my ongoing work on the sampling of learner B&H corpora³ simply provoked a challenge of attempting to apply its postulates to a wholly different material in order to see whether it is possible to use the same tools (and to which extent and success) or whether they ought to be somewhat adjusted.

2.2. News Values

The appeal which news reports present to linguists and discourse analysts brought a number of approaches which are at hand for researchers (critical Fairclough, 1995: socio-linguistic Bell, 1991; Jucker, 1991; cognitive van Dijk,

³The work on the Project mentioned in Footnote 2.

1987; genre/discourse structural approach Bell, 1991; Montgomery, 2007). Relying on Bell (1991), Bednarek (2010) develops her own view on a practised-focused approach, paying attention to journalistic language. Researching the ways in which evaluations can function in news discourse, she argues that:

‘With respect to journalism and journalism studies, journalists should be aware of the effect of evaluative language in their own writing in terms of bias, news values, targeting readerships, and creating a multiplicity of voices (sourcing).’ (p.40)

Raising-awareness started with an increased interest of linguists pinpointing the specific linguistic tools used in the mainstream media for achieving their particular agenda. And it seems that their news values lie at the top of the list, for they need our trust and confidence that we, as readers of newspapers or listeners/viewers to the radio or television programmes give, it must be quite strong and mutually interwoven and impacted.

Wanting first to have an insight in the journalists’ understanding of the term news values, I found it quite difficult to pinpoint the precise definition or even point of view, which is not surprising at all, for the fluidity of the term allows for various approaches and understandings to be applied to it. Nevertheless, the following list of requirements for news stories offered itself as an answer that a great number of researchers and practitioners reach for: the power elite; celebrity; entertainment; surprise; bad news; good news; magnitude; relevance; follow-up; newspaper agenda (Harcup & O’Neill, 2001:p.278–279).

Replicating the topic some decade and a half later, Harcup & O’Neill (2017:p.1482) widened the list of requirements by adding: exclusivity, conflict, audio-visual, shareability, drama, and the news organisation’s agenda.

It is obvious that the meaning of news values is directed to something that is worth mentioning in the news, that is newsworthy, which is the most usual definition. Bell (1991) gives them a narrower meaning arguing that they present “values by which one ‘fact’ is judged more newsworthy than another”. (p.155)

Bednarek & Caple (2012:p.104) propose their own list as a summary of contemporary approaches: negativity, prominence, consonance, impact, novelty, superlativeness, and personalisation.

In the same article, authors offer a somewhat particular discursive perspective on news values within whose framework analysis of values, not only done through words but also through images, for which, they claim, it is possible to be systematic (Ibid, p.113)⁴.

⁴Bednarek keeps on adding values as she continues to look at the issues from various angles. In Bednarek (2016:p.30–31) we find timelessness, consonance, negation, impact, proximity, unexpectedness, su-

The complexity of understanding values, even with the proposed frameworks, inevitably leads to the question as to whether it is possible (or worthwhile) to conduct any kind of evaluation.

Thompson & Hunston (2000), acknowledging the ideological component (especially the ideological value system of specific professional subgroups, one of which are linguists), which cannot be ignored when discussing the notion of a value system, claim that evaluation serves to reflect a value system stating:

‘Every act of evaluation expresses a communal value-system, and every act of evaluation goes towards building up that value-system. This value-system in turn is a component of the ideology which lies behind every text.’ (p.6–7)

Bednarek (2010) uses their terminology when discussing the semantic dimension of certainty, obligation, and desirability, i.e. evaluative parameters, which ‘refer to the standards, norms, and values according to which we evaluate something through language.’ (p.18)

As a result, it seemed feasible to test the presence and use of values within a restricted B&H context.

2.3. The methodological mix: Thematic Analysis (TA), Content Analysis (CA) and Case Study (CS)

The process of working with a small amount of data asked for a combination of applicable analysis which were at hand, for I did not want to stray from the focal point, that being the representation of a MoH (minister of health) with regards to the (possible) change of attitudes and beliefs in him as an epitome of the government, as a holder of truth and an owner of national confidence.

The amount of articles published about the Covid-19 pandemic and its representation in the media increases on a daily basis and it seems it will be the focus of researchers’ interest for years to come due to the fact that the corpora collected opens questions which go beyond social sciences’ research. Covid-19 touched and influenced all pores of society, so Herrera-Viedma et al. (2020) focused on global trends in the coronavirus research, Basch et al. (2020) explored the online versions of US daily newspapers, and Morgan et al. (2021) on New Zealand issues, and Chen, Huang & Li (2022) researched its news coverage in tourism.

perlativeness, personalisation, and elicitation. She also emphasises that: ‘This list should not be taken as an automatic checklist and analyses must take into account context and use.’ (Ibid, p.31).

When wanting to find a definition of thematic analysis (TA) which best suits this research, I searched the Boyatzis (1998), where it is posited in the following two chosen ways:

Thematic analysis is a way of seeing. (p.1)

Thematic analysis is a process for encoding qualitative information. (p.4)

Boyatzis (1998) also distinguishes different purposes for which the TA can be used:

1. A way of *seeing*.
2. A way of *making sense* out of seemingly unrelated material.
3. A way of *analysing* qualitative information.
4. A way of *systematically observing* a person, an interaction, a group, a situation, an organisation, or a culture.
5. A way of *converting* qualitative information into quantitative data. (p.4–5)

Such a variety of purposes offers the use of just one (or all) in the research, which enhances the appeal of the method even more.

