



## Portraying refugees in British print media: the case of NATO airstrikes on Yugoslavia

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**Abstract.** This paper is based on a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of three British dailies (*the Guardian*, *the Independent* and *the Times*) on NATO air strikes on Yugoslavia. The paper briefly introduces van Dijk's notions of microstructures and macrostructures of newspaper articles and discusses some aspects of CDA (van Dijk, Fairclough), especially its approach of combining linguistic analysis with intertextual analysis. It then focuses on the issues of dominance and politics. The paper starts from the assumption that the concepts of dominance, power and politics are linked to the role of language that shapes or legitimates particular views, which is also the case in the corpus we analyzed. Politicians always use media in wartime to persuade citizens in a justness of war, leading consumers of news to uncritically accept that the 'news' presented to them is true. The paper offers examples from the three dailies and discusses them based on the theoretical approach taken. It briefly touches upon macrostructures and focuses on the elements on the micro level (verbs, nouns, noun phrases and adjectives) that are important for the interpretation of the analyzed articles

**Key words:** critical discourse analysis, media discourse, intertextual analysis, war, refugees

**Contents.** 1. Introduction. 2. Background information. 3. Theoretical principles. 4. Methodology and corpus. 5. Analysis. 5.1. Techniques of reporting on refugee crisis. 5.2. Microstructure level. 6. Discussion. 4. Conclusion. References

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### 1. Introduction

Media discourse is a rich source of data for linguists. Media report on different aspects of our daily lives, such as political, economic, social, cultural and other events. Exposure to such a variety of news certainly influences our opinions and attitudes towards events in the country and abroad. It is therefore natural that media discourse has been extensively studied by a large number of researchers, including linguists.

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In the last 25 years reports on numerous wars have filled the pages of newspapers and programs in electronic media. Carruthers (2000: 3) concludes that it is no surprise that mass media were drawn so much to the subject of war since war sells. But, that is not the only reason.

The Gulf War in 1991, when live media coverage of war happened for the first time, as well as many wars after that have clearly demonstrated that wars are waged not only in battlefields, but also in the media. In addition, media do not only report about war but are often used to create or enhance public support for a war. Carruthers (2000: 5) claims that “a feature of many twentieth-century wars has been their greater involvement of civilians, whether as spectators, victims or active participants” and that “the governments, mindful of their own popularity, generally seek to harness mass media in wartime to persuade citizens of a war’s justness and the enemy’s implacability”. This is often done by putting focus on the topics that can attract the attention of readers or viewers, such as human casualties, the wounded or refugees.

The purpose of this paper is to look into the way three British dailies (*the Guardian*, *the Independent* and *the Times*) reported on refugees during NATO airstrikes on former Yugoslavia in 1999. The war in Yugoslavia was started to protect Albanian population in Kosovo from Serbian forces. This was a good ground for the Western politicians to find an excuse for the airstrikes on what was left of Yugoslavia (Serbia, including Kosovo, and Montenegro). However, the airstrikes actually contributed to even more people fleeing from their homes.

Although this war took place in 1999, we, as direct witnesses of the event, can now see it from a time distance and much more objectively. In addition, the consequences of this war are still evident in people’s lives and on the political scene and are therefore crucial in understanding the role of the media in our everyday life and the way they shape reality.

Part 2 of this paper offers background information of the event, while part 3 provides a theoretical basis. In Part 4, we briefly describe the methodology used and the corpus analysed, while Part 5 contains an analysis of the corpus, focusing on characteristic examples from the selected dailies. The last part contains conclusions.

## **2. Background information**

NATO Secretary General Javier Solana was authorized by the NATO Council on March 22, 1999 to give the order to start airstrikes against former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which consisted of two federal units, Serbia and Montenegro, while Kosovo was formally an autonomous province of Serbia at the time. The air-strikes started on March 24, 1999 and lasted till June 9, when NATO and Yugoslavia signed an agreement on withdrawal of the Yugoslav troops from Kosovo. It is worth mentioning that the UN Security Council had actually never approved of the strikes, but on June 10 it did approve the peace agreement between NATO and Yugoslavia. As a result, the Yugoslav forces withdrew from Kosovo, which marked the end of the war. However, it was not till June 20 that NATO officially announced the end of its military operations (Geoff 1999: 537 – 548).

