Nataša D. Vučenović
University of Banja Luka
Faculty of Philology
Italian Language and Literature Study Programme

HOMOPHOBIA IN SERBIAN ONLINE DISCOURSE:
THE CASE OF THE 2016 BELGRADE PRIDE PARADE

Abstract: The Belgrade Pride Parade has been associated with numerous acts of violence and vandalism since the first gay march in 2001. Although it seems that in the last couple of years the attitude towards the parade and human rights in Serbia has improved, the public discourse remains deeply imbued in national myths and stereotypes that instigate homophobia and contribute to the perception of homosexuality as deviance. This study examined public reactions to the 2016 Belgrade Pride Parade in order to outline how the Pride Parade, and by extension homosexuals and homosexuality, are viewed and represented by the commenters on some of the most visited online multimedia portals in Serbia. The online comments (approximately 500 comments) were considered as a web-based corpus and observed and analysed from a perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The use of online comments as corpus in this study is encouraged by multidisciplinary approaches and studies. Suzanne R. McMillen, for instance, shows in her research that online comments represent important spaces for debate and discussion and that they are an important form of public expression. They are also, according to the author (McMillen, 2013), reliable and trustworthy sources because the anonymous commenters are less inhibited and tend to be more honest while communicating online. Van Dijk’s framework adopted from Politics, ideology and discourse (van Dijk, 2006) was used to detect discursive structures within the online comments in an attempt to discover the underlying ideologies. The macro strategies of “positive self-representation” and “negative other-representation” plus the other 9 specific strategies were used for the evaluation of attitudes and opinions on the Pride Parade, homosexuals and homosexuality. The study ultimately showed how homophobic

1natasa.vucenovic@ff.unibl.org
speech in the public discourse was distorted and presented as "non-ideological common sense" (Fairclough, 1995).

*Key words:* homophobia, homophobic discourse, public discourse, ideology, ideological discourse strategies.

**Introduction**

The resistance towards the Pride Parade has been present in Serbia since the first installment of the manifestacion back in 2001. The first Belgrade Pride (2001) was interrupted by violent attacks organised by Serbian nationalist groups, skinhead groups and football hooligans. Several people, including one police officer, were reportedly injured (BBC news, Internet). The second Pride Parade was arranged to take place in September 2009. Due to the disapproval and threats expressed not only by nationalist groups, but also by some politicians and the Serbian Orthodox Church, the organisers were forced to cancel the Pride for security reasons. The cancellation of the 2009 Belgrade Pride was strongly criticised by the international community (Stakić 2011: 2). In the years after the fall of Milošević, Serbia started pursuing the EU membership. In order to fulfill the requirements of the European Union, the Serbian government had to guarantee the protection of human rights and freedom of speech to its citizens, which reflected positively on the Pride Parade matter. In 2010 the government finally showed a commitment to provide a safe and non-violent environment for the Gay Pride. The Parade was held in October 2010. Despite all the positive indications, it was once again sabotaged by the extremist groups. In the anti-gay riot 132 police officers and 25 citizens were injured and 249 persons were arrested (B92, Internet). The next Pride was held in 2014 and has, since then, been organised, with minor or no incidents, up until the present day. The improvement came as a result of more serious implementation of security measures but also as a result of explicit support offered by the Serbian government and the political elite. The significant change in the official discourse of the Serbian government is reflected in the fact that in 2017, a gay woman - Ana Brnabić, was appointed prime minister of Serbia.

However, in different areas of public discourse, the Pride Parade is still explicitly condemned and defined as a "parade of shame", aimed at propagating sexual deviations which degrade Serbian moral and traditional values. Even though violent physical acts against the LGBT population were largely sanctioned, a strong component of verbal violence and hate speech is still fairly noticeable in the Serbian public discourse. It seems that the hatred towards homosexuals and homosexuality...
is deeply ingrained into the collective consciousness of the Serbian people. This problem raises important questions: where does the hatred come from, and more importantly, why is hate speech, instead of being condemned, accepted as a kind of moral act? Furthermore, is there a relationship between homophobia and the patriarchal culture? Is the hate speech ideologically constructed? If so, which ideologies does it reflect? Some of these questions were previously investigated by Isidora Stakić in her Master thesis *Homophobia and Hate Speech in Serbian Public Discourse: How Nationalist Myths and Stereotypes Influence Prejudices against the LGBT Minority*. Stakić analysed the discourse of the politicians, the Orthodox Church and the media and showed that national myths and "state religion" help legitimise homophobic attitudes and hate speech. The author didn't take into consideration the opinion of common citizens of Serbia, which is a gap this research intends to fill. Moreover, a different methodology (CDA) will be adopted – Stakić approaches the problem primarily from the point of view of sociology and social anthropology, combining discourse analysis and CDA. It is also important to emphasise the different time periods the two researches observe: The 2010 and 2016 Belgrade Pride Parade. In line with this, the following research will also reveal if the public discourse substantially changed in the five years period or if it maintained similar or equal patterns.