Thematic analysis simply offered itself up as being ‘a distinctive method with a clearly outlined set of procedures in social science’ (Braun & Clarke, 2013:p.178). Its adaptability to linguistic purposes makes it more applicable to a wider type of research than mere identification of themes and patterns of meaning in the given corpora in relation to a specific problem. The thing that makes it specific is its usability in analysis of almost any kind of qualitative data collection. Braun & Clarke (2013) propose using such an analysis, for it allows one to have an insight in all the complex, juxtaposed and fuzzy relations that the world outside actually consists of.

The first thing that is seen from going through the methodological sources is a standpoint that as a research method, thematic analysis is not used as much as it could/ought to be, for the majority of authors use it as an additional aid in the research process and not as the method itself. The answer to that may be found in Thelwall (2021), which argues that

‘thematic analysis characterises a collection of documents rather than looking for differences between subsets.’ (p.93)

Adding more particularities to this “uniqueness” of the TA, Braun & Clarke (2013) emphasise that it

‘only provides a method for data analysis; it does not prescribe methods of data collection, theoretical positions, epistemological or ontological frameworks. It really is “just a method”’. (p.178)

Such an understanding makes it open for both, a bottom-up and top-down identification of themes, and its data can be applied in various ways, ranging from experiential to critical. Authors also praise it for its simplicity of use and applicability even with young researchers and students, for it does not require one 'to delve deep into theoretical constructs' (Ibid, p.178).

Guest, MacQueen & Namey (2012: p.9) emphasise the importance of the researcher within the actual implementation of TA, stating that they identify and interpret both implicit and explicit ideas in the data they are analysing, which actually present the very themes, thus again putting in focus the greatest problem which can occur in the interpretation of results, i.e., reliability.

To finish this short sketch of some of the theoretical posits, I would like to mention Nowell et al.'s (2017) argument on the place of TA in qualitative studies. They emphasise the notion that even though it has not been given a welcome acceptance in qualitative research and has not been appreciated at the same level as grounded theory, ethnography, or phenomenology, it is widely used in qualitative research.

Content analysis (CA) is 'a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use' (Krippendorff, 2004:p.18). Being used largely as a technique of researching journalistic discourse, it relies highly on quantitative data, thus reducing the subjectivity and enhancing the result validity. If understood in its broader sense, it can be argued to represent "a formal system for doing something we all do informally rather frequently— draw conclusions from observations of content" (Stempel, 2003:p.209). The amount of informality can be ambiguous and differently read, but the very reliability of the results is presumed through the carefully conducted data collection and analysis.

The obviousness of using the CA for quantitative analysis opens the question as to whether it is suitable for using in a small-data case study research. For the purpose of this paper, therefore, it was necessary to combine it with other methods and techniques. The solution to the problem of relevance and validity of the results has been sought in the Riffe et al's (2019):

'content analysis is comparable to detective work. Content analysts examine evidence to solve problems and answer questions. Of course, scholars limit their examinations to relevant evidence.' (p.168)

Another positive side of the use of CA is its adaptability, for it can be utilised as a mixed-method approach, in which it is possible to interchange paths of qualitative and quantitative steps (Mayring, 2014:p.10). Other researchers also emphasise the

possibility of mixing research methodologies. Hashemi (2012:p.207) argues it can be considered a useful tool when exploring systems and investigating both the process and the outcomes, and Riazi (2016:p.40-41) proposes its use in favour of a more robust explanation of the phenomena. Its application provides a deeper insight into the use of language and, quite importantly, allows for cultural insights, synchronic and diachronic. The research also relies on the understanding of the term mixed-method in its broader sense, the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods within the research project, at whatever phase (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012:p.131).

The mixing of methods has been used more and more often, for it allows the use of a ‘class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a *single* study’ (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:p.17). The result of this is the previously mentioned rapid growth of the amount of literature at hand. One of the things which this approach brings is a kind of amalgamation, where the shared research aims or questions generate a synthesis of results gained by the use of different methods. Therefore, it seemed only natural to add a case study to the two techniques, a movement solidly confirmed in the research methodology, or, as Creswell & Creswell (2018) state, the method that:

‘involves the use of one or more core designs [...] within the framework of a single or multiple case study design. The intent of this design is to develop or generate cases based on both quantitative and qualitative results and their integration.’ (p.209)

Mayring (2014) also mentions the possibility of the use of case study procedures in the content-analytical category systems, still warns that ‘registration of how often a category occurs may give added weight to its meaning and importance as well. (p.41)

This somewhat extensive introduction to methodological posits of research just shows the complexity with which the targeted corpora research had to be addressed with when the analysis of data is concerned.

2.4. Research description

The overwhelming influence the online media possesses in Bosnia and Herzegovina reached its pinnacle during the Covid-19 pandemic, for sometimes it was the only source citizens could turn to. As is usually the case, even the pandemic did not bring an ever-needed unity or, at least, consensus in reporting, for it is at this very point that the differences in various parts (and opinions and attitudes) shone with a fine glare.

The actual case study focus offered itself in the form of the juxtaposing photos of the RSMoH in one of the B&H newspapers, *Oslobođenje* (dated 30th March, 2020 and 22nd August, 2021), in which the Caple, Huan and Bednarek (2020: 6) news value *aesthetic appeal* equals the transformations in the presentations in accompanied written texts.⁵

Previous research (Babić, Muhić & Tica, 2021) has shown that the comparative study of daily newspapers in Bosnia and Herzegovina provides ample possibilities of approaching the notions of trust, confidence, unity, and the fact that the corpora had been collected through a period of time in which the strength of the imposed restrictions varied from a total prohibition of leaving ones home to almost free movement within the entity or cantonal borders. It was, therefore, decided to frame the corpus under the following parameters:

6. the articles are downloaded from online versions of three B&H daily newspapers, *Oslobođenje* (*O*), *Glas Srpske* (*GS*), and *Večernji list* (*VL*), which are published at the three regional capitals, Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and Mostar, respectively;
7. all of the articles entail the name of Alen Šeranić, the RS Minister of Health⁶;
8. the dates of the downloaded corpus correspond to the three specific time frames of Covid-19 pandemics in B&H: the first time frame (TF 1) contains articles from March to May 2020, the second time from (TF 2) from March to May 2021, and the third time frame (TF 3) from September to November 2021. The time frames correspond to three of four waves of Covid-19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the first, the third, and the fourth. The second wave was omitted due to the fact that it corresponded with the time of general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the types of reports found in newspapers published at the time were heavily influenced by the pre-election campaigns of the political parties.

