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Gender and Discourse: Critical discourse analysis of the ways in which men and women construct and enact their gender in the discourse of newspaper columns

(Rod i diskurs: Kritička analiza diskursa načina na koji muškarci i žene kreiraju i odražavaju svoj rod u diskursu novinskih kolumni)

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ABSTRACT

The subject of this paper is the discourse analysis of the different ways in which men and women create and reflect the characteristics of their gender in newspaper debates. The main goal of this analysis is to examine the different linguistic features and discursive strategies used by male and female authors to construct and represent their gender in newspaper debates. The corpus for this paper consists of two debates in the column "Head to head" which is published weekly in the British daily newspaper "The Guardian", and a longer debate consisting of three mutually exchanged letters from the column "Room for Debate" in the American daily newspaper "The New York Times". The reason for choosing newspaper debates as a corpus is because the discourse used in them implies a clearly defined and specific use of language, but also gives freedom and therefore, columnists can reach for individual ways of expression which are often gender defined, and this dimension allows for a critical analysis of the male and female approach to the same topic.

Critical discourse analysis is used as the main theoretical framework for this paper as it is a methodological approach that aims to analyse both the formal structure of the text – the analysis of how speakers select and use grammatical constructions and lexical units to achieve different goals and create a certain version of reality, as well as the very content of the text – the analysis of attitudes, values and worldviews that are presented through the text itself. This approach provides a comprehensive analysis as the form and content of the text complement each other – speakers' attitudes are shaped through different ways of language use – and the way language is used plays an important role in shaping and changing the way in which reality is perceived and expressed by speakers. Thus, this methodology provides us a two-way approach that gives us an answer to the question of how the attitudes of men and women in newspaper columns are expressed through particular language choices and how they construct and reflect their gender identity through this discourse.

The findings of this paper reveal that male and female debaters prefer using different discourse strategies in the formulation and positioning of their arguments and that female debaters use more cooperative language forms and put focus on social dimensions of issues discussed, while male debaters tend to defend and reinforce their viewpoints by adopting a more assertive and ironical tone and that they are more concerned about reinforcing the importance of protecting an individual's independence and autonomy.

Keywords: gender, discourse, debates, society, language use

SAŽETAK

Tema ovog rada je da kroz analizu diskursa istraži različite načine na koje muškarci i žene konstruiraju i odražavaju karakteristike svog roda u novinskim debatama. Glavni cilj ovog rada je da istraži i analizira različitu upotrebu jezika i diskursivnih strategija koje autori i autorice novinskih debata koriste za odražavanje i konstruiranje svog roda. Korpus za ovaj rad sastoji se od dvije debate iz kolumne "Head to head" koja izlazi u britanskim dnevnim novinama "The Guardian", i jedne debate koja se sastoji od tri međusobno razmijenjena pisma među kolumnisitima iz kolumne "Room for Debate" američkih dnevnih novina "The New York Times". Razlog zbog kojeg smo kao korpus izabrali novinske debate jeste to što diskurs koji se koristi u njima podrazumijeva jasno definisanu i određenu upotrebu jezika, ali ujedno dopušta i izvjesnu slobodu u kojoj kolumnisti mogu posegnuti za individualnim načinima izražavanja i poigravanja sa formama i upravo ta dimenzija dozvoljava kritičku analizu muškog i ženskog pristupa istoj temi.

Kritička analiza diskursa koristi se kao glavni teorijski okvir za ovaj rad budući da je to metodološki pristup koji ima za cilj da analizira kako formalnu strukturu teksta, odnosno analizu načina na koji govornici koriste i odabiru gramatičke konstrukcije i leksičke jedinice kako bi postigli različite efekte i ciljeve te kreirali određenu viziju stvarnosti, tako i sam sadržaj teksta, odnosno analizu stavova, vrijednosti i svjetonazora koji se iznose kroz tekst.Ovaj pristup pruža sveobuhvatnu analizu jer se oblik i sadržaj teksta međusobno nadopunjuju: stavovi govornika se oblikuju kroz različite načine upotrebe jezika, a s druge strane, način na koji se jezik koristi ima važnu ulogu u formiranju i mijenjanju načina na koji se percipira stvarnost izražena kroz stavove govornika. Dakle, ova metodologija nam omogućava dvosmjeran pristup koji će nam pružiti odgovor na pitanje kako su stavovi muškaraca i žena u diskursu novinskih kolumni izraženi kroz određene jezičke odabire, te kako oni kroz stavove koje iznose kroz ovaj diskurs održavaju i pokazuju svoj rodni identitet.

Rezultati analize u ovom rada pokazuju da kolumnisti i kolumnistice posežu za različitim diskursivnim tehnikama prilikom formuliranja i pozicioniranja svojih argumenata, te da žene u svojoj argumentaciji preferiraju upotrebu strategija kooperativnosti pri tome stavljajući težište na društvene dimenzije pitanja o kojem se diskutuje, dok su muškarci prevashodno fokusirani na elaboraciju i opravdavanje svojih gledišta, preferirajući uvjerljiviji ton i ironiju, te da kroz svoj tekst pretežno stavljaju fokus na važnost nezavisnosti i autonomije pojedinca.

Ključne riječi: rod, diskurs, debate,društvo, upotreba jezika

CONTENT

I. INTRODUCTION 2
II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND 5
1. GENDER 5
1.1 Gender as a multifaceted term 5
1.2. Earlier linguistic approaches to gender 6
1.2 Gender differences in communicative practices 8
1.3 Understanding differences 11
2. DISCOURSE 13
2.1. Discourse analysis 13
2.2. Genre as Discourse 16
2.3. Language as Discourse 17
2.3. Discourse as Identity 19
3. DISCOURSE AND GENDER 20
III. METHODOLOGY 23
IV. CORPUS 24
V. RESEARCH 26
Debate 1 26
Debate 2: 35
Debate 3 45
VI. INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS 56
VII. CONCLUSION 61
VIII. REFERENCES 63
APPENDIX 1 66
APPENDIX 2 68
APPENDIX 3 70

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is essential to human beings. Although the main function of language is communication, the role of language in our lives is much more complex and linguists keep discovering new ways in which language can be perceived and understood.

„Language does, of course, allow us to inform each other. But it also allows us to do things and to be things, as well. In fact, saying things in language never goes without also doing things and being things. Language allows us to do things. It allows us to engage in actions and activities... Language allows us to be things. It allows us to take on different socially significant identities... In language, there are important connections among saying (informing), doing (action), and being (identity)" (Gee, 2011, p. 2).

Since, among others, gender is one of the main "socially significant identities", language has been recognized as one of the crucial sites where men and women demonstrate their gender differences. Gender differences of all kinds fascinate people and the realization that language offers an inexhaustible field of examining them has motivated many linguists to focus on investigating how gender is encoded in language.

Having said this, we understand that the field of gender and language offers a broad range of topics for investigation, and the aim of this paper is to apply a context sensitive analysis of language use by male and female columnists in two debates from British daily newspapers *The Guardian* and in a debate consisting of three mutually exchanged letters in American daily newspapers *The New York Times*. This analysis will show us some important gender-based tendencies and preferences of male and female debaters regarding their discursive styles and strategies of convinction.

It is important to mention that the analysis of gender through discourse seeks to focus not only on different strategies of argumentation between men and women, but also on examining preferable social roles of male and female columnists and why they opt for certain discursive strategies. This approach is valuable and innovative because it provides a framework for analysis which enables us not only to see how our gender identities shape our language, but also to see how our gender identity is shaped by the language we use: "If past approaches had assumed that people use language in certain ways because of who they are,

(critical) discourse analysts suggest that people are who they are (partly) because of the way they use language" (Cameron, 1998 cited in Litosseliti, 2013, p. 3)."

The reason for choosing newspaper debates as our corpus is two-layered: firstly, because that is one of the main public sites where gender-based language use can be detected: "the world of the magazine is one in which men and women are eternally in opposition, always in struggle, but always in pursuit of each other. (Ballaster et al., 1996, p. 87)". Secondly, although research of the interrelation between gender, discourse and professional communication has rapidly increased over the last decade, professional communication research on discourse and gender so far has tended to be dominated by a focus on spoken discourse, and one of the types of professional written communication whose discourse remains underexplored from a gender perspective, is the discourse of newspaper columnists (Mullany, 2012, p. 518). Therefore, the aim of this paper is to shed light on gender-based discursive practices of male and female columnists on a corpus which is underinvestigated in the perspective of discourse and gender, but constitutes an important source of language in use where gender construction and representation can be dedected.

The paper is organised as follows:

In the first part of the paper, we offer a theoretical background, which aims to briefly provide us with some basic knowledge of the correlation between gender and discourse, that is, how gender can be studied through discourse (with a s special focus on the discourse of newspaper debates). Therefore, this section is divided into three parts:

1) Gender – in which we shortly explain how gender is understood in linguistic perspective, earlier approaches to the study of language and gender, basic differences in communicative practices of men and women, and finally, how those differences should be perceived and understood.
2) Discourse – here, we explain the shift in linguistic studies from the Chomskian view of language as an "abstract system" to the understanding of "language as discourse" and what does this new understanding imply.
3) Gender and Discourse – in this part, we explain how discourse is used in the study of language and gender as well as how discourse helps construct and represent gender in language.

After that, we explain the methodology and corpus used in this paper, as well as the reason for choosing such an approach. The second section of the paper is the practical part in which

we analyse two debates between female and male columnists from the column *Head to head* from the British newspaper *The Guardian*. These two debates revolve around topics which discuss issues concerning society: the first debate from this column is "Would Covid passports be damaging to public health?" and it is led by Melinda Mills and Stephen Reicher. The second debate is led by Sarah Phillips and Toby Moses and it revolves around the question: "Should schoolchildren be made to run a mile every day?" The third and final debate which we will analyse is slightly different from the previous two debates and it is taken from the column *Room for Debate* in the American daily newspapers *The New York Times*. It has a form of a series of letters exchanged between two debaters: Emerson Csorba and Noa Gafni Slaney who debate over the question: "Is Digital Connectedness Good or Bad for People?". The exchange of letters between the two debaters allows us to follow their interaction which makes their communication look like a network of discourses.

Finally, we can conclude by pointing out that the aim of this small-scale study is two analyse different ways in which male and female debaters use language and discourse strategies to construct their arguments and to investigate the ways in which they reflect and construct their gender-based social roles through their discourses.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. GENDER

1.1 Gender as a multifaceted term

Gender is a complex term which implies several meanings and according to Aikhenvald (2016, p.1) it can best be explained by dividing it into three categories: linguistic, natural and social gender. In this view, linguistic gender is "the original sense of 'gender' as a linguistic term", that is, it is a grammatical category according to which nouns can be classified as masculine or feminine. Natural gender entails anatomical and hormonal differences, linked to concomitant physiological and psychological traits, whereas, social gender reflects the social implications, and norms, of being a man or a woman.

In linguistic approaches to the study of language, this distinction between Natural and Social gender is commonly described as a distinction between sex and gender: "Sex is a biological categorization based primarily on reproductive potential, whereas gender is the social elaboration of biological sex." (Eckert and McConnel-Ginet, 2003, p.10). As Locke (2011, p. 10), points out, the distinction between sex and gender helps us to keep in mind important differences between biology and culture.

Similar explanation is offered by Litosseliti (2013, pp.10,11) when she says that language and gender theorists generally make a distinction between sex as physiological, and gender as a cultural or social construct, and, according to this distinction, sex refers to biological maleness and femaleness, or the physiological, functional, anatomical differences that distinguish men and women, whereas gender refers to the traits assigned to a sex – what maleness and femaleness stand for – within different societies and culture.

Having said so, we can conclude that when it comes to the study of language and gender, adopting a discursive perspective in analysing how do men and women construct and represent their gender identities in society through their language style seems particularly useful since "gender" is a term which is primarily associated with one's social identity as it "refers to the social behaviours, expectations and attitudes associated with being male and female" (Ibid, p.1), while, at the same time, the term "discourse" is predominately perceived as "language as social practice" (Ibid).

1.2. Earlier linguistic approaches to gender

In order to situate this paper within a theoretical framework, in this section we will provide a brief overview of the main approaches to the study of language and gender. As summed up by Coates (2003, p.5), since the publication of Lakoff's classic work, *Language and Woman's Place*, in 1975, linguists have approached language and gender from a variety of perspectives. Three basic perspectives that are characteristic for early studies of language and gender (that is, approaches which precede the study of gender through discourse) are known as the deficit approach, the dominance approach and the difference approach.

The pioneering and ground-breaking work in the area of language and gender was Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place* (1975), in which, for the first time, we see a consideration of the representation of women in language, as well as the emergence of the concept known as women's language (WL), as she recorded a number of linguistic features – phonological, grammatical and lexical – which she found were more frequent in the linguistic style of women. At the same time, however, her work received a lot of criticism as it is claimed that it represents a deficit approach which, as Coates (2003, p.6) explains "carries the implication that there was something intrinsically wrong with women's language, and that women should learn to speak like men if they wanted to be taken seriously."

The second approach that tried to explain differences in male and female speech characteristics and which developed parallel to Lakoff's deficit approach is commonly labelled as dominance approach. It puts forward male dominance as the reason for gender-based differences in speech of men and women, according to which women are seen as an oppressed group (Ibid). This approach also received a lot of criticism since "it portrayed women as powerless victims fighting against aggressive and powerful men when in fact those characteristics could be seen as successful communicative strategies" (Coates, 1994, p.73)."

As a result of this criticism a new approach appeared, which, instead of seeing male dominance as the reason for male-female language variation, explains it by the existence of different male and female subcultures. "The 'discovery' of distinct male and female subcultures in the 1980s seems to have been a direct result of women's growing resistance to being treated as a subordinate group" (Coates, 2003, p.6). This approach found its roots in a framework proposed by linguistic anthropologist John Gumperz (1982) who focused on studying the underlying reasons for miscommunication between people belonging to different

cultures. Adopting this perspective in their study of male-female communication, that is, miscommunication, Maltz and Borker (1982), provided six basic differences in conversational styles of men and women which they saw as the main reason for their mutual misunderstanding, and which were a result of men and women belonging to different subcultures. This model was also adopted by Deborah Tannen (1996) who further popularized it. However, this approach also received some criticism, mostly because it oversimplified the differences in male and female speech styles implying that men and women speak totally different languages, as well as because it did not focus enough on the issue of power.

