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## A Textual Analysis of the Embargo Column

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The paper offers a *textual analysis* of a sample of texts published in the Embargo column in *Večernji list*. The intention is to trace down the evolvement of a particular discourse type with the aim of establishing points of stability/instability within it as a manifestation of socioculturally conditioned discursive shifts. The methodological concept, i.e. *textual analysis*, conceived as including *intertextual* and *linguistic analysis*, drawn from the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis as developed by the British linguist Norman Fairclough, is in this analysis complemented with other concepts used in sociolinguistics (Labov) and narrative theory. The shifts observed within the complex generic and discursive configuration of the Embargo, such as a shift from “overt” to “covert” modes of the transmission of the story and less prominent linguistic heterogeneity, point to deeper shifts within the order of discourse of the media, which require more extensive application of Fairclough’s.

### Introduction

How to conceptualise and further analyse links between properties of discursive practices, evident as textual properties, and social and cultural practices has recently been at the centre of research within the disciplines of critical linguistics and discourse analysis. The economic, social, political, cultural and discursive changes that have taken place in the so-called “transitional societies” in the last decade have offered a particularly rich area of research into the nature and manifestation of links between, broadly speaking, discursive changes on the one hand and social changes on the other.

In this paper I will analyse the shifts in the configuration of a particular discourse type, the Embargo column in *Večernji list*, which become evident when texts published in this column at two different periods, 1988 and 2000, are compared. In other words, the



following analysis will first look at the properties of the Embargo column in 1988 and then trace its evolution in 2000 with the aim of casting light on the socioculturally conditioned instabilities of this genre as an indicator of the instabilities in the order of discourse.

The Embargo column has been published in *Večernji list*, a daily paper with the largest circulation in Croatia, since its first issue on July 1 1959. How this column, extremely popular with its readers and held in high esteem by professional associations<sup>1</sup>, has been conceived by the editors of the paper may be inferred from the following paragraph in the monograph on *Večernji list*: "Since its beginnings, "Embargo" has been a column about "ordinary" people - their worries, problems, complications, and joys. Since the earliest of *Večernji list*, "Embargo" has been enormously popular among readers who have understood the column as being their own. When someone experienced an embarrassing situation (whether on the tram, in a shop, or on the street), it was common to hear someone saying, I will get this published in "Embargo".

Thus, the function of the Embargo column is to bring to the attention of the public episodes in which "ordinary citizens" in the course of their everyday lives were done an injustice or were treated unfairly. Though all these stories are based on personal experience, the events they retell are not of a truly private nature. In all of them an individual (or a group of individuals) - the "complaining reader" - has been involved in some unpleasant situation caused by public institutions. The above mentioned episodes may figure as the usual content of complaint columns; it is a particular configuration of genres and discourses which gives them a different function. The function the Embargo performs is that of commenting on issues of public concern through the perspective of an individual's experience; in other words, a specific configuration of discourses (private - public) and of genres (narrative-commentary) realised in the linguistic heterogeneity of texts is relevant for the way the Embargo discursively negotiates both the tension inherent in its task to probe public issues from the perspective of individual experience and the tension stemming from the basic conflict of an individual and public institutions present in each of these texts on the story level.

A need to explore links between social and cultural practices and textual properties within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has led to the development of two major theoretical frameworks, Teun Van Dyk's and Norman Fairclough's.<sup>2</sup> It is Fairclough's CDA framework, conceived as a three-fold analysis, i.e. analysis of texts, analysis of discourse practices and analysis of social and cultural practices, that I rely on in this paper. However, the analysis presented here comprises *textual analysis* understood as including both

<sup>1</sup> In 1961 the author of the Embargo, the Croatian journalist Mirko Bilić, was given an annual award of the Croatian Journalists' Association.

<sup>2</sup> For more details on the similarities and differences between these two frameworks, which can be roughly distinguished as a sociocognitive (van Dijk) and a discourse-practice (Fairclough) approach, see Bell and Garrett, 1998: pp.1-64)



*linguistic analysis* and *intertextual analysis*. “Whereas linguistic analysis shows how texts selectively draw upon linguistic systems (again in an extended sense), intertextual analysis shows how texts selectively draw upon orders of discourse – the particular configurations of conventionalized practices (genres, discourses, narratives, etc...) which are available to text producers and interpreters in particular social circumstances” (Fairclough, 1995a : 188).