The perceived problem with the data came to the surface quite vividly. Namely, due to the fact that the chosen case study contained researched issues of confidence and trust shown through the media in the form of a person who lived in one B&H

⁵ Caple, Huan & Bednarek (2020:p.6–7) extended their previous categorisation by listing eleven categories, emphasising the importance of multimodality as a factor which needs to be taken into account when addressing the notion of news values.

⁶ The title of the Minister of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Srpska is being shortened into the Minister of Health (RSMoH) and used as such in the paper.

entity, it was stipulated that the majority of data would be found in the newspaper published in the Republic of Srpska, which proved to be true. Due to the fact that Minister Šeranić is an ethnic Bosniak, the newspapers published in the Federation of B&H, paid much more attention to him in the newspaper which is published in Sarajevo than in the one published in Mostar, which also proved true. Still, since the aim of the paper was to identify the possible changes in the scope of trust with the online media (and, therefore, the public as well), it was necessary to reach such a decision, for it was impossible to balance the data quantity.

The phases of data collection were as follows:

9. the articles were collected manually using the available newspapers' sites, then downloaded, and manually inserted into a Numbers 10.2 file;
10. the keyword "Alen Šeranić" was searched in all the articles and those which contained them were preserved for further investigation;
11. the files were converted into machine readable plain text format (.txt), and then uploaded into the software (AntConc 3.5.8 (Macintosh OS X) 2019 tool), news values were extracted, systematised, and analysed.

The aim of the research was to investigate whether there was a visible change in the representation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Srpska, and, if yes, if it was discernible in all Bosnian and Herzegovian main newspapers. Only the files in which news values were found were included in the analysis.

Due to the fact that the focus of the study was on the possibility of pinpointing the case study issues connected with the ways of representation of the RSMoH, the working hypotheses set are as follows:

12. The representation of the RSMoH was in relation to the publication place of the newspaper.
13. The change in the attitude towards the RSMoH was in direct correlation with the time of the issue.
14. Trust and confidence in the RSMoH decreased with time due to the movement of focus from Covid-19 to other issues.

3. Results and Discussion

The quantitative analysis used shows that the researched keyword follows the presupposed pattern of occurrence.

	Oslobođenje (O)	Glas Srpske (GS)	Večernji list (VL)
TF	168	170	122

Table 1: Number of files/articles in the corpus

As expected, the frequency of occurrence is in direct correlation with the geographical area in which the newspaper is published. Furthermore, it seems that there is a double polarity expressed in the interest (and therefore) the trust which, again, can be interpreted both on regional and ethnical levels. The need for a “trustworthy” political figure is epitomised in the *GS* and the *O* as representatives of two entity and ethnical groups, respectively, while the *VL* primarily focuses on Croatian issues. It is quite interesting to see that self/local-centredness is a dominant approach and that the presupposed unity and collective trust in institutions, even in times of a pandemic, is reduced to a local level (i.e. entities and cantons).

The breakdown of the researched time frames is as following:

2020 (TF 1)	Oslobođenje (O)	Glas Srpske (GS)	Večernji list (VL)
March	17	59	0
April	57	13	33
May	30	28	0

Table 2: Time frame 1 (TF 1) results.

2021 (TF 2)	Oslobođenje (O)	Glas Srpske (GS)	Večernji list (VL)
March	15	13	16
April	13	4	15
May	8	5	21

Table 3: Time frame 2 (TF 2) results.

2021 (TF 3)	Oslobođenje (O)	Glas Srpske (GS)	Večernji list (VL)
September	12	16	8
October	11	10	18
November	5	22	11

Table 4: Time frame 3 (TF 3) results.

As far as the news values are concerned, I will just present the quantitative data for the overall corpus, for the extracted news values presented the foundations for qualitative analysis, out of which in the discussion part I will focus on the most prominent examples. The data was collected and systematised using the Bednarek & Caple (2012:p.104) classification.

News value	No. of occurrences	Examples
Negativity	256	<i>vanrednog stanja</i> (the state of emergency); <i>epidemiološki ugrožava</i> (epidemiologically endangers); <i>negativnu medijsku kampanju</i> (a negative media campaign)
Prominence	396	<i>Ministar zdravlja i socijalne zaštite Republike Srpske</i> (The Minister of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Srpska); <i>Ministarstvom civilnih poslova, federalnim Ministarstvom zdravstva</i> (the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Federal Ministry of Health); <i>gradonačelnicima i načelnicima</i> (city mayors and municipality mayors)
Consonance	132	<i>Republika Srpska</i> (the Republic of Srpska); <i>Federacija BiH</i> (the Federation of B&H); <i>Bosna i Hercegovina</i> (Bosnia and Herzegovina); <i>građani</i> (citizens)
Impact	93	<i>defanzivne [mjere]</i> (defensive [measures]); <i>[za] blokadu opština</i> (to block the municipalities);
Novelty	46	<i>kućne izolacije</i> (home isolation); <i>rigoroznije preventivne mjere</i> (more rigorous preventive measures); <i>karantin</i> (quarantine); <i>povećanja plata zaposlenih u javnim zdravstvenim ustanovama</i> ([of] increasing the salaries of employees in public health institutions)

Superlativeness	67	<i>12 nastavnika</i> (twelve teachers); 26 djece (twenty-six children); <i>linearan rast koji je mnogo manji nego u prethodnom periodu</i> (a linear growth that is much lower than in the previous period)
Personalisation	37	<i>zaraženim dječakom iz banjalučke osnovne škole „Branko Ćopić“</i> (an infected boy from the Banja Luka elementary school "Branko Ćopić"); <i>od mojih kolega zdravstvenih radnika do spremačica i kuharica u Studentskom centru</i> (from my fellow health workers, to the cleaners and cooks at the Student Centre); <i>predstavnicima sindikata u zdravstvu</i> (the representatives of the health care trade union)

Table 5: News values breakdown.