Although contemporary approach to the study of language and gender (among which is also discourse analysis), see gender as being more dynamic and constructed by language and shows us how the relationship between language and gender is two-sided since gender shapes language and language shapes gender, we cannot ignore the accomplishments of dominance and difference approaches as they "yielded valuable insights into the nature of gender differences in language" (Coates, 2003, p. 7).

1.2 Gender differences in communicative practices

"Gender often manifests itself in differences in the range of behaviour among males and among females" (Eckert and McConnel-Ginet, 2003, p.89). Differences between men and women have always been an interesting topic for investigation in many different areas, among including language, too. This is because communicative practices of women and men present an arena where these cross-gender differences are salient, so it is not surprising that there are many books written about differences in language use among men and women, suggesting that we are so different that it can be said that we come from two different planets. However, although it certainly cannot be denied that evident gender-based linguistic differences do exist between men and women, saying that we speak two completely different languages implies an impossibility of mutual understanding and we can say that such statements are a reflection of an oversimplified view of gender differences in communicative practices.

Instead, it would be more appropriate to claim that men and women speak the same language, but they do so in subtly different ways. Because of that, when talking about male-female communicative differences, we need to be observant in order not to fall in the trap of overgeneralization. As explained in Coates (2013, p.33), the variation in male-female language, involves gender-preferential differences, that is, while women's and men's language differs, there are no forms associated exclusively with one gender; rather there is a tendency for women or men to prefer a certain form.

This means that language differences are predominately based on different preferences of men and women and on their different tendencies of self-representation in a particular society. For example, many studies on communication style of men and women show that "female speakers will use a higher proportion of prestige forms than male speakers. In other words, the prestige norms seem to exert a stronger influence on women than on men" (Ibid, p.54).

One of the studies that proves how women prefer sending off a picture of themselves as using more prestige forms, whereas men prefer to seem like their speech style is not so much in line with standard prestige norms, is the study of the (ng) variable conducted by an English sociolinguist Peter Trudgill in Norwich in 1968, according to which "a staggering 68 per cent of the women (and 22 per cent of the men) over-reported, that is, claimed to use the

prestige form when their index scores revealed they actually didn't. On the other hand, half the men (50 per cent) and 14 per cent of the women under-reported, that is, they claimed to use non-standard forms when their index scores revealed that they habitually used forms closer to standard pronunciation" (Ibid, p. 62). These opposite tendencies of over-reporting and under-reporting of women and men are significant for us in the perspective of preferable social identities that women and men want to construct (and how they use language in their construction of that identity), since "what sort of self a person presents in a particular kind of situation and how they ratify the other's self-presentation will often be implicated in constructing gender" (Eckert and McConnel-Ginet, 2003, p.137).Therefore, our communicative competence largely depends on how we prefer and intend to construct our identities in front of others, and these preferences and intentions are often gender-related:

"The ability to participate in the social enterprise requires some mutuality among the participants about what kind of people they are. Each individual, therefore, presents a self that he or she considers desirable, and that he or she figures others will be willing to acknowledge and support in the interaction… As we engage with one another, we are always positioning ourselves and positioning each other in a social landscape, a landscape in which gender is often (though not always) a prominent feature. Different situations and participation in different communities of practice will call for different presentations of self" (Ibid, p. 59,60). Therefore, "the study of language and gender involves interpreting the use of the linguistic resources to accomplish social ends" (Ibid, p.79).

Overall analysis of male-female communicative practices suggests that women are more tentative, polite, indirect and willing to maintain good social relationships, whereas men are on average more assertive, direct and dominant (Tannen, 1996). Moreover, it is claimed that "male and female speakers differ in their use of particular conversational strategies; the way in which women and men characteristically draw on different strategies in conversational interaction" (Coates, 2013, p.86). These strategies include: minimal responses, hedges, tag questions, questions, commands, swearing and taboo language, and compliment (Ibid). However, since conversational strategies which can only be used in speech, not in written texts are beyond the scope of our paper, here we will only mention those communicative strategies which are relevant and applicable to our corpus of newspaper debates.

One of the communicative practices that are found to be more present in the speech style of women are hedges – linguistic forms such as *I think, I'm sure, you know, sort of* and *perhaps*

which express the speaker's certainty or uncertainty about the proposition under discussion, and the higher presence of hedge in women's language style are commonly said to express unassertiveness (Lakoff,1975). However, such an explanation is oversimplified and hedges should not be equalized with lack of self-confidence and insecurity, instead, they can be a delicate conversational tool which can soften arguments and ensure a warm tone, because "when sensitive topics are under discussion, then hedges become a valuable resource for speakers, because they mitigate the force of what is said and thus protect both speaker's and hearer's face" (Coates, 2013, p.90).

Tags are another linguistic feature which are said to be more used by women and Lakoff also ascribes them to insecurity of women and sees them as "intrinsically weak", however, Holmes (1984, pp. 50-55) analyses tags according to whether they express primarily modal or affective meaning. Tags with primarily modal meaning signal the speaker's degree of certainty about the proposition and tags whose primary function is affective express the speaker's attitude to the addressee (for example: supporting the addressee (facilitative tags) or softening the force of negatively affective speech acts). According to Holmes, women and men do not differ greatly in total usage, although women do use more tags, but important point that distinguishes male and female usage of tags is their communicative purpose: 59 per cent of the tags used by women are facilitative (compared with 25 per cent for men) while 61 per cent of the tags used by men are modal, expressing uncertainty (compared with 35 per cent for women).

Also,"research findings so far suggest that women use interrogative forms more than men and that this may reflect women's relative weakness in interactive situations: they exploit questions and tag questions in order to keep conversation going (Coates, 2013, p.90), however, as all other communicative strategies, questions are also multi-functional and the purpose of their usage is highly context-dependant, and sometimes they can be considered as a powerful tool since: "questions control what the next speaker is able to say. Not only do powerful participants use many questions, but also participants without power are explicitly prohibited from using them in this situation" (Ibid, p.94).

Another important claim regarding gender and language use, is that women tend to use politer and more cooperative forms than men. For instance, Tannen (1996) characterizes women as focused on strengthening intimacy with others, and on promoting solidarity, whereas men seem to be more focused on establishing their independence from others, their

autonomy. When talking about politeness and cooperativeness in language, it is also necessary to mention Brown and Lewinson's politeness theory: "Brown and Levinson (1978) define politeness in terms of the concept of face. The term face is used as in everyday phrases such as to lose face. Respecting face is defined as showing consideration for people's feelings. We show consideration by respecting two basic human needs:

(1) the need not to be imposed on (this is called negative face); and

(2) the need to be liked and admired (this is called positive face)" (Coates, 2013, p.105).

Therefore, "face is something we can ''lose" or ''save" in our dealings with one another: it is tied to our presentations of ourselves and to our acknowledgments of others as certain kinds of people" (Eckert and McConnel-Ginet, 2003, p. 59). According to Coates (2013, p.107), the reason why women are more indirect and polite in their speech is because they seem to be alert to the fact that what they are saying may threaten face. This sensitivity to the face needs of others results in different linguistic usage – women use the extremes of positive and negative politeness, whereas, men's speech is more matter-of-fact. Similar opinion is found in Holmes (1984) as he claims that women are more orientated to affective, interpersonal meanings than men, while men are more oriented to the referential functions of talk. However, as Holmes further states, we should be concerned about "the overt disvaluing of women's politeness norms in public sphere", as there is a common tendency in society to label women's linguistic patterns as weak or ineffective.

1.3 Understanding differences

We cannot deny that women and men do speak differently, but "it is important to treat gendered dichotomies with caution, because the traits historically associated with women have been relegated to inferior status, and their sophistication and complexity may have gone unrecognised" (Litosseliti,2002, p.133). Just because male and female linguistic styles are different, female language cannot be seen as an inferior version of male language, that is, difference should not be equalized with deference.

However, besides early works regarding male and female language, which describe characteristics of women's language as women's linguistic inferiority to men, (especially Robin Lakoff in her famous book *Language and Women's place*) this attitude is also present

in many other English-speaking societies and for example, as stated in Eckert and McConnel-Ginet, (2003, p.188) :

" Language ideology among dominant white social groups in the US sees directness as a virtue, indirectness as at best a waste of time and often as an impediment to effective communication. The indirection being criticized is often part of politeness, generally aimed at preventing hurt feelings, and it is women who are seen as caring about others' feelings and upholding politeness norms. Not surprisingly, it is women's supposed indirectness that is highlighted for criticism: ''Why doesn't she just say what she means and not beat around the bush?'"

However, we must avoid labelling linguistic forms in a simplistic manner as 'powerful' or 'powerless' and in fact, it should be taken into account that "politeness can also be used strategically by women to affect or change power relations" (Litosseliti, 2013, p.29). Morevoer, conversational facilitation strategies commonly employed by women are in many cases more effective and more successful than direct and assertive strategies which are more characteristic of male language (Ibid).

That is, women's ways of speaking is less valued than men's, and this attitude is wrong, so, we should adopt a broader perspective which recognizes indirect style as "skilled and artful, the style most suited for public oratory, while devaluing direct language as unsophisticated and as indicative" (Bucholtz, 2013, p.48). Because of that, women should be viewd as skilled communicators who have their own convincing strategies and discursive styles which work well in bringing conflicts to an end, and as Bucholtz (ibid), further points out, women can be regarded as users of discourse who have mastered the interactional rules appropriate to their gender.

Therefore, we adopt a stance that when examining male and female discourse style, the focus should not be on determining whose communication style should be regarded as better, whose speech style should be regarded as norm, nor on deciding whether men or women should learn the communication style and interpret the meaning of other side, but instead, we adopt an approach which highlights speaker competence regardless of their gender, an approach which attempts to understand differences.

2. DISCOURSE

2.1. Discourse analysis

Traditional linguistics is characterized by its orientation on structure of language which primarily means that the study of grammar and its disciplines such as phonology, morphology and syntax are at the centre of attention in this linguistic approach. However, on the other side, the increasing realization of the interconnectedness between language and society has led many linguists to adopt a perspective which views language not as an abstract system in our brain, but as a much more complex and flexible system which cannot be studied without regard to its immediate context.

"The concept which marks the beginning of this revival of interest in language in its broadest sense is communicative competence. The term was first used by Dell Hymes (1972) and he argued that it was essential to incorporate social and cultural factors into linguistic description. In his view, the Chomskyan notion of the child internalising a set of rules which enable her or him to produce grammatical sentences doesn't go far enough: the child learns not just grammar but also a sense of appropriateness. It is not sufficient for the child to be linguistically competent; in order to function in the real world, she or he must also learn when to speak, when to remain silent, what to talk about – and how to talk about it – in different circumstances." (Coates,2013, p. 85,86).

As a result of this new perspective, new linguistic approaches which focus on language in use have emerged, and one of the most rapidly growing ones is discourse analysis. Discourse analysis cannot be regarded as a single, one-dimensional approach to language, rather, it can best be understood as a broad field of linguistics which encompasses many different linguistic perspectives whose common view is that: "discourse is not merely the reflection of society, culture, and power but their constantly replenished source. In other words, for most discourse analysts the social world is produced and reproduced in great part through discourse. The method that emerges from this theoretical stance is one of close analysis of discursive detail in relation to its context." (Bucholtz, 2013, p. 45).

As Litosseliti (2013, p.54) explains, discourse analysis does not describe a particular or coherent set of frameworks but can instead be understood as an umbrella term for variously critical approaches to language in use such as: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA),

Conversational Analysis (CA), (Critical) Discursive Psychology, Pragmatics, Interactional Sociolinguistics and Ethnography.

Broadly speaking, we can say that discourse analysis can be divided into two main perspectives: the more traditional view which analyses discourse as text, which is a more formal approach deriving from the organization of the discipline into levels of linguistic units, such as phonology, morphology, and syntax. "According to the formal definition, just as morphology is the level of language in which sounds are combined into words, and syntax is the level in which words are combined into sentences, so discourse is the linguistic level in which sentences are combined into larger units" (Bucholtz, 2013, p. 44).

Another perspective adopted by discourse analysists has a more popular appeal and it perceives language as a social practice, putting a special emphasis on the context of language use. "The move in linguistics from the micro-analysis of phonemes and syntactic structure to a more macro-analytic approach, looking at language in a more holistic way, was undoubtedly a paradigm shift with significant consequences. The freedom to think about talk in general and to analyse whole conversations has led to new understanding of the relationship between discourse and social life." (Coates, 2012, p.90).

According to this contextualized view of language, we put language in use through discourse and as explained in Eckert and McConnel-Ginet (2003, p.92), the force of an utterance is not manifest in the utterance itself, but in its fate once it is launched into the discourse – once it begins its ‘‘discursive life." In accordance with this view, in order to understand a particular utterance, it is not enough to decode it solely on a linguistic level as more traditional discourse analysts propose, but instead, "to figure out what was said or what was implied a hearer has to go beyond decoding and draw inferences based not simply on accessing a linguistic code but also on understanding of social practices, of others' motives and strategies and capabilities, and of other particulars about the contexts in which communication is occurring." (Ibid, p. 196).

This contextualized analysis of language has led to the possibility of exploring a wide range of both spoken and written texts within the field of discourse analysis which, due to the complexity of comprehending the interrelationship between text and context, as well as, many different ways in which they influence each other, offers different methodological approaches. However, all these differing methodological frameworks within the broad field of discourse analysis share "the idea of the ways in which we give meaning to experience

through language, and, broadly speaking, in the contextual and social aspects of language use. Moreover, they demonstrate a critical awareness of what we do with language". (Litosseliti, 2013, pp.54,55). As pointed out by Heller 2001 (cited in Baxter, 2010, p.119) a key way to schematize discourse-analytic methodology is in terms of its relationship between microanalytical approaches, which examine the finer detail of linguistic interactions in transcripts, and macroanalytical approaches, which consider how broader social processes work through language.

One field within discourse analysis that is worth mentioning in this sense and which is especially useful for exploring the correlation between discourse, identity and society is critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA "brings the critical tradition of social analysis into language studies and contributes to critical social analysis a particular focus on discourse and on relations between discourse and other social elements (power relations, ideologies, institutions, social identities.)" (Gee and Handford, p. 9). Therefore, CDA sees discourse as constitutive of social practice.