The relations of Serbia with its then province of Kosovo had deteriorated long before the airstrikes started. The alleged oppression of Kosovo, conducted by the Yugoslav and Serbian authorities, led to defiance of Kosovar Albanians against the authorities in Belgrade. The clashes between the Kosovo Liberation Army, which

had been established in 1996, and the Serbian forces broke out in early 1998. The two sides signed a ceasefire on October 15, 1998 but they broke it after two months and the fighting continued. After the killing of 45 Kosovar Albanians in January 1999, NATO decided to launch a peacekeeping mission in order to restrain the two sides. In addition, Yugoslavia refused to accept an external peacekeeping force after the Rambouillet Accords broke down on 23 March, which made NATO decide to “attempt to bomb Serbia into respecting human rights and accepting a peace settlement” (Geoff 1999: 13). This led to the war that lasted for two months and a half, causing a number of casualties and hundreds of thousands of refugees.

### 3. Theoretical principles

The paper is mainly based on the postulates of Discourse Analysis (DA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

Van Dijk (1988a) suggests that the analysis of newspaper articles can be carried out on the levels of *macrostructure* and *microstructure*.

According to van Dijk (1988a: 13) analysis of macrostructure includes thematic and organizational structure of texts. Thematic (or semantic) structure of news articles implies explanation of the term *topic* (or *theme*), which is actually the subject of discourse, i.e. new article or TV coverage. Overall meaning of macrostructure is expressed through *organizational structure of a text* or *schematic superstructure*.

Newspaper articles are similar to Labov’s narrative scheme of storytelling because they also tell a story and are therefore called a *news story* (van Dijk 1988b: 1). Labov’s model contains 6 basic elements, referring to six main thematic parts of a story.

Van Dijk (1988a, 1988b) proposed his model for a news story. This model was later criticised because it is difficult to distinguish between some parts of the macrostructure. Allan Bell (1994) provided another model, similar to van Dijk’s, but with fewer elements. This is probably a result of the fact that he is a journalist and that his model is based on practical journalistic experience. He combined several parts of the macrostructure identified by van Dijk into one, producing a simpler version.

In an extensive analysis of the reporting of the three British dailies (Lakić, 2011), we started from these two models. It turned out that Bell’s model was much more applicable to our analysis, so we created our own model, very similar to his, although a bit different in terminology: (1) *Headline*, (2) *Lead*, (3) *Main Event(s)*, (4) *Background of the Event*, (5) *Verbal comment(s)*, (6) *Evaluation*, and (7) *Results of the Event*. We will use this terminology when referring to the parts of macrostructure.

Let us briefly discuss these parts of the macrostructure.

*Headline* and *Lead* are introductory parts of an article, where *Lead* serves as an abstract summarizing the main event(s) described in the text. *Headline* is ‘the abstract of the abstract’ (Bell 1994: 150), because it summarizes the information already summarized in the *Lead*. These two parts of macrostructure allow the newspaper to give their own view of what can otherwise be interpreted as goods of mass production.

*Main Event* is the most important part or the focus of a news story. Compared to the ‘real’ story, however, the events in a news story are not given in a chronological order. In such a situation, the result of the event has the advantage over the event itself or the process. This procedure enables extending the story and therefore today’s

main event will become of secondary importance tomorrow and open space for new developments.

*Background of the Event* provides information on the participants in the event, the time and place, as well as the initial situation. *Who, How, Where* and *When* are the basic facts that have to be provided in the story.

*Verbal comments* are a standard procedure in the news practice. These are the comments of the most important participants in the events. In this way, journalists can provide opinions that are not exclusively theirs, although the selection of people can be problematic. This category is signaled by the names and roles of the participants in the event, as well as by direct quotations or retelling their statements.

