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**INTERPERSONAL APPROACH IN
OPINION TEXTS IN BRITISH AND
CZECH MEDIA DISCOURSE**

Diploma thesis

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I hereby declare that I have written this diploma thesis on my own and presented a full account of the works cited and the consulted literature.

Olomouc, December 13, 2017

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Introduction

"Comment is free, but facts are sacred"

C. P. Scott presented his famous claim in 1921 in his essay "A Hundred Years", marking the centenary of the establishment of *The Guardian*, where he worked as an editor and later became an owner. The message Scott conveys in this simple sentence – which later became the motto of *The Guardian* – should be quite clear to anybody at least lightly acquainted with the world of media. It prompts to give voice to various opinions for, as Scott states, "the voice of opponents no less than that of friends has a right to be heard" (The Guardian 2017), while being responsible with the truth, the facts.

Volumes have been written about the factual practice of the news, long before the current "post-truth age", in which the discussions about facts and their desirable presentation are frequent and comprehensive to the point of redundancy, while the opinion appears to be a wide and seemingly self-explanatory concept. But – is it really that simple? Are opinion texts in the media just expressed opinions about facts and events? Or are they more complex than that? Comments should, in Scott's view, have the freedom to be expressed. But in the following text I will ask: what else are comments free to be – or do?

In this thesis, I will argue that opinion texts are free to directly engage. They are free to be personal, to communicate on a human level. They are by definition free to persuade, even manipulate. The authors of opinion texts are free to choose the tools not only to convey information and their interpretations of it, but to claim the cultural space they share with the reader, and use the shared identity to construct and re-enforce the illusion of interpersonal relationship with the reader, thus relying not only on the persuasiveness of arguments they present, but also on the effect of familiarity and friendliness (Fowler 1991, 47), thereby achieving a sense of trustworthiness.

To introduce and define the texts that will be analyzed, the opinion will first be addressed from the perspective of text type/genre, the conventionalized form which can be found in the current mainstream media, taking into account the definitions in both the Czech and English media discourse. These definitions are significant both in terms of the approximate template that the author uses, and available tools to achieve the desired function, but also in terms of the reader's expectations that stem from a general experience with opinion texts.

I have already mentioned the elementary differentiation of media production into the categories of news and opinion, categories that are traditionally defined in terms of relative objectivity or subjectivity. The distinction is not as straightforward, as to break evenly with objective news on one side and subjective opinion texts on the other, I will argue that both intentional and unintentional subjectivity can be found in either category. Since the objective of this thesis is the interpersonal element in the communication between the author and the reader, I will address the distinction between the news and opinion in terms of detachment and involvement, i.e. the difference between merely conveying information, and presenting it in such a way that attracts and engages the reader – and how the media production attempts to find a functional balance between them.

The focus is, however, mainly on the opinion text, a type that permits and encourages subjectivity – ideally based on knowledge of the discussed issue, of course. While subjectivity can be intuitively expected by definition, the involvement tools may not be as apparent to the reader, which is why close attention will be paid to some of the strategies that can be used in an opinion text to invoke interpersonal effect, like the use of pronouns, general groups, humor, or cultural references.

Considering the principle of communication choices and the functional level of language which will be the focus of the thesis, I will turn to Halliday's theory of the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which introduces the concept of metafunctions, for the theoretical basis. Since the thesis aims to focus on the interpersonal aspect of the opinion texts, of all three Halliday's metafunctions, attention will be paid mainly to the interpersonal metafunction.

However, since the SFL is a general theory of language, the particular discourse of the media will be introduced more closely, followed by description of the intricacies of digital journalism, which is the environment from which the analyzed texts were chosen.

In the current age of rampantly evolving technology, the media environment is increasingly digital, which is why texts have been chosen from online platforms. Online texts are naturally prominent in the space of social networks, they are convenient in terms of sharing, immediacy, speed of the information spreading and intertextuality, that strengthen the participation of the reader.

The practical part of the thesis will consist of an analysis of the immediate tools that allow the author to establish a bond with the reader beyond the mere process of communicating the author's opinion to the reader, and an excursion to more contextually based features of the opinion texts that carry similar effects but are not as direct as the analyzed phenomena.

This thesis aims to map out the environment in which opinion texts exist and function in general, to

serve as a ground stone for the present and future research. The presented research will specifically look into the strategies which the authors of opinion texts choose to use to enact a relationship with the media consumer in order to create texts that are more engaging, personal and therefore presumably trustworthy for the reader, and to measure the usage of the chosen strategies. The texts were chosen from two publications representing the English discourse (*The Guardian* and *The Independent*) and two publications representing the Czech discourse (*Aktuálně.cz* and *iHNed.cz*). The two discourses will be compared in the analysis, however, it is important to note, that the scale of the analysis is not such that it could be representative of the whole English or Czech online media discourse.

Theoretical part

1. What we talk about when we talk about an opinion text

1.1 Genre and text

Even though the objective of this thesis is not to analyze the texts used for the practical part in terms of genre analysis, it is important to define the type of text I will be addressing in order to lay out characteristics that are expected of the text, both from the perspective of the author and the reader.

Since the terminology may be confusing when addressing genre and text, in terms of ideal types and concrete text products, I follow a particular distinction phrased by Fairclough (1995):

“When people produce or interpret texts, they orientate towards conventions as ideal types, by which I mean that texts are produced and interpreted by reference to them but certainly do not simply instantiate them. In saying that conventions have the status of ideal types I am not suggesting they are purely imaginary; there are texts which closely match ideal types (as well as others which do not), so that people learn them from concrete textual experience. Let us work from the most abstract to the most concrete (textual) level.” (7)

Fairclough differentiates text types and genres:

At a lower level of abstraction, text types are those configurations of genres (and so of discourses, voices, styles, modes, activity types) which have developed and become conventionalized for particular categories of activity in particular types of social situation. A text type is situationally and historically quite particular, a genre is more abstract, though particular text types may be more or less generically complex, closer to or more distant from genres. (14)

Since I am not attempting to pursue genre perspective in this paper, in this chapter I will only address what Fairclough classifies as a text type, the conventionalized use, and move to the concrete level in the analysis.

Some of the definitions that are to be presented can be seen as rather wide and vague, and the everyday use of the text type may vary significantly from one publication to another – even from author to author, or in fact a single author’s texts may follow various strategies. The general characteristics, such as they are specified in this chapter, however, are widely used in practice, therefore they are repetitive and both the author and the reader can be presumed to have previous experience with them.

1.2 Subjectivity and objectivity in the media

When addressing journalistic text types, there are several approaches how to classify them,¹ however, for the purposes of this thesis, the most suitable are the perspectives based on the level of objectivity and detachment and their opposites: subjectivity and involvement.

Objectivity is traditionally expected in news texts – Harcup (2014) defines objective journalism as the kind that “separates the reporting of facts from the journalist’s (or news organization’s) own comment or opinion.” (216)

To claim, however, that a news story, an exemplary news text type, which should ideally be strictly fact-based and not opinionated, is always presented in an unbiased, entirely objective way would be unrealistic.

As Harcup points out, “journalism training and ethical code emphasize the separation between fact and opinion, but in practice the line is often blurred, not only in forms of advocacy journalism or oppositional reporting that reject ideas of impartiality but also in tabloid newspapers that frequently incorporate unattributed comment into the text of news stories.” (221)

Even if the published news texts are presented in an objective and unbiased way, Blažková (2012) explains: “A newspaper is capable of expressing its ideology by publishing stories about events which are prioritized as news and thus highlighted. Additionally, a paper can also be adding various meaning to these events when commenting on them.” (226)

While the ideological component of the conscious process of selecting topics and events that the newspaper deems newsworthy may not be immediately apparent to the reader, the section of the newspaper that is devoted to commentary on the topics and events, is usually clearly marked by a heading and also the position of the opinion section in the publication.

On the spectrum of traditional media text types that scale from purely factual to subjective, an opinion text is, unsurprisingly, one of the admittedly and deliberately opinion-based text types, which means that it is not expected to comply with the standards of news objectivity. (c.f. Harcup 2014, Chovanec 2003, Jílek 2009, etc.)

¹ For example, a popular classification in English discourse is based on the seriousness and relevance of the topic to the society, differentiating between *hard news*, fact-based, topical news about crime, politics, business, etc. (Harcup 2012, 124) and *soft news*, less consequential news of entertainment value, rather than importance to society. (283)

Editorials and opinion sections of “quality” papers need not adhere to the strict requirements of the genre of the hard news and, consequently, involvement phenomena find their more common expression in these sections. (Chovanec 2003, 60)

The issue of subjectivity and objectivity has a close connection to the concept of involvement and detachment. This thesis follows the concept of involvement and detachment that was used by Chafe (1982) in his analysis of written and spoken language, and as suggested by Chovanec (53), considers also the receiving of the communication, which Chafe did not focus on.

In Chafe’s view, involvement is typical for spoken language and includes frequent references to the speaker him/herself, references to the speaker's mental processes, devices for monitoring the flow of information, the use of emphatic particles, fuzziness, and the use of direct quotes. Detachment is found in written language, and is characterized by the use of passives and nominalizations. (49)

Urbanová (1998) then links detachment to impersonality, concluding that detachment has an effect of mitigation and non-commitment, and leads to impersonality in the communication.

Chovanec (2003) stresses the requirement of detachment and impersonality in news section of publications, because of the ideal of objectivity:

Within the genre of hard news in quality papers, the widespread application of the involvement phenomena...tends to be avoided, because the forms (personal pronouns, evaluative lexical items; evaluative statements, exclamatives and interrogatives, etc.) mostly connote subjectivity. (59)

As Chovanec points out (along with Fowler 1991, 64), the phenomena connected to involvement also appears in the news production. The reason for the usage of involvement is to create an illusion of personal approach to the reader, to make the content more engaging. (54)

One of the goals of news discourse is to relate to the audience, and thus news writers have to seek ways of increasing the engagement of the audience in the discourse. News discourse is thus faced with the necessity to reconcile the tension between the ideational and the interpersonal functions: the much-needed objectivity can be connoted through impersonality and detachment, yet certain personal features of involvement are required to bridge the discursive gap and to effectively communicate with the audience. A compromise solution, then, is offered by...mixing of the oral and written modes. (64), i.e. the involvement and detachment tools.

1.3 The many forms of opinion text

It is important to note, that the theoretical definitions and the practical usage of particular types of journalistic texts may differ in some aspects. Theoretical literature in both English and Czech discourse present descriptive approach, rather than having a form of a manual – with few exceptions, such as of Galperin (1971) or Jílek (2009), who indicate a desirable form of the opinion text. In practice, various media bend the genres to their needs, their brand and specifics of the newsroom. British newspapers tend to have either a public or internal editorial style guide with instruction specific to the tradition and practice of the medium. Publishing public style guides is not a common practice in the Czech media.

In Harcup's definition, an opinion text is “a personal, collective, or organizational viewpoint, the expression of which is traditionally eschewed in news reporting unless it is attributed to a source or the subject of the story. While news sticks to the facts plus attribution, editorial columns exist to give the editor's official opinion on an issue, and personal features or columns are free to state the opinions of their named authors.” (221)

In the Czech stylistic view of opinion texts, the text type is categorized as a reporting type – as opposed to news writing text types. (Jílek, 2009) News texts focus on factual information about topics that are considered relevant or interesting for the reader. (55) There is an ideal requirement for objectivity, unbiased and balanced description. (58) Reporting texts should preserve the informative quality in many ways and add interpretation, analysis, opinions with persuasive element and entertainment. (79) The linguistic features that are present in reporting texts are very varied, as the form allows for more language creativity than news texts. Since subjectivity in opinion texts is overt and deliberate, it is possible and sometimes even desirable for the author to make his or her individual style noticeable. In case of publications that publish opinions of prominent journalists, experts in the topic or notable society representatives, the subjective, individual elements are an added value.

In Czech stylistic tradition the cover term “opinion text” can refer to several text types (*žánry* in Czech).

Jílek identifies the origin of the opinion text (*názor, komentář* in Czech) in a news story, for it immediately reacts to the current content presented in the news section of the publication, uses the facts from it and interprets them, comments on them. Regarding the linguistic features, Jílek points

out the usage of subjective line of reasoning, expressive words and shallow, even baseless interpretation. (92) Osvaldová, Halada et al. (2007) share this definition and note that the tradition of opinion texts in the Czech discourse tends to be polemic, political and at times even satirical. (103) All of these features are also applicable to editorial, which can be viewed as a subtype of opinion. (Jílek 2009, 90)

Based on the definitions above I have drafted the following scale of types of opinion texts, which will be explained in terms of the aforementioned authors:

factual - - - - - opinionated - - - - - satirical - - - - - literary

Factual - Analysis

Jílek (2009) defines *analysis (analýza/rozbór)* as a text between the news and views. Its objective is to present the facts but also include a persuasive element to lead the reader to a conclusion, by developing a logical pattern of information, which is subjective. Jílek stresses that the intent of this text type is not to present the authors own opinion or directly provide a conclusion, merely to present the facts to the reader and put them into context. (89)

Opinionated - Commentary

Jílek presents three genres that correspond with the opinion part of the scale:

An essay (úvaha) has a basis in a fact/facts and elaborates on it, evaluates it and uses arguments to support the chosen view. (90)

A polemic (polemika) is a reaction to a thesis/thought that the author disagrees with, it is a disputation which can be using both factual and non-factual arguments. (92)

A commentary (komentář) is an immediate reaction to news, it provides a factual introduction and proceeds with interpretation of the facts. It can contain subjective argumentation, manipulation. Often the text can include humor, vulgar expressions, rhetorical questions and answers etc. (92)

Satirical

According to Harcup satirical journalism aims to “mock or ridicule its targets, which are often powerful individuals or institutions.” (272)

Literary

Jílek mentions several definitions of *feuilleton* (*fejeton*) – which he differentiates from *column* (*sloupek*) – by various authors (Bečka, Čechová a kol., Hrabák, Mistrík), but he puts emphasis on the element of narration as a key feature of the *feuilleton*. In this type of text the author uses an original form, an unusual narrative to convey his/her opinion on the discussed matter. (99-100)

This scale will be used in the analysis part of this thesis to offer a closer introduction to the authors and texts that are used in the analysis.

2. Language as a functional element of social practice

Since the thesis aims to focus on the relationship between the author of the opinion text and the reader, the situation, the roles and mainly the interpersonal element of the relationship and its effects, the theoretical frame I am using is the Systemic functional linguistics, specifically the interpersonal metafunction and tenor.

Halliday introduced the approach to linguistics, Systemic functional linguistics (SFL), in 1961, building mainly on the theoretical influence of Malinowski, Whorf and Firth, under whom Halliday studied. (Kress 1976, 6)

Concerning Malinowski, both Halliday and Firth accept his definition of meaning as the function in context, Halliday does not adopt most of Malinowski's functions, but he incorporates certain features into his system of metafunctions. Whorf's influence is mainly in his relation of language and culture. Firth was Halliday's Cambridge professor and Halliday took over his attempt to link linguistic components to sociolinguistics (referring to Malinowski), but Kress argues that Halliday should not be considered a Neo-Firthian linguist, because he does not use Firth's work in prosodic analysis, which is what many Firth's followers consider to be his most significant contribution. (Kress 1976, 8)

SFL is a theory of language, which examines meaning in social context and considers the main feature of the language its function, while still taking into account the structure. Halliday (2013) identifies five dimensions of language, which are structure (syntagmatic order), system (paradigmatic order), stratification, instantiation and metafunction. (20) He recognizes two basic functions of language, which are to make sense of the human experience and act out human social relationships. (30) For the purposes of this thesis we are going to delve deeper into his concept of metafunctions and later to the addition of context.