CDA is a broad term which does not imply a special method of discourse analysis: "As an analytical practice, CDA is not one direction of research among many others in the study of discourse. Rather, it is a critical perspective that may be found in all areas of discourse studies, such as discourse grammar, Conversation Analysis, discourse pragmatics, rhetoric, stylistics, narrative analysis, argumentation analysis, multimodal discourse analysis and social semiotics, sociolinguistics, and ethnography of communication or the psychology of discourse-processing, among others. In other words, CDA is discourse study with an attitude" (Van Dijk, 2001, p.466)

What we can understand from this is that the goal of CDA is not just to describe how language works or even to offer deep explanations, though they it also attempts to do this. CDA also wants to speak to and, perhaps, intervene in, social or political issues, problems, and controversies in the world. (Gee, 2011, p.9). Because of that, CDA argues that language-in-use is always part and parcel of, and partially constitutive of, specific social practices and that social practices always have implications for inherently political things like status, solidarity, the distribution of social goods, and power (Ibid, p. 68). Therefore, for discourse analysis which intends to be critical, the main focus of investigation is how language, both spoken and written, enacts social and cultural perspectives and identities." (Sunderland and Litosseliti, 2002, p. 9).

CDA percieves language as a social practice putting a special emphasis on the context of language use and differentiating between what a a certain text says and what it implies, since , “with any speech act or other meaningful social move, questions arise about what interactants are trying to do, whether they straightforwardly mean what their words say or whether something else is at their stake.“ (Eckert and McConnel-Ginet, 2003, pp. 152,153).

2.2. Genre as Discourse

As defined in Eckert and McConnel-Ginet (2003, p.107), genres are conventional text types that can be distinguished on the basis of typical content and internal organization, and, genre-specific stylistic characteristics are closely connected not only to the aims of individual producers in a given genre but also to expectations and ideologies among both producers and consumers of that genre. Bhatia (2014, p.13) sees genre as a recognizable communicative event which is highly structured and conventionalized with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. However, these constraints can sometimes be exploited by expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of the social recognized purposes.

In addition to this, we need to mention that the term “genre” is sometimes used interchangeably with the term “discourse” (e.g. newspaper discourse, classroom discourse, interview, TV news), (Litosseliti, 2013, p. 52) and such an understanding implies broadening of the term „genre“ and as Jones (2012, p.9) puts it, genre in discourse analysis goes beyond examining the conventional structures and features of different kinds of texts to asking what these structures and features can tell us about the people who use the texts and what they are using them to do.

This positioning allows us to perceive the corpus used in our paper as “the discourse of newspaper debates”, which implies “a set of conventions associated with this linguistic activity, and some specified positions for those involved” (Litosseliti, 2013, p. 52) and to explore what columinsts can do and be in various contexts, because, as Jones (2012, p.56) further explains, genres are more than just texts; they are means by which people get things done and the way they are structured depends crucially on what the particular people using a genre want or need to do.

2.3. Language as Discourse

We put our language to work in discourse, shaping our utterances to have an effect on our interlocutors, anticipating how they will react. (Eckert and McConnel-Ginet, 2003, p. 78). The changed perspective of language as a complex and dynamic system which is inseparable from our sociocultural context, has led many contemporary linguists to shift their attention from language to discourse. Coates (2013, p. 215) explains that the whole idea of 'language', from this new perspective, is something of a fiction. What we normally refer to as 'language' can more realistically be seen as a heterogeneous collection of discourses."

However, as discussed above, "the term discourse is itself subject to dispute, with different scholarly traditions offering different definitions of the term, some of which venture far beyond language-centred approaches." (Bucholtz, 2013, p. 44). Even though a basic linguistic understanding of discourse is that it is language beyond the sentence, and most traditional disocurse analysts agree that discourse includes the idea of stretches of text, spoken and written (Sunderland and Litosseliti, 2002, p. 9), the increasing understanding that language and society mutually shape each other resulted in a broadening of the traditional definition of discourse from "the linguistic level in which sentences are combined into larger units" (Ibid), to a more comprehensive definition of discourse as "language in context: that is, language as it is put to use in social situations, not the more idealized and abstracted linguistic forms that are the central concern of much linguistic theory" (Ibid).

As Jones (2012, p.3) explains, language is always situated in at least four ways: within the material world and where we encounter it will contribute to the way we interpret it; within relationships – one of the main ways we understand what people mean when they speak or write is by referring to who they are, how well we know them and whether or not they have some kind of power over us; in history – in relation to what happened before and what we expect to happen afterwards; and finally, language is situated in relation to other language – utterances and texts always respond to or refer to other utterances and texts; that is, everything we say or write is situated in a kind of network of discourse.

Therefore, one of the most important discoveries of contemporary linguists which led to this revolutionary approach to the study of language is that discourse is always embedded in a particular social context, not merely as a consequence of it, but also as an important factor which exerts influence on that social context, because language simultaneously reflects and creates how we see the world. „Language does not simply reflect social reality, but is also

constitutive of such reality, in other words, it shapes how we see ourselves and the world.“ (Litosseliti, 2013, p. 9).

In this sense, we can say that the understanding of language as discourse has come to recognize language as having an active role in the creation of our identities which come to exist as a consequence of different positioning through different discourses. “One of the advantages of talking about ‘discourses’ rather than about ‘language’ is that the concept ‘discourse’ acknowledges the value-laden nature of language. There is no neutral discourse: whenever we speak we have to choose between different systems of meaning, different sets of values. Each of us has access to a range of discourses, and it is these different discourses which give us access to, or enable us to perform, different ‘selves’.” (Coates, 2013, p. 215).

2.3. Discourse as Identity

Identity can be created and expressed in different ways and actions we do. In the perspective of discourse analysis, one of these actions is our language, and in fact, it is seen as a very powerful way of enacting our identity. As explained in Jones (2012, p.20), whenever people speak or write, they are through their discourse somehow showing who they are and what their relationship to other people is – they are enacting their identities and the important thing about such identities is that they are multiple and fluid rather than singular and fixed, and this is not because we change our personality in any fundamental way, but because we change the way we use language.

From this, we understand that language is an active participant in our self-representation and creation of our identities, because, "we use language to get recognized as taking on a certain identity or role, that is, to build an identity here and now" (Gee, 2011, p. 18), and the choice of different styles of speech are used for enacting and and recognizing different identities in different settings (Ibid, p. 28).

This leads us to a conclusion that there is no neutral discourse (Coates, 2013, p. 215), because discourses represent and constitute ways of thinking and doing (Litosseliti, 2013, p.49) and therefore, when you speak or write anything, you use the resources of English to project yourself as a certain kind of person, a different kind in different circumstances (Gee, 2011, p. 30). And, due to the fact that the way we use discourse and position ourselves through it is "tied up with our social identities and our social relationships" (Jones, 2012, p. 5), discourse analysis can greatly contribute to our understanding of "how the societies in which we live are put together and why people interact with one another the way they do" (Ibid). Also, it can help us understand how people view reality differently and why they do so, and because of that, the study of discourse analysis, then, is not just the study of how we use language, it is also indirectly the study of romance, psychology, politics, power, and a whole lot of other things (Ibid), among which we can also classify identity.

One part of our identity that is reflected in our discourse is our gender identity. Language is shaped by gender, but also, language helps construct gender identities. Language use shapes how we see ourselves and this is where we find the study of discourse analysis very useful as it helps us determine all gender-based differences hidden and reflected in discourse.

3. DISCOURSE AND GENDER

“The study of discourse and gender is an interdisciplinary endeavour undertaken by scholars in linguistics, anthropology, communications, social psychology, education, literature, and other disciplines. At its heart is a focus on, first, the linguistic resources individuals draw on to present themselves as gendered beings in relation to other aspects of the self within the constraints of their communities, more or less conforming to or resisting these constraints; and, second, the discursive construction of gender and its many components through words and images” (Kendall and Tannen, 2001, p. 639).

Whereas earlier studies showed us that we use language because who we are which can, to a great extent, explain natural differences reflected in male and female speech styles, the new perspective, centred at discourse, shows us that who we are is partly because of the way we use language.

“We make choices when we speak; we can resist and subvert. Social and cultural change are possible precisely because we do not use the discourses available to us uncritically, but participate actively in the construction of meaning. We choose between competing discourses in our construction and reconstruction of ourselves. These choices are particularly significant in our construction and re-construction of ourselves as gendered subjects. Our construction of ourselves as masculine or feminine is profoundly affected by the discourses on gender current at any given time.” (Coates, 2013, p.216).

In short, discourse approaches to gender and language are based on a conceptualization of language as social practice (Litosseliti, 2013, p. 44), as for, “discursive positions are tied to cultural contexts and social situations, and they are seldom completely gender neutral” (Eckert and McConnel-Ginet, 2003, p. 157). Also, in addition to looking at the ways in which language is used by men and women, the study of gender through discourse attempts to look at “the ways in which language is used to say things about men and women. “(Litosseliti, 2013, p.1).

Mills (1999, pp.17,18) explains that the reason why discourses are in some ways gendered is because of “the systematicity of the ideas, opinions, concepts, ways of thinking and behaving which are formed within a particular context [and in line with which] women and men behave within a certain range of parameters when defining themselves as gendered subjects.“ Similar opinion is offered by Litosseliti (2013, p.68) and she also links the existence of

different gender identities to the fact that people grow up "performing the practices of different communities of practice, where people engage in an endeavour together", and therefore, she continues, "their gender identities are formed, produced, and reproduced through engagement with gendered practices in such communities, and through differential gendered participation in them."

As we have already explained, there is no neutral discourse and, since discourse is a reflection of our identity, then gender, as a constitutive part of our identity, is also constantly being constructed and enacted through discourse which in turn means that we can see gender as a contextualized practice. As Aikhenvald (2016, p.1) says, the way gender is articulated shapes the world of individuals, and of the societies they live in.

"When we speak of a discourse, we refer to a particular history of talk about a particular idea or set of ideas. Thus when we talk about a discourse of gender, or varied discourses of gender, we refer to the working of a particular set of ideas about gender in some segment or segments of society" (Coates, 2013, p. 42).

Furthermore, if we take into account that "discourses represent and constitute ways of thinking and doing" (Litosseliti,2013, p.49), and that gender can also be understood as "a sex-based way of experiencing other social attributes like class, ethnicity or age (and also less obviously social qualities like ambition, athleticism and musicality)" (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1998, pp. 488,489), and that "gender identity enters into shaping both the face individuals want to project and the face others are willing to ascribe to them" (Ibid, 2003, p. 60), then we can conclude that the interrelation between discourse and gender is highly complex, intertwined and inextricably linked, in fact, our personal discourses are always, to some extent gendered – "gendered discourses are articulated by both women and men, in different ways and different situations" (Litosseliti, 2013, p. 58).

As Litosseliti (Ibid), further points out, gendered discourses are discourses that say something about women and men, girls and boys, and about their – in certain ways gendered – actions, behaviours, positions, choices, relations, identities. Gendered discourses position women and men in certain ways, and at the same time, people take up particular gendered subject positions that constitute gender more widely. As explained by Butler 1990 (cited in Litosseliti, 2013, p. 3), in order to define ourselves as masculine or feminine, we make choices among norms of language which are seen as appropriate and intelligible for performing masculinity or femininity. Among approaches that study gender and discourse,

we need to mention Feminist Post-structuralist Discourse Analysis (FPDA) which sees gender as one of the power variables, which construct speakers' identities (Baxter,2010, p. 131). Furthermore, FPDA argues that most females are not helpless victims of patriarchal oppression, but that gender identities are complex, shifting and multiply located, continuously fluctuating between subject positions of powerfulness and powerlessness (Ibid).

When we talk about the construction of gendered identities, we necessarily refer to a two-way process: discourses constitute multiple identities and people's identities give rise to particular discourses (Litosseliti, 2013, p.62). Therefore, analysis of gender and discourse helps us understand how gender is enacted through everyday interactions and practices, or better said – discourses. This can especially be evident in the discourse of arguments, because "men and women differ in the ways in which they attempt to influence each other" (Locke, 2011, p. 17) and because „the content and organisation of arguments is both shaped by assumptions around notions of 'maleness' and 'femaleness' and produces gender" (Litosseliti, 2002, p. 145).

Although, earlier approaches to language and gender have showed us important gender-based communicative practices of men and women, such an approach by itself is not sufficient because, as explained by Swann (2002, p.51), on its own, the establishment of general patterns in the distribution of linguistic features is a limited and potentially reductive exercise which tells us nothing about how language is used by women and men in specific contexts, nor about what speakers are doing as they talk – and this is where discurse analysis approach can provide useful answers.

Finally, the need for exploring gender through discursive lens can best be summerized by following: "Knowledge of how language relates to gender is not a catalogue of correlations between particular linguistic forms and sex of speakers, referents, addressees and the like. Rather, such knowledge entails tacit understanding of

1) how particular linguistic forms can be used to perform particular pragmatic work (such as conveying stance and social action) and

2) norms, preferences and expectations regarding the distribution of this work vis à vis particular social identities of speakers, referents and addressees" (Ochs 1992, cited in Aikhenvald, 2016, p.152).

III. METHODOLOGY

Given that “in many instances it is difficult to pinpoint the precise framework within which a given study was carried out, for most studies of language and gender do not rely on a single approach to discourse” (Bucholtz, 2013, p.44) and that “the theory of discourse analysis (critical or otherwise) is often vague, and theoretical work frequently does not aim to provide clear methodological guidelines,” (Sunderland and Litosseliti, 2002, p. 22), the methodological framework of this paper also relies on a combination of theoretical fields and methodological frameworks within the study of discourse analysis which take a critical standpoint that linguistic choices are important in the construction of one’s social (in this case, gender) identity through discourse and that the close reading of texts can reveal wider preferences of social roles of male and female debaters. Discourse analysis, therefore, “by viewing discourse as a social practice in itself, and by seeking to demystify the workings of identity, ideology and power in discourse“(Litosseliti, 2002, p.146), is particularly useful in exploring the implicit and assumed aspects of discursive construction of gender through our language use.