*Evaluation* includes attitudes, opinions or evaluation of the event by the journalist or the newspaper he/she writes for. Although some believe that facts and opinions should not be mixed, this part of the macrostructure appears a lot in newspaper articles, although sometimes indirectly. It is the *Evaluation* that gives sense or meaning to the text. My research (Lakić 2011) has shown that *Evaluation* can appear indirectly or implicitly within other part of the macrostructure, such as *Headline, Lead, Main Event* or *Verbal Comments*. Therefore, this part opens room for manipulation.

The second van Dijk's concept, that of *microstructure*, refers to the purely linguistic aspect (syntax, semantics, lexical aspect, cohesion, coherence etc.). All these elements play an important role in creating a news discourse.

However, van Dijk (1988b: 29) says that "discourse analysis does more than just describe textual structure" and that "discourse is not just text but also a form of interaction". This is where the role of critical discourse analysis starts, as it goes beyond pure linguistic analysis. Its purpose is to use linguistic findings in order to interpret events in a certain way, taking into consideration social and other indicators that lie outside linguistics. This approach is also known as *socio-political discourse analysis* (van Dijk 2001: 300).

Baker et al. (2008: 280) refer to CDA as an analysis of "opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control, as they are manifested in language". They add:

... a 'critical' analysis would not only be interested in accounting for what linguistic elements and processes exist in a text or set of texts, but would also need to explain why and under what circumstances and consequences the producers of the text have made specific linguistic choices among several other options that a given language may provide. (Baker et al., 2008: 280)

This is in line with Fairclough's approach to CDA (1996: 311-313) who says that language analysis is carried out through three dimensions: (1) text, (2) discourse practice, and (3) social practice.

- (1) *Text*. Text analysis is focused on formal characteristics of text (vocabulary, semantics, syntax as well as cohesion, discourse markers and other units that contribute to the organization of texts above the sentence). It overlaps with van Dijk's notion of microstructures, including meaning and form that are difficult to separate, because meaning is realized through form and differences in meanings require different forms, and vice versa.

- (2) *Discourse practice*. Analysis of discourse practice is aimed at production, consumption and distribution of discourse that is under study. In the world of constant changes, media undergo changes too, which includes a change of their discourse practice.
- (3) *Social practice*. Analysis of social practice (or socio-cultural practice) is carried out on a wider scale. It deals with social, political, ideological and other aspects of event and how ideology influences and contributes to social changes. It studies how text is used in a certain social context or a discourse community. Social practice, however, does not have a direct impact on texts but rather an indirect one, since discourse practice serves as a link through which aspects of social practice are reflected in the texts.

Fairclough (1996: 314-315) also makes a distinction between linguistic analysis and intertextual analysis of texts. Intertextual analysis is a border discipline between the text and discourse practice in terms of the analytical framework. It actually looks at the text from the perspective of discourse practice. Linguistic analysis is descriptive, while intertextual analysis is interpretative. Fairclough also thinks that connecting linguistic analysis and intertextual analysis is necessary in overcoming the gap between text on the one hand and society and culture on the other. The interpreting aspect of CDA is what makes the analysis complete and provides a proper interpretation of the text under study.

Van Dijk (2001: 300-301) suggests that the purpose of critical discourse analysts is to identify “what structures, strategies or other properties of text, talk, verbal interaction or communicative events play a role in these modes of reproduction”. He also investigates the relationship between society, discourse and social cognition. He believes that it is important to study the role of social representations in the minds of social actors in order to make a link between discourse and society.

The ideas of power, dominance and politics are closely linked to the language. Lau et al. say:

Central to the notion of power and politics is the role of language that is used to shape, sustain, alter, or legitimate particular views. In unpacking the relations between power, discourse, inequality, and dominance, critical discourse analysis is key to uncovering how conflicts are represented in the media. (Lau et al. 2011: 9-7)

Lau et al. (2011: 10) propose that discourses influence the way of thinking and creating meaning through offering truth claims and interpretations of the world as well as versions of reality and opinions that the readers should adopt. Through language, discourses “make it possible to construct a topic in a certain way and also limit other ways in which the topic can be constructed”. Thus, those in power have control which “may limit freedom of action of others but also influence their minds” (Van Dijk, 2001: 302).