3.1. Time Frame 1

The beginning of the Covid-19 pandemics brought into the B&H society sentiments and attitudes both the same and different to those of the remainder of the world. The same feelings of uncertainty, anxiousness, despair, and different, the sleeping inner remembrance of war, inability of movement, futurelessness. Nevertheless, the public media somehow tried to retain a positive attitude and did not relay the feelings of the general public, rather those of the governmental policies.

March 2020 brought the topic of Covid-19 to B&H, and, as supposed, the measures were not brought on the level of the state, but on levels of entities and cantons. The notion of trust is mixed with the notion of orders. The name of RSMoH Alen Šeranić first occurred in relation to Covid-19 on the 5th of March.

15. *Ministar zdravlja i socijalne zaštite Republike Srpske Alen Šeranić rekao je da je testovima potvrđeno da 26 djece koja su bila u kontaktu sa zaraženim dječakom iz banjalučke OŠ "Branko Ćopić" kao i 12 nastavnika nisu zaraženi virusom korona, ali da će biti u kućnoj izolaciji narednih 14 dana.* [GS, 5/3/20-5]

[The Minister of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Srpska, Alen Šeranić, said that the tests confirmed that 26 children who were

in contact with an infected boy from the Banja Luka elementary school ‘Branko Ćopić’ as well as 12 teachers were not infected with the corona virus, but that they would be confined to home isolation for the next 14 days.]⁷

It is quite interesting that the first case of Covid-19 was confirmed by the RSMoH, thus establishing him as a person that the people of the Republic of Srpska should turn to for information. Prior to this case, the usual way of communicating problems which were deemed serious always included the addresses of the President and the Prime Minister of the RS, who in this case remained silent. So, the beginning of the pandemics introduced a new player (or a spokesperson) in the media arena in the form of the MoH. Moreover, very little time passed before he assumed the position of the decision-maker.

16. *Šeranić je rekao da se područje zaraze virusom korona širi te da su rigoroznije preventivne mjere donesene isključivo radi stabilnije epidemiološke situacije. On je još jednom pozvao građane da se ponašaju odgovorno i poštuju mjere koje se tiču kućne izolacije.* [GS, 11/3/20-1]

[Šeranić said that the area of corona virus infections is expanding and that **more rigorous preventive measures have been adopted solely for the sake of a more stable epidemiological situation.** He once again called on citizens to behave responsibly and respect measures related to home isolation.]

The surprising use of the RSMoH’s surname as an identifying notion, which is going to be found in the following course of time as well, somehow, at least in the source language, emphasises the position he holds, for this type of lexical item is usually used with persons the public is more related to. We encounter quite an assertive lexis, for the notion of issuing orders holds very strong background information in a post-conflict society. He imposes himself as a person who takes action, but the points related to trust and confidence are reported as something which ought to be understood as a duty of higher governmental officers (as well as of the media).

17. *On je istakao da je potreba za uvođenjem vanrednog stanja opravdana, jer bi se odluke donosile brže i bile bi efikasnije, pa s tim u vezi i odgovorilo bi se na potrebe građana. Šeranić je rekao da ne postoji razlog za blokadu opština, te demantovao ranije objave u pojedinim medijima i na društvenim mrežama da se sprema takav scenario.* [GS, 31/3/20-1]

⁷ All translations are made by the author.

[He pointed out that the need for the introduction of the state of emergency **was justified**, because decisions would be made faster and more efficient, and in that regard, the needs of citizens would be responded to. Šeranić said that there was no reason to block the municipalities, and denied earlier announcements in some media and on social networks that such a scenario was being prepared.]

In the FB&H, the RS MoH is seen as a person who transfers information about the number of Covid-19 cases, but also as a person who promises the acquisition of vaccines as soon as they appear on the market. While the number of hits in *O* shows interest in what has been happening in the other entity, the disinterest shown in *VL* confirms the posit that the online (as well as printed editions) really try to narrow the news coverage according to the perceived wishes of their prospective readers.

The tone changes significantly during the next month.

18. *"To se odnosi na to da su mjere koje se donose u zajednici označene kao dobre, ali su defanzivne. Zato moramo ofanzivnije reagovati prema virusu korona. To podrazumijeva jasnu trijažu i odvajanje negativnih lica na virus korona od pozitivnih, zatim lakše kliničke slike od srednje teške i teške, te da je potrebno masovnije testiranje na virus korona", pojasnio je Šeranić.* [GS, 24/3/20-1] [“This means that the measures taken in the community are marked as good, but they are defensive. That is why we need to react more offensively to the coronavirus. This means clear triage and **separation** of negative people from positive ones, then separation of uncomplicated clinical picture’ patients from mid-difficult and difficult ones, and also the need for **more mass Corona virus testing**”, Šeranić explained.]

The number of hits in *GS* decreased significantly, and we encounter other politicians aiming to take their share of public attention. The notion of trusting in what has been said is somehow taken for granted; still, the words *confidence* and *trust* and their derivatives do not occur overtly in the corpora as if one is left to trusting the government and its officials since trust was given to them in elections.