In this small-scale study, we will analyse newspaper debates between men and women, we are going to apply a critical discourse approach which can be described as a comprehensive approach to the study of discourse and gender in newspaper columns since it examines both the text organisation – the linguistic practices or conversational and rhetorical strategies, and the text content – what is being said and implied through a particular text. We find that both these perspectives are important for our analysis; the first one helps us understand the ways in which arguers use linguistic resources to achieve different aims and effects in their arguments, while the second entails identifying the attitudes and beliefs that are explicitly or implicitly present in discourse. “The two are mutually reinforced, and given the view of argumentation as an in-context negotiation of discourses, both orientations are important for the analysis – text organisation and text content are mutually constructed: themes (and values, ideologies, identities) emerge and are shaped through the different ways of language use, while language use (linguistic organisation of the material) constantly constructs, negotiates and changes these ways of seeing the world” (Ibid, 2002, p.134).

Theoretically speaking, this is an interdisciplinary approach rooted in a linguistic perspective, because as Gee (2011, p. 44) elaborates, even though discourses can be considered as ways with and integrations of words, deeds interactions, thoughts, feelings, objects, tools, times,

and places that allow us to enact and recognize different socially situated identities, we, as linguistic discourse analysts, pay attention primarily to language and for a while, at least, we will leave non-language "stuff" out of consideration. When we do so, we are looking at how people communicate who they are and what they are doing through language.

In this sense, our analysis explores the ways in which male and female debaters in newspaper columns construct their gender identities through their language – "primarily by favouring one rhetorical route over another, and by evoking specific repertoires from social life" (Ibid, 2002, p. 129). Therefore, our focus will be to explore differing discursive strategies of male and female columnists, that is, variations in the way they construct their gender identities through variations in lingustic choices and topic invokations.

In our paper, we will use the methodological framework applied in the paper *Head to head* written by Lia Litosseliti (2002) and published in *Gender identity and discourse analysis*, edited by Sunderland, J. and Litosseliti, L. (eds.).

For analysing text structure, linguistic practices and rhetorical and conversational strategies we will ask the following questions:

1) How are argument positions and claims grounded or legitimated (e.g. appeals, authorities cited)?

2) What kind of linguistic tactics are mobilised) (e.g. text structures, lexical choice, use of metaphor)? (Ibid, p. 135)

And, in our analysis of text content we will look at:

1) What argument positions and claims are put forward?
2) How is the world represented and constructed (knowledge, assumptions, attitudes, values, beliefs) and what are the consequences of those representations?
3) What identities and relationships are set up for those involved? (Ibid).

IV. CORPUS

The corpus of this paper consists of three newspaper debates between male and female debaters. These debates present a very specific genre of argumentation and opinion elaboration with distinctive features which can be linked to gender identities of debaters. Two

debates are taken from the column Head to head in the British daily newspaper *The Guardian*, and these debates revolve around issues which concern social life. The first debate from this column is related to the question of Covid passports "Would Covid passports be damaging to public health?" and it is led by Melinda Mills and Stephen Reicher. The second debate is led by Sarah Phillips and Toby Moses and it revolves around the question: "Should schoolchildren be made to run a mile every day?" The third and final debate which we will analyse is slightly different from the previous two debates and it is taken from the column *Room for Debate* in the American daily newspaper *The New York Times*. It has a form of a series of letters exchanged between two debaters: Emerson Csorba and Noa Gafni Slaney who debate over the question: "Is Digital Connectedness Good or Bad for People?" This type of debating slightly resembles spoken communication and due to its length it allows us to observe how female and male debaters refer to each other when debating, how do they interact and communicate in a "network of discourses".

The reason for choosing newspaper debates as our corpus is firstly because more research on gender and language is done on speech texts (Robin Lakoff, 1975; Deborah Tannen, 1996) rather than on written texts, secondly, because the discursive reproduction of gender of different professional groups is not enough explored (including those of newspaper columnists) and newspaper columns present an important source of examples of language in use in our daily lives – "given the superfluity of newspapers and the daily role they have in meaning-making, it is surprising how few linguistic studies there are, proportionally, of how they use language" (O'Keeffe, 2012, p. 442). Finally, another reason which made this corpus especially appealing for examination within the field of gender and discourse is that newspapers are "a key public site for pointing out arguments"(Litosseliti,2002, p. 136), and bearing in mind that arguments "canonically involve giving reasons and evidence and using rational principles of inference to support a position" (Eckert and McConnel-Ginet, 2003 p.101), and that these strategies and principles are largely shaped by gender, we can conclude that newspaper debates between male and female debaters offer an interesting field for examination how gender shapes discursive strategies in argument positioning and how do these discursive strategies construct and represent gender identities of male and female debaters using them.

V. RESEARCH

Debate 1

The Guardian

Head to head : **Melinda Mills and Stephen Reicher**

Would Covid passports be damaging to public health?

The government is trialling them but some scientists think they could be counterproductive. Two experts go head to head.

Opening paragraph

Melinda Mills: *"**Many** have argued that Covid passports **– certificates showing** whether someone has had the vaccine or a negative test, or has Covid immunity – wouldn't work. In our recent **Royal Society report**, we concluded that they **could be feasible in some cases, but only if they meet certain criteria**. **The crux is** how and where these passports would be used."*

Stephen Reicher: *"**The government** has flown so many kites about **"**Covid passports**"** and **"**vaccine passports**"** that we have ended up with **a hopelessly confused debate** where people are disagreeing over entirely different things. Certificates that allow people entry to potentially crowded spaces **could take one of two forms: a "Covid passport"** would show the results of a recent Covid test, whereas **a "vaccine passport"** would show whether people had been vaccinated."*

Differences in language use and discursive strategies:

Melinda Mills	Stephen Reicher
"Many have argued" – indirect language; not calling out anyone, not criticizing those people who have an opinion opposite from hers; just states a situation present in the society i.e. that many people do not believe that Covid passports would be an effective measure. "certificates showing whether…" – immediately offers explanation; careful to provide all necessary information for readers, even if the term mentioned is	"The government has flown" – directly calling out the government as a responsible body for causing confusion among people. "Covid passports" and "vaccine passports" – uses abbreviation marks for Covid passports and vaccine passports – significant of his attitude about such preventive measures; what body language is for speaking, abbreviation marks are for text – we can sense a dose of sarcasm in the way he talks about these passports.

relatively well-known to everyone today. wouldn't work – starts by providing opposite opinion. Simple statement of what others think, without irony or sarcasm; stating a common fact.	"we have ended up with a hopelessly confused debate" – uses strong terms to describe the present disagreement among people; this word choice reveals his dislike of governmental action. We see his criticism right at the beginning.
"Royal Society report" – refers to an *authority* i.e. official report of the Royal Society and offers a direct link for the insight, making sure that her statements are trustworthy and based on truth. From this, we see that she wants her audience to trust her. "could be feasible in some cases, but only if they meet certain criteria" – tentative language, not insisting on her attitude at all costs, rather, she shows her awareness that some criteria should be met in order for Covid passports (she supports their usage) to be functional. A relatively light and an observant opposition to those who argue that "Covid passports wouldn't work". The crux is – in the final sentence of the opening paragraph she uses a more direct language, she summarizes what exactly those criteria are: "how and where these passports would be used". A tone which suggest greater readiness for dialogue.	"Certificates … could take one of two forms: a "Covid passport" – gives a brief explanation of two types of certificates which people need to have, in a way, aims to make clear the difference between the two in order silence the debate caused by inadequate government explanations. He makes a distinction between the two, whereas Mills refers to the both types of passports as "COVID passport". The reason for this distinction might be seen as showing his attitude that Covid measures should exist, but that he does not see compulsory vaccination and certificates showing someone is vaccinated as one of them.

Differences in text content and argument positioning in the opening paragraphs:

In terms of text content, the topic discussed is the same – Covid passports. However, debaters present different argument positions. Mills states that there are people who object vaccination i.e. Covid passports, without precisely stating who those people are, which social status do they belong to etc., and explains what Covid passports are and cites Royal Society

report to show that vaccination can be useful if it meets certain criteria. On the other hand, Reicher's tone is more accusative, we see him as adopting a position of a critic of government which causes confusion among people instead of leading them in these hard times. We therefore can say that Mill's uses a more objective discourse style which is not imposing her opinion, but rather open different views, whereas Reicher is more subjective, as for his discourse style instantly reveals his personal attitude.

Paragraph 2

Melinda Mills: "***For international travel****, where testing* ***infrastructure*** *and a "yellow card"* ***system*** *are already in place, Covid passports* ***seem a reasonable move****. The* ***UK government*** *is also trialling Covid passports at large gatherings such as* ***sports events****. Earlier this month, when* ***the Texas Rangers*** *played in front of a sold-out baseball stadium, we got* ***a glimpse of what can happen*** *when the floodgates open without restrictions: there was no social distancing in place and few people wore masks – all in a context of rising infections and when only a fraction of the population had received their second jabs."*

Stephen Reicher*: "****So let's focus*** *on vaccine passports.* ***First, a crucial distinction****: there is* ***a world of difference*** *between requiring a vaccine to undertake activities that are seen as nonessential and applying this requirement to activities that are basic to our everyday lives. In the former case, vaccination is perceived* ***as a choice****,* ***whereas in the latter it becomes effectively compulsory****."*

Differences in language use and discursive strategies:

Melinda Mills	Stephen Reicher
The UK government – grounds and legitimizes her views by calling on to the efforts of the UK government and on a concrete real-life example of a large gathering – a sport event. A sport event – uses an example of a typical daily activity which involves a lot of people, therefore causing a risk of spreading the infection. She sees such events as good examples where Covid passports would be useful and protect the collective health of the society (contrary to Reicher, who sees this measure as an attack on one's freedom). The Texas Rangers – again uses an example from real life to support her argument position. a glimpse of what can happen – she	So let's focus – straight and direct language, guiding readers to the topic of his speech: vaccine passports. *I explained you the difference, and I will talk about vaccine passports, not Covid passports.* First, a crucial distinction – again, starts by using direct and "to the point" language, not much words. a world of difference – uses hyperbole to highlight the difference which he sees in the vaccination process. Language use which reveals his black-and-white viewpoint of the situation. Choice vs. compulsion – uses a "black-and-white language" to highlight the contrast. Implies that the existing practice of vaccination as a condition to participate in

describes the consequences of this event, that is, rising infections, as just a "glimpse", suggesting that if no further measures (Covid passports), next to the already existing ones are added, we will not even be able to foresee what will happen, not to say prevent the consequences. She uses metaphorical language, saying we saw just a tiny piece of what can happen, instead of saying: *We saw what can happen*. In this way, she implies to her readers that extra care is needed because the danger is huge.	daily activities is a sort of a constraint of one's right to act freely. We see a concern for individual rights, as opposite of Mills who prioritizes social duties and health.

Differences in text content and argument positons:

Here, we see a more concrete difference in the stances that the female and male debaters adopt. As Litosseliti (2002, P. 146), in her analysis of a similar type of debate explains, debaters use different repertoires in their talk: "I think of repertoires as similar to discourses, in being entities or worlds consisting of acts, behaviours, values and assumptions which we evoke in our talk, writing and reading." For the purpose of our analysis, we will refer to the different repertoires employed by the debaters as "discourses", in accordance with the explanation provided in the theoretical background of this paper that discourse is a way of doing and being.

In this sense, we see that the main focus of Mills will be on the necessity of vaccination and Covid passports in order to ensure a safe society and prevent infection and we can label this as an example of a *Discourse of Care*. On the other hand, the main argument positon which Reicher decides to adopt when talking about Covid passports and vaccination is not health and the care for the wellbeing of society, but instead, he is more concerned with defending an opinion that insisting on certification of vaccination as a condition for doing everyday activities is a threat to one's freedom and autonomy. Therefore, we can label his argument positioning as a *Discourse of Autonomy.*

Paragraphs 3 and 4

Melinda Mills: "*When used alongside other measures such as ventilation, social distancing and an effective test-and-trace system, Covid passports **could offer added certainty** at large events. But they need to meet certain **immunity and infection benchmarks**. There are **four ways** to show whether someone has Covid: proof of vaccination or the results from a PCR, lateral flow or viral antibody*

*test. In **our report**, we concluded that only proof of vaccination or a PCR test result would be viable benchmarks for Covid passports… This is because antibody tests aren't **a reliable measure of infection,** and lateral flow tests aren't as effective at identifying people who have Covid but only have a low viral load. The latter **can be unreliable,** particularly when they're not administered by an expert."*

Stephen Reicher: "*Once people begin to see **vaccines as compulsory for everyday social participation** (going to the pub, even going to work), two things follow. Those who aren't vaccinated are, in effect, **excluded from society**. They will view **the threat** of such exclusion as **a means of controlling** them and **forcing them** to get a jab…*

*Vaccination would cease to be something that is done with and for people. It would instead be **something imposed** by an external agency – and hence both political and medical authorities would be repositioned as the "other". All this would do is **generate anger**, and lead people to **reassert their autonomy** by refusing the vaccine."*

Differences in language use and discursive strategies:

Melinda Mills	Stephen Reicher
could offer added certainty – again, use of tentative language immunity and infection benchmarks – *Discourse of Care,* the focus is on health, on collective immunity; pointing out social awareness In our report – again referring to the statistical data four ways … – systematic listing, appeals to facts and empirical evidence reliability/unreliability – explains why Covid passports are a better measure (more reliable), alongside PCR tests, than the other two ways; reasserting *Discourse of Care* –	vaccines as compulsory for everyday social participation – the focus is on the fact that vaccine passports are being imposed as a requirement excluded from society (those who aren't vaccinated) – vaccination as a means of stigmatization; the threat, means of controlling, being forced, being imposed – reasserts the *Discourse of Autonomy.* Generate anger – through his discourse, he presents vaccine passports as having a detrimental effect on society reassert their autonomy – autonomy and

health and safety come first	freedom come first

Differences in text content and argument positioning:

In the content of the female debater, Melinda Mills, we notice a focus on the claim that Covid passports are a necessary measure for preventing infection and there is no mention of individual choice because the main goal is to prevent infection, to keep people safe – *Discourse of Care*. She is representing vaccination passports as a necessity, but also uses a tentative and observant tone and is careful to mention that these passports need to be applied properly.