The media are often in a position of power, as they are controlled by persons in power, (e.g. politicians, enterprises, interest groups etc.). For those in power, the media represent a way of influencing, directing and changing people’s minds, which often borders with some sort of abuse of power. Being controlled by those in power, the media resort to discursive practices that best convey the information desirable to those that own, influence or stand behind them. Fairclough & Wodak notice:

Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people. (Fairclough & Wodak 1997: 258)

In case of war, it is not easy to get public support. The public in a country must be prepared to accept the fact that a country has to enter a war. Carruthers (2000: 5) says that the military “may well regard civilian support as essential to the war effort”. She adds:

A feature of many twentieth-century wars has been their greater involvement of civilians, whether as spectators, victims or active participants; and a feature of most twentieth-century states has been greater concern with their own popular legitimacy. Thus governments, mindful of their own popularity, generally seek and the enemy’s implacability: a concern with public attitudes which transcends any narrow pursuit of post-war electoral success as such. (Carruthers 2000: 5)

The reports in the analysed British dailies on NATO airstrike on Yugoslavia meet these criteria. Politicians and the military did see civilians not only as spectators, but also as active participants in the war in that they could provide legitimacy for a war that was waged under the pretext of protecting some other civilians as victims. Of course, what is served to the public is limited and strictly regulated (Carruthers 2000: 5) as some news (e.g. civilian casualties, misses, collateral damage) can lead to a drop of the public support to the war (Hopkinson 1992: 8).

In addition, consumers of news easily accept what is offered by the media. Comparing the situation with the media in 1914 and in 1999, Theobald proposes the following statement:

A cultural-linguistic context in which the great majority of consumers are ready to accept that what is propagated to them as ‘news’ is true, and to suspend their critical faculties, imagination and humanity with regard to warlike actions perpetrated in their name for the duration of hostilities, and when constructing their memories of them. (Theobald 2000: 100)

This can be especially dangerous when the information provided is unreliable, without the possibility for the journalist to check even the authenticity of the information received. The problem with the air-raids on Yugoslavia was the fact that most journalists were expelled from Serbia and did not have access to the war zones in Kosovo. Located in Montenegro, Albania and Macedonia, they could not verify the stories of refugees in many cases, which may have misled the Western public. This was certainly in favor of all those politicians and military representatives who justified the involvement in this war as an effort to prevent the Kosovo exodus.

#### **4. Methodology and corpus**

The analysis in this paper is based on the reporting of all the issues of three British dailies (*the Guardian*, *the Independent* and *the Times*), published between March 22 and June 10, on NATO airstrikes on former Yugoslavia was quite an extensive one. The total number of articles read was 2689 (836 from *the Guardian*, 1123 from *the Independent* and 730 from *the Times*). The focus of the analysis was on news stories,

while some other aspects (e.g. cover page, photographs, comments and so on) were separately analysed when necessary, but we will not deal with them in this paper.

After the reading, the articles were classified according to their topic. It turned out that some topics were not covered much, so the most frequent topics were chosen for a detailed analysis. These include: war operations, refugee crisis, situation in Serbia, situation in Montenegro as well as collateral damage. However, the last three topics contain a number of subtopics that were also analysed separately.

The first aim of the analysis was to identify the macrostructure of the news articles, which resulted in the model presented above. We then looked into the linguistic exponents of the parts of the macrostructure (the micro level), primarily lexical and syntactic items, but also discourse markers that also point to the functional units of the macrostructures.

Based on the linguistic findings, we carried out an intertextual analysis, bearing in mind the principles of critical discourse analysis presented in the section on theoretical grounds. The analysis clearly showed that linguistic data were necessary in order to interpret the texts in an objective way. Some aspects of that analysis are presented in this paper.