This research aims to identify the most common forms of homophobic speech present in the Serbian public discourse, in order to identify and analyse the ideologies from which they arise. Based on the content analysis of the online commentaries, we will try to develop the main argument, which is that homophobic attitudes have their root in social ideologies that persist in the long run because they are masked and presented as a non-ideological common sense (Fairclough, 1995). A specific CDA analytical framework will be adopted to reveal different strategies used to justify and legitimise discrimination and hate speech.

**Theoretical framework**

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a rapidly developing area of language study that views language as "a form of social practice" (Fairclough & Wodak 1997: 258). It is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of language and society that often brings together different scientific fields and disciplines, such as psychology, history, ethnography, anthropology, sociology and many others. Fairclough (1992a, b, 1993, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003), van Dijk (1993, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2001) and Wodak (1996, 2009 2009) are generally considered to be key figures in this area.
Fairclough (1993) defines CDA as a form of discourse analysis which aims to investigate opaque relationships between 1) discursive practices, 2) events 3) texts and wider social and cultural structures. CDA addresses the ideological character of discourse (Fairclough, 2012) and aims to systematically explore how discourse is ideologically shaped by relations of power (Fairclough, 1993). For van Dijk (1985: 352):

critical discourse analysis is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take an explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality.

Similarly to van Dijk, Blommaert i Bulcaen (2000: 449) emphasise the socially engaged component of CDA:

analysing [social dimensions of language use] should have effects in society: empowering the powerless, giving voices to the voiceless, exposing power abuse and mobilising people to remedy social wrongs.

According to van Dijk (1985) CDA is not a specific direction of research and therefore it does not have a unitary theoretical framework. However, he identifies four mainstream approaches to CDA. The first one is a critical linguistics approach, which was developed by Fowler, Kress, Hodge & Trew (1979). The approach introduced by Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995) is defined as a sociocultural approach, while Wodak (1996, 2001) proposed a discourse-historical approach. Van Dijk's (1998) framework is based on a sociocognitive approach. This approach shows that many structures of discourse itself can be described in terms of various cognitive notions, especially those of information, beliefs or the knowledge of participants (van Dijk 2016: 3). It represents a particular application of the philosophy of social constructionism, which holds that social and political "reality" are constructions of social members (van Dijk, 2016: 4).

In Politics, Ideology and Discourse (2006) van Dijk proposes a framework for political discourse analysis. However, since the main purpose of his work was to provide analytical tools necessary to detect socially shared ideologies, which inevitably include ideologies of hatred, such as sexist and racist ideologies (van Dijk, 2006), the proposed framework results are perfectly suitable for the analysis of the relation between ideology and socially shared negative evaluations of the Pride Parade and homosexuality.
Methodology

Corpus

The materials used in this study are 554 online comments published as a reaction to two different articles reporting events from the 2016 Belgrade Pride Parade. The first article entitled Pogledajte kako je tekla parade iz minuta u minut: Završena jos jedna “Nedelja ponosa” bez incidenta was published on September 18, 2016 on the portal of the Serbian daily Telegraf and it contains 295 online comments, while the second one entitled Odrzana parada ponosa: Setnja gejeva Beogradom prosla bez incidenta. Potom vernici kadili ulice was published on the same date on the portal of the Serbian daily Kurir counting 220 online comments. These two multimedia portals were chosen because they were the three most visited portals in Serbia according to Gemius research (Blic, Internet). The first position was occupied by Blic with 2 009 435 genuine users, Kurir came second with 1 755 324 genuine users while Telegraf with 1 478 697 registered users assumed the third position. Furthermore, Telegraf and Kurir were chosen because they contained the largest number of online comments on the subject (the media portal Blic had 190 online comments).