2.1 Metafunctions

The triad of metafunctions, which Halliday (2013) introduced, reflects into several layers of his theory starting with the three lines of meaning in the clause (clause as a message corresponds with textual metafunction, clause as an exchange corresponds to interpersonal metafunction and clause as representation corresponds to ideational metafunction) and he argues that: “the three-fold pattern of meaning is not simply characteristic of the clause; these three kinds of meaning run throughout the whole of language, and in a fundamental respect they determine the way that language has evolved. They are referred to in systemic account of grammar as metafunctions...and the concept of ‘metafunction’ is one of the basic concepts around which the theory is construed.” (84)

As the explanation of why Halliday introduces a new term for the functions of language, he suggests that: “there is a long tradition of talking about the functions of language in contexts where ‘function’ simply means purpose or way of using language, and has no significance for the analysis of language itself...But the systemic analysis shows that functionality is *intrinsic* to language: that is, to say, the entire architecture of language is arranged along functional lines. Language is as it is because of the functions in which it has evolved in the human species. The term ‘metafunction’ was adopted to suggest that function was an integral component with the overall theory.” (32)

He presents three metafunctions: ideational (which consists of experiential and logical), interpersonal and textual.

The ideational metafunction is language concerned with the theory of human experience, the experiential part refers to the grammatical choices that the speaker makes to construe meanings about the world, whereas the logical function is linked to the logical–semantic relationships between one clausal unit and another. (Halliday 2009, 232)

The interpersonal metafunction is concerned with the choices the speaker makes to enact his/her personal and social relationships with other people.

“This kind of meaning is more active: if the ideational function of the grammar is ‘language as reflection’, this is ‘language as action’. We call it the interpersonal metafunction, to suggest that it is both interactive and personal.” (Halliday 2013, 31)

The third metafunction relates to the construction of text, it is therefore called textual. Halliday suggests, that it can be considered an enabling or facilitating function “since both the others...depend on being able to build up a sequence of discourse, organizing the discursive flow, and creating the cohesion and continuity as it moves along.” (31–32)

2.2 Metafunctions translated into categories of context

As Talbot points out, a “particular discursive event...does not happen in social vacuum; it is shaped by situational, institutional and social structures,” (13) and concerning the previously mentioned Halliday’s types of meaning, she adds that the cues to those meanings “are interpreted with the help of other resources beyond the text. A text only has meaning when it is engaged with, but its formal features impose constraints on what it can mean, on how it can be interpreted.” (14)

Outside of the scheme of the language dimensions that Halliday presents, he mentions context as a vital feature in language analysis, for every act of communication functions in context of a particular situation. He therefore introduces his ‘ecological’ theory of language’, which takes the factor of situation and culture into account.

The contextual potential of a community is its culture – what we call the context of culture, following Malinowski. The context of culture is what the members of a community can mean in cultural terms; that is, we interpret culture as a system of higher-level meanings – as an environment of meanings in which various semiotic systems operate. (32)

While he admits that analyzing a particular culture might be too difficult of a struggle, he suggests that there is a manageable way to do so through identifying and describing institutions and supports the theory by claiming that: “systemic functional contributions along these lines have been made in a number of areas including the family, education, administration, the media, and healthcare.” (33)

True to the form, Halliday presents three categories of context that can be linked to the system of metafunctions, and these are field, tenor and mode; those he defines as “sets of related variables, with ranges of contrasting values. Together they define a multi- dimensional semiotic space – the environment of meanings in which language, other semiotic systems and social systems operate.” (33)

Field values correspond to the ideational metafunction, they refer to the nature of the social and semiotic activity, what is going on in the particular situation. Following the scheme, the interpersonal metafunction resonates with tenor and refers to the participants of the situation and focuses on the roles the play in the socio-semiotic activity. Mode refers to the role of the language and other semiotic systems present in the situation and corresponds to the textual metafunction. (33)

When approaching text, we are able to analyze whether they tend to be more field- oriented, tenor-oriented or if the orientation is a combination of the two. The implications for the media discourse and for the particular type of texts we are dealing with in this thesis, the opinion, will be explained later, as the thesis will focus on the element of tenor.

3. Interpersonal function in media discourse

The position of the media in present-day society should not be understated, it is a source of information that forms public opinion, is able to shift moods and trends, set topics and state what is and is not relevant for the society's knowledge. As Talbot (2007) explains: "for some sections of society, at least, the media have largely replaced older institutions (such as the church, or trade unions) as the primary source of understanding of the world" (3)

When focusing on the media environment and the content it produces, it is necessary to make distinction between the terms *text* and *discourse*. We view the two through an analytical perspective: *text* as the observable product of interaction, a cultural object, and discourse as the process of interaction itself, a cultural activity. (Talbot 2007, 9) Focusing on media we will understand *text* as a product of journalistic work, including actual texts, videos, images etc. *Discourse* will encompass the activity of making them – the character of the work, the position of the author, institution, the media environment and the intertextual and interactive elements connected to it.

The default nature of the media discourse is being public and undergo different rules and influences than face-to-face or mediated interaction – in this case it is customary to talk about mediated quasi-interaction, which is in its essence monological and pointed at an indefinite, dispersed audience. (Thompson 1995, 86)

In the attempt to come closer to the audience, the media cover the public nature with an illusion of private approach, which modifies the communicative choices of the journalist/ presenter. Talbot (2007) brings up an example of TV host, who create an illusion of private interaction with the audience which reflects in the language; she argues that: "while the context of broadcasting production is the public domain, most people listen or watch in the private domain, where they do not necessarily want to be lectured, patronized or otherwise 'got at'." (25)

In text-based media (print, written online) the concern is similar, the reader needs to be taken into consideration and in case of opinion-based text the author also constructs a personalized interaction with the reader using specific language. In order to give the illusion of interpersonal communication, media personalities, such as TV or radio hosts, reviewers or opinion authors need to establish credibility for the target addressees, to give a firm impression, that their name and opinion has a value for the audience and that it is in the interest of the viewer/listener/reader to pay attention to

them.

Any text can be said to have an implied reader, an imaginary addressee with particular values, preoccupation and commonsense understanding. In having to construct an imaginary person to speak to, media producers are placed in a powerful situation. They are in a position to attribute values and attitudes to their addressees, presenting them in a take-for-granted way. (Talbot 2007, 47)

Talbot's position, however, assumes a rather passive audience, while the position of the addressee in communication process is of significant importance; Widdowson (2012) says that: "co-operation is a communicative imperative. Unless you co-operate in some degree, you cannot communicate at all. But since co-operation must involve some convergence of space, there is always another imperative involved which has to be taken into account: what I have called the territorial imperative – the natural urge to assert one's own personal space and protect it against intrusion. The enactment of any discourse involves the tactical reconciliation of these two imperatives as each participant negotiates position on line." (14) In the specific situation of media communication, we can see the parallel in the author's struggle to communicate his/her position to the reader and the reader's defensive impulse to prevent this to succeed entirely.

Being aware of that, media producers need to strategize in terms of the approach to the reader, and personalizing the communication is one of the strategies which can and are being used. Since the ways to track and describe the character of the readership are improving in efficiency all the time, due to ever-evolving, widely accessible tools, such as Google Analytics, focus groups, etc., the authors are more and more capable to adjust the language to the desired target group.

While analyzing the audience, we would ideally presume the reader's full attention and understanding. However, Hermes (1995) warns that: "it is simply not possible to read characteristics on audience from the surface of the text: there is no single text that has the required monopoly position to exert such influence. All texts are used in context of other media texts and genres; all readers bring their social and cultural background to texts; reading can be a fleeting, transient pastime that does not leave much of a trace." (147)

In this thesis, however, we will dismiss such cases, for our attention is predominantly on the producers, their creative process, strategies and their concept of the target reader.

3.1. The intricacies of online media environment

Media in general are very prone, and at the same time vulnerable, to technological development. With every major innovation, especially involving speeding of the communication process, some portion of attention is taken away from the older media and given to the newer and faster ones. In the beginning of the digital revolution, there were public and expert voices suggesting, that the impact and popularity of the news in printed press, television and radio, i.e. the traditional media, will be damaged by the widely spread internet access (Brown 2000, Noack 1998), and to a certain extent these predictions were proven right. However, the introduction of a more modern type of media did not eradicate the traditional media, rather diluted the monopoly of previously dominating media (McQuail 2010, 182) Dimmick, Chen and Li (2004) explain that “a new medium survives, grows, competes and prospers by providing utility or gratification to consumers. In doing so, it may have effects on existing media by providing new solutions to old needs or to more contemporary needs.” (31)

After the initial uncertainty how to approach the free and incomprehensibly vast content available online, most mainstream publications chose to transfer individual parts of the content, or the entire content on the web. The media I am addressing in this thesis were and still are known among the media consumers for their opinion pieces in the print form (apart from *Aktuálně.cz*, which never had a print form), and this has transferred even to their online presence over time. So far it seems that online journalism does not tend to obliterate the traditional genre forms like opinion pieces and columns. In online forms these sometimes tend to melt together and in certain aspects they also incorporate features of a blog. There is, however, a very key element which differentiates authors of opinion texts from bloggers, that is to be discussed later on.

The digitalization of media, brings significant changes to the form of the presented content. One might presume that, in the digital space, length would not be a problem, since the layout is not restricted, but the reading behavior online is very different print. As Warnick and Heinemann (2012) point out:

Web reading...is discontinuous and fragmented; readers read rapidly and piece together what they read from various sources. As Nancy Kaplan has noted, in Web reading , there is no predetermined next node in the reading process, and readers must continually make choices about what to read next. As they read, they proceed by weighing alternatives, constructing forecasts , and then continually modifying their expectations. . . They are restless. In such an environment, intertextuality has an appeal. It is modular and does not depend on sequenced text. It offers a wide repertoire of ways to engage attention, such as the use of hyperlinks to external resources, as readers become complicit in construction the meanings of the texts they encounter. (77)

While the reading habits evolve and change based on the character of the reading environment, the choice of source of the information is not as random as it would seem, as Warnick and Heinemann also argue that: “media ownership is as important as ever in the convergent media environment. The key global communication firms are both more concentrated (in their range of owners) and more extended (in their global reach) than ever before. And while the Internet may provide access to a much greater range of media providers, many users still obtain their media from a handful of source.” (183)

One of the main qualities that media producers have always compete for, and for which the online environment is revolutionary, is speed. Currently, in the online publications, news is seen “in the making”, mimicking the process of TV breaking news in a sense, the information has to be presented as soon as possible, preferably for the particular publication sooner than the others, and then the process of updating starts. The whole production is tightly linked to the social media, where the immediate contact with the reader takes place and it is the social media space, which is a source of news for an increasing portion of readers.²

Halliday (2013) notices that the connection between the technology advancement and the content makes communication between the author and the audience even more tenor-oriented, he claims that: “...the development of social media does indicate the extent to which companies are trying to leverage people’s need for ‘sharing’ and orientation towards the interpersonal.” (42)

Warnick and Heinemann (2012) stress the development and changes connected to increasing influence of the digital media:

Since new media technologies function as a significant part of our political culture, candidates, voters, and critics must come to terms with how to make sense of persuasion in a digital medium...the Web employs a logic of referentiality and intertextuality where discourse is often characterized by fragmentary and disjointed statements and questions... forms of rhetorical criticism such as narrative criticism or pedantic analysis that traditionally focus on more linear and self-contained discourses might not apply to the hyperspatial and hyper temporal nature of the Web without some adaptation. (41)

² 41% of online media consumers in the UK in 2017 (Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism 2017)

3.2 Authors of opinion texts online

Concerning the position of the opinion texts in online publications in terms of their authors, it is comparable to the print media, however it is magnified in a certain respect. Even in the print media the personality of the author and his or her established credentials is what makes the opinion valuable to the reader and therefore the publication. The print media readers tend to be selective in their choice of publication not just for the quality of news but also for the reliability and expertise of their commentators, who are either experts in the field they write about or they possess social credit – for example literary or public figures. In online production, the identity of the author is even more prominent, for the published texts often work in concord with the author's presence on social networks. The reader can therefore feel closer to the authors, can follow them online not just for the official texts but also outside of the publication environment. That, however, does not mean, that the publications are irrelevant. They still provide an institutional credit and reputation to the authors, which mainly stems from the reader's experience with the printed form and allows the authors to present themselves as more trustworthy than the authors of blog, who also suffer by their sheer numbers. In this case the traditional loyalty to the publication can extend to the online space. This of course does not apply to new, purely online media, which in Czech context are currently mainly built around the personalities and reputations of the editors-in-chiefs, who gained the public credit while working in print media.³ Digital environment is a convenient platform for forming like-minded communities focused on certain topics, products or political and social streams. Online media are also a part of this phenomena, not only is there a tendency to allow for extensive interactivity and contact with the readers/viewers/listeners, the social network presence establishes a community of supporters, but also critics, reading, commenting, sharing and using the content in discussions.

³ For example Svobodné fórum or Echo24 – which is also connected to a printed weekly, but the online form is default)

4. Relationship between the author and the reader

4.1. Simulated relationship

As mentioned earlier, the features of public and private communication are often blurred in the media discourse and the addressee is deliberately led into an illusion of a different kind of interaction than actually occurs, an illusion of an almost interpersonal interaction. O’Keefe (2006) examines the issue mainly in TV interviews, but her concept can also be applied to the written text and the relationship between the author and the reader, which is the case we are looking at in this thesis. She calls the relationship pseudo-intimate and recognizes the four distinct markers accompanying it: the use of pronouns, vocatives, pragmatic markers and response tokens. (90)

Fairclough (2001) claims that due to the actual conditions of production and interpretation in mass communication (he mainly presents this issue in the advertising discourse) “one finds what I shall refer to as a synthetic personalization, a compensatory tendency to give the impression of treating each of the people ‘handled’ en mass as an individual.” (52) The reasons why this process is needed is according to him the indeterminate nature of that audience and the indeterminate and complex nature of the producers. (168)

As one of the strategies to establish the interpersonal interaction he mentions invoking cultural knowledge. (183)

Taking the personal approach, the author can create the illusion of a dialogue with the reader, even though reciprocity is diminished in case of a written text, even if it is published online.⁴ Such an illusion can be achieved by the use of pronouns, or rhetorical questions, that create an effect of a prompt to participate in the communication process.

O’Keefe and Fairclough both point out the practice of the authors to create personas that may not match have anything in common with their actual personalities, but are crafted for the purposes of more individual communication. O’Keefe also stresses the author’s regular contact with the audience in terms of maintaining the pseudo-intimacy, the effects of this “are not to be underestimated in the process of construction pseudo-relations within the participation framework.” (92) In the context of print or online media we can observe the tendency of repetitiveness in regular weekly opinions, a specific place in the newspaper or the webpage or a regular update, for example, in case of

⁴ However, reciprocity can be achieved in comment section, either on the website of the publication, or on social media.

one of the publications that are to be analyzed in this paper (*iHNed.cz*) – a weekly e-mail summary of the most important published opinions with links. The author’s active presence on the social media can also contribute to the illusion of relationship.

4.2 Sharing cultural space

4.2.1. Proximity

Proximity is mainly used and analyzed as one of the news values, i.e. the values “by which one ‘fact’ is judged more newsworthy than another” (Bell 1991, 155) Of course, news are not the focus of this thesis, but this particular phenomenon, proximity, has a similar, if not more prominent function in the opinion texts than it has in news texts. Bell introduces this news value both in terms of geography and culture. In principle, a story has a greater impact on the reader if it refers to events that have happen or are related to the reader’s geographical or cultural space.