One of the most covered topics of the British dailies was the refugee crisis. For this topic, we analysed 178 articles (48 from *the Guardian*, 91 from *the Independent* and 39 from *the Times*). This was a topic very sensitive for analysis as we had to read often very distressful and sad stories on the fate of refugees. On the other hand, as neutral analysts, we had to look into the way of reporting and see whether the reports were objective, taking into account the linguistic aspects of the reporting, without any intention to hurt anyone's feelings.

## 5. Analysis

The issue of refugees from Kosovo was probably one of the most prominent ones in the British media. A large number of Albanian refugees from Kosovo went to Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro, looking for a shelter. This was a second wave of refugees, after the exodus in 1998. It is important to bear in mind that the airstrikes started mainly with the explanation that their goal was to protect the population in Kosovo.

### 5.1. Techniques of reporting on refugee crisis

We will here refer to some "techniques" used by the journalist to present the situation with refugees. We will offer characteristic examples from the corpus, followed by comments, to illustrate how the three British dailies reported on refugees.

#### Literary style

Many articles on refugees take very literary, almost lyrical approach to the topic. The emotional side of journalist's personality and obvious compassion with ordinary people is striking in these texts. This does not refer, though, only to the Kosovo refugees, but also to the people in Serbia affected by the war, in cases where journalists were present on the field. The following example was taken from the *Main Event*:

- (1) *First a little smoke, a sketching line blowing back along itself, coiling and circling towards the roof tiles. In seconds, screwing blacker into the sky. Then*

*there is a second, and a third coil, the smoke twisting together until the sky is filled with a black pall that makes the burning of the fifth, the sixth and seventh houses almost impossible to see except for the occasional feverish hint of flame.*  
(The Guardian, April 6)

A reader who starts reading the text may first think that he/she is starting to read a piece of fiction. There is an obvious presence of literary style, used in descriptions, which hardly fits the conventions of a newspaper article. The first sentence presents an idyllic image of a village in winter time, but later it becomes obvious that the situation is quite gloomy (e.g. phrases *black pall* and *burning of the houses*). It is possible to conclude that the journalist tried to show that a serene life in a village was interrupted by war. Using the narrative as in a piece of literature, the journalist may have had in mind to turn the attention of the readers to the plight of refugees and hence the support of the public for the airstrikes.

### Contrasting “before” and “now”

Some examples are obviously aimed at causing a feeling of pity among readers and, again, the purpose is not just to inform, but also to get support for the NATO air raids. The following is an extract from a *Main Event*:

- (2) *Their expensive leather jackets soaked with rain, their pockets emptied, all evidence of their identities taken and burnt, Pristina’s middle classes joined ordinary peasants as penniless European refugees yesterday.* (The Times, April 2)

Here, the distinction between the noun phrases *expensive leather jackets* and *middle classes* (before) with *pockets emptied*, *identities taken and burnt* as well as adjective *penniless* (now) is obvious. Although this may be an accurate description of the situation of refugees, who have lost everything they had, one may conclude that the journalist’s aim was primarily to stimulate empathy in readers, not just to provide an accurate picture of the event.

It seems that by comparing the life of refugees before and now, using the phrases listed above, the journalist successfully invokes compassion. Thus, the purpose of the paragraphs is not only to inform, but also to evoke sympathy in readers. This implies there is a strong, although implicit presence of Evaluation in these examples. In addition, the line between a news story and a short story is broken here and it is possible to ask a question ‘Is there a difference between the two?’.

### Personal names

Another reporting ‘technique’ is (3) mentioning the names of the refugees in the first sentence, or (4) starting a paragraph with a personal pronoun such as *she*, *he* or *they*, while the name is given in the next sentence (an obvious cataphora). The following two paragraphs are also examples of the *Main Event*:

- (3) *Fazile – not her real name – is a 23-year-old student who entered Macedonia three days ago through the frontier post at Tabanovce.* (The Guardian, April 14)
- (4) *She is a tired, pale, woman from a small village 30 miles from Pristina. Yesterday Hysnije Cerkine became a footnote to the ongoing tragedy of Kosovo’s refugees...* (The Independent, April 9)



These two examples show that there is an attempt to personalize events, again something that evokes sympathy in readers. Certainly, such reports cause emotions, but the question is whether they are written this way to make people sympathize with those who suffer or whether there is an additional element of getting support for NATO for their military campaign of “protecting the civilians”. By all means, individualization of an event may have had a positive effect in providing support for the airstrikes.