The methodological issue mentioned above, i.e. of how to research the links between textual properties and social and cultural practices, has been approached in this paper by the use of intertextual analysis, which seems to me a particularly productive methodological concept in this line of research for a number of reasons. First, as a particular sort of interpretation of linguistic evidence, intertextual analysis remains within the dimension of texts, making it possible to integrate linguistic analysis and, broadly speaking, cultural analysis. Or, to use Fairclough’s definit:”It is a cultural interpretation in that it locates the particular text within the facet of culture that is constituted by (networks of) orders of discourse. The linguistic analysis is, in an obvious sense, closer to what is “there” on paper or on the audio-video tape, whereas the intertextual analysis is at one remove of abstraction from it. Consequently, in intertextual analysis the analyst is more dependent upon social and cultural understanding. This can seem problematic to those who expect a more “objective” form of linguistic analysis. Nevertheless, linking the linguistic analysis of texts to an intertextual analysis is crucial to bridging the gap between text and language on the one hand, and society and culture on the other. (Fairclough, 1995b : 61)

Second, due to the fact that it places the focus of analytical attention on the concept of discourse type<sup>3</sup>, intertextual analysis enables us to expand the object of analysis from single texts to larger sequences of texts which belong to particular discourse types. A need for this to be done, expressed as a need for a methodological “de-privileging story or topic” (Fowler, 1991 : 225) has been felt within critical linguistics perspective as something that will enable further breakthroughs.

## **The comparative intertextual and linguistic analysis of the Embargo column**

The analysis presented here is a part of a larger work the objective of which was to examine shifts in several discourse types within the order of discourse of a particular newspaper conceptualised as the shifts in the “voice” of the newspaper. Thus, the

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<sup>3</sup>Discourse types are defined as “configurations of genres and discourses which actually occur, and which may become more or less stable and conventionalized within orders of discourse”. (Fairclough, 1995b : 76)



discussion which follows will comprise intertextual analysis of the Embargo column as a distinct discourse type with the aim of unravelling stabilities/instabilities within this discourse type, placing to the forefront changes relevant for the consideration of the changes in the newspaper's voice in this column, being manifestly present as the highly individualized voice of the Embargo persona. The analysis is conducted on a sample of Embargo texts created on a weekly basis by the method of systematic random sampling. More precisely, the sample encompasses all the texts published in the column in two periods: June 2 – June 9 1988 and June 1– June 8 2000.

As a discourse type the Embargo column draws strongly on the narrative genre in that it “tells a story”.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, in each of the Embargo texts it is possible to discern a clear narrative the structure of which closely resembles Labov's scheme of oral narratives that “tend to display a determinate shape dependent upon the ordering of different types of discursive strategy”.<sup>5</sup> The types of discursive strategy, some with an obligatory position within the narrative and some with an optional position, are: 1 *Abstract* ; 2 *Orientation*; 3 *Complicating Action*; 4 *Evaluation*; 5 *Result* or *Resolution*; 6 *Coda* (Labov, 1977 : 363)

Relying closely on Labov's scheme of oral narratives in the manner of their staging, the texts in the Embargo also display a considerable measure of aberration from this scheme, which is highly significant in terms of tracing down their intertextuality, or, in other words, generic hybridity.

The analysis of sample texts showed that *Abstract*<sup>6</sup> is usually replaced with what I might call *Framing Narrative* (or *Focusing* after Montgomery) which performs the function of relating the narrator's personal experience to the core narrative that will follow.

Izlazim neko jutro iz kuće, i zamalo udarih nosom u - mastodonta; dvokatni autobus strane registracije ispriječio se preda mnom, i zastro mi vidik, vedutu zagrebačku velegradsku...Gledam: odakle taj autobusni kolos, i otkrivam- iz Zapadne Njemačke. Da bih istog trenutka pomislio:da si ti, brajko, vozaču moj, u Švabiji parkirao autobus na mjestu gdje mu nije mjesto ode iz tvog džepa 200 do 300 maraka, kao od šale. ('Rđa...?', (Rust), *VL*, June 6 1988)

(One morning I leave the house and almost find my nose plastered up against - a mastodon; a doubledecker with foreign plates looms up in front of me, hiding the metropolitan vista of Zagreb from my view...I look: where is this bus collosus from, and discover - from Western Germany. And at the same moment it crosses my mind: had you,

<sup>4</sup> For example, Mieke Bal defines a “narrative text” as a text in which an agent relates (“tells”) a story in a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof.”(Bal, 1997 : 5) or simply as a cultural artifact “that tells a story” (Bal, 1997:3).