By implicitly reiterating the closeness of both the cultural and physical space, the author stresses that the topic is relevant for the reader **personally**, while also re-enforces the notion of a space that is **shared** by the author and the reader, highlighting the group identity that they have in common.

4.2.2 Group identity

O’Keefe claims that in the media communication process, there is an understanding between the author and the audience of a range of shared space, a cache of common knowledge and a sense of common identity. (127) These can manifest for example in the usage of vague categories, pronouns, deictic referencing, or self-reference pronouns. (128) Some of the tools used for establishing a common space between the author and the reader are described in the following chapter.

- **Whose voice is in the lead?**

As was mentioned earlier, the opinion is a journalistic text that is tightly linked with the persona of the author, therefore the personal style is not discouraged – it is expected and called for. The author can distinguish himself/herself in many ways – I have mentioned the public persona on social networks or the presence of a particular topic, which the author makes “his/her own”, either by being on an expert level in the field or by covering the topic extensively.

Self-mention is quite frequent in opinion texts and the **first person singular** works as “a clear indication to the reader of the perspective from which [the authors’] statements should be

interpreted” (Hyland 2005, 148) The use of the first person singular also creates a relatable narrative, a personal story with which the readers can identify.

Riboni (2015) highlights the individual voice of the author in case of blogs, which serves as a juxtaposition “to the alleged “impersonality” and neutrality of mainstream media. (265)

However, as she analyzes blogs in the USA political discourse, she points out the existence of blog production in the name of a specific party, where the voice of the individual and the voice of the party are not clearly distinguishable. Usually, this merging of voices is expressed by the usage of the first person plural. (268)

The 1st person plural does not just encompass the author and the reader, i.e. the immediate members of the communication process, the *we* transcends the set consisting of the author and the readership. In this thesis, the chosen authors are members of the mainstream media community and their individual voice may merge into the opinion of the organization, the publication (Harcup 2012, 221) or the political, or social movement to which the author belongs, such as a party or a position on the political spectrum.

Much like proximity, the use of **1st person plural** is again related to space, be it geographical or cultural, specifically in the author's attempt to convey that he/she and the reader are members of the same geographical or cultural space and therefore connected in the issue that is being described in the text. As was mentioned earlier, readers still tend to be faithful to a limited number of media, regardless of the digital revolution, as mentioned in the theoretical part of this thesis, there is also a presumption, that the reader knows the opinions and leanings connected to the authors of the particular medium, therefore the author can – up to a certain extent – presume that the reader is also in the same opinion space in terms of political leaning. Chovanec (2003) mentions a common use of “the ‘editorial *we*’ to gather public support and appeal to shared values.” (60)

- **Humor**

A fairly common and important component of opinion texts is the use of humor. In addition to simply entertaining the reader, it serves as another of the author's tools to establish a shared identity with the reader. According to Benwell (2001), humor strengthens the bonds of identity within groups. (141) Using a certain type of humor establishes the author as a part of a group with particular cultural references a language, that are intrinsic to the group members. Specific humor helps to define and confirm group identity, and to construct boundaries between groups. (North 2007, 551)

- **Cultural references**

As mentioned earlier, according to Fairclough (2001), invoking shared cultural knowledge is one of the strategies to establish interpersonal interaction between the author and the audience. (183)

To understand the author's and reader's familiarity with the same cultural reference, we need to address the concept of intertextuality, which, according to Warnick and Heinemann (2012) "is not just cross-reference and allusion between written texts. It also includes response to the larger cultural context and elements within that context with which readers are likely to be familiar." (77)

In the print media, intertextuality can be assumed due to the compactness of a publication, which offers a repetitive schema in each issue – usually consisting of news, which are in some cases introduced by an editorial and usually completed later on by opinion pieces that are thematically connected to the news and draw on the information, so the reader is familiar with the context. As was mentioned earlier, the online readers choose rapidly and step-by-step what they are going to read next and do not follow the traditional process of getting the news and the opinion respectively. Warnick and Heinemann point out that the "sites of commentary, resistance and political parody, as well as entertainment sites involving social criticism may not be immediately understandable to all users. Being able to identify the relevant inter texts that enable users to understand what is being said is a vital component in the success of persuasive communication...the producers of such sites...need to negotiate the tension between making their content so accessible that it lacks originality and uniqueness on one hand and, on the other hand, developing the content with allusions that are so arcane and specialized as not to be understandable. (87)

- **Us against the others**

O'Keefe (2006) addresses deictic referencing in pronoun use more closely and introduces the concept of deictic mapping, which refers to the participant deictics. She names two strategies that are commonly used: **centering**, which refers to the participants (we, this, these, etc.) and **othering**, which refers to the outside context (them, that, those, etc.). (141)

The previous paragraphs presented several ways how the author can establish a cultural space and create the perception that he/she shares this space with the reader. Building on O'Keefe's dichotomy of centering and othering, having presented the shared cultural space and a clearly defined group, the author can put this into opposition with another space, another group, actual or abstract, or even established in the very same text as the shared group. Presenting this duality, the author can create a logic based on the opposition of the two sides.

- **General groups**

As was explained earlier in this thesis, the mission of the news journalism, be it hard or soft news, is to provide reporting based on “sourcing and verifying facts and attributing information to sources”. (Harcup 2012, 197) In opinion texts, adherence to facts can be openly omitted by definition, for the author is allowed, even encouraged, to present his/her opinion. Using general groups is, however, a deceptive mixture of news phenomena (attributing claims to sources) and opinion (acceptability of vagueness, subjectivity, fuzziness). The author in this case does not openly mark the information provided as his/her opinion, but rather attributes it to an undefined and unlimited (*people, everybody*) or vaguely limited group of sources (*voters, workers, etc.*). This may not be just the case of attributing a source of information, but also a feeling or reaction to a situation/fact or who is affected by the situation/fact.

Using this element in the text provides author with the opportunity to express an opinion indirectly, stating it as a fact attributed to a general source, to the public opinion, without it necessarily being true or even likely. It would be difficult to point out the “unfairness” of such a technique for two reasons: firstly, the text is an opinion text and therefore it does not need to adhere to exact and verifiable facts (although it is desirable that at least the main factual claims have basis in verifiable sources). Secondly, the author could make the case that the statement can be reasonably considered to be true at least for a portion of the described group.

I have mentioned two sources that mention general, or vague, groups in relation to the involvement of the audience. While on Urbanová’s (1998) scale of involvement and detachment, the use of general groups, such as *people* is considered to have rather an effect of detachment on the reader – it is classified as “semi-personal” (112), O’Keefe (2006) presents the use of vague categories to be one of the strategies to achieve interpersonal effect on the reader.

5. On the selected media

Being aware of the position, management, political preference and ownership of the publication/medium should be crucial not just for media analysts, but also for any media consumer. The reason is best summed up by Blažková (2012):

. . . a medium is able to not only construct *media reality*, but also to stress its point of view, thus spreading its beliefs and opinions. . . people do not act on the basis of reality, but they behave on the basis of their interpretation of reality. (226)

In media environment, we have to account for the fact that most publications are owned by individuals or companies (apart from the public media or special cases - such as *The Guardian*, as will be explained further below), and can use media ownership to promote business or agenda that might not be necessarily in the best sense of the reader, who seeks objective information. Fairclough (1995) points out that: “institutions construct their ideological and discursal subjects; they construct them in the sense that they impose ideological and discursal constraints upon them as a condition for qualifying them to act as subjects.” (39)

5.1 British context

British mainstream print media are traditionally divided according to their political leaning into the right or the left part of the spectrum, where the division line is clear and known to both the producers and consumers of the information. (Smith 2017)

The individual publications take positions on key issues in the public debate and some do not avoid being linked to political parties, in case of certain issues they might even openly campaign for one side of the argument; in the time of making of this paper the most prominent example would be the Brexit referendum in 2016. The two publications that were chosen for analysis in this paper are both traditional broad sheets (a term that does not address the actual format of the publication anymore, rather the solidity of the news – to be compared with tabloids)⁵ on the left side of the political spectrum and were chosen, because their online presence has got very prominent and offers a considerable amount of content. They both also increased activity on social networks. Stemming from their political likeness and similar positions they take on key issues, the texts are comparable without the influence of opposite argument perspective.

⁵ The term broadsheet says as much about content, readership, and branding as it does about size or format because it is used as shorthand for the quality press (also known as the ‘heavies’ in the UK: the Daily Telegraph, The Times, the Guardian, The Financial Times, The Independent...) and their online operations. Guardian actually switched to Berliner size in 2005. (Harcup 2012, 43)

5.1.1 The Guardian

Founded 1821, this daily newspaper presents itself as a source of accurate liberal news and opinion for progressive readers. (The Guardian n.d.) The paper is owned by the Guardian Media Group and published by the Guardian News and Media. It has an exceptional self-reliance status thanks to the Scott Trust Limited,⁶ which was established to ensure that the paper is financially independent and the profits are re-invested into back into the journalistic process. (Forgan 2016)

The number of monthly global unique visitors online is 3.5 million. In terms of the readership demographics, the print version is read mostly by the age groups 65+, 45+ and there is also a spike in the 25-34 age group, the drop is in the 35-44 age group. The online readership splits 59% to 41% between 35+ and 15-34, respectively. Gender split is not significant, 52% are male readers and 48% female readers. The paper presents the readers as 66% highly educated, 45% working full-time, mostly well-travelled, art, food and culture loving people. This is projected in the content, which focuses on the politics and the society mainly, but it also provides quite extensive and popular articles on arts and culture, and of course – sports. The statistic also suggests great loyalty of the readers to this one particular paper, since 95% read no other “quality” newspaper. (The Guardian 2017) This, of course, are statistics provided by the publication itself.

5.1.2 The Independent

One of the youngest British newspapers, *The Independent* was established in 1986 as a left-leaning daily. In Harcup's (2012) words, the founders Andreas Whittam Smith, Matthew Symonds and Stephen Glover intended it as “an unashamedly highbrow, quality newspaper that eschewed fawning coverage of royalty, took its ethics so seriously that it would not accept freebies and gave photographs a much better showing than in rival broadsheets.” (135)

In February 2016, it was announced that *The Independent* would continue as an online daily only and its print version was to be cancelled. At the time of this decision, the print version circulation was 55 193 and the online circulation was 3 331 403, now the online readership is 6 140 183. The last printed issue was released on the 26th of March. (Slawson 2016) As for the readership demographics, the

⁶ Named after the aforementioned editor of *The Guardian*, C. P. Scott; after his death the Scott Trust was created to “preserve the financial and editorial independence of the Guardian in perpetuity” (Harcup 2012, 119)

online readership is 61% to 38% in the 35+ and 15-34 age groups respectively. (The Independent, n.d.)

The ownership of the publication is considered problematic because of the Lebedev family that bought the newspaper in 2010 for just 1 pound. The controversial figure is mainly Alexander Lebedev, whose past includes involvement with the KGB. (Anderson 2010)

5.2 Czech context

Although in comparison to the British media, the Czech media do not tend to be openly politically biased, it would be quite an overstatement to claim, that they are independent and fully objective. A simple explanation of the difference between the two media environments might be found in the past; while the British media can be perceived and classified in terms of their political leaning, in the Czech republic an openly politically engaged publication might evoke connotations with the pre-1989 era of strictly censored journalism in favor of the governing Communist party. When discussing the leaning of the Czech media, the debate usually includes the aspect of questionable ownership and in one case even suspected conflict of interest in connection to politics (c.f. Cichowlas, Foxall 2015).

As pointed out earlier, though, problematic ownership can be found even in British context, and it will not be a prominent feature in this thesis, even though it arguably affects the content, but the scope of selected media could not cover the topic in a satisfactory manner. While the selected couple of British newspaper underwent a similar journey from a broadsheet to either parallel or singular web site, the Czech samples have different origins.

5.2.1 Aktuálně.cz

The page was launched on 1 November 2005 as a purely online news service, at that time as a part of Centrum Holdings. Without connection to another type of medium, the mission of this news site was to provide independent and original content and publish on an online platform.

In 2013 *Aktuálně.cz* was bought by the media agency Economia a.s., which is owned by Zdeněk Bakala, a businessman and the tenth richest Czech person, according to the Forbes magazine. (iHNed.cz 2013, Forbes 2017)

Besides news *Aktuálně.cz* also provides opinions by full-time commentators and hosts a blog platform. *Aktuálně.cz* is the third most read online news server with over 2.1 million readers a month. (NetMonitor 2017)

5.2.2 iHNed.cz

iHNed.cz is the online mutation of the print daily *Hospodářské noviny* and the ninth most read online news server in the Czech Republic with over 940 000 a month. (NetMonitor 2017)

It was fully launched in 1999, originally simply as an online form of the daily print issue. The online platform provides online news and opinions, but it is closely interlinked with the print version, paying subscribers have access to the current issue and also to the print archive of the last 20 years.

Both the print and the online publications also belong to the media agency Economia, which is owned by Zdeněk Bakala.

5.3 Authors

It is worth highlighting the variety of the people that are called upon to share opinion under the heading of publication. An intuitive guess would suggest, that this role be offered to a journalist, who is an expert in the particular topic, and whose opinions are in line with the general political leaning of the publication and its newsroom. Moreover, it is not only the opinion spectrum, which would seem to require consistency, but also the stylistic form, to which the publication adheres, and the content – in a print newspaper, the opinion section would usually build on the news section of the newspaper, which usually precedes it (with the possible exception of an editorial or a front page column).

In reality, however, the space to publish an opinion is often given to authors, who are not journalists, they can be authors, public figures or – as is case of one of the authors analyzed for the purposes of this paper – comedians.

The key aspect of inviting such authors to the opinion section is embracing their individual style, allowing the texts to move from the factual journalistic approach paired with opinions or interpretations, to a more literary or satirical tone.

The following part offers short profiles of the authors whose texts are analyzed in the practical part of this paper.

5.3.1 Jan Lipold

Lipold is the chief author of the opinion section of *Aktuálně.cz*. His journalistic career led him through a number of Czech newsrooms, including the national press agency ČTK (ČTK) in the years 1991-1993, the period where the post-1989 era media design was being shaped. After, he joined the newsroom of the daily *MF Dnes* for eight years, followed by a year in the weekly *Týden*, only to get back to daily publication *Hospodářské noviny*, and later back to weeklies - *Instinkt* and *Týden* again. He transferred to the digital media environment in 2010. (Aktuálně.cz n.d.)

In 2014, he won the Best Opinion category at the Journalism Award. (Votava, 2015)

Despite him being in charge of a section of an online publication, his personal online presence is very marginal.

5.3.2. Martin Fendrych

Fendrych is an author of opinion texts for *Aktuálně.cz* was born in Prague, which is where the focus of a large number of his texts lies. Before the Velvet Revolution in 1989, he had various jobs including driving cars at the airport, cleaning shopping windows or as working as a stoker. He was also involved in samizdat activity - contributing to *Revolver Revue* and *Vokno* magazine and copying illegal music and literature. (Aktuálně.cz n.d.)

After the revolution he worked as a press secretary at the department for refugees and the Ministry of the Interior.

His political affiliations were on the right part of the political spectrum, however, he was not a member of the party he ran for - ODA. Still in the early 1990s, he returned to active journalism, writing political opinions in *Týden* magazine and later its online form.