### Refugee stories

Most reports on the situation in the refugee camps were based on the accounts of refugees. Refugees described their dire situation and the manner they were evicted from their homes. Whether they were credible or not was difficult to establish. Here are two examples of refugee stories that appear within *Verbal Comments*:

- (5) *They opened fire and killed four of the men. They asked one of the survivors to burn the bodies. He was horrified and refused. They told him to lie on top of the bodies and they shot him four times but he survived.* (The Guardian, April 23)
- (6) *They told of how they saw young men have their limbs hacked off by laughing and jeering policemen, who then shot them in front of their loved ones...* (The Times, March 30)

Although this may be true, nowhere in these or many other texts is it possible to find a confirmation for these claims. In addition, journalists do not question the credibility of the story in the text itself in order to try to at least hedge. Hedging in these situations can be a good device in avoiding being biased.

The examples like these are numerous. They do show difficult position in which refugees were, but not only that. The issue of checking the information received still remains open. One of the reasons why it was impossible to check these stories is the fact that it was impossible for journalists to enter Kosovo. In such a situation, referring to the statements of the Serb representatives would not have given results because they would have denied that. Still, in some instances evidence must have been provided.

In one text, the journalist relies on the statement of an UNHCR representative:

- (7) *The story seems to fit together very, very precisely this time, and there is a great deal of credence here'* (The Guardian, April 29)

This sentence is worth mentioning as it is an attempt to check credibility of the source, but the use of the noun phrase *this time* suggests that the sources or claims were not always reliable.

There was only one serious attempt in the analysed corpus to mention even the possibility of verifying the truth:

- (8) *The scale of the Serb atrocities in Kosovo, which are not possible to verify independently, was given credence by the fact that every refugee in Kukes had a similar story. They told of mass rape, or men being tied up and then immolated in their homes, or random killings, and not a single act of mercy or help from their neighbours.* (The Times, March 30)

Although the journalist claims that it was not possible to verify the atrocities, the article was still published and the rest of the paragraph still shows that the Serbs were still the ‘bad guys’ in the story.

In another article, the journalist expresses his opinion on these issues. The example below shows how unreliable the information was, except the one on violence:

- (9) *Their stories are sometimes coherent, sometimes sobbed out. Sometimes they make no sense, save for moments of clear violence recalled.* (The Guardian, Apr 7, p. 3)

This is one of rare direct *Evaluations* in the analysed corpus, since most *Evaluations* are implicit. Still, *Evaluation* in its direct form is present a bit more in *the Independent* than in *the Guardian* or *the Times*. The other parts of the macrostructure that are found in the analyzed texts are *Main Event* and *Verbal Comment*, while other parts appear very rarely. Sometimes, there are large parts in articles consisting only of indirect *Verbal Comments*, which may suggest that journalists wanted to avoid expressing their own opinions in the situation when the stories of refugees could not be verified.

## 5.2. Microstructure level

Looking at the level of microstructure, it is possible to draw some conclusions on common characteristic of the reporting of *the Guardian*, *the Independent* and *the Times*. We will here focus on the most prominent language elements – verbs, nouns, noun phrases and adjectives.

The fact that vocabulary was the most conspicuous language aspect in our corpus is confirmed by the first sentence from the article "A damn poor show as sofa wars go" published in *the Times* on March 28, 1999, which reads as follows: "The first casualty of war is no longer the truth but the vocabulary, with collateral syntax damage".

In the analysed texts, verbs, nouns and noun phrases usually refer to the activities of Serbian forces, while most adjectives describe emotions or condition of refugees. This does not mean, of course, that there are no verbs, nouns and noun phrases referring to refugees and adjectives referring to Serbs, but to a lesser degree. In addition, the elements referring to Serbs have very negative connotations, while those used to describe refugees express compassion. This will be illustrated in the tables below.