19. *On je napomenuo da je Republika Srpska u prvoj fazi prošla taj prvi udar i prihvati virusa korona, sprovela mjere, organizovala zdravstveni sistem i cijelu zajednicu da javno zdravstveno odgovori na sve ovo.* [GS, 24/4/20-2] [He noted that in the first phase, the Republic of Srpska went through that first stroke and acceptance of the corona virus, implemented measures, organised its health system and the whole community **to respond** to all this through the means of the **public health service**.]

The foreseeable end of the wave also brought a milder tone to press statements, and the hedging started to be used. The use of hedging is particularly overt when RSMoH is asked to comment on another entity or the state itself.

20. *GLAS: Cijeli region hvali Vaš rad u ovoj situaciji i donekle zavide Srpskoj što na mjestu ministra zdravlja ima epidemiologa. Koliko Vam to znači?*

ŠERANIĆ: Podrška znači mnogo i to je uvijek bolje nego da vas ljudi kude. Međutim, i kad vas kude, ne mora da znači da to rade iz zle namjere. Treba saslušati i njih i prihvatiti savjete i preporuke. Ja sam samo najvidljiviji u odnosu na sve one koji rade ovaj posao zajedno sa mnom, od mojih kolega zdravstvenih radnika, do spremačica i kuvarica u Studentskom centru. Veliki je krug ljudi koji zajedno rade, a ja samo imam priliku da svako jutro u pola devet sve to saopštim. [GS, 13/4/20-1]

[GLAS: The whole region praises your work in this situation and somewhat envies Srpska for having an epidemiologist at the position of the Minister of Health. How much does that mean to you?

ŠERANIĆ: Support means a lot and it is always better than people scolding you. However, even when you are scolded, it does not necessarily mean that they are doing it out of malice. They should also be listened to and their advice and recommendations should be accepted. I am **only the most visible in relation to all those who do this work together with me**, from my fellow health workers, to the cleaners and cooks at the Student Centre. There is a large circle of people who work together, and I just have the opportunity to present all the work done every morning at half past eight.]

This change of discourse is also noted in the FB&H newspapers, but this time they also focus on reporting some less positive statements made by RSMoH about the FB&H.

21. *Ministar zdravlja i socijalne zaštite Republike Srpske Alen Šeranić ocijenio je da je Srpska na poluvremenu kada je riječ o epidemiji virusa korona, ali i upozorio da odluka Federacije BiH /FB&H/ da se ljudi sa granice, umjesto u karantine, upućuju u kućnu izolaciju, epidemiološki ugrožava Srpsku, prenosi Srna. [O, 24/4/20-1]*

[The Minister of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Srpska, Alen Šeranić, assessed that Srpska is at half time when it comes to the corona virus epidemic, but also **warned** that the decision of the Federation of B&H /FB&H/ to send people from the border to home isolation instead to quarantine **epidemiologically endangers** Srpska, Srna reports.]

22. *Šeranić: Federacija BiH je napravila korak unatrag.* [VN, 29/4/20-1]
[Šeranić: The Federation of B&H has taken a step back.]
23. *Mislim da treba da ispoštujemo odluke i da ne idemo u inat tim odlukama, jer to svakako nije dobro. Očekujem da ćemo se ponašati kako treba - kaže ministar.* [O, 30/4/20-4]
[I think that we should respect decisions and **not go against those decisions**, because that is certainly not good. I expect that we will behave properly, the Minister says.]
24. *Kada se promatraju posebno entiteti, građani Republike Srpske općenito imaju više povjerenja u mjere Vlade i nadležnih institucija koje se poduzimaju i vide ih kao mjere primjerene situaciji.* [VN, 2/4/20-1]
[When looking at the entities in particular, the citizens of the Republic of Srpska **generally have more confidence** in the measures taken by the Government and proper institutions and see them as measures appropriate to the situation.]

Even though the position of the RSMoH does not call for commenting on the conditions in the other entity, it is precisely this which has been done. And the newspapers do take notice of this kind of table-turning (examples 7 & 8), even though they are aware that he merely replicates the messages sent to people in his own entity (example 9). There is another change noticeable, the use of first person pronoun (singular and inclusive plural) instead of imperative and the notion of confidence, mentioned in *NV* as a comparison to the state in their entity and cantons (example 10).

The month of May brought not only the loosening of measures but also the return of previously set borders. It is, therefore, no surprise that the virus topic has somehow been put aside, for it was time to come back to other issues (related to it or not).

25. *Ministar zdravlja i socijalne zaštite Republike Srpske (RS) Alen Šeranić potvrdio je danas da je zabrinjavajuća situacija kada je u pitanju broj zaraženih koronavirusom u posljednja dva dana, ali da je sve još uvijek pod kontrolom.* [O, 2/5/20-1]

[The Minister of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Srpska (RS), Alen Šeranić, confirmed today that the situation when it comes to the number of people infected with coronavirus in the last two days is perturbing, but that **everything is still under control.**]

26. *Dok su svi hvalili Šeranića i RS, brojke pokazale da je FBiH mnogo bolje reagovala.* [O, 4/5/20-1]

[While everyone praised Šeranić and the RS, **the figures** showed that the FB&H reacted in a much better way.]

27. *"Mi epidemiju držimo u potpunosti pod kontrolom, imamo i dalje linearan rast koji je mnogo manji nego u prethodnom periodu. To možete da vidite prema broju uzoraka koje radimo i broju lica koja su pozitivna", rekao je Šeranić.* [22/5/20-1]

[‘We are **keeping** the epidemic **completely under control**, we still have a linear growth that is much lower than in the previous period. You can see that by the number of samples we process and the number of people who are positive,’ Šeranić said.]