Fendrych published several works of fiction – novels *Slib, že mě zabiješ*, *Jako pták na drátě* or *Samcologie* – and a poetry collection. (ČTK 2017)

5.3.3 Petr Honzejek

Honzejek is the editor-in-chief of the opinion section of *Hospodářské noviny*. After studying to become a teacher (with focus on the combination geography-PE) he worked in the Czech national radio, first at a local station in Ústí nad Labem, later as a reporter, and finally, as a broadcast editor. In 2003, he became an editor-in-chief of one of the substations, *Radiožurnál*. His journalistic experi-

ence also includes working for the Czech branch of *BBC*. (BBC n.d.)

In 2013 he won the Journalism award for Best Opinion. (ČTK 2014) In addition to his activity at *Hospodářské noviny*, he also frequently offers political analysis for the national television and radio and his publicly accessible personal Facebook profile.

5.3.4 Jakub Horák

Horák is a PR-specialist, media analyst, traveller, author, music producer and political campaign adviser (currently associated with the Czech political party Piráti). After not finishing his studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences, he built his professional reputation through his work in advertisement (he worked for companies such as Absolut Vodka, Nivea or Tchibo (Proti šedi 2016) but later became known for his comments on politics and society in general and the significant reach of his online presence, especially on Facebook. Before he became active in the official campaign for Piráti, he founded a satirical political movement called Nevím (*I don't know* or possibly *Undecided* – it is a reference to the undecided votes in polls).⁷ Besides his opinion texts he has also published works of fiction: a novella *Ostrov*, novels *Zlatá rána*, *Je to všechno pakárna* and most recently a political satire *Kočky jsou vrženy*, in which Czech political scene is dominated by a tomcat. (Data-báze knih n.d.)

⁷ The name is a response to the political party ANO (YES), whose leader, Andrej Babiš, is the former Minister of Finance

5.3.5 John Rentoul

Rentoul is the Chief Political Commentator for *The Independent*, and a visiting professor at King's College, London.

Rentoul worked for the *New Statesman* in the years 1983 to 1988, first as a journalist and later as an editor. In 1995 he started working for the BBC's political program *On the Record*, where he stayed until 1995. From BBC he moved on to the *The Independent*, where he held the position of a political correspondent, and since 2004 he has been in his current position of the Chief Political Commentator. (Queen Mary University of London 2012) His political leaning is towards the Labour party. (BBC 2011)

His non-fiction writing includes titles *The Banned List*, *Questions To Which The Answer Is No*, *Listellany* and a biography of Tony Blair. Currently, he is writing a book on New Labour with Dr Jon Davis for Oxford University Press.

At Queen Mary's University he used to teach a course on the Blair government and currently teaches a course on New Labour in Government, on which he also focuses in some of his texts. (Queen Mary University of London 2012)

5.3.6 Mark Steel

Steel is a comedian, broadcaster and author who has presented radio and television programs. Steel started his career as a stand-up comedian in 1982 and later over time worked up to a regular slot on the *Radio 4* show *Loose Ends*. He appeared on *Radio 5*, where he hosted his own show *The Mark Steel Solutions* and later on TV shows on *BBC 4* and *BBC 2*. He took part in other shows, such as *Have I Got News for You* or the comedy show *Never Mind the Buzzcocks* and currently he hosts a travel show *Mark Steel's in Town*. (BBC n.d.)

His print contributions were weekly columns in *Socialist Worker*, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*.

He published several books, including *It's Not a Runner Bean*, *Reasons to be Cheerful* or *Vive La Revolution: A Stand-up History of the French Revolution*.

He is politically active and openly against the ruling Conservative party, and satirizes capitalism and the right-wing political current. He actively takes part in political meetings and protests and even stood as a candidate in 2000 London municipal elections on the list of London Socialist Alliance candidates. (Steel n.d.)

5.3.7 George Monbiot

An Oxford graduate who gained his interest in environment working on farms or as a waterkeeper. He attempted to create an environmental program for the *BBC*, where he started in 1985, as a radio producer making wildlife programs. After the *BBC* financial reorganization in the 1980s and 1990s (c.f. Seaton 2015), he joined the *BBC World Service* as current affairs producer but soon left for Indonesia to write a book about Suharto's transmigration program. The book was called *Poisoned Arrows*.

This combination of travel, activist interest and journalism resulted in a book about movements in Amazon called *Amazon Watershed*, and a book about assaults on nomads in Kenya and Tanzania, *No Man's Land*.

Back in the UK he continued writing about social, political and environmental causes. His books include the titles: *Captive State: the corporate takeover of Britain*, *The Age of Consent*, *Captive State*, two collections of essays (*Bring on the Apocalypse* and *How Did We Get into this Mess?*), *Heat: how to stop the planet burning*, and *Feral: searching for enchantment on the frontiers of rewilding*.

He started writing regularly for *The Guardian* in 1996. (Monbiot 2017)

5.3.8 Owen Jones

An Oxford graduate, a journalist and columnist, who previously wrote for *The Independent*, currently for *The Guardian*, and since 2015 also for the *New Statesman*. Before becoming a journalist he worked as a trade union and parliamentary researcher.

He also provides political opinion and analysis on TV and radio shows, such as *BBC 1's Question Time*, and several news programs for *Sky*, *Channel 4* and the *BBC*. (The Guardian n.d.)

Jones is a self-proclaimed socialist (Jones n.d.) and the topics of his texts reflect this position, his main focus is politics, openly supporting the left (however not without criticism aimed at for example some parts of the Labour party – the central, so-called New Labour; or Tony Blair (Jones 2016, Jones 2017) and criticizing the Conservative party. In the time of 2017 elections he openly campaigned in favor of Jeremy Corbyn, and at time of the Brexit referendum, he campaigned against the UK leaving the EU.

He published two non-fiction books: *Chavs: the Demonization of the Working Class*, and *The Establishment: And how they get away with it*.

In 2012 he was named the Stonewall Journalist of the Year and in 2013 the Political Book Awards Young Writer of the Year. (British Council n.d.)

5.3.9 Common topical elements

Even though the authors work at various publications and focus on various, if related, topics, there is a consensus and consistency in the stances they take towards particular issues. In the texts that have been analyzed in this thesis, if approaching these particular subjects, all authors exhibit these tendencies:

- at the time of European immigration crisis, they show tolerance or support for the refugees
- at the time of the USA presidential elections, they express disagreement with Donald Trump
- they advocate for social tolerance
- they are not against the European Union

6. Methodology of the analysis

While the SFL has been used as the theoretical background, as I regard the opinion texts in functional sense, the analytical toolkit will involve an approach derived from corpus linguistics for the data gathering, and ultimately for the specific analysis of a particular phenomena and their function in the social context, I will be drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis. Fairclough's views discourse analysis as "an analysis of how texts work within sociocultural practice."³

In CDA, social practices imply a "dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and... situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s)" (Fairclough and Wodak 1997, 258). Discursive events are defined by social context (situations), by objects of knowledge (institutions) and the social identities of (and relationships between) people and groups (social structures). CDA primarily views discourse through the distribution of power.

The position of journalists with regard to power can be complicated: they can be seen as representatives of the institutions that are in power and re-enforce the status quo, using the persuasive tools to influence the public opinion in favor of it – or they can be seen as members of social movements, using the persuasive tools to represent the voices of the powerless in the society, who would not be heard otherwise. In the analysis, I will attempt to address which tools are used and how.

I have selected several phenomena from those that were mentioned in the theoretical part: I will observe their frequency, gather the chosen elements in a corpus, and interpret the data with regard to the media environment and practice, and with regard to the relationship between the participants – the author and the reader, that was addressed earlier.

For the purposes of the analysis I have selected five opinion texts from two authors from each of the four selected publications, altogether eighty texts. I have selected two periods to avoid confusion of the results by specific events or time of the year. The first batch of texts covers the period of July-November 2016 and the second batch is January-March 2017.

First, to offer a base knowledge of the type of an opinion text which of the authors generally uses, I will define their approach using the scale of opinion types, that was presented in the theoretical part:

Factual – Opinionated – Satirical - Literary

The opinion text is a very particular type of text to analyze: it undoubtedly belongs to the media dis-

course and is connected to the content of the news, and therefore the practices of the news, however, in its persuasive nature, the tools used to achieve the persuasion, and in its interpersonal component, in some ways it resembles **advertisement** rather than news texts. While the main objective of the news is to inform about events taking place, focusing ideally mainly on the facts, the opinion texts rarely bring a new information. The intent behind them is to present a certain portion of arguments, a certain perspective, a certain opinion. It is written to persuade – or at least offer a particular interpretation of the facts. In terms of advertisement discourse, the opinion is the product that the author attempts to sell.

Because of this combination of discourse tools, I have decided to select both the phenomena connected to the news production (proximity, general groups), and those connected to the advertisement (pronouns, general groups, imitation of a dialogue)

The interpersonal aspect on the textual level will be observed through phenomena that achieve one or both effects below:

– **the way the author communicates with the reader individually**

– **the way the author defines social/cultural space**

Building on concept of simulated relationship that was addressed in the theoretical part, I have selected 6 phenomena that I searched for in the texts:

- **first person singular**
- **first person plural**
- **second person singular/plural**

à all in the form of a pronoun and a pronoun implied in a verb

- markers of **proximity**
- **imitations of a dialogue** (rhetorical and non-rhetorical questions, imitation of a response)
- **general groups** that can be assumed to include the reader, such as *people, lidé, voters, voliči* etc.

The chosen phenomena were both a result of my pre-reading of the text and the findings of the authors that were central in the theoretical part of this paper. As was mentioned earlier in the text, War-

wick and Heinemann and Fairclough as well highlight the usage of what is known to the reader, what is relatable. This effect is achieved both by **proximity** and the **cultural references**. O’Keefe talks about vague categories (in this paper marked as **general groups**), usage of **pronouns** (in this paper differentiated according to person). The **imitation of a dialogue** was inspired by the concept of simulated relationship (which also applies to some of the previous phenomena), that both Fairclough and Talbot mention.

After the pre-analysis reading of the text, I have decided to exclude **cultural references** from the analysis. The analysis aims to measure the appearance of the particular phenomena, however, these interact with the reader directly by appearing, they can be counted. A cultural reference also creates an interpersonal effect on the reader, but not necessarily directly – it can create a frame of meaning, which could practically mean that just one reference would set the frame for the whole text (example from the analyzed text will be presented in the analysis part) and this quantitative analysis cannot account for that. However, as was explained earlier in the text, the references have an effect similar to the analyzed phenomena and therefore they will be mentioned and their interpersonal effect described on the selected text examples.

Regarding the particular details of the analysis: Europe and the European Union/EU will be treated differently in the analysis, for while they at times refer to the same meaning, the choice of the term matters. Europe will be taken as a geographical and cultural reference, therefore marked as proximity. The European Union/EU refers to the union of states, an institutional body representing a system.

The results are measured in pure counts of an appearance of the particular phenomenon, which are later used in a formula:

Number of appearances/Number of words in the text=Relevance

This approach aims to account for the different lengths of the texts and allow for comparison of the phenomena and the authors.

The analysis aims to answer the questions:

Which of the described phenomena are most frequently used by an author
Which of the described phenomena are most used in the particular discourse
Which author uses the particular phenomena most frequently

Which discourse on average uses more of the described phenomena on the whole

Following the results of the analysis, the practical part introduces other elements of the texts that are less direct in their interpersonal effect and are more connected to the context.

Having addressed the particular phenomena, I will offer examples of duality, that draws on the concept of centering and othering, which was mentioned in the chapter on the simulated relationship.

It could be argued that in this paper I put myself in the position of the reader and assume the effect which the chosen elements of the text have on him or her. It is an argument that is often raised when CDA methods are used, however there are two points that I would like to raise in defense of the chosen approach: firstly, as Fairclough says: „This argument is very relevant to CDA, for part of the critique is directed at analysts who postulate ideological effects solely on the basis of analysis of texts without considering the diverse ways in which such texts may be interpreted and responded to. But there is a danger here of throwing the baby out with the bathwater, by abandoning textual analysis in favor of analysis of audience reception.“ (9)

Secondly, I intend to test the results in the future on a sample of audience.

7. Analysis

To introduce and summarize the particular approach to opinion texts that the individual authors generally choose to take, I have used the scale that was introduced in the theoretical part:

Factual – Opinionated – Satirical - Literary

Considering this scale, I would argue that most of the analyzed authors oscillate between two stages.

Jan Lipold and **Martin Fendrych** from *Aktuálně.cz* mostly register between the factual and opinionated level, mostly being closer to opinionated and in some cases reaching towards satirical, but mostly not on the level of the whole text, rather as humorous interjections amidst facts and opinions. Three exceptions would be Martin Fendrych's text "*Nestřílejte si z policie! Kdo si plete kombajn s traktorem, na toho vletí ušaté torpédo*", which is a mockery aimed at the former police chief, and Jan Lipold's "*Děti do 150 centimetrů vstup zdarma? Diskriminace vysokých, šikana dlouhánů. Netrpme to!*", which develops an ad-absurdum narrative about random discrimination based on body characteristics. The third exception is Jan Lipold's text "*Politikář: Hrad plesá s Trumpem a zahrává si s jeho žárlivostí*", which presents a satirical and partly literary possible future of the next election.

Petr Honzejek from *iHNed.cz* presents stylistically consistent texts, which are mostly combining the factual and opinionated level, partially reaching to satirical, but again – not in the scope of the whole text.

Jakub Horák from *iHNed.cz* mostly oscillates between the opinionated and satirical part of the scale, combined with his personal narratives. In two cases he reaches towards literary – on the whole text level in "*Pokémoni jako zbraň islámu*", where he presents the popular game as a part of muslim invasion, and in "*Domobrana - když nemáte uprchlíky, dejte tam feťáky*", in which he assumes the point of view of the characters he satirizes and uses them for parts of the narrative.

George Monbiot from *The Guardian* is steadily between the factual and opinionated parts of the scale. He presents facts and provides his opinions, interpretations and recommendations. While crit-

ical, in the analyzed text he does not stray into satirical mode.

Owen Jones – similarly to his colleague in *The Guardian*, George Monbiot, Jones maintains a stable position between the factual and the opinionated, presenting facts and opinions, often in accordance to his political leaning and focus on the social politics.

John Rentoul of *The Independent*, chooses the style not unlike the authors of *The Guardian* – he oscillates between the factual and the opinionated, and mainly presents interpretations of the facts and adds opinions at times.

Mark Steel of *The Independent* is nearly a pure satirist on the scale. While presenting his opinions, his main style is irony and sarcasm.

7.1 Proximity

As has been explained earlier in the text, proximity invokes both the geographical and the cultural context in which the participants of the communication – in this case the author and the reader, belong. There appear to be two levels of proximity used in the text that were analyzed:

- Proximity used as an integral part of the text connected to the topic, i.e. it is necessary/suitable to include them to set the story/topic into a geographical/cultural context. This usage is the similar in the opinion texts and in the news texts.
- Re-enforcing of the existence of the geographical/cultural space by adding the proximity markers where the context would be sufficient to imply the space.

While in the news texts, proximity markers are primarily used to indicate where the events that are described are happening, its function is informative. In the opinion texts that were analyzed, this function also appeared, however, proximity was mainly used redundantly, therefore resulting in merely reiterating the presence of a shared cultural space and thus contributing to the interpersonal effect between the author and the reader, based on the shared cultural identity.