The concept of public discourse in this research will be narrowed down to the online commentary domain, where each individual commentary will be viewed as "text", a term which in Fairclough’s approach refers to "the written or spoken language produced in a discursive event" (Fairclough 1993: 138). In this particular case the "discursive event", defined as an "instance of language use, analysed as text, discursive practice, social practice" (Fairclough 1993: 138) refers to the Belgrade Pride Parade. A corpus composed of online comments is justified with the dominant role that the Internet has assumed in contemporary societies where it represents: "a communication medium which allows, for the first time, the communication of many to many, in chosen time, on a global scale. The Internet is, above all else, a cultural creation" (Castells 2002; cit. in Burton and Graeme 2010: 192). McMillen (2013: 2) points out that the online comment sections were originally created as spaces for reactions to associated articles but that they have eventually evolved into spaces for debate and discussion between users as well. Commenters today not only respond to the articles, but also to the other commenters and the comments they post, creating a space for social interaction. In light of the previous deliberations,
online comments will be considered as forms of valid public expressions through which ideologically constructed discourse is manifested and reproduced.

**Method and Procedure**

This study utilises the CDA methodology to identify different strategies that reveal how public discourse is deeply imbued in national myths and prejudices and how this practice is ideologically constructed. The framework is adopted from van Dijk’s *Politics, ideology and discourse* (van Dijk, 2006). In this study van Dijk defines four overall strategies that underlie ideological discourses. These strategies are introduced in the form of the "ideological square": emphasise Our good things, emphasise Their bad things, de-emphasise Our bad things, de-emphasise Their good things. Apart from these major strategies, van Dijk introduces 25 more specific ideological discourse categories that will be used in this study to identify and analyse the public discourse presented in the form of online comments. The categories (9 out of 25) that will be used for the purpose of analysis are defined as follows:

- **Actor**: the way we describe actors or members of a particular society either in a negative or positive way.

- **Authority**: mentioning authorities to support one's claims.

- **Comparison and Polarisation**: in homophobic talk the homosexuals are compared negatively and the heterosexuals positively which further on coincides with negative-other and positive-self representation.

- **Burden**: The Pride Parade is a financial burden- a premise taken for granted as self-evident.

- **Disclaimer**: presenting an idea as something positive and then rejecting it by the use of terms such as "but" in the second sentence.

- **National Self Glorification**: a strategy used to create positive self-representation by glorifying countries and nations.

- **Counterfactuals**: a conditional statements ("If your mother was gay...").

- **Victimisation**: Telling bad stories about people who do not belong to Us.

Every individual comment in the corpus will be analysed and interpreted in the light of the above-mentioned strategies that will reveal how the public discourse is essentially constructed through the "ideological square". Since every discourse is related to a specific context (Meyer, 2009), we examine how the Pride Parade,
and by extension homosexuals and homosexuality, are perceived in the context of the Serbian patriarchal culture.

**Results and discussion**

On the basis of either a positive or a negative attitude reflected in relation to the Pride Parade, homosexuals and homosexuality, the online comments can be classified in two basic categories: comments with a negative connotation that statistically dominate the discourse (180 out of 246 on the *Telegraf* portal and 124 out of 208 on the *Kurir* portal), and significantly less distributed comments with a positive connotation (40 out of 246 on the *Telegraf* portal and 50 out of 208 on the *Kurir* portal).

We could mark off one more category composed of a particular type of texts that contain opinions which are often semantically vague or misleading and which digress from the specified subject and context of discussion (for example comments that enter into the private sphere of commenters with the purpose to dispute their argument or insult them on a personal level). These comments (60) have been excluded from any further analysis. Given the fact that the aim of this study is to analyse the different discourse strategies used to disseminate homophobic attitudes in public discourse, the further analysis will include only the texts that carry a negative connotation.

**Actor description (meaning)**

This category refers to the tendency to describe ingroup members in a neutral or positive way and outgroup members in a negative way (van Dijk, 2006), which is in direct correlation with the "ideological square" (emphasising end de-emphasising US and THEM). This strategy is the most evident and the most frequent in depicting a gay parade, homosexuals and homosexuality in a negative way. For the purpose of illustrating the level of intolerance in public discourse, we will present the most frequent lexical items with negative connotations, separating them into derogatory terms concerning firstly a gay parade, secondly homosexuals and thirdly homosexuality. The most indicative terms will later be observed in a broader context where they will be associated with correspondent ideological backgrounds.