The standpoint of the RSMoH is still quite solid, and here we see the difference in reporting according to the news providers’ geographical area: *VN* does not comment on anything happening in the RS, while *O* clearly juxtaposes the RS and the FB&H, levelling the RS with its MoH, and starting back the old competitive model of informing. The first crisis in the RS backfires on its minister, for the previous two months it was he who presented himself as the representative of the government. The most important notion, that of a possible occurrence of a serious problem, is widely reported in the FB&H newspapers, while the RS one publishes either reports on the numbers of infected people or whole page interviews with the MoH about various topics.

Time frame 1 established MoH as a person whom the people turn to when asking for true and valuable information. Yet, as soon as the perceived peril started to diminish, the old frictions started to come to the surface and the geographical and political separateness became visible and hearable. Still, the researched corpus shows no word match for trust and confidence which can only be interpreted as a total lack of distrust due to the uncommon situation for which the people were totally unprepared.

3.2. Time Frame 2

The second year of the Covid-19 pandemic seems to replicate the sentiments felt a year ago. And the position of the RSMoH is still perceived as the most trustworthy and solid, for no voice for his removal of office was heard. This time frame is also marked with a new issue which provoked the notions of trust and confidence, that

of vaccination. Information about the quality of particular vaccines as well as their usability both as a protection against the virus and as a pass for traveling overseas also became a newspaper issue.

28. *On je ponovio da su sve vakcine kvalitetne u borbi protiv virusa korona i da je cilj da građani budu što brže vakcinisani.* [GS, 22/3/21-1]

[He **reiterated** that all vaccines are of a high quality in the fight against the corona virus and that the goal is for citizens to be vaccinated as soon as possible.]

29. *“Dobili smo zadatke koje ćemo u narednom periodu realizovati. Moram priznati da imam odličnu saradnju sa Ministarstvom civilnih poslova, federalnim Ministarstvom zdravlja i u duhu te saradnje ćemo nastaviti dalje da radimo u korist svih naših građana”, dodao je Šeranić.* [GS, 31/3/21-1]

[‘We have been given tasks that we will realise in the next period. I must admit that I have an excellent cooperation with the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Federal Ministry of Health, and **in the spirit of that cooperation**, we will continue to work for the benefit of all our citizens’, Šeranić added.]

30. *“Najznačajniji je fokus na lokalnim zajednicama i aktivnostima koje bi oni trebali preduzimati. Jer, odgovornost je na gradonačelnicima i načelnicima, jer bi oni mogli biti restriktivniji”, kaže Alen Šeranić, ministar zdravlja RS-a.* [VN, 13/3/21]

[‘The most important focus is on local communities and the activities they should undertake. Because, **the responsibility lies with the city mayors and municipality mayors**, for they could be more restrictive’, says Alen Šeranić, the RS Minister of Health.]

RSMoH never seizes to miss an opportunity to emphasise his dedication to the work he is doing as well as the collaboration within the country. Nevertheless, the phrases he uses sound rather like clichés than like real endeavours, even though it is noteworthy mentioning the presence of inclusiveness and the absence of entity separateness.

On the other hand, the FB&H newspapers portray other traits of RSMoH, sympathy and collegiality.

31. *Godinu dana nakon pojave prvog slučaja koronavirusa u Bosni i Hercegovini zdravstveni stručnjaci u RS-u je na konferenciji za novinare u Banjaluci poručeno građanima da budu strpljivi i da poštuju preporučene mjere.* Alen

Šeranić, ministar zdravlja i socijalne zaštite RS, danas je izrazio saučešće svima koji su izgubili nekog dragog u pandemiji. [O,5/3/21-3]

[One year after the first coronavirus case in Bosnia and Herzegovina, health experts in the RS were told at a press conference in Banja Luka that citizens should be patient and follow the recommended measures. Alen Šeranić, the Minister of Health and Social Welfare of RS, today **expressed his condolences** to all those who lost someone dear in the pandemic.]

The lexis softens, so there are no more orders, just recommendations. It seems as if trust between the government and the people, though not spoken out loud, is present and that shared sentiments and empathy are raised on another level. Moreover, the realisation that separateness, which functions at all levels of B&H society, is not something that the international community will tolerate, so almost instantaneously a common language and aims are found.

32. *Za sutra je planiran sastanak predsjedavajućeg Vijeća ministara Bosne i Hercegovine Zorana Tegeltije, federalnog premijera Fadila Novalića i predsjednika Vlade Republike Srpske Radovana Viškovića, potvrđeno je Feni iz kabineta premijera Novalića. Jedan od povoda je i zaključak jučerašnjeg sastanka premijera Novalića s kantonalnim premijerima da se od Vijeća ministara BiH traži hitno pokretanje aktivnosti oko nabavke vakcina, jer su neki proizvođači kao što je Pfizer jasno rekli da pregovaraju samo s državama. [O, 30/3/21-1]*

[The FENA has got a confirmation from the cabinet of the Prime Minister Novalić that a meeting between the chair of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Zoran Tegeltija, the Federal Prime Minister, Fadil Novalić and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Srpska, Radovan Višković, is planned for tomorrow. One of the motives for this, is the conclusion of yesterday's Prime Minister Novalić meeting with the cantonal prime ministers about the B&H Council of Ministers being urged to start instant activities related to the purchase of vaccines, because some manufacturers such as Pfizer have clearly stated that **they negotiate only with states.**]

The notions of trust and confidence are still not found in the corpus, which, again, is not surprising for it consists of articles published at the peak of the third wave, when people were trying to get vaccinated at any cost with any vaccine available, and the number of deceased kept on increasing rapidly.