<sup>5</sup> Montgomery interpreted and deployed Labov's scheme of oral narratives in the analysis of a particular radio genre. (Montgomery, 1991 : 139).

<sup>6</sup> *Abstract* is defined by Labov as “one or two clauses summarizing the whole story”. (Labov, 1977 : 363)



my good man, my driver, parked that bus in Švabija at a place not meant for parking - 200 to 300 marks would fly out of your pocket, with the greatest ease.)

As such the section of *Framing Narrative* plays an important role both in the realisation of ideational and interpersonal functions of the text and in their specific merging, thus pointing clearly to the distinctiveness of the Embargo column as a particular discourse type. *Framing Narrative* is usually followed by *Orientation* after which the narrative of the “complaining reader’s” experience unfolds following Labov’s elements of *Complicating Action* and *Resolution*. The narrative ends with what might, within Labov’s scheme, be termed *Evaluation*, i.e. places where narrative is suspended in order to make it possible for the narrator “to indicate the point of the narrative, its *raison d’être*: why it was told, and what the narrator is getting at.” (Labov, 1977 : 369) . However, within the pattern of the Embargo section, the element of *Evaluation*<sup>7</sup>, which projects the story from the personal level of what happened to the protagonists onto a broader societal level, is of central importance as it provides an interpretative framework into which the implied readers are supposed to place the meaning of the narrative. Here follows an example of *Evaluation*:

Znam da je ourizacija (plus lažno samoupravljanje) kadra razmrvti čak i najčvršće, poslovno najsolidnije tzv. velike privredne sisteme (kao što je i OZ “Croatia”). Ali budi mi dopušteno kazati: zar direktor daruvarskog OZ-a “Croatia” Ranko Lolić nikad, baš nikad nije čuo za osnovna pravila (poslovne) igre u koja je uključeno i gore opisano – obaveza upućivanja poslovnog partnera na internu komisiju OZ-a – pravila koja su dužni poštovati svi iz kruga Zajednice osiguranja “Croatie”, dakle i daruvarska filijala?! (‘Pravila’ (Rules), *VL*, June 3 1988).

(I know that *ourizacija*<sup>8</sup> (coupled with phony self- management) is capable of destroying even the strongest, the most solid of the so-called large systems (such as the insurance company “Croatia”). But do let me say: has the manager of the Daruvar branch of “Croatia” Ranko Lolić, really never heard of those basic rules of the (business) game to which the above described case belongs - an obligation to direct your business partner to the internal commission of the insurance company - the rules which are to be obeyed by all those belonging to the Associated Insurance Company “Croatia”, and so by the Daruvar branch as well?!).

<sup>7</sup> Labov also notes that *Evaluation* should not be understood as a clear-cut section: “The evaluation of the narrative forms a secondary structure which is concentrated in the evaluation section but may be found in various forms throughout the narrative”. (Labov, 1977 : 369).

<sup>8</sup> This term needs to be explained instead of being translated: during the period of “self- governing socialism” companies were divided into units called OURS (basic organisations of associated labour), a process which, as the analysed article tries to imply, mainly led to the growth of bureaucracy.



While these texts draw on a genre of personal narrative in the pattern of their structuring, in order to approach other relevant aspects of this hybrid genre (its intertextuality) it seems useful to turn to Fairclough's notion of genre, which goes beyond the staging of a text and includes voice, style and mode.<sup>9</sup>

In this discussion the above quoted facets of the generic configuration of the Embargo, namely *voice*, *style* and *mode*, are approached by examining the level of the transmission of story, or the level of discourse.<sup>10</sup> In the Embargo the readers are presented with a clearly mediated narrative with an "overt narrator" (the persona of the Embargo) who mediates between the implied author and implied readers, materialized as narrator and narratees.