**PRIDE PARADE:** shame and disgrace, shame to our country, shameful and miserable, provocation of normal people, shame (x5), shame for Serbia and Serbian ethnicity, disgrace for Serbs, squalor, sickness, attack to moral and Christian values,
desecration, a manifestation of European values, parade of turncoats, disgrace for an Orthodox country and its Orthodox people, parade of shame, sorrow, misery and evil of human kind, moral disgrace, nonsense imported from the West, debacle; foreign turncoats and traitors of Serbs, product of foreign agencies, provocation to normal families, employees of gay lobby, shame for Serbia, the torture of LGBT over the citizens of Serbia, horrible repression over the citizens of Serbia, terror over normal people, circus, disgrace for Serbia, for the family institution and for the normal majority, the most expensive party in the history of Serbia, apocalyptic scenes.

Some comments were presented in the form of exclamations: Shame on you! Shame on you Serbia! Serbia, you are miserable! God pities our glorious history!

HOMOSEXUALS: their kind, only 300 of them, a couple of them, depraved and sick, pitiful people, a crowd, lame and unworthy people, idiots, twisted, sickos, mutants, seeking attention, them/those, euroliberals

HOMOSEXUALITY: sickness and disorder, sickness, desecration, incurable disease; a sort of disease, derangement, a consequence of child abuse, not normal in the Bible, against nature, sickness.

Comparison (meaning, argumentation) and polarisation

As opposed to the negative representations of the outgroup members, the ingroup members define themselves in a positive, or a rather neutral way, establishing the heterosexual orientation as a norm compared to which homosexual orientation is perceived as unnatural and anomalous. In the polarisation Us vs. Them, the most common terms used to describe the ingroup members are the pronoun us and the adjective normal, while the outgroup members are described as a deviant minority. Furthermore, the comments reveal the context and the various beliefs, which suggest a strong ideological background for homophobic attitudes:

Our children know well who they are... They are just attention seekers, to us it’s a sort of illness, they are victims of unfulfilled desires, of child abuse and therefore we need to help them, we need to explain to them what a normal and healthy life is, instead of allowing a few of them to brainwash us. As long as we don’t let them annoy us and mistreat us with their orientation, and as long we keep our children away from this environment- they cannot harm us. (Shon 12, Kurir)

Their ‘kind’ and their sick minds must disappear from the face of the Earth because they, being the way they are, will never be able to have progeny. You better organise
a parade of us normal people who are proud to be normal, because today being different and special is respected but the best and the most difficult thing is being normal. (Milica, Telegraf)

There is more police on the streets than these depraved people. No normal person wants to look at them anyway. (Dodson pfc, Telegraph)

In Europe they organise this but in the parts of the city where they don’t jeopardise normal people...Shame on you! (Jovan, Telegraph)

Every normal person is disgusted by what’s happening today [...] Is it possible that gay lobby is so strong that it allows all this money to be spent so that a few of them can walk. (Ja, Telegraph)

Comparison and polarisation are often constructed with the use of metaphor (e.g. "their kind"). The way the metaphors are used in the online comments reveals that homosexuality is associated with illness, deviance and degeneration.

Authority (argumentation)

The corpus confirms that homosexuals are often described as perverted and morally corrupt individuals whose nature represents a threat to traditional, Christian values that constitute a basis for a healthy and a prosperous society. The authorities often cited to support the case against homosexuality are God, true Christians and their values and the Serbian Orthodox Church. The choice of these authorities confirms that despite the constitutional guarantees of secularity, the Church in the Serbian society holds significant symbolic power and that it performs a moral guide role for the Serbian people. When it comes to homosexuals and homosexuality, the Church considers that ‘all uses of the human sex organs for purposes other than those ordained by creation runs contrary to the nature of things as decreed by God, interfering with the normal development of societal patterns’ (Orthodox Church Statement on Homosexuality, cit. in Stakić, 2011). The statement corroborates that the Church interprets homosexuality as a medical disorder or a moral decline (Stakić 2011: 44), which further deepens the alienisation of homosexuals in Serbian society and legitimises the hostility towards them.

All of the previously indicated comments in the Us vs. Them polarisation reflect the homophobic attitudes based upon the Christian Church dogma which is grounded in a strict division between gender roles, namely between a man and a woman who ought to share the same moral obligation to procreate in order to extend their nation and the human species. The transgression of the imposed
parameters of normality causes the differentiation between "the normal us" and "their kind", as indicated in the comments above. As for the explicit recourse of mentioning the divine authority, the following comments are particularly indicative:

*Maybe today we should have organised gatherings of families and children in front of the Saint Sava temple and in front of the other churches to demonstrate in a symbolic way that God is on the side of us normal people* (Vojkan, Kurir).