The main objective of the male debater, Stephen Reicher is on representing Covid passports as a threat to one's autonomy – *Discourse of One's Autonomy.*

Paragraph 5

Melinda Mills: *"**The government has correctly drawn some red lines.** Certification would **never be required for essential services**, such as supermarkets or transport. But entry into **nonessential outlets, such as pubs and restaurants**, will be **a battleground** for this measure. The prime minister noted on Monday that **a number of fences will have to be jumped** before it's clear where Covid passports would be required, but business owners may feel that **the government is sitting on the fence rather than jumping it."***

Stephen Reicher*:" **This is bad enough in itself**, but it is raised to a whole new level of significance when you consider **the divisions** between those who are and those who aren't vaccinated. These divisions **aren't random**: they map precisely on to **existing social cleavages.** In the UK, those who have **a more troubled relationship with authority** have lower vaccination rates. Increased deprivation is closely related to decreased vaccination. Ethnic minorities, particularly black people, also have greater concerns about Covid vaccines. Based on **painful historical experience**, they need to be convinced that vaccines are being rolled out for them, rather than being done **to control them."***

Differences in language use and discursive strategies

Melinda Mills	Stephen Reicher
The government has correctly drawn some red lines – approval of governmental action, but with a dose of hedging: "some red lines", implies that she does not blindly support government restrictions, but that some of them are worthy of mentioning as successful Essential services (supermarkets and	This is bad enough in itself – insists on the negative side of certification of vaccination, no mention of other opinions, of possible difficulties in bringing a proper decision; offering only one perspective The divisions – the reinforcement of passports as stigmatization and a cause of social tensions; *Discourse of Autonomy*

transport) – in her opinion government would never require a certification for essential activities and she sees governmental action as "correct", since it ensures health of society Non-essential outlets (pubs and restaurants) are a battleground. – Figurative language highlights the complexity of bringing a decision which will satisfy everyone. A number of fences will have to be jumped – figurative language again, implies that there are a number of barriers in deciding where Covid passports should be required. The government is sitting on the fence rather than jumping it. – figurative language; interestingly, here she also makes a critique of government as not bringing a decision. Acknowledges other opinion (of business owners), too. We see her as more objective; not defending her opinion entirely, but rather evaluating possibilities.	links resistance to passports to the troubled relationship with authority – suggests that the question of Covid passports does not have to do just with health, but also with more complex social issues and individual statuses painful historical experience – links resistance to vaccination in Black communities to "painful historical experiences" – referring to history and collective memory of people Control – reasserting the argument position that vaccine passports are a way of controlling people; *Discourse of Autonomy*

Differences in text content and argument positioning:

Mills is seen as more objective as she offers both the approval of governmental actions and acknowledges that there are those who criticize the government because of indecisiveness. However, we notice that her understanding of essential and non-essential services differs from that of Reicher – she is more "disciplined" and views pubs and restaurants as a "luxury", whereas Reicher, as we saw in his previous arguments, sees pubs and restaurants as essential services as they constitute one's social life. But, unlike Mills, he does not give space in his argumentation to the other side but only reinforces the opinion that vaccination certificates bring more harm than use.

Paragraph 6

Melinda Mills: *"Ministers **may want** to shift some of the responsibility for administering Covid passports on to individual businesses, but this would **be mired** in **legal and ethical issues**. **The US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, for instance**, recently informed businesses that if employees cannot get vaccinated because of a disability or religious belief and businesses are unable to take additional measures, it would be legal to exclude them from workplaces."*

Stephen Reicher*" Passports would **undermine the take-up of vaccines** and **feed the very concerns** that **fuel hesitation** among minority communities. They would also **nurture the narratives of anti-vaxxers**, whose **mantra** is that vaccines are about control rather than health. **Compulsion fosters alienation** among the very people who are most likely to feel hesitant about getting the vaccine at the very point where this reassurance is most urgently needed."*

Differences in language use and discursive strategies:

Melinda Mills	Stephen Reicher
Ministers **may** want – an example of hedging, not stating surely that this is an intention of ministers. Be mired – figurative language; everything that threatens ethics is seen as a "boggy ground". The US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission – grounding her concern about the ethics of administering Covid passports on to individual businesses on the negative example in the practice of this Comission.	Undermine the take-up of vaccines – passports as the greatest enemy of vaccination, portrays them as counter effective Fuel hesitation, nurture the narratives – figurative language; Passports as "food" for hesistation Mantra of anti-vaxxers – depicts refusal of vaccination as a belief, and their sayings as "mantra" or "sacred utterance". Compulsion **fosters** alienation – making direct links; "fosters"– through his discourse he again depicts compulsory Covid passports as a fuel for social division.

Differences in text content and argument positioning

In this paragraph, Mills offers the issues and possible side effects of imposing Covid passports and she again demonstrates a *Discourse of Care*, but this time in another dimension: it is not about effective measures, but about ethics. Reicher positions passports as a threat, not just to social divisions, but to the very process of vaccination itself. He categorically refuses the necessity of such certification, unlike Mills who constantly weighs between positive and negative aspects of Covid passports and in that sense, we see her as more cooperative and ready for exchange of opinions which is a trait more present in female conversation strategies.

Final paragraph

Melinda Mills*: "These are **only some of the issues that Covid passports will face**. It will be crucial to **ensure they don't discriminate or exacerbate inequalities, particularly among those who may be hesitant about getting tested or receiving a vaccine**. There are also **questions** about the technology they would use and the extent of data collection. Would they work across different devices and via the*

*NHS app? How could paper passports be built to resist forgery? And how would they ensure people's data remains private and secure? **The government also needs to be clear** about whether it intends Covid passports to be the birth of a digital healthcare system, or whether this policy will have a "sundown clause", like Denmark's Covid certification, where data is soon deleted.*

*These are all questions that require **detailed attention**. Covid certificates **could provide** added certainty – but **only if** they meet these criteria."*

Stephen Reicher: *"Vaccine inequity plus vaccine passports will translate into **vaccine apartheid**. That is why **we must immediately take down these "vaccine passport" kites** and **instead focus** on what public health practitioners have long known: **good health depends on sustained community engagement**. Vaccine passports **threaten** both our physical health and the health of our society."*

Differences in language use and discursive strategies

Melinda Mills	Stephen Reicher
only some of the issues that Covid passports will face – reinforcing the fact that Covid passports have some problematic points, a more objective way of talking about passports, looking at both sides ensure they don't discriminate or exacerbate inequalities, particularly among those who may be hesitant about getting tested or receiving a vaccine – in this paragraph she switches her talk to the social dimension of passports, a more observant and a more comprehensive view, her *Discourse of Care* which was at the beginning centred at health and safety now encompasses the social dimension, too. questions – she asks a number of questions regarding technical issues of these passports; critical argument positioning. The government also needs to be – this time she is offering suggestions and clear advice to the government, aiming to guide ministers to bring a proper decision and overcome issues facing the usage of passports. Detailed attention – reinforces her view that	"Vaccine inequity plus vaccine passports will translate into vaccine apartheid. – "Mathematical language": (A+B = C). No room for other viewpoints. Uses strong terms: apartheid – presents Covid passports as a system or a policy of segregation. We must immediately take down these "vaccine passport" kites. – an order, directive, no further discussion. instead focus – after ordering what we should stop, he goes on to provide direction in which way we should act. No observant forms, such as "we should try focusing" or "perhaps it would be better to focus", but simply and directly and even assertively stating what the right move is. public health practitioners – referring to the authority of public health practitioners Good health depends on sustained community engagement – offers his view of a solution for public health. This is a strong statement and it can have a strong effect on the reader, however, it does not offer any concrete actions, what exactly would "sustained community engagement" be?

Covid passports are a sensitive and a complex question which has both good and bad sides and therefore needs to be treated with care Covid certificates **could provide** added certainty – but **only if** they meet these criteria. – A tentative usage of language, not asserting her view, but rather suggesting passports as a possibly good solution (hedging) and reasserts the necessity of meeting the mentioned criteria. Suggesting a possibility: Vaccine passports can be useful (but, we must approach them carefully).	Vaccine passports **threaten** both our physical health and the health of our society. – Final sentence is a reassurance of his opinion, no call for further talk on this topic, strengthening his view that vaccine passports are a danger, a threat to health, and points out that both physical and public health are in danger. This statement actually says: Vaccine passports are useless.

Differences in text content and argument positioning

The final paragraphs of the two debaters differ entirely in their content and in the way in which they positon their viewpoints. While Mills offers an example of a more critical thinker by suggesting directly what issues stand as an obstacle to the functionality of passports, Reicher continues to reassure his opinion that vaccine passports are bad and he depicts them as a tool for social segregation which will be counter effective – not only will these passports be useless in solving existing health problems, but they will further harm our health as they threaten to attack our physical health.

Debate 2:

The Guardian

***Head to head:* Sarah Phillips and Toby Moses**

Should schoolchildren be made to run a mile every day?

Sarah Phillips and Toby Moses debate whether a 'daily mile' initiative from a Scottish primary should be rolled out to pupils nationwide

Opening paragraphs (1st and 2nd paragraph)

Sarah Phillips: "***I despised*** *PE at school.* ***I faked*** *sick notes,* ***had my period more frequently than was biologically possible*** *– did anything to avoid* ***the ritual humiliation of running*** *around cones in the cold followed by an even colder communal shower. It was* ***as if they were trying to put you off fitness for life…*** *Luckily it didn't work and when I turned 20* ***I discovered running,*** *which has* ***enhanced my life in so many ways****, which other people have* ***described*** *far more eloquently than I ever could.* ***This is why I think*** *the "daily mile" initiative to get schoolchildren to run or walk en masse for 15 minutes each day is ingenious."*

Toby Moses: "***I'm sure*** *all* ***the fitness freaks****, cross-country enthusiasts and the naturally skinny will* ***raise a glass of kale juice*** *to the "daily mile" scheme. But* ***spare a thought*** *for* ***us poor fat kids*** *forced out on to the road for* ***a painful, wheezy jog****, and then ask yourself whether* ***this ritual torture*** *is really the best way to encourage a life-long exercise habit in those struggling with obesity. After all, this scheme isn't aimed at those who are already fit –* ***it's the fat kids it's supposed to help...*** *As a once* ***"cuddly, big-boned" child****, I remember all too well* ***the agony*** *of cross-country, the regular pre-football laps****, the sweaty, jiggly embarrassment of the always last to be picked.*** *That was enough to be* ***put me off exercise*** *for a decade"*

Differences in language use and discursive strategies

Sarah Phillips	Toby Moses
I despised PE at school. – starts with referring to her personal experience of PE lessons Faked sick notes, had my period more frequently than was biologically possible – lists excuses she was coming up with to avoid PE lessons; an honest personal confession which strengthens her previous statement the ritual humiliation of running – refers to the obligatory running on PE lessons as a "ritual humiliation" – an unusual way of beginning her argumentation in which she actually supports the running idea; cleverly plays with the expectations of readers; exploits the constrains of the genre of debates	I'm sure – starts with claiming that he must surely know what those opposite of him (sport lovers) must be thinking Fitness freaks, cross-country enthusiasts and the naturally skinny – a mocking tone, all those that love fitness are "freaks"; a dose of sarcasm Raise a glass of kale juice – use of sarcasm; if you love running, what else can you be drinking than kale juice? ; metaphorical language, raising a glass (of kale juice) implies celebrating But, spare a thought – addressing to his readers, asking for their understanding, conversational tone; more relaxed

as if they were trying to put you off fitness for life – suggests that it seemed that the purpose of that “ritual” was to make you hate running forever I discovered running – use of the verb “discover” creates an effect that running is something spectacular (not a well-known activity in which everyone engaged at least a couple of times in life), “a hidden treasure” which she discovered; here we see a sudden switch in her discourse Enhanced my life in so many ways – this “discovery” improved my life on many levels (it is not just about health or being fit) Described – a click on this word in the texts opens a link of an article in which benefits of running and healthy life are explained by five people (Getting fit in middle age: a marathon addict, a couch potato and others share their pain | Health & wellbeing | The Guardian) – motivational effect, as if saying: *I am not the only person who discovered how running is amazing, there are other people,too, look!* This is why I think – in the last sentence, she sums up that all the mentioned benefits of running are the reason why she supports the running initiative; grounds her argument	Us, poor fat kids – implies that he belongs to the category of “fat” and suggests that this category is to be pitied: *While “fitness freaks” are celebrating” no one has remembered to think of the rights of us poor fat kids…* The ritual torture – same word preference (ritual); sees running as torture Help the fat kids – solidarity only with his category; depicting his category as victims “cuddly, big-boned” child – personal experience, exaggeration in the description of himself The agony of cross-country – reinforcement of his opinion that running is a torture The sweaty, jiggly – uses depictive words that reinforce a feeling of an unpleasant experience. embarrassment of the always last to be picked – puts focus on the feeling of embarrassment caused by being the last one in running activity; the focus is on shame; implies the competitive nature of the author put me off exercise – personal experience, signals demotivation for running due to experiences in school

on the experiences of other people who can witness how running is useful	

Differences in text content and argument positioning

Sarah Phillips starts by invoking her personal (unpleasant) experience of PE lessons. Toby Moses makes a division between the two categories: fitness freaks rising a glass of kale juice because of the decision to run and poor fat kids. He acknowledges that he is a "fat kid" and positions this group as being under pressure and threat. He makes "black and white" categorization: *If you are skinny, you love fitness. If you are fat, you do not love fitness.*

In the second paragraph Sarah says how she realized that running is good when she grew up and that her life became so much better and she states that she sees this realization that running is actually good as a reason why children should be thought about it and motivated to run while in school – it will be better for them if they discover the magic of running earlier. On the other hand, Toby Moses continues to draw on his negative experiences (although he also started running after a decade) which he represents as even being traumatic to an extent that he did not wish to run for a decade after finishing school. The main standpoint which he proposes is not that running is hard or unpractical or that it does not help much in losing weight, but on the feeling of embarrassment caused by always being the last, which is a typical concern of men.

We see that they both start similarly in an honest manner (with *Discourse of Negative Experience*), admitting that they did not enjoy P.E. lessons in school, but Sarah continues to positon her argumentation on the bases of her later experience of running (the discovery of its benefits) – *Discourse of Motivation and Optimism*, whereas Toby "stays in the past" and draws on his negative psychological state caused by not being able to run as fast as his colleagues – *Discourse of Negative Personal Experience*.