The narrator, the *I* of the narration, invariably asserts his/her presence at the very beginning, in the stage of *Framing Narrative*. This is done by the use of a range of devices belonging to the spectrum of "overt" narration, such as an overt comment on the narrative that will follow ("Dakle, da čovjek ne povjeruje!" (Can you believe it?) 'Preregistracija' (Re-registration) *VL*, June 7 1988)), or explicit self-mention ("Pišući ovaj okvir koječega sam se minulih petnaestak godina naslušao...." (In the past fifteen years I have, while writing this frame, heard all sorts of things) 'Aranžman' (Package Tour), *VL*, June 9 1988) or direct address of narratees ("Ispričat ću vam, poštovani čitatelji, jedan detaljčić...." (I will, respected readers, tell you about a tiny detail), 'Socijala' (Social Benefits), *VL*, June 2 1988).

The modes of the direct address of narratees (which are mainly found, in terms of Labov's stages, in *Framing Narrative* and *Evaluation*), an inevitable property of "overt" narratives, are of particular importance within this discussion. Since the Embargo column, though drawing strongly on the properties of narrative genres, is a press genre, these modes, as carriers of interpersonal meanings of the text, are vital to the construction of relations between the newspaper and its readers. In addition to the second person pronoun address, the first person plural pronoun *mi* (we) is systematically used, both in its exclusive meaning "I-the narrator and you-the audience", and in its inclusive meaning "we together". In the sample texts *we* is predominantly used in its inclusive meaning, and, as the context of the use of other related deictics such as *naš* (our) or *u nas* (in our country/town/place)

<sup>9</sup> It is not helpful to conceive of a genre simply in terms of structuring with respect to stages. I regard genre as a socially ratified way of using language in connection with a particular type of social activity (e.g. interview, narrative, exposition). Such a way of using language is not just a way of staging a text, it also involves particularities of (in terms of Halliday, 1978) "field" – what social practices are referred to and how they are signified (van Leeuwen, 1993), of "voice" – who the participants are and how they are constructed, of "style" – how participant relations are constructed, and of "mode" – what forms of textualization (not just staging) and of text-context relations apply. We can use the terms voice, style, and mode to refer to these particular facets of genre, and the term "activity type" (Levinson, 1979) to refer specifically to the schematic structuring of a genre in terms of stages. (Fairclough, 1995b : 14)

<sup>10</sup> I will use the former term to avoid possible misunderstanding that may stem from the fact that the concept of discourse is differently used in the narrative theory than in discourse analysis. See Chatman, 1978.



shows, the community that is conceived goes beyond that of the narrator and narratees, i.e. it goes beyond the community of those who share an interest in the narration being “told”, and encompasses those who share the same “lifeworld” as a set of everyday experiences and goes even further to encompass all those who live in the same country as the usual implied audience of the press discourse.<sup>11</sup>

A good example of the insistent use of inclusive *we* and related deictics is to be found in ‘Socijala’ (Social Benefits). The text begins: “*U nas* još nitko nije počeo (javno) razmišljati o tome da se i u *naš* svakodnevni jezik unese jedan takav izraz, riječ koja bi govorila sve, ali bi istovremeno vodila računa o dignitetu takve, vremesne, osobe. Ali smo zato naprosto zasićeni javnim i nejavnim raspravama o socijativnim (ne) prilikama onih koji više...Uzmemo li u ruku olovku i papir i odbijemo 102.625 od 102.789, dobit ćemo...” (VL, June 2 1988)

Therefore, in the scope of *we* that expands beyond the narrative community it is evident how apparently narrative conventions are twisted in accordance with the requirements of the press genre.

However, it is important to note that the narrator at certain points lapses into neutral *you* when addressing readers: “Instead of giving my advice to an indignant old pensioner, I will, respected readers, tell you about a tiny detail...” The lapse into *you* may be considered as a device for maintaining a tension between the levels of intimacy and distance, this tension being present in other aspects of the text, and contributing in a major part to its *intertextual configuration*. It should be pointed out that this tension is also visible in the switches between direct and indirect speech in the rendition of the main protagonist’s story, as well as on the lexical level in the mixture of official, colloquial and dialectal expressions.

Another aspect of inclusive *we* that should be considered is its ideological potential. The subtext of its use is that *we* do not just share an interest with the author in the narrative being unfolded but, as members of the same society, are faced with similar problems (“it could have happened to any of us” is a discernible subtext) on a personal level of experience and moreover, take similar positions. As such, *we* is a strong means of building a sense of common identity and consensus between the narrator and readers.