### Verbs

When it comes to verbs, it is obvious that the number of verbs denoting Serbian ‘actions’ surpasses those that refer to refugees.

Verbs referring to Serbian forces	Verbs referring to Kosovar refugees
<i>beat, burn, chase out, cleanse, empty, execute, expel, force, herd, kill, loot, rampage, rape, ravage, rob, shell, slaughter, torch, wipe out</i>	<i>flee, pour out</i>

Table 1: Verbs

Obviously, the verbs in the first column express all those negative connotations attached to the Serbian forces in the war. This is, of course, an expected approach because the media mostly presented the Serbs as aggressors and refugees as victims. This in turns means that aggressors ‘act’ against victims, which justifies such a large number of verbs referring to the Serbian forces.

## Nouns

Nouns follow the same pattern as verbs, which can be seen from the examples below:

Nouns referring to Serbian forces	Nouns referring to Kosovar refugees
<i>atrocities, blood, brutality, eviction, expulsion, extermination, frenzy, genocide, horror, indignity, killers, massacre, pillage, rape, repression, revenge, robbery, savagery, slaughter</i>	<i>calamity, desperation, exodus, expulsion, fatigue, fear, hunger, ordeal, plight, torment</i>

Table 2: Nouns

The ‘actions’ include a large number of things referring to the Serbian forces (column 1) and result in a certain number of situations that the Kosovar refugees had to face (column 2).

## Nouns phrases

The number of noun phrases in the analysed corpus is quite large and they are used more when the Serbian forces and their actions are described, although noun phrases referring to Albanian refugees are also frequent. Here are some examples:

Noun phrases referring to Serbian forces	Noun phrases referring to Kosovar refugees
<i>current orgy of ethnic cleansing</i>	<i>the biggest humanitarian catastrophe</i>
<i>orgy of burnings and killings</i>	<i>a severed artery of human misery</i>
<i>huge scale of ethnic cleansing</i>	<i>a sea of humanity</i>
<i>frenzy of ethnic cleansing</i>	<i>human misery</i>
<i>systematic rape</i>	<i>refugee flood</i>
<i>mass rape</i>	<i>refugee influx</i>
<i>mass executions</i>	<i>tide of refugees</i>
<i>summary execution</i>	<i>starving refugees</i>
<i>brutal expulsions</i>	<i>fleeing Albanians</i>
<i>enforced deportation</i>	<i>rheumy-eyed old men</i>
<i>random killings</i>	<i>torched homes</i>
<i>killings spree</i>	<i>appalling conditions</i>
<i>a reign of terror</i>	<i>tales of horror</i>
<i>twisted tyranny</i>	
<i>meat-processing business</i>	
<i>act of savagery</i>	
<i>act of spite</i>	
<i>eerie reminders</i>	
<i>deadly game played by the Serbs of Nazi</i>	

<i>methods</i> <i>Serbian death squads</i> <i>brutal special police</i> <i>neighbour killers</i>	
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Table 3: Noun phrases

Obviously, the noun phrase *ethnic cleansing* was used quite frequently. Also, many noun phrases include nouns such as *rape*, *executions* and *killing* that often collocate with adjectives *mass* and *brutal*. However, it was quite unusual to find the noun phrases *meat-processing business* and *killing spree* in a newspaper article. It seems that both of them, but especially the first one is insulting for refugees, labelling them as ‘meat’.

### Adjectives

In the analysed corpus, adjectives are used mainly to describe the condition of refugees, although there are those that describe the Serbian forces. The black-and-white representation of the two sides can be illustrated with the following examples:

Adjectives referring to Serbian forces	Adjectives referring to Kosovar refugees
<i>brutal, eerie, enforced, heartless, systematic, twisted, vindictive</i>	<i>alarmed, anxious, bedraggled, dazed, desperate, devastated, dry-eyed, emaciated, exhausted, filthy, frightened, frozen, malnourished, numbed, starving, terrified, trapped, traumatized</i>

Table 4: Adjectives

Obviously, the larger number of adjectives referring to those who are victims of the Serbian forces shows that the refugees were those who suffered. When looking into the examples, it is possible to conclude that the three British dailies represented refugees as *passive victims* and the Serbian forces as *active perpetrators* of atrocities. This is not surprising, though, as the media usually provide a rather black-and-white picture of the war.