Paragraph 3

Sarah Phillips: "*There is* ***no easier form of exercise*** *than running. You put on your trainers, leave the house, and* ***hey presto****, you're exercising.* ***No expensive*** *gym subscription necessary;* ***no competitive*** *neon lycra uniform.* ***Just run****. So what better thing to teach kids – especially in the midst*

*of **a childhood obesity epidemic** – than the fact that fitness can **be free, easy and most importantly fun**, as you **chat to your mates** along the way. It also **dispels the myth that you have to be good at sport**, as many of us aren't, in order to be fit.*"

Toby Moses: "***I remember vividly** faking a groin strain to get out of cross-country one year – the only injury my juvenile mind felt assured no teacher would feel comfortable examining. I got a friend to leave his bag in between the desks and staged an elaborate tumble over it, before lying in a heap on the floor. **It worked a treat.** My friend got in trouble, but I got to help marshal the race – **feeling smug** as **fellow chubsters** who **lacked my ingenuity struggled** around the field."*

Differences in language use and discursive strategies

Sarah Phillips	Toby Moses
No easier form of exercise – starts with a simple, short statement: *Running is easy!* – at the beginning she immediately attempts to motivate her readers; more objective: describes running as such No expensive gym subscription necessary; no competitive neon lycra uniform – continues by listing reasons why running is so easy: it is not expensive and you do not need to be fancy in order to run. hey presto – use of an exclamation; suggests that running is magic. Just run. – short sentence reinforces the simplicity of running, no need for any instructions or rules; you just run. That's it. A childhood obesity pandemic – refers to the increased tendency of having obese kids as a "pandemic" – something that is infectious, spreads fast and so we need to teach our kids an effective preventive measure to protect themselves from this pandemic. Free, easy and fun – motivational language again Chat to your mates – sees running as a social activity where children can strengthen	I remember vividly – continues to ground his argument on his personal experience. Offers a concrete example when he made up an excuse in order to be freed from running; more subjective: describes his own experience of running The whole paragraph explains his plan and the way in which he tricked his teacher in order to avoid running. – a dose of subjectivism, reference to his personal experience. It worked a treat – informal language; relaxed tone Feeling smug – description of the way he felt at that moment (finds it important to mention how he felt more superior) Fellow chubsters – informal language: chubster (an overweight person). By adding fellow, also an informal word with which he reasserts his belonging to the category of "chubsters". By using informal language and giving a detailed description of his personal memory, he makes a comic effect. Also, this is a powerful tool for getting solidarity and understanding from his readers.

their bonds, not as an arena for competing dispels the myth that you have to be good at sport in order to be fit – figurative language dispels the myth). Suggests that being fit is easy, no need for special sport skills.	lacked my ingenuity – self-praise, also has a comic effect struggled around the field – implies that running was a struggle, not a fun activity, for his "fellow chubsters".

Differences in text content and argument positioning:

In this paragraph, both debaters aim to convince their readers that their viewpoint is better, but they do so in a different manner. Sarah Phillips positions her argument objectively, she points out the positive aspects of running and on depicting it as a form of exercise available to everyone – regardless of their financial status or sport skills. She aims to motivate her readers to recognize that running is an essential daily activity which makes you feel better, and that it is especially effective in preventing obesity among children – *Discourse of Motivation and Optimism*. Toby Moses, on the other hand, uses personal experience retold in a relaxed, informal manner, which slightly resembles "street talk", to awaken sympathy among the readers. He talks from a perspective of a boy, a chubby boy who avoided running (suffering) in school – *Discourse of Negative Personal Experience.*

Paragraph 4

Sarah Phillips: *"**Elaine Wyllie, who is headteacher of St Ninians, the primary school in Stirling in Scotland that pioneered the scheme**, says of its success: "The children are fit and healthy, they come in energised, ready to learn and focused, apple-cheeked and bright-eyed." While this **may sound like something out of Enid Blyton,** Wyllie **is definitely on to something**, with signs that **not only the children's health but also possibly their grades have improved** (a study is under way to assess this). **I'm quite sure** they are happier for it too*."

Toby Moses: "***Enforced** running would not have cured **my aversion**, it would have **been a further trauma** for somebody who already **found PE traumatic enough**. **I do jog now** on occasion – but **I still hate it.** Some of us **simply aren't built** for that type of exercise."*

Differences in language use and discursive strategies:

Sarah Phillips	Toby Moses
Elaine Wyllie, who is headteacher of St Ninians, the primary school in Stirling in Scotland that pioneered the scheme –	Shorter paragraph; again uses example of himself – running would not have cured my aversion (so it will not cure aversion that

grounding her statements on impressions of the teacher working in the school which was first to apply this "running model". – She cites her and the citation is bursting with positive impressions regarding children's health, but also motivation for learning. may sound like something out of Enid Blyton – acknowledges that this explanation might sound a bit too idealistic (referring to Enid Blyton, a popular writer for kids). is definitely on to something – suggests that her saying should not be thrown away as it reveals something important and that is: not only the children's health but also possibly their grades have improved – "possibly" – observant not to make a final conclusion ad suggests that "a study" is being conducted to prove this. I am quite sure they are happier, too. – suggests that children should be able to see positive effects of running, but uses tentative language (*I am quite sure*, not *I am sure*).	any kid feels towards running). Enforced running, aversion, trauma – uses strong terms to reinforce his viewpoint that an initiative for running is bad. I do jog now – mentions that his lifestyle has changed (but does not mention any motives why he decided to run, when he previously felt aversion towards it) I still hate it – my feeling towards running has not changed (and that is a reason good enough not to make children run more) Some of us simply aren't built for that type of exercise. – there are many people (children) who are like me, who are not good at running.

Differences in text content and argument positioning

Content of these paragraphs and the way arguments are positioned and defended in them differ significantly. To support her statement, Sarah refers to the statement of the headteacher

in the school in which running initiative was performed. She points out how running had a positive effect on children's health, but also on performance in school – her focus is on the positive effects of running, regardless of one's personal feelings towards it (like it or not, it is good for you, and therefore you should give it a try) – *Discourse of Motivation and Optimism* (supported by claiming that children themselves benefited from running, that is, she appeals to facts rather than to her own experience.

On the other side, Toby Moses, bases his argumentation on the fact that not everyone likes running and he asserts his opinion that if you do not like it, and someone makes you run, you will hate it even more (not giving a space for the opinion that if you do not like it, perhaps you need to exercise a bit more and then you will get better at it and maybe even start liking it). Also, there is no mention of any positive aspects of running, if you are "not built for it", you should find another exercise. He bases his argumentation on the fact that he personally, if he were a child in school, would not like this running activity – *Discourse of Negative Personal Experience.*

Paragraph 5

Sarah Phillips: "*Obviously* ***there is the issue of making sure those who can't run or walk a mile very easily don't feel excluded from this social in the fresh air****; and of course there's* ***the delightful British weather****, which looms large in* ***most people's traumatic memories of PE****. But running in the rain is definitely* ***character-building****, as we all know. And it's* ***only 15 minutes****."*

Toby Moses: *"****Far better to try to develop*** *PE in primary schools that* ***offers a variety of different, and fun, activities****. For those not naturally inclined or physiologically suited to exercise, running is likely to be* ***the worst possible option****. There's* ***no purpose, no distraction from the pain, no fun*** *to be had. And that is the key."*

Differences in language use and discursive strategies:

Sarah Phillips	Toby Moses
Obviously there is the issue… acknowledges the opinion of the other side, more comprehensive viewpoint, it should be made sure that no one feels excluded the delightful British weather – sarcasm, but not intended to mock the opposite side, the purpose of it is to strengthen solidarity with	Far better to develop… – suggests another solution Organize PE lessons in a way that it offers a variety of different, and fun, activities. – his solution; PE lessons should be improved, but this is not the way, you have to make it more fun (no concrete suggestion of how to

readers: *We all are facing this awful British weather but that should not be an obstacle for running.* most people's traumatic memories of PE – again, mentions the opposite side, i.e. shows awareness that many people did not find their PE lessons fun character-building – gives motivation for running (despite "delightful" British whether): running will help you improve certain positive traits, it is an activity which involves some degree of discipline, with time, your character will get stronger (and you might even start liking it). Only 15 minutes – motivational language	improve the quality of PE lessons) The worst possible option – reinforcement of the opinion that running is a bad option, especially for those who are "not naturally inclined or physiologically suited to exercise" – if they try it they will not like it, but hate it; no motivation to "keep going" or to try to "push their limits" no purpose, no distraction from the pain, no fun to be had – strong vocabulary again: Encouraging children to run has no purpose, it will cause pain and it is not fun. – reinforcement of his viewpoint, not mentioning any positive aspects of encouraging children to run, or how to make them start liking it

Differences in text content and argument positioning:

In this paragraph, Sarah gives space to offering and acknowledging that not everyone loves running and suggests that schools need to be careful and ensure that running activity does not cause inequality among children, but also implies that the difficulty that running can help children become stronger (psychologically) – *Discourse of Care and Motivation*. On the other hand, Toby Moses is categorical in his opinion that running is "the worst possible option", for those "not naturally inclined or physiologically suited to exercise" (those like himself) – *Discourse of Negative Personal Experience*, and states his solution – to develop other activities. We see Sarah as more cooperative, less-assertive and more optimistic and encouraging, whereas Toby is more categorical, insists on his opinion and does not mention other (opposing) aspects. Perhaps, the crucial difference is that Phillips sees difficulties one might experience in running (not being able to run as fast or as long as others) as a "chance" for strengthening, whereas Moses sees them as a reason for feeling insecure due to the feeling of embarrassment in front of other children.

Final paragraph:

Sarah Phillips: "*In fact* ***we shouldn't stop*** *with children. Office workers* ***would benefit immensely*** *from a mile a day* ***to combat our increasingly sedentary lives. I'm off now*** *...*"

Toby Moses: "*If you want to tackle childhood obesity,* ***make exercise a form of entertainment.*** *These are very young children after all –* ***capture their imagination*** *and you can start a habit for life. Sports like tennis, rugby, even good old British bulldog are more likely to appeal to a broad range of children. Even better,* ***offer a choice*** *– rather than* ***trying to pigeon-hole kids into one amorphous group****. Adults don't all* ***excel at, or enjoy****, the same types of sport – why should children?*"

Differences in language use and discursive strategies

Sarah Phillips	Toby Moses
We **shouldn't stop** with children... Office workers **would benefit** immensely – making a suggestion in a more indirect way, not saying: *Make running mandatory for office workers, too;* but rather suggesting that such an activity would be useful for them since they spend too much time sitting I am off now – I am leaving now, a more informal tone, a discursive strategy which creates an effect as if a real conversation is going on between the debater and readers	**Make exercise** a form of entertainment… **capture** their imagination… **offer** a choice… – more direct suggestions articulated in a form of orders; not saying: *You should try making exercise a form of entertainment because… it would be more beneficial to think from a child's perspective…* trying to pigeon-hole kids – suggesting that this running activity is a bad idea because it is restrictive and categorizes children "into one amorphous group"

Differences in text content and argument positioning

Sarah's final paragraph is shorter than Toby's and it she expands the recommendation for running on office workers and focuses on the benefits of running especially in the context of sedentary lives. On the other hand, Toby, sees exercise primarily as a form of entertainment, not as something that is health beneficial, and he bases his argument on the fact that, just like all adults do not find running fun, nor do they all are good at it, then why should kids be forced to do one same activity. In his view, making all kids run is demotivating for them and will turn kids into one "amorphous group" – as opposed to Sarah's view that running is "character-building" and will increase motivation in kids. He reinforces the view that fun

comes on the first place, while she puts health and other positive benefits as reasons for running. He is more concerned with protecting one's individual choice and sees this running initiative as a threat to one's individual choice and because of that we can say that he uses a *Discourse of Autonomy* here.

Debate 3

The New York Times

***Room for Debate:* Emerson Csorba and Noa Gafni Slaney**

Is Digital Connectedness Good or Bad for People?

In the Opinion page of *New York Times* magazine, there is a section called "Room for Debate" in which two (or sometimes more) people discuss and debate over a certain topic. Their discussion takes the form of a series of letters exchanged between two arguers. The positive side of such a debate is that we can follow the communication (written communication) between the two debaters and get a deeper insight into how do they interact in a "network of discourses". For the purposes of this paper, we chose the debate "Is Digital Connectedness Good or Bad for People?" in which Emerson Csorba and Noa Gafni Slaney lead a debate. Their discussion is divided into three letters (six in total) and we will apply a critical discourse analysis on each round of letters of their debate in order to see in what ways do they construct their opinion and which discursive and persuasive techniques do they use, as well as, how they construct their worldview in their argumentation, and of course, where can we see a reflection of their gender in their discourse.

Letter 1

Noa Gafni Slaney – A Way to Explore and Build Relationships We Wouldn't Otherwise Form

From the very title of her letter, we can see that she is basing her argument on the social aspect of internet, she depicts internet as a "connective tissue" between people. She starts by describing people as *social creatures*: "As social creatures, we seek out opportunities to

connect with others. The internet is particularly effective in helping us do that". This immediately suggest to us that she will use a *Discourse of Social Connection*.

She continues by appealing to her own personal experience "as a child growing up in the United States with foreign parents" explaining how her personal experience of different cultures could not be known to her friends in USA. In the next paragraph, she points out how, "nowadays, music, sport and culture spread easily across the globe." By doing so, she constructs a contrasting picture of "a dark past" in which we could not socialize with different people vs. "bright present" in which we all are like one society, one culture. In this way she represents the Internet as "a source of light" which helped us to leave behind "the dark (disconnected) past".

She further supports her viewpoint that connectedness equals togetherness, by saying that "Chinese artist Ai Weiwei is the darling of the art world". Here, she personifies the "art world" as a kind of a "global father" whose darling or the dearest child is a Chinese artist (Chinese here implies a typical example of a non-western culture). Further on, she depicts the world as "getting mature" thanks to Internet which allows us now to outgrow from "local" to "global" – (*Shakira's fans go beyond Latin America. And even Black Friday sales are now a global phenomenon*.). Also, she points out how internet shapes our preferences, suggesting that it is "our friend for life" in all aspects of life – (*it is the top source of news, the biggest influence on voting behaviour and points to a generation that is more open to connecting with strangers based on mutual interests*) – Internet deepens our connections and it widens our perspectives.

In the next paragraph she acknowledges the possibility of misuse and abuse of Internet: *But the internet, like all platforms, can be used for positive and negative interactions* – and even here, we see that her focus stays on interaction, that is, on mutual relationships and social bonds.