At the end of the period, the first notion of the lack of trust appears, and the RSMoH is seen as a person whose job is to dissuade the people and medical

workers from taking particular action, for the consequences of the pandemic started touching various areas of social and private lives.

33. *Ministar zdravlja i socijalne zaštite Republike Srpske, Alen Šeranić, sastao se danas sa predstavnicima sindikata u zdravstvu. Razgovarano je o modelima povećanja plata zaposlenih u javnim zdravstvenim ustanovama u oblasti zdravstva Republike Srpske.* [O, 14/5/21-1]

[The Minister of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Srpska, Alen Šeranić, met today with the representatives of the **health care trade unions**. Increasing the salaries of employees in public health institutions in the field of health of the Republic of Srpska were discussed.

34. *Biće omogućeno da se vakcinišu i mlađi od 65 godina sa Astra Zenekom. Ova vakcina je prošla negativnu medijsku kampanju iako je registrovan mali broj ozbiljnih nuspojava, posebno s obzirom na broj osoba koji su primili Astra Zeneku. U Britaniji je preko 20 miliona osoba vakcinisano ovom vakcinom - naglasio je Šeranić.* [GS, 25/5/21-2]

[It will be possible to vaccinate those younger than 65 with AstraZeneca. This vaccine has been involved in a **negative media campaign**, although a small number of serious side effects have been registered, especially considering the number of people who received AstraZeneca. In Britain, over 20 million people have been vaccinated with this vaccine - Šeranić emphasised.]

The overall feeling is that the RSMoH slowly moves away from the role of the person who is responsible for bringing the government and the nation together and returns to his primary role of executing the decisions made by the government he belongs to.

3.3 Time Frame 3

The third time frame is marked by a very specific situation. Namely, after two years of the so-called pandemic, its different stages and challenges, it seems that the general public got tired of constantly being told what to do. Moreover, the amount of issues, especially scandals in relation to answering the crisis' problems, resulted in more attention being put on the government finally to deal with the perpetrators and to take legal actions against them. This is particularly true when it comes to the so-called "oxygen crisis", in which the news offered an ample amount of deictic information, i.e., pinpointing different persons in order to re-direct attention.

35. *Ministar zdravlja i socijalne zaštite Republike Srpske Alen Šeranić uputio je dopis Agenciji za lijekove i medicinska sredstva BiH i njenom direktoru Aleksandru Zolaku, upozoravajući ga na „pogubnost njegovih upornih tvrdnji kojim se dovodi u pitanje ispravnost kiseonika u zdravstvenim ustanovama Srpske“ te zatražio od njega da iznađe rješenje za nastali problem. [GS, 1/10/21-1]*

[The Minister of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Srpska, Alen Šeranić, sent a letter to the Agency for Medical Products and Medical Devices of B&H and its director Aleksandar Zolak, warning him of “**the perniciousness of his persistent claims** questioning the usability of oxygen in health facilities in Srpska” and **asked him** to find a solution to the problem.]

36. *Ministar i rukovodioci bolnica su konstatovali i da izlaženje u javnost pojedinih sa neprovjerenim informacijama, u kojima predlažu navodna „instant“ rješenja, dodatno zbunjuje i obmanjuje javnost. Upozoravamo da oni koji to rade ne raspolažu sa objektivnim informacijama sa terena i o radu zdravstvenih ustanova, što i sami priznaju, ali ih to ne spriječava da namjerno insinuiraju da u zdravstvenom sistemu Republike Srpske nema volje za rješavanje problema nesmetanog dopremanja kiseonika. [GS, 12/10/21-2]*

[The Minister and the managers of the hospitals have also stated that exposing individuals to unverified information, in which they propose alleged “instant” solutions, additionally confuses and deceives the public. We warn that the people who are doing that do not possess objective information both from the ground and about the work of health institutions, **which they admit themselves**, but that does not stop them from deliberately insinuating that the health system of the Republic of Srpska does not have the will to solve the problem of an uninterrupted oxygen supply.]

37. *Oni koji se protive vakcinaciji koriste poluinformacije - istakao je ministar zdravlja te dodao kako svi žele da se ovo smiri, ali se ne pitaju i šta su učinili da do toga dođe. [GS 18/11/21-1]*

[“Those who oppose vaccination use incomplete information”, pointed out the Minister of Health and added that all want this situation to calm down, but they do not want to ask themselves **whether and how** they can personally contribute to such a development.]

38. *Ministar zdravlja i socijalne zaštite RS Alen Šeranić održao je danas sastanak sa direktorima bolnica u RS gdje su razgovarali o kisiku i optužbama iz prethodnih dana da u bolnicama nije korišten medicinski već industrijski kisik. Zaključak sastanka je da su ove tvrdnje apsolutna neistina.* [O, 27/9/21-1]

[The RS Minister of Health and Social Welfare Alen Šeranić held a meeting today with the RS hospital managers, where they discussed the oxygen issue and accusations heard in the previous days stating that hospitals did not use medical but industrial oxygen. The conclusion of the meeting is that **these claims are an absolute lie** [untruth].]

The accusations again brought to surface the old division between us and them. Moreover, no report has been found which clearly states that the RS public is asking for a prompt and clear answer to the oxygen question, rather we see that all the attention is being averted to the state and its officials' role (examples 21 and 22). It seems that the only important thing is to persuade the public that the real problem actually exists only in the malevolent intentions of others, whose goal is gaining points with future voters and diminishing the trust the RS public has in its health system. At the same time, the use of the pronoun is rather interesting, for it also allows personal interpretation by every individual reader, thus inferring that trust is a two-way street, i.e., those who do not trust the state and its policy as far as vaccination is concerned also do not deserve to be trusted by those who implement the policies (example 23). Distrust, or at least, the lack of trust is seen in lexical choices (example 24). The noun phrase in Serbian had to be appropriated in English word-for-word *an absolute untruth* in order to emphasise the juxtaposition felt in Serbian by choosing the word *neistina* (non-truth) instead of expected *laž* (lie), which was expected due to the fact that the premodifier is a non-gradable adjective. The lexical choice, at least in Serbian, does not possess the fullness of confidence in the claim presented, however synonymous it may be.