## 6. Discussion

The general idea of the reporting of *the Guardian*, *the Independent* and *the Times* shows that their reporting was similar, with very few differences among them.

On the macro level, the analysed articles mainly consist of the *Main Event* and the *Verbal Comments*, while *Evaluation* is rarely present directly, but it is very frequent indirectly. *Main Event* and *Verbal Comments* are often combined, as well as *Evaluation* and *Verbal Comments*. This does not mean that the two parts of macrostructure are clearly distinguishable. Actually, the same sentence or set of sentences can be interpreted as having dual function. For example, very frequently the opinion of the journalist is hidden behind *Verbal Comments*, in which case we can claim that *Evaluation* appears implicitly.

On the micro level, verbs, nouns and noun phrases mainly describe the Serbian forces and adjectives are mostly used to describe the condition of Albanian refugees.

The two sides are represented black-and-white, the Serbs as active perpetrators of atrocities, and the Kosovar refugees are passive victims.

Another aspect worth mentioning is that it was not possible to establish a clear editorial policy of the three dailies. Obviously, journalists could freely express their positions. In case of refugees, however, journalists obviously took sides, which is partially acceptable bearing in mind that journalist in most cases could not verify the information they received from refugees or could not get any official statements to substantiate their claims. Therefore the sources of information are usually refugees and sometimes representatives of humanitarian organizations. This led to the situation when two journalists reported completely differently on the same event, in the same newspaper and sometimes even on the same page. The attitudes of journalists range from neutral, to pretty balanced ones, to those with mild negative connotations and to those that are quite extreme and biased, which is best seen through the use of terminology presented above. Some of the analyzed texts can even be understood as an open support to NATO air raids.

The analysis based on the approaches on organizational pattern of news and the Critical Discourse Analysis shows that the journalists who reported from the field were very much under the influence of the circumstances that surrounded them. This led to a certain degree of bias in their reporting. In addition, the Serbs and Serbian authorities refused to give comments on most things that were going on. Moreover, Serbian authorities expelled most foreign journalists at the beginning of the war, which turned out to be a huge mistake. If foreign journalists had been allowed to stay, the image of Serbia in the Western media would have been much better and some sort of counter-balance in the Western media could have been established.

Taking into account the character of every war, including this one, this manner of reporting of the three dailies could be expected. The UK was officially in the war and the three dailies had to take a position, which meant supporting the activities of NATO and the UK as its member and promoting NATO goals to gain domestic support for the air raids. When exposed to such news, with the representation of the Serbs as warmongers and the Albanians as victims, the consumers of news could not but accept such reports as true, especially if they did not have access to other information. This, of course, does not mean that the information was wrong but the fact is that the statements, especially those of refugees, could not be verified in most cases. Still, a large number of journalists offered clear and objective information on the war, but there were those whose reporting was biased and misleading and examples in this paper are taken from such texts. This means that the reporting of the three dailies was not entirely misleading, but that there were numerous instances where this was the case.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The statements in this paper do not aim to downgrade the suffering of all those who underwent atrocities, tortures, rapes or beatings during the war or to hurt the pain of those who lost their dear ones in this terrible war. However, in order to provide sound evidence, based exclusively on the linguistic findings, we had to push the feelings aside and analyze the articles based on the linguistic criteria.

As for the reporting of the three British dailies, it varied depending on the topic. The topic of refugees was particularly sensitive and that is why biased approaches to

it were more numerous than when other topics were covered (war operations, collateral damage etc.)

However, in war conditions it is easy to cross the threshold of objective reporting and enter partiality. Even minor units on the microstructure level can turn a piece of writing from fairly neutral to very biased, which in this case happened many times. Hopefully, lessons have been learnt and one of the most important ones would be to always take the side of truth.

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