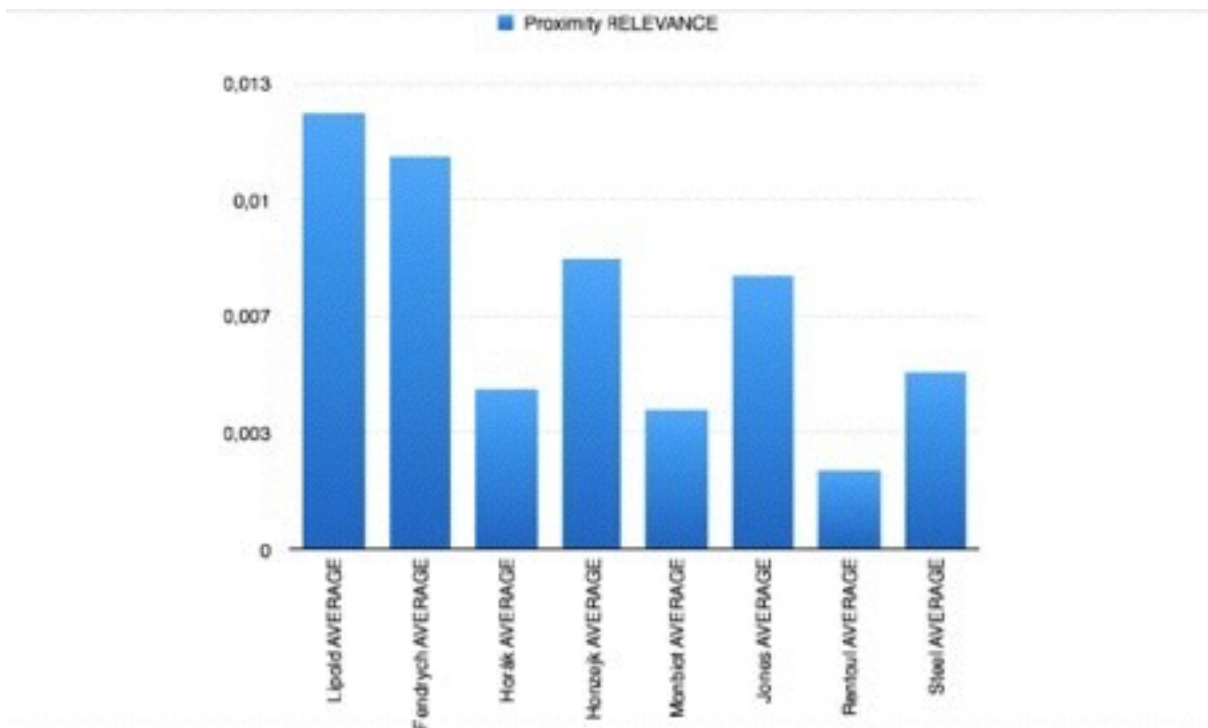
Usage of proximity markers that are not general, but very specific to the countries and cities, such as notoriously well-known towns or streets, also works as a tool for engaging the reader by providing

imagery for the narrative, using the places that the reader presumably knows, can picture and therefore relate to.

Examples: Proximity

<p>Petr Honzejek</p>	<p>...podlehli čeští voliči víc povýtce dětskému pocitu, že když je pohoda, musí nutně trvat navěky. ... zavelelo české veřejné mínění: "Do zbraně!!!" Za "nekorektnost" se už v Česku nestydí leckdo označovat i vyslovenou lež. Vztah českých voličů s Andrejem Babišem je pořád ještě čerstvý.</p>
<p>Jakub Horák</p>	<p>Pokud tu chtějí bydlet a najdou si práci... V bouřlivých devadesátkách pulty pražských knihkupectví...zaplavily knihy Ginsberga... Českým žebříčkům tehdy vévodila kolotočářská sestava Františka Janečka... Jsme tu v té české kotlině tak zalezlí... Milan Chovanec zneškodní útok ISIS v pražském Palladiu... Michaela Marksová převádí babičku s nákupem přes magistrálu v oblasti Muzea.</p>
<p>Jan Lipold</p>	<p>K otázkám, které se týkají metropole Pokud jde o Prahu, To je postup, který by prospěl celému centru metropole Českému jazykovému sebevědomí prospěje poznávání světa, ne spouštění závor.</p>
<p>Martin Fendrych</p>	<p>V Česku byla povinná vojenská služba zrušena V Česku zákon zakazuje nosit zbraně na veřejná shromáždění... Jak dokonalý výcvik by český pistolník musel mít V české společnosti poslední dva roky roste napětí Jízda na kole po Praze... ...přijedete na Povltavskou ulici</p>
<p>John Rentoul</p>	<p>The media landscape in Britain has been utterly transformed by the internet... If you look at the readership of British newspapers...</p>
<p>Mark Steel</p>	<p>That's because he's so passionate about the United Kingdom... ...he gives a tiny bit to places abroad instead, to help Britain out. ...wider ownership of African wood carvings bought from antique shops in Notting Hill. ...you can't move in Lincolnshire for Bulgarians. That's the first rule if you're heading off for a weekend break in the Lake District...</p>

George Monbiot	In Britain , the media largely failed to hold David Cameron to account ...a campaign fronted by the former England cricket captain Sir Ian Botham... ...it could save the British countryside
Owen Jones	British workers have suffered the longest fall in wages Growing personal debt is the price many British workers have paid wages were stagnating or even falling for millions of British workers Better living standards and more equality than we have in Britain are two of the byproducts There will be those in Britain who say: this is none of our business...



On average, proximity was more used by the Czech authors: the average relevance was 0.009, especially by the authors of *Aktuálně.cz*, Jan Lipold (AVG 0.012) and Martin Fendrych (AVG 0.011). The two authors who used proximity most frequently also showed a significant tendency to prefer topics relating to the capitol, Prague, which in many cases is, of course, relevant to the country as a whole, but in cases of some of the chosen topics were most likely written with the expectation of a large portion of the targeted readers being based in Prague. Here we encounter another element of proximity, that was mentioned in the theoretical part, and is not of interest within this thesis, but it

is very significant in the whole process of producing media content, and that is the beginning of the writing process – choosing a topic, that is suitable to the intended readership. This element is not textual, it is pragmatic, but it is the basis for the textual choices the author makes during the writing process. The average relevance in the English texts was 0.005.

7.2 General groups

As was mentioned in the theoretical part, two of the sources who talk about general, or vague, groups present different approaches to the use of this tool. Urbanová (1998) considers general groups to create an effect between detachment and involvement, semi-personal, while O’Keefe (2006) considers vague categories to actually add to the interpersonal effect.

Building on the usage in the analyzed text, I have come to the conclusion that while use of general groups may create a perception of the author’s detachment from the presented claims, for the reader it creates an implied prompt to either identify with the named group or to reject its position, which adds a personal element in the reading experience.

We can observe several uses of general groups, however, I will pay special attention to two of them. These two uses are similar in presentation, nevertheless they differ in the effect they convey.

- 1. involves the general group in authors opinion/claim, but does not attribute the opinion or “fact” to it**
- 2. the opinion/claim or “fact” is attributed to the general group.**

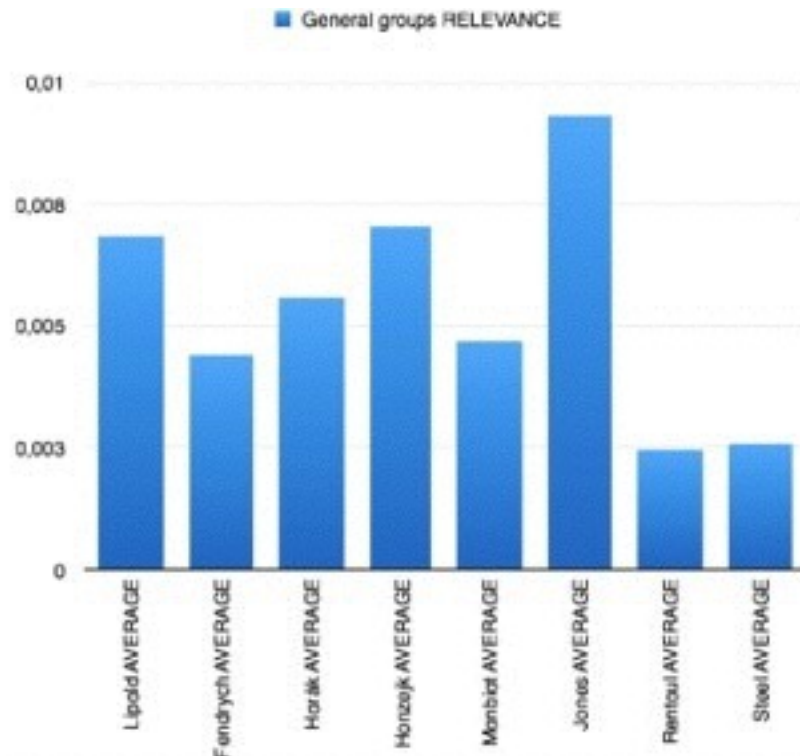
Examples: General groups

Petr Honzejek	1. Česká společnost se mlátí ve vlnách hysterie sem a tam... Voliči reagují trochu jako malé děti... Něco se stane a lidé požadují razantní “řešení”... 2. Skandálů kolem Andreje Babiše se ještě nestačilo nakupit dost na to, aby voliči pojali podezření... Lidé jsou vesměs přesvědčeni...
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<p>Jakub Horák</p>	<p>1.</p> <p>Lidé v mešitách, co se klaní, jsou směšní. Lidé by neměli mít žádné vyznání...</p> <p>Pokud by Češi a Češky dělali totéž, nikdy by se ve světě neztratili.</p> <p>...přimět lidi vypadnout ze své sociální bubliny a poznat svět. Chytrého pozorovatele však zarazí jedna věc.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>Je spousta lidí, kteří chtějí jet raději do Jižního Súdánu než do USA a naopak.</p> <p>...lidé to sdílí a jsou utvrzováni v domnění, že kdesi existuje ta "pražská kavárna"...</p> <p>Někteří lidé by se zasmáli tomu, jak realita překonala Járu Cimrmana.</p>
<p>Jan Lipold</p>	<p>1.</p> <p>Opatření na Hradě přidělala lidem problémy.</p> <p>Masový turismus se stává soupeřem místních obyvatel</p> <p>Čemu se většina přizpůsobila...</p> <p>...proč se tomu obyvatelstvo bez reptání podrobuje</p> <p>2.</p> <p>...domácí publikum má ještě v paměti, jak se tu v nejstřeženějších zónách pohybovala delegace z Osvětiman...</p> <p>Evropanovi, obyvateli Evropské unie, je to nápadné Spousta lidí je z toho nesvá.</p>
<p>Martin Fendrych</p>	<p>1.</p> <p>Česká veřejnost si již zvykla na lži.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>Mnoho obyvatel měst bere autozáplavu jako samozřejmost</p> <p>...Pražákoví nečiní žádnou radost se tam proplétat.</p> <p>Menší část obyvatel už si uvědomuje, že auta v tom obřím množství přinášejí stres...</p> <p>...místní lidé si neuvědomí, jak je město bez aut skvělé, přátelské</p>

<p>John Rentoul</p>	<p>1. But you will do nothing to persuade people who don't like Trump... There has been a majority in the British public for leaving or for reducing the EU's powers... ...but to the peoples of the EU. Our national interest outside the EU depends on their friendship.</p> <p>2. Human beings want to know what is going to happen next... Other people who already agree with you might feel better... Most people accept that the NHS needs two things... ...people would say: "But you're still taking money from us..."</p>
<p>Mark Steel</p>	<p>1. ...it's the left that makes people miserable. ...it's the natural home for common folk who want to take on the international elite.</p> <p>2. ... it might not harm him as much as people expect... Liberal people think, "haha, this has got to finish him now"...</p>
<p>George Monbiot</p>	<p>1. This is how people can truly take back control This is about what it is to be human... ...a political model based only on state provision can leave people dependent...</p> <p>2. ...people are atomised and afraid... ...squalor that many people now find hard to imagine. But you can still hear people repeating the old claim...</p>
<p>Owen Jones</p>	<p>1. Too many people face unmanageable debt ...the everyday experience of all too many Britons ...viewers were treated to a baffling boreathon... A defeatist attitude...says that the media programme people with what to think</p> <p>2. ...meanwhile, voters can repeat back Tory attack lines verbatim on the doorstep ...people do not generally like them... ...many voters believe the Tories are nasty...</p>

On average general groups were slightly more widely used in Czech context (AVG 0.006), however, the most frequent usage was found in the texts by Owen Jones from the *The Guardian* (AVG 0.009), the average in English texts was 0.005.



7.3 Persons

One of the main interests of the analysis was the focus on person, i.e. how the author of the opinion piece communicates with the reader using personal pronouns, both by themselves or connected to a verb.

7.3.1 First person singular

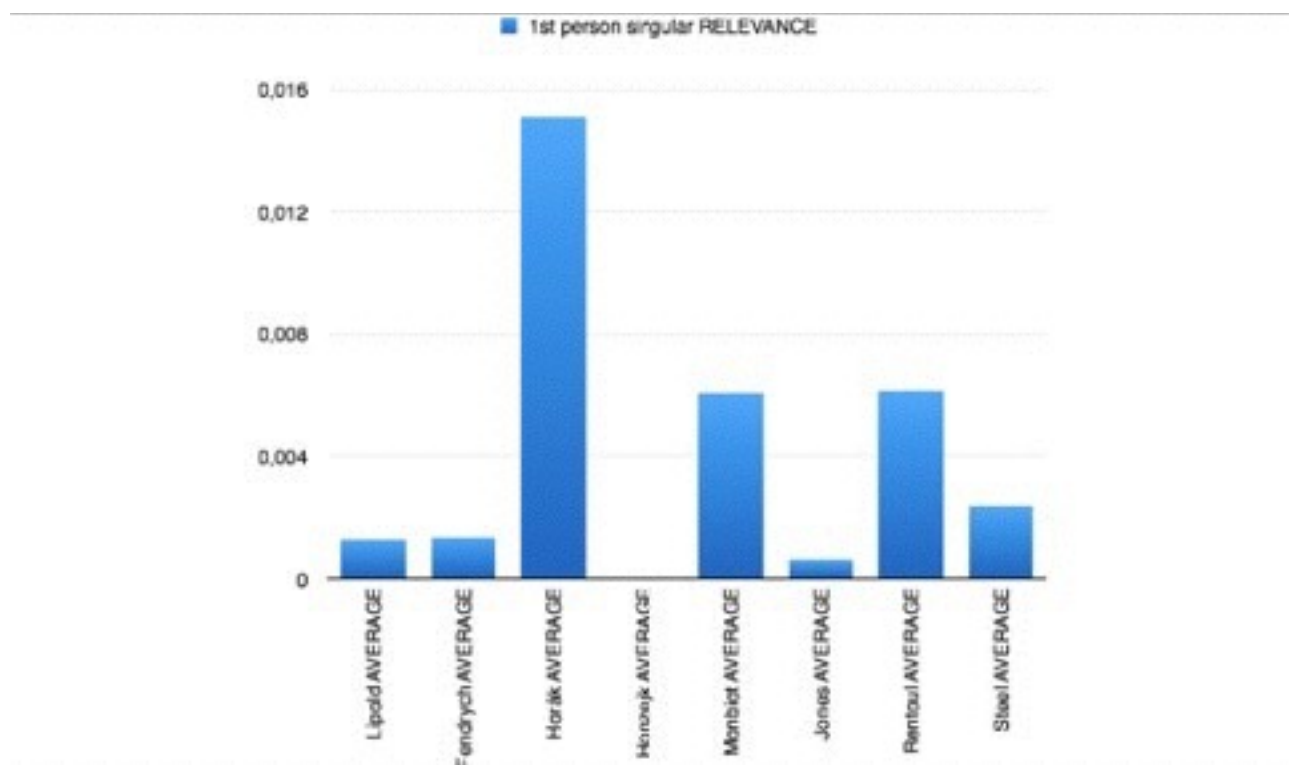
As was mentioned in the theoretical part, the use of first person singular indicates to the reader from which perspective the opinion is coming. It can also allow the author to employ relatable personal narratives. The personal elements is strengthened by the approachability of the authors persona outside of the particular text, mainly in his/her presence on social networks.