39. *Druga stvar na koju se osvrnuo Zolak su tvrdnje ministra zdravstva Alena Šeranića kako je Pravilnik o dobroj proizvođačkoj praksi za medicinske gasove nezakonit. On tvrdi kako je ovaj pravilnik usvojen 2018. godine, uz podršku predstavnika Ministarstva zdravstva RS-a, koje je imenovao upravo ministar.* [O, 1/10/21-1]

[The second thing that Zolak referred to were the claims of the Minister of Health, Alen Šeranić, that the **Rulebook** on Good Manufacturing Practice for Medical Gases is **unauthorised**. He claims that this rulebook was ad-

opted in 2018, with the support of the representatives of the RS Ministry of Health, who were appointed by the Minister.]

The ball is thrown back to the state court by the RSMoH, and the personal fight continues. We are faced with different accusations and claims from both sides and the newspapers do not give us any option as to who we should believe, rather, they just present a line of statements which are open to interpretation. It is sometimes impossible to draw any conclusions, for the development of a situation is so fast and new claims are presented with such a speed that the very processing is deterred with such an amount of new data.

40. „U središtu svih ovih mjera”, kaže Šeranić, „treba da bude poruka da su cijepiva dokazano sigurna i učinkovita i da je cijepljenje jedini odgovor na pitanje kada će se pandemija okončati. Iz tog razloga donosimo ovakvu vrstu mjera, kako bismo promovirali sve ono što je potrebno da idemo u pravcu okončanja epidemije. U tome trebamo sudjelovati svi zajedno i ne smijemo dozvoliti da se interpretiraju poražavajuće poruke, a to je da cijepivo nije dobra u borbi protiv koronavirusa”, rekao je Šeranić. [VN, 19/11/21-1]

[‘At the heart of all these measures’, Šeranić says, ‘there should be the message that vaccines are proven safe and effective and that vaccination is the only answer to the question of when the pandemic will end. For this reason, we are adopting these types of measures, in order to promote everything that is needed for going in the direction of ending the epidemic. We should all participate in this together and we **must not allow destructive messages to be interpreted**, that is that the vaccine is not good in the fight against coronavirus’, Šeranić said.]

The last example presented here rounds up the TF3 conveniently. Again, the focus is put on the anti-vaccinationists as the imminent threat to society and the one thing the public should focus on. Trust is trying to be established through finding another ‘other’ who should attract all the attention and lessen the pressure that is put on confidence. It is evident that the trust in the Ministry (the RSMoH included) has been jeopardised and an attempt to regain it does not avert from the usual paths which have been previously firmly set (and which have always been quite successful).

4. Conclusion

The research results show that the hypotheses set were all confirmed. As predicted, the most overt positive attitude towards the RSMoH was seen in the entity he came from from, the Republic of Srpska, while the newspapers from the FB&H show either disinterest (the Bosnian Croat one) or some hesitant, slightly-biased attitude (the Bosnian/Bosniak one). As time progresses and the Covid-19 pandemic spreads, the popularity and trust in the RSMoH rises on all three sides, thus confirming the second hypothesis. Moreover, the position of the RSMoH changes drastically, and, for a certain period of time, he holds the position of the most trusted person in whole country (as well as the most popular one). As time progresses and the focus moves from the actual pandemic to other everyday life problems, more and more novel information is provided and the trust factor starts to become shaky, which confirms the third hypothesis. Nevertheless, the results of the research unveil one interesting issue: it is possible to find consensus in B&H as far as trust and confidence in the establishment are concerned. This is not the first time, for the same unity and feeling of oneness was felt during the great flood in 2015. The people stuck together and helped each other, and the newspapers did the same. The Covid-19 pandemic times replicated the consensus. With an almost unwritten rule, all the reports focused on prevailing the hardships the pandemic brought and put up front RSMoH as a trustworthy leader and person everyone believes in by unanimously using strategies aimed at creating such a sentiment. As soon as the situation begins to settle down, we are faced with claims and reports which are solely aimed at bringing back the old differences, thus showing the readers that the pandemic situation is getting better. Such a small amount of data is unable to bring a deeper insight into the problem, but it opens a door for a more in-depth consideration and analysis of particular news values used.

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3. Večernji list <https://www.vecernji.ba> (*VL*)

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РАЗМАТРАЊЕ ИСТИНИТОСНЕ ВРИЈЕДНОСТИ У ПИСАНОМ КОРПУСУ - СТУДИЈА СЛУЧАЈА

Резиме

Рад се бави појмом истине (истинитости) унутар писаног корпуса медија, тачније – трију босанскохерцеговачких дневних новина. Усмјерен на истраживање компјутерски доступних онлајн чланака објављених у три изабрана временска оквира, рад се усредсређује на наративе који садрже кључну синтагму ‘Ален Шеранић’ и представљање вриједносних концепата истине и повјерења који су пронађени унутар корпуса у коме се налазе и изабрана кључна синтагма и примјери вриједности које се налазе у вијестима. Резултати истраживања показују да се однос према истраживаној кључној синтагми мијења и у складу са временским оквиром у коме је она коришћена, и у складу са географским подручјем на коме се налази издавач.

► **Кључне ријечи:** корпуси, БиХ, дневне новине, повјерење, вјера, вриједности које се налазе у вијестима.

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