In the final paragraph, she reinforces her argument from the beginning, that the power of internet is wonderful because it allows us to share our identity and local culture with others: *That is what makes today's globalized success stories so wonderful — they are undeniably influenced by their local context. – a Discourse of Openness.*

Emerson Csorba – Online Sharing and Selfies Erode the Value of Our Private Lives

Emerson's first letter is much longer and, it is written in a much more serious tone, as he supports his arguments with quotations of philosopher and writers.

About a year ago, I attended a meeting in Geneva focused on gathering 450 "changemakers" to tackle some of the world's most pressing challenges. – starts with a personal experience, the use of abbreviation marks for the word changemakers, immediately implies irony. He continues by describing his disappointment: *But very little meaningful conversation took place. Instead, participants spent the summit glued to their phones, taking selfies and sharing on Facebook*. – depicts people as anti-social beings addicted to social networks.

He continues with critical tone focused at "shift of values in society toward concepts such as authenticity, transparency and vulnerability" and to support his claim he cites Arthur C. Brooks, of the American Enterprise Institute who describes this shift through what Jean-Jacques Rousseau called "amour de soi" to an "amour-propre", claiming that the primary goal of people on social media is to satisfy others, and questioning the actual authenticity of our online activities.

In the next paragraph we can observe a slight accusation of society's leaders as promoters of this online superficiality. Emerson "as a Canadian", provides an example of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and gives ironic and critical comments to his political actions: *Trudeau's visit to the White House, for instance, was accompanied by numerous "candid" Instagram photos and clever hashtags with the Obamas… Though an important meeting between Canada and the United States, the Trudeau Instagram feed was at times more suggestive of a Vanity Fair shoot than a serious gathering between national leaders*." Again, we see a use of abbreviation marks, which clearly signal sarcasm, suggesting that these Instagram photos are all but candid. His criticism is direct and open, especially in comparing the picture of a serious political meeting of leaders to a "Vanity Fair shoot" which implies an abundance of ostentation served for Instagram followers.

In the next paragraph, he writes a question which reflects his central thought: *But I cannot help but wonder what it is that we lose in the process of sharing so much of ourselves publicly*. Here, we see a crucial difference in his viewpoint and that of his female colleague; he observes what we are losing by connecting through Internet (and therefore adopts a critical and a more pessimistic tone), whereas, she focuses at what we gain by connecting through Internet. She sees Internet as a chance of enriching of who we are, while he views it as a danger which threats to overtake parts of our identity. As opposed to the female debater who

is motivated by getting in touch with more people, he is concerned about the superficiality of these contacts and his discourse is an example of a *Discourse of Protecting Privacy*.

In the last two paragraphs he further elaborates and strengthens his viewpoints, and like his male colleagues in previous two debates which we analysed, he does not mention positive aspects of Internet (whereas his female colleague did mention the possible dangers of Internet).

Again, he strengthens his opinion by appealing to philosophical thoughts, this time of Sarah Maitland: "how it is that in a world that glorifies the individual, we have become so afraid of spending time alone". Furthermore, he approves her question by adding his own conclusion: *Our digital lives favour public image at the expense of private reflection*. What we see from this is that his concern is not on the social dimension of Internet (the growth from local to global), but on the personal dimension of it (public self vs. private self): *Indeed, our digital connections might increase the ease in sharing certain parts of ourselves, but we must ask whether these are things better worth protecting.*

Letter 2

Noa Gafni Slaney – Online Activism Is Having a Positive Effect in the Real World

In her second letter, Slaney again positions her argumentation on the social effects of online activism. Therefore, social dimension continues to be the key point of her text content and she shapes her discourse in a factual manner: she starts by providing information to the readers about the most typical accuses to online activism, which is an unusual discursive strategy; she starts with acknowledging the opinion of the other side:

"Clicktivism" and "slacktivism" are derogatory terms for online activism. It suggests that digital campaigns do nothing more than generate likes on Instagram. Many argue that these campaigns do more harm than good by providing participants with a sense of satisfaction that they've taken an action without actually contributing to the cause through tangible, "real-world" means."

When analysing her language use in this opening paragraph, we see that she excludes herself form such statements and that her aim is purely to inform readers about typical "stereotypes" about online activism; she explains the meanings of terms "clicktivism" and "slacktivism"

labelling them as “derogatory” which immediately implies her disagreement with such opinion. By writing “it suggests” and “many argue” she forms an objective discourse and distances herself form such an opinion. Also, by using abbreviation marks for real world (“real-world”), we can sense a slight dose of irony and sarcasm which are suggestive of her opinion that the division of world into “online world” and “real world” is wrong as it suggests that online activism is not a valuable part of our reality. Although, her introduction is unusual in a sense that it does not start by offering argumentation in support of her opinion, but with explaining the “accusations” centred at online activism, her last sentence in the introduction makes it clear why she started like that: “Nothing could be further from the truth.” Here, she openly states her disagreement, although indirect method can be detected in her preference for the negative form (saying “That is not true”, rather than: “That is a lie”.

In the next three paragraphs, she offers three different examples from “real life” in order to show how such statements are “far from truth”. We see that she bases her opinion, not on subjective feelings, but on facts, that is, activities that actually happened, and in this sense, she is objective and prefers to appeal to the facts, rather than personal impressions. Her main discursive strategy in this letter is denying common stereotypes.

She starts by giving an example of the worldwide famous Ice Bucket Challenge which received a lot of criticism for claiming to be socially useful, whereas its main purpose was to increase popularity of celebrities: “One of the most notable examples of proported “slacktivism” was the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge.” By saying that it is “proported “slacktivism” she displays her disagreement with such a viewpoint, also by putting abbreviation marks on the term slacktivism (“slacktivism”), she again shows her criticism of such terms. She continues by pointing out that the “campaign attracted worldwide attention with leaders such as Lei Jun and Victor Koo taking part along with Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Gates.” By writing that the campaign attracted successful people from different cultures and parts of the world, she wants to point out the significance as it gained attention even from them, and also, she wants to put focus on the importance of campaign in uniting people for social good – “it raised more than $115 million.”. Another argument, with which she concludes her counter-argument in support of Ice Bucket Challenge is that it was “credited with funding a research breakthrough” by which she implies how online activism motivates not only social action, but also intellectual action.

She continues by offering “other examples of online interactions fueling real-life actions” and from this statement we see how she depicts online actions as motivators of social action. She offers an example of how campaigns financed by Lean In in which Beyonce and other celebrities share tweets regarding gender equality have raised “online and offline” awareness of people, but even more than that, it motivated companies to do something concrete and “as a result, more than 900 companies have officially partnered with Lean In to support female leadership.” She puts a link for seeing which 900 companies cooperated with Lean In in this project and by doing so, she ensures that her statements are more trustworthy as they are based on easily available facts. Her last reference to real life action motivated by online action is that of United Nations Foundation and its +SocialGood community, “a platform for changemakers to share resources around global issues, to spread the word and make the goals locally relevant” – again, she bases her argumentation on the social and global impact of virtual world.

In the final paragraph, she concludes by restating her opinion: “Our online interactions influence our offline behaviour.” Her last sentence refers back to her introduction and in this way, she encircles her statement; after introducing what clicktivism is, she denies it by offering concrete examples and finally she concludes by saying: “The myth of clicktivism dismisses the powerful movements that are taking place — on and offline.” We notice that in her last sentence, she uses direct language and makes a clear conclusion that misconceptions of online activism are myths and that they belittle the positive influence of online interactions in society, that is, in “virtual” and “real” social worlds.

Emerson Csorba – The Constant Sharing Is Making Us Competitive and Depressed

In the second letter, Csorba’s reply to Slaney is based on his argumentation of psychological consequences of online actions. Unlike Slaney, who uses a *Discourse of Social Motivation,* Csorba defends another perspective, which is very similar to the viewpoints of his male colleagues in the previous two debates that we analysed, and that is a viewpoint centred at an individual’s psychological state – through his discourse, he represents the online world and online actions as a pressure and a threat to one’s self-perception and therefore, we can say that he opts for a *Discourse of Psychological State*.

Unlike Slaney who starts by informing readers about common insults on online interactions and then proceeds to show their irrelevance, Csorba uses his introductory paragraph to state

out his viewpoint: “The relationships we form are superficial at best, and the social comparison that these connections fosters can be psychologically damaging” – and then continues to elaborate his own viewpoint.

His elaboration and argument positioning is based on his own findings: “Over the past three years, I have conducted hundreds of one-on-one interviews with early and mid-career professionals on how they see their lives and careers developing in an uncertain world.” What he finds to emerge as the greatest threat in the “uncertain world” is our need to compare ourselves with others which creates insecurity because we compare ourselves with “how our friends and colleagues portray themselves online”. Through this, he represents online world and online actions of others, not as a motivation for our self-improvement, but as un unrealistic mirror of our society that creates idealized images of others which impose unrealistic expectations on us.

He refers directly to Slaney’s statements and arguments about Ice Bucket Challenge and Lean In. He acknowledges that they are “useful in generating real-life action”, but he goes beyond that, implying that there are other, deeper consequences which are overlooked – social action promoted in the online world acts as a social pressure: “These online actions are increasingly required to "keep up with the Joneses" in a connected world.”

Further on, he notes that “interviewees were aware that these self-representations are illusory” and in this way closes an opportunity of counter-argumentation that such pressure is irrelevant because everyone is aware that our online profiles are not completely realistic. That is, regardless of our awareness, we continue to compete, and the manifestation of this competition is our need to share events from our private life, regardless of their accuracy.

In the next paragraph, Csorba states his key point: “This sharing has psychological consequences”. He supports his statement by factual information, that is, by providing results of study of the University of Michigan (he provides a link to these results) which show that “increased Facebook usage contributes to anxiety and even depression”. It is not social dimension which he is concerned about, but the psychological one. In this conversation between the female and male debaters, there seems to be a key differences in their discourses, while Slaney adopts a more positive outlook which questions how online world improves our society, Csorba is more sceptical and examines how online world harms us on an individual level.

Because of that, Slaney's discourse is significantly more motivational and encouraging, Csorba's discourse is more critical and it sometimes brings in a darker representation of the world. For example, the relation between the online world and real world is a "vicious cycle" which is "hard to escape", that is, once you get entrapped by the pressure of virtual world, you will hardly find your way out. Further on, he is being even more critical and refers to the online activism as a charade: "it requires a significant amount of confidence in oneself to both remain connected and see past the charade we collectively engage in" – implying that online world is an unrealistic playground for actions, but we nevertheless continue to play (i.e. act) in it.

Once again, he appeals to the findings of his interviews stating that people "feel trapped in a society where sharing is celebrated", and by using this word choice, he constructs an image of people as victims of online-oriented society.

In his final paragraph, he concludes his criticism with a warning tone, suggesting that connectedness is not an entirely positive thing, because it provokes comparisons which "are often psychologically exhausting and, in some cases, harmful". He ends with strong vocabulary where he openly reaffirms his argument position that online activism does more bad than good.

Letter 3

Noa Gafni Slaney – Online Connections Can be Superficial, but the Examples of That Are Outliers

In her final letter, Slaney starts in a similar manner as in the previous letter – she mentions a common misconception regarding social media and socialization. She stars by drawing on her own experience in research on social media. She draws onto her personal experience just to point out that she was also faced by a common stereotype that "people who chose to interact online were "socially awkward"", however, she claims that her findings showed opposite – "I saw that a generation of digital natives were as socially adjusted as their peers and looked to connect online in addition to real life". As we see, she chooses to start her discourse with offering the opposite view of hers and then shows her side of the story. Also, we notice that she chooses to base her support of virtual world on the social dimension of it, that is, her

argument position remains the same. While Csorba, in the previous letter directly referred to and denied her argumentation, Slaney here does not give any comment on his argumentation.

In the second paragraph she only briefly mentions that “Emerson points to the negative consequences of a digital presence,” she does not go on to lead a discussion on the negative aspects, but rather turns the topic back to the question of how social media links people and offers examples of online dating and the stability of marriages in which couples have met online.

In the third paragraph, she appeals to the undeniable fact that “social media has become a key part of our lives”. In doing so, she bases her discourse on realistic vision of the world, and in the next sentence she intends to calm down all those who are sceptic about its effect on our society by saying: “These platforms mimic — not alter— our real world behaviour.” In this way, she indirectly suggests that there is no real change that we should be afraid of, it is just that our communication has gained another form. Further on, she adds the positive aspect of this new form of interaction: “They (i.e. platforms) just happen to broaden our perspective”. She uses a relaxed tone here “just happen to” which is a discursive strategy that minimizes the comprehension of social media as a threat which harms our everyday activities. In order to prove the harmlessness of social media, she makes a comparison of Twitter and dining room table: “And Twitter allows me to share my opinion on the issues I care about — much as I would at the dining room table”. This is a clever and delicate language use, as dining room table invokes a picture of family atmosphere in which everyone feels relaxed and willing to say what they feel is important. In this way, she implicitly suggests that social media unites the whole world into one global family which can meet together anytime on the dining room table of social platforms. She further strengthens this conceptualization of global connectedness by saying: “The key difference is that I'm now able to tap into a global community, not just a local one.” Again, we notice a smart choice of words; she could have also said: *Now I am able to follow the happenings in our global community* – but, by choosing a phrasal verb “tap into” she reinforces her previous viewpoint about the active role we have as online users, that is, by using social media we do not just receive information from different parts of the world, but we are also able to establish a connection with global happenings and influence them as well as benefit from them.

In the next paragraph, she gives an example of citizen journalism, as a way of following and conducting news which helps raise awareness about many different topics and especially

gives space to marginalized groups. One of the topics that gained more attention thanks to online media which she offers as an example is the #BlackLivesMatter movement, which has now become a global concern – more people are able to see the injustice towards black population and react proactively.

In the final paragraph, she concludes by referring to Csorba: "Of course, as Emerson mentions, there are many instances where the web is superficial — there is Tinder, #humblebragging and a tendency toward selfies." She mentions some concrete examples of negative aspects of social media, but she places them in the very end of her text, she acknowledges their existence which gives an objective character to her discourse, especially the sentence: "There are also elements of social media that cause more harm than good, from filter bubbles to fake news" – in which she is completely objective and even openly states a counterargument. This discursive strategy makes her text more realistic as it offers both good and bad side of the Internet, but she concludes by reinforcing her viewpoint: "But the deeper connections that take place online more than make up for these outlier examples." In this way, she smartly reduces all the negative aspects of social media as "outliers" implying that they occur so rarely that they do not need much attention. Finally, she concludes by reinforcing her central opinion which has at the same time been the key discourse in her discussion: I, for one, am continuously amazed at social media's ability to connect us all – social media unites us into a global family.