It is not surprising that in the Czech context, the most frequent use of the first person singular was in the texts written by Jakub Horák (AVG 0.015), a journalist and PR specialist, whose Facebook profile is popular and widely followed. Since his online persona is well-known, his personal views

on the events of the day are in high demand. His personal style is consistent on social networks as well as in his texts for *iHNed.cz* – while more stylized and less personal in case of the texts.

Nevertheless, the connection between social-network activity and the usage of first person singular is not applicable generally. In the English discourse Owen Jones has a prominent presence on social networks, nevertheless, his opinion texts (AVG 0.001) do not display the same tendencies as Horák's. However, Owen Jones's personal style defies the set criteria of this analysis and instead displays dominant features of topical duality, which will be addressed later in a separate chapter.

On average, the phenomenon was slightly more prominent in the Czech texts, 0.0044, while in the English texts, the average was 0.0037.



There are three uses that I wish to highlight in the examples:

- 1.The author uses his experience as a narrative, which leads the reader to the conclusion**
- 2.The author expresses his/her opinion**
- 3.The author attributes the opinion/claim to a known/unknown source, other than him/her or the reader**

Examples: First person singular

Petr Honzejek	-
Jakub Horák	<p>1. ...jednou jsem byl na mši... Málem jsem z té atmosféry omdlel.</p> <p>2. ...líbí se mi označení “magor Konvička”, které použil premiér... Vážím si moc vegetariánů...</p> <p>3. ...pak přijde moje velká chvíle... ...já sáhnu do té pravé kapsy... ...vyndám šroubovák... ...spravím to. ...bude lepší si trochu posunout židli, kdyby skočil mým směrem... Proč bych tady totiž jinak byl, já s kočičkou.</p>
Jan Lipold	<p>1. ...masivní infokampaň v duchu „prosíme o strpení, děkujeme za pochopení a omlouváme se za případné zdržení“ jsem nezaznamenal</p> <p>2. Dnes, myslím, by to solidní médium nezveřejnilo</p>
Martin Fendrych	<p>1. Bydlím v Praze 6 Z toho jsem vždycky měl největší strach.</p> <p>2. Já to ještě stihnu... Jsem jen já, já, já. (Trump) (Nejedu autem zbytečně?)</p>
John Rentoul	<p>1. I was a Remainer myself, although a reluctant Remainer...</p> <p>2. ... I don't think it is Johnson's colourful language that is the problem.</p>
Mark Steel	<p>1. I feel like the establishment has really been given a kicking... I'm glad well known fact-checker Donald Trump has come out against 'fake news'</p> <p>2. ...when I see Farage celebrating... It reminds me of my Auntie Joyce's do when she retired...</p>

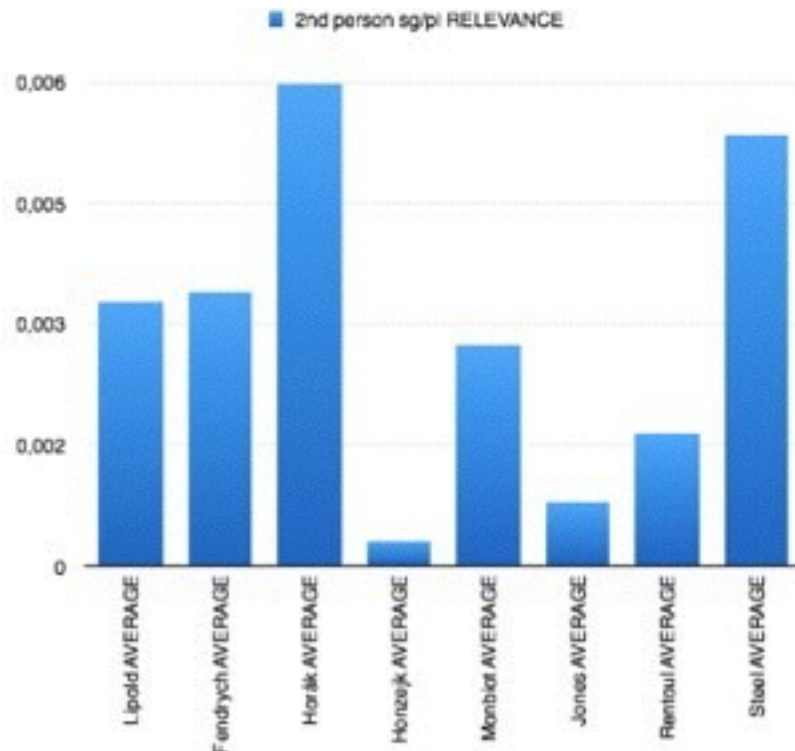
George Monbiot	<p>1. I've converted to veganism to reduce my impact on the living world 2. I do not see the European Union as a lost Avalon.</p>
Owen Jones	<p>2. But who do I mean by "they"? 3. I'm a careerist, secretly rightwing, motivated by money... ...it's because I want a genuinely radical Labour leadership...</p>

While the first person singular revolves predominantly around the persona of the author, the other two persons the analysis dealt with shift the focus on the readers and their perception of the text.

7.3.2 Second person plural/singular

The **second person plural/singular** functions as a conversational element, it allows the author to address the reader through the text and creates an illusion of direct contact. Unless it is a direct recommendation of an opinion or behavior, which fulfills the conative function of language, this textual element is rather phatic, it maintains the link between the author and the reader and supports the overall conversational tone. The usage of this person usually targets the readership, therefore the author presumably knows the type of group to which he/she directs the arguments. This presumption cannot be applied in the situation when the author decides to use the first person plural.

On average the usage was higher in the Czech texts (AVG 0.003) than in the English texts (AVG 0.0026), but the difference was not overly significant. The highest frequency was in the texts by Jakub Horák from *iHNed.cz* (AVG 0.006), followed closely by Mark Steel from *The Independent* (AVG 0.005).



I would like to highlight three uses of this person in the texts that were analyzed:

- 1.The author addresses the reader within the narrative. This use is mostly phatic.**
- 2.The author recommends the reader to do something, be it an actual activity or thought process.**
- 3.Similarly to the third use of the First person singular, the author attributes the opinion/claim to a known/unknown source, other than him/her or the reader**

Examples: Second person

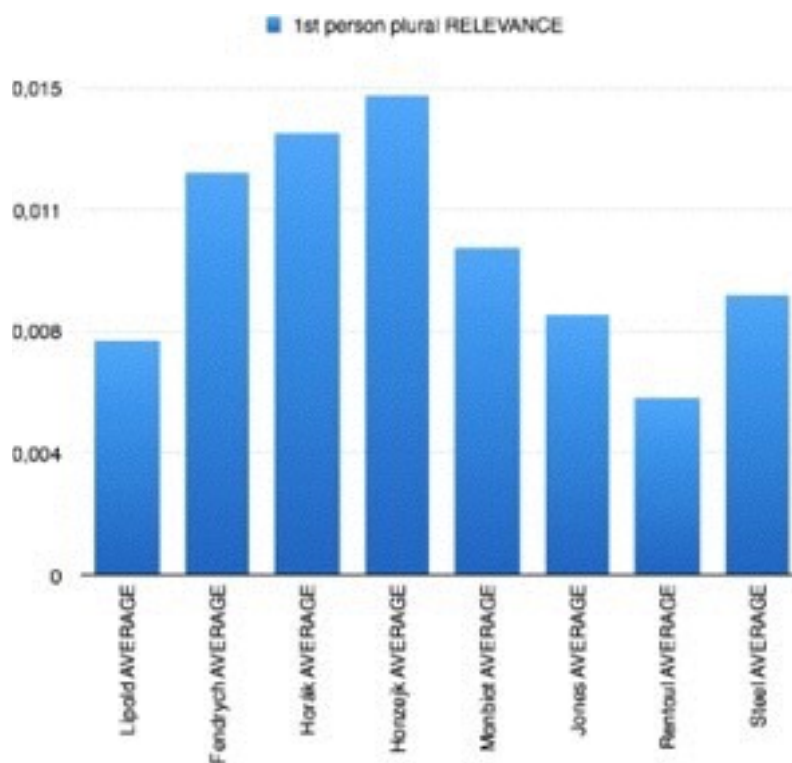
<p>Petr Honzejek</p>	<p>3. Uprchlík? Terorista! Bijte ho!!! (SG) Babiš tady, Babiš tam, všude, kam se podíváš.</p>
<p>Jakub Horák</p>	<p>1. SG (...můžeš ho (ji) potkat kdekoli...) SG (...musíš je mít všechny...) K jejich honění vás ponouká nezvladatelný puď... Možná jste to zaznamenali sami... 2. ...když nemáte uprchlíky... ...dejte tam feťáky...</p>
<p>Jan Lipold</p>	<p>1. ...srocní davů na význačných místech najdete každý den celou řadu Kdybyste si zkusili přečíst normalizační Rudé právo... 2. Zastavte zprávy a tím seberete teroristům motiv Především zapomeňte na centimetry výšky</p>
<p>Martin Fendrych</p>	<p>1. Přijedete třeba do renesančních Slavonic... 2. Nestřílejte si z policie. 3. Ozbrojte se, my vás odzbrojíme ?</p>
<p>John Rentoul</p>	<p>1. ...you can see why the British cannot be given anything that makes life outside the EU look good. If you look at the readership of British newspapers... 2. Forget about the Supreme Court case... But then you always, always have to apply judgement to them...</p>
<p>Mark Steel</p>	<p>1. So if you were picky... ...you might doubt the figure of 650 million... You can see why this would make him so angry...</p>

<p>George Monbiot</p>	<p>1. ...if you want a job... ...you must be as unlike a machine as possible. ...well, what did you expect? Today you can no longer call out the yeomanry... You use a corrupt and partisan media to hound them. 2. Call them out... ...expose them to the light... ...don't believe a word they say.</p>
<p>Owen Jones</p>	<p>1. ...and if you don't define yourself, you will be defined</p> <p>2. Take Sadiq Khan... ...watch this space.</p> <p>3. Sacrificing a hot meal so your children don't need to</p>

7.3.3 First person plural

As was indicated earlier in the text, the **1st person plural** does not just encompass the author and the reader, i.e. the immediate members of the communication process, the *we* transcends the set consisting of the author and the readership to mean basically any vague group from society or nation to all of humanity – this use can be found for example in George Monbiot's texts.

The author's individual voice may merge into the opinion of the organization, the publication or the political, or social movement to which the author belongs, such as a party or a position on the political spectrum. The political and social perspective is especially prominent in the texts by George Monbiot and Owen Jones. Monbiot's texts urge the reader to consider the issues – which are usually social, political or environmental – from the perspective of the collective responsibility. Jones positions himself on the left side of the political spectrum and addresses the readership from that perspective.



Similarly to the case of general groups, because the use of first person plural often strays to a very vague meaning, the claims which the author attributes to *us* can be very difficult to refute.

The usage in both Czech (AVG 0.012) and English (AVG 0.008) context is higher than the other observed phenomena, with the Czech share higher – similarly to previously described phenomena.

The presumption that the 1st person plural involves the reader, would intuitively suggest that meanings of the statements where it is being used, would be designated to lead to the readers agreement. However, this expectation can in certain cases be deceitful.

Examples: First person plural

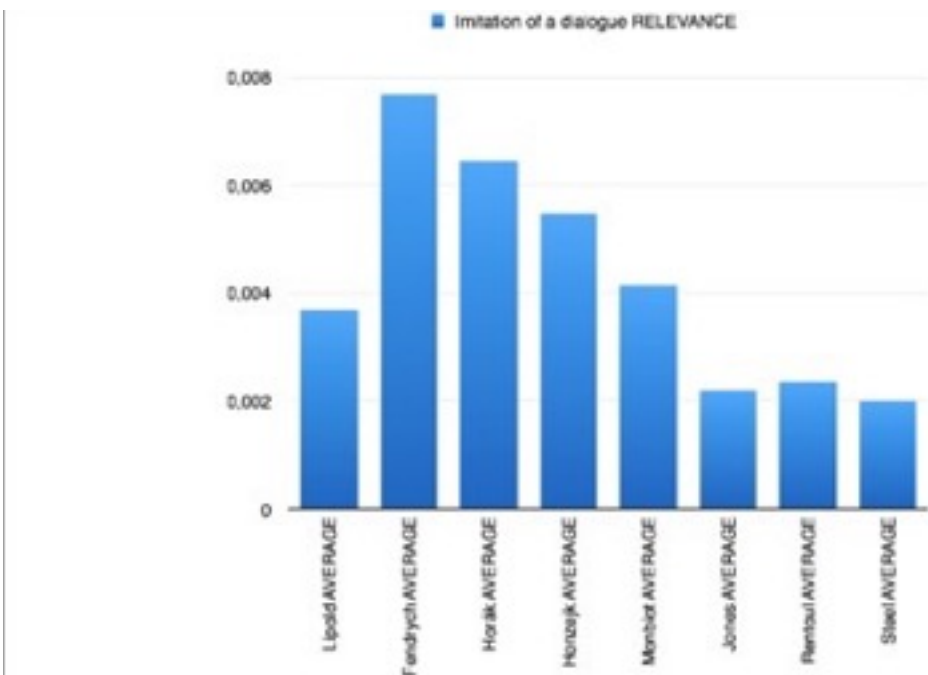
<p>Petr Honzejk</p>	<p>Většinou uvažujeme dospěle...</p> <p>Ne že bychom chtěli válku, ve které bychom umírali. Možná ale chceme aspoň její náhražku.</p> <p>Naučme se hledat krásu...</p> <p>Zatím se jen zoufale bojíme všeho cizího</p> <p>My už totiž od politiků žádnou pravdu nečekáme.</p>
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<p>Jakub Horák</p>	<p>Smějme se náboženství Ze samé korektnosti, abychom někoho neurazili... ...se bojíme už i říkat, že islám skutečně je slušná konina. Naučme se hledat krásu... Zatím se jen zoufale bojíme všeho cizího... My už totiž od politiků žádnou pravdu nečekáme.</p>
<p>Jan Lipold</p>	<p>My Češi jsme s ním ovšem začali obcovat ještě před vynálezem Facebooku. A vystačili bychom si dál bez sociální sítě... Zvykali jsme si, že pravda – i historická pravda – je velmi relativní... ...my populisti jinak vypadající cizince v ČR nechceme...</p>
<p>Martin Fendrych</p>	<p>Nežijeme v době husitských válek, nejsme husité Ale my nežijeme v patnáctém století Náš život je organizován jinak, moderně Moc svěřujeme do rukou státu. Platíme tajné služby, speciální policejní jednotky, aby nás chránily. Politika bez vize vede k tomu, že se hlavně bojíme a nadáváme Strašíme šaríou</p>
<p>John Rentoul</p>	<p>We all like a good court case. We swoon at the sensational clash of great minds. ... we ought to be trying to find out what kind of deal the other 27 EU countries are prepared to give us. ... we ought to be trying to find out what EU leaders and MEPs think about our future trading arrangements. We know how that worked out.</p>
<p>Mark Steel</p>	<p>...we all remember the sermon of Jesus... When we agreed to let children in... ...these weren't the ones we ordered. We were expecting a cute four-year-old... Even the children we've accepted in the past have swindled us... How much longer are we going to be taken for mugs like this? But we're too politically correct these days...</p>

<p>George Monbiot</p>	<p>It's hard to see how we can escape the need for professional, full-time politicians.</p> <p>Perhaps...we could learn to love them. But we should be aware of the dangers.</p> <p>We have an environment secretary whose ideology urges her to see the environment...</p> <p>We no longer have a climate change secretary, of any description. We have a government that treats the Earth's systems...</p>
<p>Owen Jones</p>	<p>We should aspire to properly publicly funded NHS dentistry</p> <p>We should be ashamed of what we're doing to Britain's children</p> <p>And that's why we should all be alarmed by the crisis of mental health We need to stop calling it hard Brexit</p> <p>...let's not ignore challenges...</p> <p>...let's confront them and resolve to overcome them.</p> <p>We must make it clear to her that the UK cannot be used as a prop by a proto-fascist</p>

7.4. Imitation of a dialogue

As was explained previously, it is in the interest of the author to establish a simulated interpersonal relationship with the reader, and seemingly including the reader in the conversation, implying his or her active part in the communication, is a frequent strategy.