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...Uzmemo li u ruku olovku i papir i odbijemo 102.625 od 102.789, dobit ćemo...” (VL, June 2 1988). (In *our* country nobody has yet started thinking (publicly) of introducing a word into *our* everyday language which would say everything, but would at the same time take care of the dignity of a such older person. But *we* have simply become fed up with public and non-public debates on social circumstances of those who ... If *we* take a piece of paper and pen into our hands...).





However, it is important to note that the transmission is not consistently overt throughout the narration, but that at some point in the narration the narrator minimalizes his/her presence by lapsing into less overtly mediated forms of transmission, such as a quoted dialogue (in which even tags, as the most minimal form of suggesting the narrator's presence, are sometimes omitted and replaced with separate paragraphing as a means of indicating turn-taking pertinent to "covert" narration), direct presentation of documents, letters, etc...Nevertheless, while the techniques used (such as a quoted dialogue and separate paragraphing) may be those pertaining to "minimalized narratives", implied readers/narratees are not, within the terms of the "generic contract" (Montgomery, 1991 : 157), placed into the position of overhearing the actants' dialogues, but are simply, through the narrator's voice, presented with dialogues he was party to.

The practices of naming and labelling as a means of construction of the identities of "complaining readers" need to be examined. In addition, practices of naming are relevant for interpersonal meanings within the text since they indicate the level of intimacy/distance, not just between the narrator and the complaining reader, but also the desirable level of intimacy between the narratees and the "complaining reader", which is significant for creating a sense of solidarity and community between readers/narratees and the narrator/the newspaper and actants. The above mentioned tension in the discussion of modes of address of readers (switching from exclusive *we* to inclusive *we*, and to *you*, coupled with the varying scope of *we*) is further maintained by means of inconsistent patterns of naming and labelling. The inconsistencies in the patterns of naming, ranging within the same text ('Preregistracija' (Re-registration), *VL*, June 7 1988) from the most personal *Antun*, to fairly official *Antun Uremović* and the most impersonal *A.U.* are a feature of all the texts in this column. This carefully built inconsistency, like the other features mentioned above, points to unresolved tension, stemming from the fact that private discourse is mediated into public discourse, and from the fact that public discourse is, for ideological reasons, used as a site for private-like communication.

Another aspect worth considering is the salience of variable patterns of naming as cues, in terms of the notion of cues as developed within critical linguistics.

The idea of cueing implies that a model of register of dialect or mode can be assigned to a text even on the basis of some very small segment(s) within its total language: it does not have to be saturated with markers of the variety, or structured with tyrannical consistency... . What I am proposing is that a variety can be cued by a stereotypical detail which is as valid for models of mode-in this case "oral", suggesting conversation - as it is for models of dialect and register (Fowler, 1991 : 61).

Thus, the use of initials or first names are cues of diverse models of discourses, ranging from highly authoritative and impersonal (*A.U.*) to markedly personal models (*Antun*).

Let us consider the practices of labelling "complaining readers". Usually they are not given any other identity but that which caused their troubles. Thus, *Antun Uremović*,





whose trouble started when he moved from one town to another, is identified as *doseljnik u Zagreb* (a newcomer to Zagreb), *novopečeni Zagrepčanin* (a newly-made Zagreber), *nevoljnik Antun Uremović* (poor Antun Uremović), *bivši sugrađanin* (ex fellow-townsmen). However, within this line of argument it may be more interesting to consider the patterns of labelling such as *naš sugrađanin* (our fellow-townsmen) or *nevoljnik* (unfortunate wretch) which point to the intention of creating feelings of solidarity with and empathy for the “complaining readers”, and as such are also used for consensus-building.

Intertextual complexity in the mixing of genres and discourses is realized in linguistic heterogeneity, which is the object of the linguistic analysis that follows.

It is important to note that the linguistic heterogeneity, or intertextuality, of the narrator’s segments of the text has a dual function. On the one hand, its function is to make the idiom of the narrator, the newspaper’s voice, closer to the “speech” of “ordinary people” and thus to establish relations with readers as being friendly and informal. This helps to achieve consensus, an important ideological tool. On the other hand, its function is to simulate the voices it assumingly presents, the voices of “complaining readers” with the use of certain “cues”. Therefore, tension stemming from the fact that “lifeworld” discourses, discourses of ordinary people, incongruent with routine press discourses, are brought into the newspaper medium is discursively manifest in the heterogeneity of the voice which both retains properties of the expected discourses and simulates discourses which are not usually found within a newspaper.