*God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve* (Niki, Telegraf).

*It’s not so much about the people and Serbia...What will God do to us when he gets tired of all this? How can it be possible that people are not afraid of God?* (Realnost, Telegraf)

*And in the end, how much does all this cost? It is not described as normal in the Bible, it’s all written in the commandments* (Petar, Kurir).

The following comments reflect the inveteracy of gender roles in the Serbian society and it illustrates the collective perception of the importance of procreation:

*The most horrible thing is that someone will give birth to their children or that they will be allowed to adopt children. What will they teach those children? That it is normal to have two fathers or two mothers in one family. I am terrified* (Mama, Telegraf).

*Your love will destroy this world because two men or two women cannot procreate and without procreation the result is self-destruction. You are leading us to self-destruction, stop for a minute and think about what you’re doing to yourselves and the world* (n2, Kurir).

*My pride is my wife and one day, with God’s blessing, our children too. And you, what is your pride?? What will you leave behind?? Do you know what progeny means?? Why do you provoke us normal people??* (Keza, Telegraf).

**Burden (topos)**

One of the topoi of the anti-gay parade discourse involves the financial burden that the manifestation represents for the state. Many commenters emphasise this aspect by stating that the state should dedicate the funds invested in the organisation of the gay parade in resolving other, more important issues, such as the promotion of young researches, investment into hospitals and child care, resolving the problem of unemployment etc.
In previous studies (Valić-Nedeljković et al. 2017: 105) this strategy was recognised as thesis replacement. As authors have noted (ibidem) thesis replacement is employed in order to minimise the problem by stating another problem that challenges society. They further notice (ibidem) that this strategy is the denial of the problem and a way of denigrating the problem and the actors, in this case the organisers of the Pride and the LGBT population.

500.000 euro or 61.500.000 dinars equals approximately 250 000 meals for poor and hungry children, but the point is not feeding the children. Enough said (Janko, Kurir).

In a time of poverty and hunger, how much does this shame cost? [...] Not one single educated and dignified homosexual will walk today. I have wonderful gay friends who are ashamed of this parade. Our young scientists and sports players are leaving this country. Hospitals where little children die have no medication and look like barns (Srbin De, Kurir).

Minister, only common sense should be promoted in this city...You better fight to protect the churches and the monasteries that are threatened (Mile, Kurir).

Counterfactuals (meaning, argumentation)

Anti-gay Pride arguments based on counterfactual thinking mostly resume the issue of procreation, suggesting that homosexuality is unacceptable as homosexuals cannot participate in creating new life together. When one of the commenters expresses that his mother is proud of his homosexual orientation, he receives the following responses:

If your mother was gay, you wouldn’t exist (Paranoik, Kurir)

She would have been proud of her grandchildren too but... (Meda, Kurir)

Your poor mother! Do you know that if she had been the same thing as you, you wouldn’t exist? That is something you will never understand (Andjelina, Kurir).

One of the comments expresses the hypothesis that homosexuality is an acquired behaviour learned and adopted by children who are raised in same sex families:

I don’t have anything against gay people but I am against gay families with children. Children should be raised in a healthy environment with a mother and father and not with two mothers or two fathers. When that child grows up, it will have the
wrong (read American) ideas about what a normal family should be and he/she will look for the same sex thinking it’s normal (XYZ, Kurir).

**Disclaimers (meaning)**

The disclaimer strategy allows positive self-representation and the apparent denial of homophobia, racism and ideological bias. It is illustrated in a well-known disclaimer "I have nothing against blacks but..." which is often adopted to deny racism and prejudice (van Dijk, 1992). In this particular case disclaimers have the function to disguise and conceal homophobic attitudes by presenting them as forms of social engagement, or more specifically, as a preoccupation for the rational and transparent managing of state funds or as an appeal to all citizens to maintain their privacy for themselves.

*I have no intention in invading anybody’s privacy. It is your own choice who to love, BUT nobody should do it on the streets, at the expense of the taxpayers. This city is not ready to spend money on carnevals, we have other priorities to solve* (Prevaspitavanje, sa zastavicama, Kurir).

