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INVESTIGATING MEDIA DISCOURSE

Theoretical and Practical Approaches

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PREFACE

The book "Investigating Media Discourse: Theoretical and Practical Approaches" is a result of a longstanding collaboration and joint scientific research in the area of pragmatics and critical discourse analysis of the authors, prof. dr. Zorica Trajkova Strezovska and prof. dr. Silvana Neshkovska.

"Investigating Media Discourse: Theoretical and Practical Approaches" is a collection of 11 articles written, reviewed and published in the period from 2011 to 2022, in a number of distinguished domestic and foreign journals such as the *Journal of Contemporary Philology* (Ss. Cyril and Methodius University – Skopje); *The Journal for Languages and Literatures* (Faculty of Philosophy, Novi Sad), *Thesis* International Research Journal (AAB College – Prishtina), *Studies in Linguistics, Culture, and FLT* (Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen) and *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics* (De Gruyter). Few of the articles in the book have originally been published in Conference proceedings, such as: ESIDRP (English Studies at the Interface of Disciplines: Research and Practice) Conference Proceedings (Faculty of Philology, Blazhe Koneski, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University – Skopje), Conference Proceedings of the International Interdisciplinary Conference for Young Scholars in Social Sciences and Humanities Contexts, Novi Sad, (Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad), the Proceedings of the International Applied Linguistics Conference: Practice in Language, Language in Practice (FON University, Skopje).

The book is organized in three separate sections according to the topics covered in the selected articles. Each section deals with various aspects of media discourse analysis, and contains articles which offer contrastive analysis of Macedonian and English (American) tailor-made corpora. While the first section articles are more theoretical and analyse the use of persuasive language features in selected samples of media texts in order to show the power of the media to impact people's opinions and judgements, the next two sections contain articles in which the authors reveal the interrelatedness between political and media discourse through critical discourse and pragmatic analysis of media texts dealing with specific, rather important socio-political issues. What these articles show is that the media, undoubtedly, play not only the most important role in spreading news, but in shaping people's opinions and stance regarding the political problems. The readers should be aware and cautious of how the news is presented to them, because quite frequently the media may skillfully use language to manipulate the news and present it from one perspective, excluding the alternative perspectives, in order to support and favour a

specific politician, political party or political cause. Its capacity is so great that it may give power to certain people, politicians or political parties or strip them of power. In addition, one must not ignore the social media networks as the most popular and powerful online platforms where news is usually first shared and quickly spread. They give users an opportunity to comment, discuss and critically assess the presented news, which, on the other hand, could be of great use for researchers when aiming to assess the public's disposition towards important socio-political issues.

The underlying idea of the articles in the first section, titled *Persuasion in Media Discourse: the use of metadiscourse markers*, is to investigate the use of specific language features, predominantely metadiscourse markers, in journalistic texts (mainly editorials) and their contribution to the persuasiveness of the texts. As the media (both print and electronic) is the most powerful means of spreading information, it has also proven to be the most influential in shaping people's general opinion on certain very important political and social matters. Therefore, the articles in this section aim to make the reader aware of how journalists intentionally and carefully employ language in the media in order to present news from a certain perspective and thus influence public opinion concerning some specific socio-political issues. More specifically, the focus in each article of this section is on the use of various metadiscourse markers, either textual markers (such as *transition markers, evidentials, code glosses*), which help journalists organise the text and direct the readers towards the appropriate interpretation of their intended message, or interpersonal, such as *hedges*, with which they tone down their statements and present uncertainty in the factuality of their argumets thus making them more acceptable for the readership, or *self-mentions and engagement markers* which help them build their authority in the text and at the same time acknowledge the presence of the readers.

The second section, titled *Political Discourse in the Media*, consists of articles whose focus is on very important socio-political issues: the change of the name of the Republic of Macedonia into the Republic of North Macedonia and the Covid-19 crisis, the vaccination and the vaccine mandates' imposition. The articles dealing with the name change investigate two important aspects: the framing of the issue by the media (pro- and anti-governmentally oriented ones) which had direct influence on the citizens' perception of it, and the discursive processes used by the media to negotiate and construct the identity of Macedonians before, during and after the name change. The other two articles employ critical discourse and pragmatic analysis to reveal the social media users' stance concerning the vaccines, vaccination and the imposition of the vaccine mandates during the Covid-19 crisis. All four articles presented in this section reveal the power of the (social) media to impact people's opinions and judgements on significant political issues.

The articles in the third section, *Rhetorical Violence in Media Discourse*, draw attention to the use of hateful and deragotory language by social media users as well as by journalists, directed towards a specific group of people with specific political orientation. Namely, by applying the methods of critical discourse and pragmatic analysis on selected samples, the articles in this section reveal negative hateful rhetoric expressed: by social media users towards fellow citizens, political figures and other officials in regrads to the

name change in the first article; then by politicians, political activists and voters in their social media status updates during the elections in 2016, through the use of negative lexis, rhetorical figures, speech acts and metadiscourse markers in the second article, and finally, by journalists in their news articles published on various news portals and electronic platforms of traditional media towards female politicians, through the use of both overt and implicit sexist linguistic forms. The objective of these studies is to make the readers aware of the hateful rhetoric used in the (social) media towards the "other" and to shed light on the specific language features employed to express the hatered.

The book "Investigating Media Discourse: Theoretical and Practical Approaches" is primarily intended to be of assistance to undergraduate and graduate students who are interested in doing critical discourse and pragmatic research in the area of media discourse. In addition, we believe the book will be of interest to our fellow researchers, journalists, media workers and all (social) media users.

Finally, we would like to express our deepest and most sincere gratitude primarily to our families for their constant support, but also to our mentors, colleagues and students who in their different capacities have helped us in various ways to enhance our creative process and research endeavors, which, eventually culminated in the compilation of this book.

The authors

January, 2023

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