The imitation of a dialogue was used more frequently in the Czech texts (AVG 0.006) than the English texts (AVG 0.003), especially in the texts by Martin Fendrych from *Aktuálně.cz* (AVG 0.008). In the English context, the highest occurrence was in the texts by George Monbiot (AVG 0.004).

A popular element of the texts was the use of rhetorical questions, that even though they are not to be answered, they seemingly acknowledge the reader and actively invite him/to consider the issue. Another tool to create the illusion that the reader is an active part of the communication, is to phrase certain claims as answer to unasked questions or as a reaction - agreement or disagreement - to an opinion, which could presumably be the reader's.

1. Imitations of responses to reader's presumed reactions/objections/argument

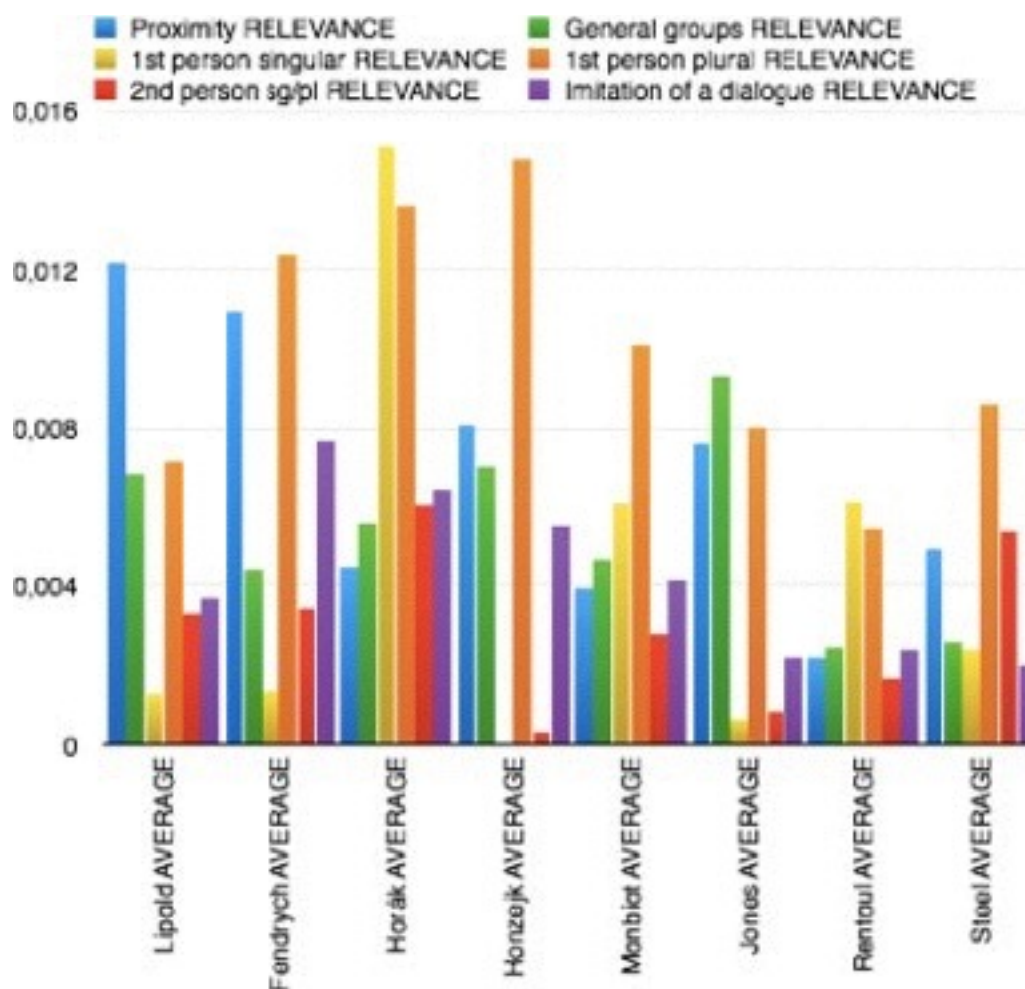
2. Rhetorical questions

Examples: Imitations of a dialogue

Petr Honzejek	1. <i>Ne</i> , opravdu to není nic hezkého... 2. Proč se všechny tyhle odezdikezdismy dějí v takové míře zrovna nám?
Jakub Horák	1. <i>Jistě</i> , z liberálního pohledu má právo každý koupat se, v čem chce. 2. Proboha, to už jsme ztratili smysl pro humor?
Jan Lipold	1. (To je konstatování faktu, ne postesknutí.) <i>Ne</i> , angličtina (ani němčina, ani ruština atd.) nás nesežere. 2. A není náhodou také starostí kraje, aby si s případnými problémy poradil, respektive jim úspěšně předcházel?
Martin Fendrych	1. <i>(Jasně ...)</i> 2. Mají se Češi změnit v kovboje, koupit kolty a vyhnat teroristy?

<p>John Rentoul</p>	<p>1. No, David Cameron's EU referendum wasn't a mistake 2. Are referendums like the one we had on Brexit a tool of fascism – or the will of the people?</p>
<p>Mark Steel</p>	<p>1. Of course refugee children should face dental tests... 2. What's the point in saving someone's life if they turn out to be 23 and wearing a hood?</p>
<p>George Monbiot</p>	<p>1. Of course farmers fear Brexit 2. What lovers of the nation are these, who seem prepared to scrub its features from the map?</p>
<p>Owen Jones</p>	<p>1. Yes, we need investment in services 2. Whingeing about media bias is one thing, but how do progressive movements deal with it?</p>

7.5 General results



The analysis provided answers to these questions:

Which of the described phenomena are most frequently used by an author
Which of the described phenomena are most used in the particular discourse
Which author uses the particular phenomena most frequently

Which discourse on average uses more of the described phenomena on the whole

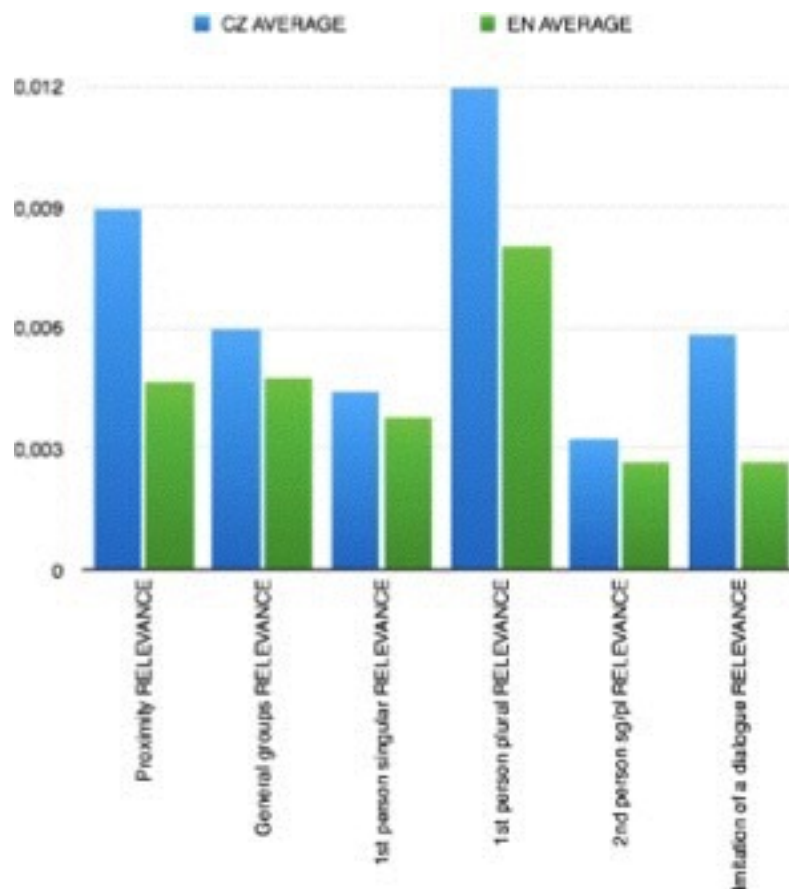
While the first and the third point were addressed in the previous section concerning the phenomena, the second and fourth questions are yet to be addressed. It is important to note again that this analysis can only be considered valid for the texts and media that were

analyzed. Addressing the whole discourse should in this case be considered as addressing the discourse within the boundaries of this thesis and the scope of text and context it refers to.

Which of the described phenomena are most used in the particular discourse

English discourse	Czech discourse
1. First person plural	1. First person plural
2. General groups	2. Proximity
3. Proximity	3. General groups
4. First person singular	4. Imitation of a dialogue
5. Imitation of a dialogue	5. First person singular
6. Second person plural/singular	6. Second person plural/singular

Which discourse on average uses more of the described phenomena on the whole



The analysis revealed that on average the Czech authors used all of the described phenomena more frequently than the English authors. In terms of this thesis we could claim that they their effort to establish and interpersonal relationship with the reader was more prominent. Explaining the reason for this difference would, of course, need to be a subject of further research. However, my personal approach (and proposal for further research) would be to take into consideration the fact that the British media context is more structured in terms of political leaning and the mere fact, that the readers choose the media they favor based on their political beliefs, and this process is open on both sides of the communication, could be creating a situation where the author and the reader are already linked beyond just the roles of a media author and a media consumer. By consciously sharing the politically or topically defined media space, both sides of the communication are bonded, I would argue.

I have mentioned the topical, as well as the political element. While the Czech media that were chosen for this analysis produce opinions on various topics and their authors usually do not have a particular specialization beyond general political and social commentary, in the British context we can observe that some authors keep and frequently address a specific topic. George Monbiot's topics are environmentalism and society development, Owen Jones is both professionally and personally interested in the affairs of the British left, in particular the Labour party, and John Rentoul comments frequently on the US affairs. Mark Steel's topic vary but his connection to the reader is also a matter of personal-style choice, which was briefly discussed earlier.

8. Other phenomena

8.1 Cultural references

This element was not a part of the final analysis, but it was addressed in the theoretical part and observed in the texts of most of the writers; and because it contributes to the interpersonal effect of the author-reader communication, it should be mentioned.

The use of cultural references does not only make the text more vivid and engaging, and adds another layer of meaning to it – it also frames the cultural space which the author and the reader share. The references invoke reader's own experience, cultural knowledge and context. Presumably it also pleases the reader to be able to notice and understand the reference, which proves he/she shares the cultural knowledge of the particular social group which is connected to the publication.

There are numerous types of references that can occur in an opinion piece:

Examples: Cultural references

Petr Honzejek	<i>Úvaha samozřejmě směřuje do současného Česka, ale dovolte ještě jeden literární příklad. V románu George Orwella 1984 byli lidé efektivně ovládáni skrze strach z Emanuela Goldsteina, jakéhosi prefabrikovaného démona, který hrozil zničit jejich domnělé štěstí. (literary reference)</i>
Jakub Horák	<i>A zatímco Michal David sbíral céčka nebo zpíval o tom, jak "pijeme colu u jednoho stolu", Elán vyprávěl o bitkách na diskotéce (Co je? Co je? Co chceš?) a razil motiv kaskadéra, který se nějak životem protluče. (past popculture reference)</i> <i>To zase sorry jako. (current political and media reference)</i>
Jan Lipold	<i>Zahraniční turisté o tom nejspíš nevědí, ale domácí publikum má ještě v paměti, jak se tu v nejtřeženějších zónách pohybovala delegace z Osvětiman, kontroly nula nic. (close past reference to an event presented in the medium)</i> <i>Dokonce přirovnal atmosféru k tomu, co zažil Jesse Owens v Berlíně 1936. (historical reference)</i>

Martin Fendrych	<i>I tento její usilovný kritik tedy bude muset předvést "Wilkommenkultur" (vítací kulturu). (close past media and social network reference)</i> <i>Nežijeme v době husitských válek, nejsme husité. Ti měli jasný cíl, pevnou víru (a cepy a sudlice). (historical reference)</i>
John Rentoul	<i>But remember the immortal words of Benjamin Zander, the conductor, who taught his musicians, when they made a mistake, to say, "How interesting!" (historical anecdote)</i>

Mark Steel	<i>It's the same reason we shouldn't take any notice of David Attenborough, with his misleading films about orangutans; the ones he shows are a far cry from the ones in The Jungle Book that want to kidnap a child and learn to make fire.</i> (current media reference, literary reference)
George Monbiot	<i>I do not see the European Union as a lost Avalon.</i> (folklor reference)
Owen Jones	<i>A proto-fascist will not be defeated by a few rousing renditions of Kumbaya.</i> (religious/pop-culture reference)

The possibilities to insert a cultural reference in an opinion text are numerous and varied. Very often the reader can encounter an intertextual reference to an event/phrase that he/ she knows if he/she follows the particular medium. As was mentioned earlier, opinion texts are in most cases referential by definition, because they frequently react to current events, that are presented in the media, and in many cases, there is a presumption that the reader knows the general story from the news or public space (social networks) and will therefore understand the references.

8.2. Duality

There is a principle of proportionality used in the news to ensure the highest possible level balance and objectivity. Harcup's (2012) account of media balance is probably the closest that relates to practice:

Even-handedness and fairness in assessing and presenting different sides of an issue, argument or conflict. The notion of balance does not necessarily require a strict stopwatch-measured evenness between the time devoted to different sources, nor does it imply that all viewpoints be treated equally. Rather, balance within journalism requires that journalists approach stories with open mind and report matters fairly, having regard to the evidence, and acknowledging the existence of different explanations and interpretations. (28)

A news article should ideally not focus of one side of the argument, it should provide the reader with the opposing view and balancing facts. In case of the purposely subjective opinion texts, we can find such principle used to achieve the complete opposite.

I have observed this phenomenon, building on O'Keefe concept of about *centering* and *othering*, which is precisely the strategy that is applied here on a larger scale:

8.2.1. Natural enemies

In the British context, a natural pair of opposing entities on the political and social scene is the distinction of “the Left” and “the Right”, which in the media is often simplified as the opposition the two most prominent political parties, the Labour party, which represents the political left and the Conservative party, which represents the right. The reason why I call this approach a simplification of the reality is because the Labour party is not the only representative of the left-leaning part of the political spectrum (we can mention also the Green party and other political bodies) and the Conservative party is not the only example of the right (this part of the spectrum is also represented by UKIP and other political bodies). Positioning the Labour and “Tories” against one another in a text is a prominent tool for example in Owen Jones’s text.