**National self-gloration (meaning)**

The dominant strategic direction of Serbian foreign policy propels the country towards EU membership. Apart for the conspicuous dialogue progress and the commitment to EU integration, Serbian society remains divided as it continues to balance between Europeanisation and pro-nationalist politics.

Drezgić (2010) claims that the persistence of nationalist and patriarchal values in Serbia is a consequence of "religious nationalism"- a term that refers to a specific system characterised by a symbiotic relationship between political institutions and the church which has throughout modern Serbian history based its authority in the role of a national, rather than a religious institution (ibid.). The symbiosis between national and religious ideologies is particularly evident in the Kosovo myth, which symbolises a martyrdom of the Serbian nation in defense of their honour and Christendom against the Ottoman occupiers. In the traditional account, memories of Kosovo cemented a collective Serb identity throughout the Ottoman centuries, as the Serb people kept their national spirit alive through the support of the Orthodox Church and the practice of orally transmitted epic song (Greenwalt 2001: 49).
The following ironic comment on the one hand illustrates the presence of the myth about Serbs as a warrior nation devoted to the preservation of national tradition and glory, but it also demonstrates how the Serbian national identity is still indissolubly associated with the Christian tradition:

_Nikolaj Velimirovic, Sveti Sava, Vasilije Ostroski and many others are looking upon us from the sky and they are saying: “Oh Serbs, what great pride in the middle of Belgrade, the proud country is parading, be proud Belgrade, capital of the proud Serbia... God should pity us for what we have allowed_ (Damjan, Telegraf).

_Belgrade is one of the few cities dedicated to the Blessed Virgin who is probably crying today for those who allowed her desecration. Great sadness_ (Ljiljana, Telegraf).

A notable number of comments show that homosexuality and gay rights are perceived as a Western product, imposed on the Serbian nation with the purpose of destroying it (Stakić 2011: 41). These comments come as a consequence of nationalist ideologies that, according to Mosse (cit. in Stakić 2011: 51) tend to promote the idea about the collaborations and plots between different categories of outsiders, in this case between the LGBT population and Europe or between Europe and Serbian politicians. Both categories are most commonly perceived as traitors of the Serbian people and their traditional values or as "servants" of the West.

_You voted and now you can watch those you elected spread their European values. Next time you better think twice before you vote... if there will be a next time._ (Balkanski spijun, Telegraf).

_Foreign agencies are ruling Serbia the way they want to. The best proof for it is this ‘Pride’ parade_ (Grebace te gde vas ne svrbi, Kurir).

**Victimisation (meaning)**

Victimisation is based on thesis replacement which in this specific case intends the denial of prejudices and discrimination with regard to homosexuals and insisting instead on the economic and social issues experienced by the "normal" citizens.

_We don’t belong in Europe. Nobody here respects the rights of average (should I say normal) people. If an average citizen went out on the streets to seek his working and social rights he would be arrested, and he wouldn’t be immediately released like some hooligan or protected by the police like the LBGT population because an average citizen of this country is not financed by EU funds and he doesn’t have protection from the judiciary system_ (Neko, Telegraf).
The strategy of dramatisation is used to impose the image of a blocked city whose inhabitants, due to the parade, are prevented from carrying out their everyday activities and commitments:

*Mr. Stefanovic, today is Sunday, my free day. I would like to take a walk in the town centre. You are terrorising us normal people, I can't go out and take a walk in Belgrade* (S.P.M., Kurir).

*I don't understand. You have equal rights like other citizens- you have the right to medical care, to education, you can have a job, walk, enjoy...what else do you want? What you do in your bedroom is your own business, you don't have to go around demonstrating it while my child for that matter cannot go for a walk in the town centre because it is blocked* (X, Kurir).

**Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to analyse the online comments regarding the gay Pride Parade, homosexuals and homosexuality, in order to disclose the ideologies that produce and perpetuate homophobia in the Serbian public discourse. The examination of the corpus through van Dijk’s framework (2004) demonstrated the presence of 9 different strategies that confirm the correlation between public discourse, ideology and homophobia. The strategy of description showed that the gay parade is most commonly described as shameful and unnecessary, homosexuals as ill and deviant, and homosexuality as an illness or as a moral decline. In opposition to the negative-other representation the lexical item most commonly used by the ingroup members to distinguish themselves from the outgroup members was "us normal people". Further analysis confirmed the outcomes of a prior study (Stakić 2011), which claims that the distinction between "us normal people" and "their kind" affected here through strategies of polarisation and comparison are primarily grounded in the symbolic authority of the Christian church and the "religious nationalism" that is still deeply ingrained in the Serbian society. Discourse on gay rights in this prospective is often interpreted as a Western product imposed on the Serbian nation with the purpose of destroying its traditional values (Stakić 2011: 41). The corpus showed that Christian, nationalist and patriarchal values represent the main parameters for defining the notion of normality in the contemporary Serbian society (Stakić 2011: 41). This ideological discourse operates in a disguised form of the non-ideological common sense that continuously reproduces homophobia.
and acts "in the service of maintaining unequal relations of power" (Fairclough 2001: 70).