Most of the devices used to negotiate this tension in the Embargo column could be subsumed under the phenomenon of “conversationalization”, inherent in other discourse types within the media order of discourse<sup>12</sup>. The linguistic devices are a textually evident means of achieving discursive intertextuality, i.e. a means of introducing diverse discourses and registers into the text of the Embargo. The illusion of speech, of oral communication going on between the readers and the newspaper (an important element of the “generic contract” I referred to above) is systematically built by relying on an entire range of devices:

i) On the level of typography:

They include dots and dashes to break up the sentences and punctuation to suggest certain properties of intonation and other prosodic features of speech in print.

Ti omatorio, a još si pješak...?

(You’ve grown old and you’re still a pedestrian...?!)

(‘Pravila’ (Rules), *VL*, June 3 1988)

ii) On the level of register:

A specific mixture of various registers is achieved by the juxtaposition of typically literary words like *minula godina* (last year) with remarkably colloquial and dialectal

<sup>12</sup> For instance, Fowler, within a critical linguistics perspective, elaborately describes technical devices, conceived as “cues” in the text that are used to suggest the oral mode and conversational style in newspaper discourse. (see Fowler, 1991 : pp. 62-65).



expressions, such as *brajko* (my good man), *Švabija* (a colloquial and even pejorative term for Germany). (This feature is evident in the above quoted passage from 'Rđa' (Rust)).

Another example that illustrates this point well is a paragraph from 'Preregistracija' (Re-registration) where expressions like *maltene* (*skoro, gotovo*) (almost), *dok mi je još na ramenu glava* (*dok sam još živ*) (while I still have my life) have, in terms of choice relations, alternatives which belong to a more neutral idiom and are here enclosed in brackets. On the other hand, expressions like *automobil* (*auto*) (motor-car), *osobni automobil* (*auto*) (passenger car), *posjedujem* (*imam*) (own) cue rather official discourses and could also be replaced with more neutral expressions.

The illusion of the oral mode, aimed at achieving a common ground between the newspaper and readers, and at creating the illusion of mediating the speech of ordinary people, is also "cued" by frequent allusions to proverbs, sayings and other components of what may be termed "popular wisdom". For instance, *pa treba tako uzeti pod račun onu narodnu: tko prizna...* (thus the folk saying: A fault confessed... should be taken into account).

However, besides all these elements which contribute to the colloquial nature of the discourse, the language is equally full of elements which pertain to various discourses characteristic of the public domain. For example, official names of various administrative bodies are always precisely cited like *Komitet za komunalije* (Committee for Public Utility Services), *Stanica milicije za regulaciju auto prometa* (Police Station for the Regulation of Car Traffic), *Školski centar za cestovni promet* (School Centre for Road Traffic), *Izvršno vijeće skupštine općine Trešnjevka* (Executive Council of the Municipality of Trešnjevka) though in the colloquial idiom of the period they were referred to in some other, at least shorter, variant. In its full form which is used here they belong to the pronouncedly official discourse.

iii) On the level of syntax

Incomplete clauses, questions and exclamations are major marks of the oral mode as presented in the above quoted examples (for instance, where typographical devices are used to achieve the illusion of oral mode). It should also be said that the syntactic structure of sentences, in their avoidance of nominalisations, passive constructions, and what is called *neodređeni oblici* (indefinite forms) and which have the same effect of obscuring the agent as passives, is evidence of drawing on discourses other than official.

To sum up the main points of this analysis, what makes Embargo a distinctive discourse type is the fact that certain properties which are found in different genres and orders of discourse, and in different domains of social activities, are articulated together in a specific way. Among the major elements of this configuration attention should be drawn to the conventions of the narrative genre, in particular to the genre of oral narratives (in terms of the sequence of elements of the narrative) articulated together with the properties of other genres and discourses, such as a carefully built dichotomy of "us" and "them",



which is a property of press genres, such as press reports and press commentaries, or the scope of *we* which projects to encompass the nation as the targeted audience. In terms of discourses, one should observe that official discourses are articulated together with discourses of the “lifeworld”, or of private domain communication. Joint articulation of the above cited genres and discourses, visible in the textual heterogeneity, is evidence of the discursive negotiation of tensions involved in its articulation - tensions on the story level between the private experience which makes for the core content of the narration, and its projection to the public level, and on the discourse level, tensions between the discourses of everyday life and the public, official discourses, more appropriate to press discourse.