“Political language matters. The Tories understand this: that’s why they repeat the same messages over and over again. We’re clearing up Labour’s mess; we’re balancing the nation’s books; long-term economic plan, all repeated ad infinitum. Opponents mock this message discipline, play Tory bingo or are driven to distraction by it: meanwhile, voters can repeat back Tory attack lines verbatim on the doorstep.”

“However, if Labour loses terribly in an election, the left gets blamed, the party shifts off to the right in response, and the country is even more consumed with rightwing populism, then those things will (to put it bluntly) not happen.”

As was mentioned previously, the Czech context does not offer such a clear distinction and historical and political opposition. By large the duality used in the texts stems from the current political climate and events. We can find general counterpart, such as the common man vs. the elite, or institutions/system vs. the people.

8.2.2 Far or close to home

Another common use of duality is connected to proximity. Be it geographical or cultural, the authors often use the comparison of places/cultures that are close – “us” – and far away – “the others”. This can be found either on the whole text level, this distinction therefore functions as the main basis of the presented arguments, or it can merely be a part of an argument within the text, alternatively there can be several dualities used in several arguments/paragraphs.

Examples:

Petr Honzejek	<p>Střední Asie je bohužel na mentální mapě blíže, než se zdá. Když slyšíme zdůvodnění, proč se mají v Praze stavět nejrůznější monstrózní hejblata, těžko se ubránit pocitu, že je přináší vítr z východních hor a stepí. Třeba ruské kolo na Smíchově.</p>
Jakub Horák	<p>Funguje to takhle v Izraeli. Všichni, kluci i holky, jdou po škole na povinnou vojnu. Když po dvou či třech letech vojnu dokončí, dostanou od státu peníze, neboť vojna je placená. A každý se sebere a na půl roku cestuje. Potkal jsem v Indii spoustu Izraelců, i v Nepálu. Cestují, sbírají zkušenosti a kontakty, pozorují svět. Tohle vás žádná škola nenaučí. Pokud by Češi a Češky dělali totéž, nikdy by se ve světě neztratili. Povinná vojna i pro holky taky není špatný nápad.</p> <p>A někde v budoucnosti nás snad čeká nový národ, musíme si tím projít, stejně jako si tím prošli Slováci, kterým jsme se v devadesátých letech smáli, jak po rozdělení federace dopadnou špatně. A vida - teď jsme dopadli špatně my.</p>
Jan Lipold	<p>Protože, jak víme z blahopřejného dopisu, my political opponents have called me the „Czech Donald Trump“ & I am proud of such a label, je pochopitelné, že inaugurační plesy se v pátek nekonají jen ve Washingtonu D. C., ale paralelně se plesá také na Pražském hradě. Jenže hrozí, že leskem vystoupivších celebrit – Vondráčková, Neckář, Gott či moderátor Libor Bouček – Ameriku zastíníme.</p> <p>Make ROP Severozápad Great Again! #realcssd2017</p>
Martin Fendrych	<p>Česko prožívá inauguraci amerického prezidenta, jako by byl prezidentem zde. Neobyčejný zájem o Donalda Trumpa, o to, co se děje v USA. Znovu nám nemůže uniknout, v jak globalizovaném, spojitém světě žijeme, jak jsme navzájem provázáni. Mnozí čeští občané sledovali Trumpův inaugurační projev i reakce na něj. Jako by USA byly součástí Česka a Česko jejich.</p> <p>Jakmile lež prohlásíte za faktum, všecko se stává relativním, neplatí nic, jistota mizí. Po nástupu Donalda Trumpa do prezidentského úřadu (i před ním) se to odehrává v Americe. U nás jsme si už zvykli; Česko v té relativitě, kde je jedno, co kdo plácne, vězí několik let.</p>
John Rentoul	–
Mark Steel	Of course the US should ban Syrians – remember how all the Jews fleeing Germany were a bit Nazi?
George Monbiot	<p>The first multi-racial school in South Africa, Woodmead, developed a fully democratic method of teaching, whose rules and discipline were overseen by a student council. Its integrated studies programme, like the new system in Finland, junked traditional subjects in favour of the students' explorations of themes, such as gold, or relationships, or the ocean. Among its alumni are some of South Africa's foremost thinkers, politicians and businesspeople.</p> <p><i>In countries such as Britain and the United States, such programmes succeed despite the system, not because of it.</i></p>
Owen Jones	–

8.2.3 Britain vs. the EU, Remainers vs. Leavers

In the years 2015-2017, the topic of Brexit was a prominent part of the British, but also European and – slightly less – the global media discourse. The duality between the European Union and the UK is used in many of the analyzed texts, and as a logical result of the process of the UK possibly (and later surely) leaving the EU, the duality is a consequence of the topic itself. However, the sense of distinction between the state and the union of states has been in the European public discussion even before Brexit became a newsworthy topic.⁸

Examples

John Rentoul	What is harder to grasp is why she hasn't tried harder to hold out the hand of friendship – not so much to Europe's leaders, who are understandably bruised by the rejection of their Euro-idealism – but to the peoples of the EU. Our national interest outside the EU depends on their friendship.
Mark Steel	Typical Europeans coming over here to steal the benefits of owning our railways
George Monbiot	<i>It brought us much that is good, such as directives that enable us to hold our governments to account for their environmental failures.ited States, such programmes succeed despite the system, not because of it.</i>
Owen Jones	–

Within the scope of this topical setting, there is also the duality between the supporters of the Leave and the Remain campaign. This distinction does not correlate entirely with the political distinction, for both major parties had representatives endorsing both decisions, with the Conservative party being more closely split and the Labour party mostly, but not entirely for the decision to Remain. (BBC 2016)

⁸ As addressed in Attila Grizsán's book "The Eu Is Not Them, But Us!": The First Person Plural and the Articulation of Collective Identities in European Political Discourse" (2011)

Examples:

John Rentoul	The Labour candidates in Copeland and Stoke both supported remaining in the EU, but are now aligned with their leader's policy of supporting the start of the Article 50 procedure. The only reason his successor turned out to be a Remainer – a reluctant Remainer – was that the country had already voted to Leave.
Mark Steel	Part of the problem may be the attitude towards Brexit, which seems a little hazy, because Labour have to please the 65 per cent of their supporters who voted to remain, along with the 35 per cent who voted to leave.
George Monbiot	–
Owen Jones	Labour's electoral coalition includes both ardent remainers and ardent leavers. The party has already lost four times as many leave voters as remain voters.

8.2.4 The people vs. the system/the government

It is considered to be the traditional role of the press to function as a control force on behalf of the citizens, acting in the public interest and the democratic structure. This concept is referred to as the *watchdog role* (Harcup, 327) or, in the British context, the *fourth estate*.⁹ Harcup points out that this function of the press is usually associated with investigative journalism (327), however, we can observe authors taking this position even when writing opinion texts. It is not the aim of this thesis to judge whether the author chosen for the analysis actually do fulfill the *watchdog role* or merely position themselves on the side of “the people”, the readers against the system in power to achieve more persuasive effect.

Examples:

Petr Honzejek	Prezident není prognostikem rizik, stejně jako jím nebyl, když hrozil, že se letos převalí přes Česko migrační vlna. Prezident jen předvádí management strachu.
Jakub Horák	Vláda Bohuslava Sobotky si dala za úkol ve svém posledním roce zvýšit nemocenskou pro dlouhodobě nemocné, zavádět sociální bydlení a postarat se o svobodné matky ohledně výživného. Je hezké podporovat ty slabé. Ale měli bychom především myslet na to, jak vybudovat stát plný odvážných a chytrých lidí.

⁹ The three preceding estates are: House of Lords, House of Commons and the Church. This concept was originally introduced by Edmund Burke in the 18th century and later used by the writer Thomas Carlyle, who linked the press and democracy (Harcup 2012, 109)

Jan Lipold	Typické uvažování: místo toho, aby se radnice při pohledu na řeku zasekanou turistickými parníčky zamyslela, jestli toho není příliš a neměla by nastoupit restrikce, zamyslí se nad tím, že investuje peníze (zčásti evropské), aby turistický ruch a byznys pumovala.
Martin Fendrych	Sám [Zeman] však řekl, že útoky, pokud by přišly, hrozí „v hlavním městě, v metru, na nádraží“ nebo na Hradě. Chrání tedy nejdřív sebe. Když se podíváte na nedávné teroristické útoky v Evropě, neodehrály se na střežených místech, ale vždycky tam, kde se houfují lidé.
John Rentoul	They don't want to punish us, but it is in their interest to make sure that leaving the EU does not look like an attractive option for their peoples.
Mark Steel	It's time to put America in the hands of people who aren't afraid to be utterly irrational, such as Trump's chief strategist Stephen Bannon, whose wife swore he wouldn't let his daughter go to a school as there were "too many whiny brat Jews". [Trump] can act like this because he's anti-establishment which is why he's such good friends with Farage. And there's no greater sign of two mates bravely fighting against the symbols of wealth and power, than being photographed smiling in a solid gold lift that one of them owns so he can go up and down his tower. Jeremy Corbyn, look and learn.
George Monbiot	<i>What does it mean to defend its sovereignty? For some of the leaders of the Brexit campaign, it means reducing the United Kingdom to a franchise of corporate capital, governed from head offices overseas. They will take us out of Europe to deliver us into the arms of other powers.</i>
Owen Jones	What's the cure? The government will undoubtedly point to a rising minimum wage, but tax and benefit changes are projected to leave many workers worse off regardless in the coming years.

Conclusion

The objective of the thesis was to explore the interpersonal aspects in opinion texts online, the relationship that the author creates between him/herself and the intended audience and the tools that are used to achieve that goal.

Since the focus was on the social context of the communication and the relationship of the participants, I have briefly addressed Halliday's (2013) concept of interpersonal metafunction, which refers to the choices the author makes to enact personal relationships with other people, in this case the reader; and the related category of tenor, which relates to the participants of a socio-semiotic activity, and their roles.

In the media production, the author has a prominent role in the communication for he/she plays the active part without much reciprocity from the reader, however, the characteristics of the intended reader are considered, as the author needs to know which topical and language choices to make.

It was established that an opinion text is usually openly and deliberately subjective, while ideally it is based on solid facts that the author interprets. This definition was put in contrast with news texts, where objectivity and detachment is expected. However, even in the case of news, the function is not purely informative, the author needs to achieve the reader's involvement in the text using interpersonal tools (c.f. Chafe 1982, Chovanec 2003, Urbanová 1998), and the opinion texts pursue this objective even further.

I have followed Talbot's (2007) concept of a persona, which the author assumes for the purposes of presenting the public topics to the target audience in a more personal manner in order to engage them in the interaction. As Fairclough (2001) points out, this allows the author to create an illusion of treating each reader as an individual, not as a mass. (168) The outreach to the reader's personal space is even more prominent in case of online media environment, which was chosen for this thesis, for it allows for greater reciprocity, interactivity, intertextuality, sharing, etc. Halliday (2013) notices that the development of social networks are leading to a more tenor-oriented, interpersonal communication. (43) In the online environment, authors of opinion texts can also strengthen the interpersonal effect of their texts by connecting them with their personal profiles on social networks, which allows the reader to seemingly enter into the author's personal space and experience the opinion texts in the context of the perceived closeness.

Building up on Talbot's notion of the fabricated persona, I have proceeded to O'Keefe's (2006) description of a simulated relationship between the author and the reader, which she defines as pseudo-intimate and achieved by the author using pronouns, vocatives, pragmatic markers and response to-

kens. (90) Fairclough also mentions that invoking cultural knowledge creates a similar effect. (183) Cultural references are one of the tools that allow the author to invoke the cultural space he/she shares with the reader, and re-enforce the sense of group identity, therefore simulate closeness. Other means to achieve this effect is the use of humor, proximity, or first person plural.

As an opinion text can represent both the perspective of the individual author, the publication or even the political stream he/she identifies with, the use of pronouns may not always be straightforward and simple for the reader to interpret. Ideally the first person singular should indicate the author's personal views, but it can also be used simply as an element in a narrative. The second person (both singular and plural in the Czech discourse) can have an effect conative function, it can implore the reader to think or do what the author suggests, or it can be used merely as an phatic element, to enact the relationship between the two participants.

With consideration of the above, an analysis was carried out on 80 selected texts by 8 authors from 4 different publications, 2 from each discourse, Czech and British. The publications were chosen from approximately the same political and value context, to eliminate the influence of different sides of issues on the language. The British context was represented by the liberal publications *The Guardian* and *The Independent*, and the Czech context by *Aktuálně.cz* and *iHNed.cz*, i.e. publications that showed similar views on the discussed topics as the British publications, as the Czech context does not offer the same, generally perceived distinction of political leaning of various publications.

The analysis was carried out using an application of corpus linguistics for gathering the data from the texts, and an application of Critical Discourse Analysis was used to interpret the effect of the analyzed phenomena: **first person singular, first person plural, second person singular/plural**, markers of **proximity, imitations of a dialogue** (rhetorical and non-rhetorical questions, imitation of a response), **general groups** that can be assumed to include the reader, such as *people, lidé, voters, voliči* etc.

The analysis was set up to measure the average relevance of phenomena for the analyzed texts, compare the frequency of the use in the chosen discourses, and put the results in contexts of the particular social interaction.

On the whole, more frequent usage of the phenomena was in the Czech texts. On average, authors from both British and Czech discourse used first person plural the most, the second and third most frequent were general groups and proximity. Proximity was more prominent in the Czech discourse than general groups, and a reversed order could be found in the English discourse.

As mentioned earlier, using the aforementioned means, the author of an opinion text can create the illusion of a shared cultural space with the reader, a cultural bond to achieve engagement and trust.

This established space can also be used in comparison to an opposite, to strengthen impact of the presented arguments, presenting one side of the issue as close and the others as distant, or one as the good and the other as the bad. I have provided several examples of types of this duality, that were commonly used in the analyzed text, such as the Left versus the Right-wing, the people versus the government, the immediate cultural space (home) versus the distant space (far away, abroad).

Assessing both the theoretical and the practical part of this thesis, I have come to the conclusion that the tools used to create an interpersonal effect on the reader are widely and variedly in both discourses. The effect is a desirable result for the author, for it creates an atmosphere of personal, trust-filled environment, which engages the reader and makes the arguments more appealing and persuasive, and the author more trustworthy, as if being spoken to the reader in an interpersonal conversation.

In my future research, I would like to use the knowledge acquired while writing this thesis to establish possible methods to easily analyze and categorize parts of opinion texts into provable facts, interpretations (opinions) and interpersonal elements, in order to be able to measure to what extent the text is informative and where the line of persuasion lies.

Resumé

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá vztahem mezi autorem názorového textu a jeho zamýšleným čtenářem.

Názorové články jsou zdefinovány podle teoretické literatury v obou diskurzech - českém i anglickém. Teoretická část dále rozvíjí perspektivu rolí v konkrétní komunikační situaci, prostředí online médií a jazykových prostředků, které autor může využít k vytvoření iluze blízkosti čtenáři a dojem sdíleného kulturního prostoru. Práce bere v úvahu specifika mediálního diskurzu, kontextu, intertextuality, technologických charakteristik digitálních médií a vybraných publikací – *The Guardian* a *The Independent* v britském diskurzu a *Aktuálně.cz* a *iHNed.cz* v českém diskurzu. Jelikož se praktická analýza soustředí na intepersonální prvky, jsou krátce představeni i autoři z vybraných periodik. Praktická část sčítá, prezentuje a interpretuje data z 80 názorových textů, které byly analyzovány, a doporučuje je s poznatky prezentovanými v teoretické části.

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