The confrontation with the research conducted in 2011 (Stakić 2011) proves that 5 years later, in 2016, the same ideological constellations still dominate the perception of homosexuality and of the gay Pride Parade in Serbia. This study furthermore shed light on the aspects that haven’t been considered in previous studies, such as the replacement of the roles and the self-victimisation fabricated by the ingroup members to justify discrimination and hate speech addressed towards the LGBT population. Aside from this, it was discovered that various disclaimer strategies are used in order to conceal homophobic attitudes by presenting them as forms of social engagement, or more specifically, as a preoccupation for the purposeful management of the state funds or as an appeal to all the citizens to maintain their privacy.

Although the commentaries containing a negative evaluation of the Pride Parade are predominant, the corpus also contains a certain number of comments with pro-gay oriented arguments. Since the topic of the research is limited to homophobia and hate speech, these comments were not taken into consideration. Nevertheless, it might be revealing to confront two fundamentally different perspectives that coexist within one society. The main limitation of the study however resides in the limited number of online comments that were taken into analysis. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to the public discourse in its entirety, but they can, on the other hand, provide a contextualised understanding of the possible origin and causes of homophobic attitudes.

Due to the recent developments in corpus linguistics and corpus-based study, for further research it would be useful to create a corpus that would include all the online comments expressed in relation to the Belgrade Pride Parade since 2001 until the present day. In that case, it would be possible to investigate how homophobic attitudes under the influence of different ideologies were formed and shaped in the course of the years.

References
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Nataša D. Vučenović
Univerzitet u Banjoj Luci
Filološki fakultet
Studijski program italijanskog jezika i književnosti

HOMOFOBIJA U SRPSKOM ONLAJNI DISKURSU:
SLUČAJ BEOGRADSKE PARADE PONOSA 2016.
GODINE

Rezime

U radu se na osnovu korpusa sačinjenog od 500 onlajn komentara, objavljenih na tri najčitanija medijska portala u Srbiji, analiziraju reakcije javnosti na održavanje Beogradske parade ponosa 2016. godine. Začeci ove manifestacije praćeni su brojnim kontroverzama, a njeni učesnici i pobornici su u prvih deset i više godina održavanja povorke kontinuirano bili izloženi verbalnom i fizičkom nasilju. Verbalno nasilje predstavlja značajnu komponentu javnog diskursa koji se formirao oko pitanja Parade, a potom i homoseksualnosti i homoseksualaca. Premda su aktovi fizičkog nasilja u posljednjih nekoliko godina uspješno suzbijeni, govor mržnje još uvijek se ističe kao glavna karakteristika javnog diskursa kreiranog oko pomenutih pitanja. Beskompromisna netrepeljivost prema drugačijoj seksualnoj orijentaciji sugeriše da se radi o idejama i koncepcijama koje su duboko usaćene u kolektivnu svijest naroda Srbije. U okviru ove pretpostavke, nametnula su se značajna pitanja: Šta je korijen netrepeljivosti i mržnje? Na koji način su homofobija i govor mržnje legitimisani od strane viših autoriteta? Pored ovoga, pitanje o interesima ali između homofobije i patrijarhalnog sistema vrijednosti? Da li je govor mržnje ideološki konstruisan i ako jeste, koje ideologije reflektuje? Primjenom Van Dijkove metodologije „ideološkog kvadrata“ (ideological square) u korpusu je identifikovano devet diskurzivnih strategija pomoću kojih se konstruiše i legitimise homofobija. Analizom ovih strategija
utvrđeno je da su homofobni stavovi produkt društvenih ideologija koje dugoročno opstaju u društvu jer su maskirane i predstavljene kao zdravorazumsko razmišljanje („non-ideological common sense“) (Fairclough 1995).

Ključne riječi: homofobija, javni diskurs, ideologija, ideološke diskurzivne strategije.

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