In the comparative intertextual analysis of the Embargo column sample from 2000 the focus is placed on the stabilization/destabilization of this discourse type in obviously radically changed social and cultural circumstances which frame this order of discourse, i.e. the order of the discourse of the daily press and the Embargo column as its part.

Though the basic assumptions underlying the “generic contract” of the Embargo column are still present, in that a reader tells his/her story to Embargo which is retold it to other readers, the quality of the communication between the narrator and narratees has undergone significant changes. These changes, which result in subtle shifts in the overall configuration of this discourse type, are evident both in the pattern of the staging of the narrative and on the level of the transmission of the story. Thus, an examination of the sample from 2000 shows that all the five elements of Labov’s scheme are still clearly discernible, but the centrality of *Evaluation* has been eroded. “Complaining readers” as the main actants are not present in the narrative just in terms of their experiences, which are commented and evaluated for us by the overt narrator (a pattern dominant in 1988), but they themselves project their experiences to a broader social level by commenting and evaluating them. Consequently, this shift is on the level of the transmission of the story evident as a shift from the first person narration to more “objective” and dramatic ways of transmission, or in other words, as a shift from “overt” to “covert” forms of narration. Thus, it is often the case that considerably larger segments of the “complaining readers” narrative are transmitted via Direct Speech, rather than Free Indirect Speech and narrative summaries, which used to be predominant in the sample from 1988.

A shift towards more “covert” forms of the transmission is, consequently, coupled with a significantly reduced frequency of explicit address of readers, all of which contributes to a less insistently built illusion of a pseudodialogue going on between the newspaper and its readers and to a less insistently built sense of common identity between the newspaper and its readers, as an effect of the former. The devices that were deployed to construct the illusion of a dialogue ranged from a number of devices attempting to imitate the speech mode in print to direct mentioning of this communication as being oral, placing readers in the role of “listeners of the story”, which implied their physical vicinity to the



narrator. Since the use of these devices has been elaborated above, I will merely mention their absences in the texts from 2000: an absence of typographical devices imitating the pace of speech and properties of intonation, such as punctuation used to convey pauses in speech, or reactions, such as surprise (?!), as well as an absence of syntactical structures such as unfinished or elliptical sentences.

While the practices of naming have remained rather inconsistent (still pointing to the tension inherent in this discourse type) ranging from the initials *M.K.* ('Boli me kompjutor' (Computers bother me), *VL*, June 9 2000) to *Dražen Š.*, *Dražen*, *our Dražen* ('Po debljini ili po glavi' (Pro weight or pro head), *VL*, June 1 2000), the absence of empathy provoking labels such as *nevoljnik* (unfortunate wretch) etc., is another sign of the less insistently built dichotomy of "us" and "them".

No, Antun Presečki na to ima odgovor. On, naravno, želi što više putnika u svom busu! Kupite li mjesečnu kartu, kaže mi, potvrdu dobijete besplatno. Ako se busom vozite povremeno, također vas neće stajati tih 10 posto.

'Po debljini ili po glavi' (Pro weight or pro head), *VL*, June 1 2000

(Yet, Antun Presečki has an answer. He, of course, wants to have as many passengers in his bus as possible. If you buy a monthly pass, he tells me, you get a receipt without having to pay for it. If you go by bus from time to time, you will not have to pay this 10 per cent.)

Da bi provjerio upravo kupljenu sobnu peć na ulje, otišao sam do benzinske crpke..." 'Ininini detektivi', (INA detectives), *VL*, June 7 2000

(In order to check a recently bought oil heater, I went to the petrol station).

The quoted extracts clearly show higher linguistic homogenisation (when compared to the examples from 1988). Apart from the fact that colloquial expressions as "cues" of informal, "lifeworld" discourses are less frequently used, it is also important to note that these "cues", when used, are not so discriminately distributed, i.e. they are not systematically anchored in the "voices" of the narrator and the "complaining readers". As the above example shows, the colloquial expression *bus* (bus) is uttered by the voice which represents the public domain. At the same time it should be noted that the discourse of the "complaining reader" draws strongly on linguistic patterns belonging to the public domain, as is visible in the second example. Instead of *da bi provjerio* (in order to check), the colloquial idiom would rather put something like *Htio sam provjeriti* (I wished to check), instead of *upravo kupljena sobna peć na ulje* ( a recently bought oil heater) it would be more common to use *peć koju sam upravo kupio* (the heater I have just bought), instead of *benzinska crpka* (petrol station)<sup>13</sup> it would be more common to use the expression *benzinska pumpa*. This clearly points to the softening of the linguistically enacted dichotomy of "us" and "them", a feature strongly present in the Embargo in 1988.

<sup>13</sup> *Crpka* is a standard language expression, rarely used outside the official context and public communication.



## Conclusion:

The generic configuration of the Embargo in 1988 in terms of staging (centrality of *Evaluation*), coupled with the choice of narrative techniques used (“overt” narration), strong “conversationalization” of the newspaper’s discourse, a carefully built consensus and dichotomy of “us” and “them” point to a strong tendency for the newspaper, retained even in hybridized fictionalized formats, to be the exclusive carrier of evaluations, comments, i.e. to impose cognitive control over discourse. Though it is not possible to elaborate within the scope of this discussion, it should be noted that these properties of the Embargo may be fully assessed when compared with other instantiations of the newspaper voice, for example the manner of the composition of headlines. Another point worth considering would be the interrelatedness of the Embargo’s patterns of “overt” narration with the strategies of embedding the discourses of others into the primary discourse.

The shifts in the configuration of the Embargo observed in 2000 include a change in the narrator’s role which is evident as a marked shift from “overt” towards more “covert”, or more dramatic forms of the story transmission. The narrator, or the newspaper it personifies, does not overtly perform the role of a negotiator between two conflicting perspectives, enacted also as two visibly different discourses – that of individuals and that of public institutions. A change in the function of the narrator’s voice is accompanied by an absence of devices that served to “soften” the didactic qualities of this voice and, consequently, with an absence of a whole cluster of devices used to establish a sense of community with both “complaining readers” and the implied newspaper readership.

In the texts from 1988 the dichotomy of “us” and “them” was carefully built up in the way in which the identities of “complaining readers” were constructed (practices of labelling) and further reinforced by the use of *we*, and discriminate “conversationalization” of the narrator’s and complaining readers’ mediated voices, all this leading to evident linguistic heterogeneity.

The fact that texts from 2000 are less pronouncedly linguistically heterogeneous is due to the fact that the narrator’s voice has been neutralised in accordance with the changed understanding of the newspaper’s role as a “neutral mediator” of events. That this understanding has changed, and has led to discursive changes, can be seen in the less visible overt presence of the narrator’s voice, in the avoidance of the devices belonging to “conversationalization” and in the reconciliation of the dichotomy between “us” and “them”, both on the level of the construction of identities and their linguistic enactment.

As I mentioned earlier, these shifts are parallel to shifts in other discourse types and discursive strategies of the press and point to larger shifts within the order of discourse of the media. However, to analyse them further we should leave the dimension of texts and focus on the analysis of two other dimensions envisaged by Fairclough’s framework, namely discourse practices and socio-cultural practice.



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## TEKSTUALNA ANALIZA KOLUMNE EMBARGO

Članak donosi tekstualnu analizu uzorka tekstova objavljenih u rubrici Embargo u *Večernjem listu*. Namjera je pratiti razvoj određenog diskurzivnog tipa kako bi se ustanovile točke njegove stabilnosti/nestabilnosti kao pokazatelji društvenokulturno uvjetovanih diskurzivnih pomaka. Metodološki koncept tekstualne analize, koja obuhvaća intertekstualnu i lingvističku analizu, preuzet je iz modela Kritičke diskurzivne analize, koji je razvio britanski lingvist Norman Fairclough, te nadograđen konceptima koji su korišteni u sociolingvistici (Labov) i narativnoj teoriji. Pomaci koji su zamiječeni u složenoj konfiguraciji ovog diskurzivnog tipa, kao što su pomak od "otvorenih" narativnih modusa ka "zatvorenim" i umanjena jezična heterogenost, ukazuju na dublje pomake unutar medijskog poretka diskursa, koji zahtijevaju primjenu Faircloughova modela u njegovu širem opsegu.