Emerson Csorba – The Potential for Change Through Online Connections Can Lead to Frustrations

In his last letter, Csorba starts by referring back to Slaney's claims, pointing out that she "highlights the ability of online connections to "tap into a global community, not just a local one", that is, he points out how she puts focus on and bases her argumentation on the social dimension of Internet, its ability to unite people. Since that is a well-known fact, he continues by giving his own experience: "Personally, I have benefited from this interactivity…" In this way, he is being fair and objective, he uses a discourse of approval of general facts, which is, as we have seen, more rarely present in the discourse of male debaters.

After approval, he goes on to elaborate his viewpoint. In this way, he suggests that he is aware of the positive aspects of digital connectedness which cannot be denied, but that he also sees the deeper level of it: "But there is a danger that belief in global connectivity, and

its ability to "change the world," becomes its own religion bereft of critical examination." Here, he readopts his earlier stance and continues to represent Internet through a *Discourse of Danger and Threat*. He furthermore constructs such a representation of world by saying that mutual connectedness "bombards us with success stories" – the verb "bombard" effectively awakens a conceptualization of connectedness as a danger which threatens to attack us (our psychological state) – the main concern of Csorba, as well as of the previous two male debaters. These success stories feature "changemakers", by using abbreviation marks, Csorba implies his ironical attitude towards successful people who share their success on social media. Further on, he continues:

"As previously argued, however, the change trumpeted in these networks does not always bear out in reality; the stories of these social entrepreneurs, and their ability to disseminate these stories through their online networks, often substitutes for the longer-term and often times unrecognized efforts required to make a lasting impact in the world."

Unlike Slaney, who suggests that online activity "mimics" real-wold actions. Csorba, adopts an opposite view, according to which stories popular on Internet do not have much to do with reality, and in fact, he suggests that Internet gives too much attention to certain kinds of stories, leaving much more important and significant ones untold. In this way, he readopts his critical tone which constantly questions the depth and quality of digital connectedness.

For a conclusion, he decides to appeal to a scholarly reference again: "The British psychoanalyst Adam Phillips writes in his book "Missing Out: In Praise of the Unlived Life …". He uses the quotation from this book to support his opinion that connectedness gives us a false hope that success is easily achievable: "Our online connections feed our belief that changing the world is possible for all, reinforced through the numerous success stories we see of social entrepreneurs and innovators overcoming traditional limitations of space and time. Connectedness, in short, strengthens our belief in potential." This viewpoint leans on his previous attitude that online world and idealistic stories cause pressure, that is, connectedness is a threat to our psychological state since, "a belief in potential to create change can bring disappointment and frustration, as we realize that the stories of social change we consume in our connected worlds are not always as readily achievable as we have been led to believe." His conclusion is, as we see, that connectedness makes us have unrealistic expectations which can be psychologically damaging as it causes depression and frustration, a *Discourse of Psychological State*

VI. INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Debate 1: *Would Covid passports be damaging to public health?*

As seen from the analysis of the debate on Covid passports, male and female debaters use different communicative skills to position their arguments. Contrary to the common tendency suggested by research on gender based language use that women are more subjective and men are more objective, here we see an opposite example. Mills (female debater) is the one who refers more to the factual information, such as statistics and concrete examples from real life, whereas Reicher (male debater) is more subjective in a sense that through his speech he constantly insists on his viewpoint and reinforces his opinion. We see him as a debater with a stronger opinion, whereas we see her as a debater ready for cooperativeness, more ready to take into account different viewpoints and question the quality of possible solutions.

We see them as using two different discourses around which they position their arguments: *Discourse of Care* vs. *Discourse of Autonomy* which is a distinction that largely resembles results of previous findings regarding male and female differences in speech: women are more concerned with promoting cooperatives while men are more focused on establishing autonomy and their independence from others. When it comes to this concrete social issue, the female debater shows more concern for social responsibility and prefers a cooperative way of finding the best solution, while the male debater puts his focus on protecting the freedom of individual choice in the society and resists any kind of control. We can say that their gender identities are constructed and revealed through her reinforcement of "a feminine *ethic of care* and a masculine *ethic of justice*. While the former describes contextual and narrative thinking about moral problems, with an emphasis on responsibility and care of others within relationships, the latter involves a formal and abstract way of thinking around moral issues, based on systems of rules and a 'universal' sense of justice that overrides the particulars of a situation" (Litosseliti, 2002, p. 132.). We see the female debater as more nurturing and more concerned about "not appearing to be prescriptive" (Ibid, p. 144), the male debater is more concerned with one's "personal space" and a threat of invading one's autonomy. When it comes to the language use, we also see that Mills uses more metaphorical language and indirect and tentative forms, whereas Reicher uses direct language, shorter sentences. Mills raises questions and constantly hedges her viewpoints by using tentative language, while Reicher gives conclusions and offers solutions (prescriptive appearance) and

in this sense, they fit into the typical female and male gender based communicative tendencies.

Debate 2: *Should schoolchildren be made to run a mile every day?*

In the second debate which we analysed, "Should schoolchildren be made to run a mile every day?", there seems to be a conflict between *Discourse of Motivation and Optimism* in Sarah's claim that running is an easy and character-building exercise and the emphasis which Toby puts on the feeling of embarrassment and demotivation caused by being slower than other children in running – a *Discourse of Negative Personal Experience*. When it comes to the overall content of the two debaters, we notice that Phillips is more oriented towards offering objective reasons why running is a good activity for children, besides offering her own changed perspective of running, she also supports her statement by referring to the experiences of other people (the link she offers) and by quoting the statement of the headteacher in the school very running activity is being held. She is also more objective in a sense that she openly states that running can be a bad experience (as it was for her), and by admitting that there are children who might not be amazed by this activity. Moses, on the other hand, appears more subjective as he bases his argumentation exclusively on his negative experience of running and his impression that running is not a fun exercise, he also lacks to provide objectivity because he does not mention nor acknowledge any positive aspects of running and uses strong vocabulary to depict it as an unattractive activity for children. This conclusion is contrary to common assumptions that women use more personal experiences in their speech. In this sense, we notice some similarities with female and male debaters from the first debate; both Mills and Phillips try to give space to the opposite side as well, whereas both Reicher and Moses offer only "their side of the story", that is, they just defend their viewpoints.

Also, Phillips and Moses differ in their comprehension of running with friends: Phillips sees it as a chance to "chat with mates", that is engage in a social activity without pressure of who is going to be faster, whereas Moses perceives running as a competition and a source of embarrassment if other children are faster than you and this difference can be linked to the common tendency of women for cooperativeness and men for competitiveness. "it is not just conversational style overall but preferred kinds of speech acts and stances toward what is said that have led many to describe male speech as competitive and individualistic, female speech as cooperative and other-oriented" (Eckert& McConnel-Ginet, 2003, p. 127).

Regarding their conversational styles, we can say that Phillips adopts a more professional, formal tone, whereas Moses prefers to talk in a more relaxed and informal manner with partial story-like elements (the description of how he fall over his friend's bag). Moses uses more sarcasm and is slightly offensive when describing those that are fit and skinny (probably aiming to produce a comic effect like this) and only refers to his own experience and impression of running, whereas Phillips calls on factual information regarding running and on the experiences of others.

Finally, Guardian offered a poll "to read @sarahlphillips and @tobymoses views & vote" and the question was: "Should schoolchildren run a mile a day?". The final results show that the majority of the readers agreed with Phillips – 65.7%, whereas Moses' viewpoint was supported just by 34.3% of the readers. It seems that the motivational and supportive discourse of the female debater was more convincing than the male debater's discourse of personal negative experience with a slight tone of belittling which confirms the view that indirectness and cooperativeness (typical for female discourses) can be more convincing than predominately assertive male discourse strategies.

Debate 3: *Is Digital Connectedness Good or Bad for People?*

The third debate differs from the previous two debates, as it is longer and debaters are engaged in a form of communication which leaves an impression that they are participating in a dialogue. This form of debate is interesting and useful for analysis as for it offers us the possibility to follow how each debater develops his/her opinion, how they react and refer to opposing views as well as, how do they defend their viewpoints and arguments.

In the letters of the two debaters (Slaney and Csorba) we observe that their concerns differ crucially and that they decide to argue about different aspects of the Digital World. She chooses to use a *Discourse of Social Connection* which is visible from her optimistic tone that embraces the Internet as a factor which increases our mutual connection and global unity and a *Discourse of Openness* which proposes that the ability to share our private life is one of the blessings of being connected through social media. Therefore, her primary focus is on the social dimension of connectedness and she reinforces that we are social creatures. Her argument positioning is based on the reinforcement of positive changes that Internet brought and besides offering her personal experience, she does not limit herself on basing her opinion on her own attitude, but provides factual examples from many spheres of life, in global. In

this sense, her discourse fits into the viewpoints of the previous two female debaters as the primary focus is on the social aspect, not psychological one, and her argument positioning is also close to theirs since she is also observant to acknowledge the negative aspects of connectedness, despite the fact that she perceives it as a positive thing. On the other side, Csorba depicts connectedness as a threat of privacy, a discourse which greatly resembles the attitude of his male colleagues in previous two debates: a concern for protecting individual's freedom. Therefore, his main argument positioning is based on the *Discourse of Protecting Privacy*. His language use is also very much similar to that of other two male debaters: it is more critical, does not include the opinion of the other side and contains a dose of irony. Also, he largely draws his arguments on personal impressions and experience, but also employs a considerable reference to scholarly sources, which adds further seriousness to his discourse style. Another crucial difference between the two arguers is that she focuses on the growth in the social aspect: from local to global, whereas he focuses on the discrepancy in one's individual life: public image vs. actual private state. This difference also fits into the main concerns of male and female debaters: women tend to prioritise social relations, while men enforce an individual's state. Due to this fact, Slaney continues to base her argumentation on what can be collectively labelled as a *Discourse of Social Motivation*, while Csorba stays consistent in his concern for psychological aspects of connectedness and employs a *Discourse of Psychological State*.

When it comes to their mutual interaction, which we are able to observe only in this prolonged debate, it can be noticed that Csorba is more concerned with direct calling out and referring back to "what Noa said" and basing his argumentation on her examples and then further developing them by evaluating them from his perspective which is coloured by a concern for autonomy, characteristic for male debaters. These direct references start as an acknowledgment of the opposite opinion, but end up as an attempt of depicting them as inadequate. For instance, what she represents as a factor of social unity (ex: Ice Bucket Challenge), he depicts as a form of social pressure, which again has to do with his concern of one's individual space. On the other hand, Slaney never directly refers back to what Csorba has mentioned and problematized, she prefers to skip his critiques by ignoring them and offering more examples in favour of positive aspects of digital connectedness on our society. Even when she does mention his critique, she does it only briefly and she represents his critique as irrelevant in comparison to the many positive aspects of social media. However, if we compare the overall tones of their discourses, we can say that Slaney is more objective

because she more frequently acknowledges the negative aspects of Internet which gives a realistic dimension to her tone, but when it comes to interaction with Csorba, she does not want to be the one answering to his critiques, but decides to develop discussion by turning back to her viewpoint that online world unites us.

VII. CONCLUSION

Gender differences have always been a matter of large interest of many sciences, including linguistics. While earlier approaches to language and gender were more focused at exploring gender-based linguistic differences on a purely linguistic level, discourse analysis approach reinforces the view that these differences are significant in terms of social identities of male and female gender. Therefore, analysing language and gender from a discourse analysis perspective enables us to look at the mutual connection between the two: we are able to observe how language use reflects one's gender, as well as how gender is enacted and constructed through language use.

The aim of this paper which is a small-scale study was to analyse different ways in which male and female debaters reflect and construct their gender identities in the discourse of newspaper debates, as for, written communication between men and women is still underexplored when compared to many works dedicated to analysis of cross-gender communication and different communicative strategies in oral communication. The reason for choosing newspaper debates as our corpus is because they offer a good example where arguers (male and female debaters) are able to employ different convincing strategies and use different discourses in the formulation of their arguments which largely reflects and constructs different gender-based social identities of male and female debaters.

As we have seen, the earlier research on language use in spoken communication of men and women has showed that women tend to prefer prestige forms more than man and even though this classification cannot be applied to written communication, our analysis has showed us that female debaters are more formal in their construction of arguments while male debaters use more irony and sarcasm and more openly state their criticism of the opposing view. Female debaters tend to position themselves as more understanding and ready for dialogue, while male debaters position themselves as dedicated to convincing the readers that their viewpoint is more valid and logical, and therefore, their language use contains stronger statements, direct conclusions and a higher concern for establishing and imposing their argument position. To some extent, it is a surprising finding of this paper that female debaters are more objective, as for, they are mostly more observant to present both views to the readers, while male debaters seem more subjective since they mainly prefer to draw their conclusions on the basis of their personal experiences and impressions.

Besides prestige forms, speech style of men and women tend to be differentiated by their usage of hedges and swearing and taboo language, and although these traits cannot be detected in written communication in a literal sense, a reflection of them can be observed if we look at the discursive strategies employed by male and female debaters critically: hedges are realized by indirect and tentative forms used by female debaters through which they soften the strength of their arguments and distance themselves from being prescriptive when sharing their statements, while male debaters show a tendency to bring conclusions in a direct manner. On the other side, swearing and taboo language is more characteristic of male speech style and similarly, in the discourse of newspaper debates, male debaters tend to feel more free to use a relaxed tone and more ironic and sarcastic comments.

From our analysis of argument construction of male and female debaters we have come up to a conclusion that different gender identities of male and female debaters are primarily reflected and constructed by different gender-based preferences of discourses employed in their argument construction. In that sense, gender-based discourses of male and female debaters that we analysed demonstrate consistency in the ways of thinking but also in the ways of doing their gender: female debaters prefer adopting roles that imply care for overall social good, male debaters are more focused on defending the state of an individual in the society. In accordance with this, discourses employed by female debaters are: *Discourse of Care, Discourse of Motivation and Optimism, Discourse of Social Connection*, and *Discourse of Openness*, whereas those employed by male debaters are: *Discourse of Autonomy, Discourse of Negative Personal Experience, Discourse of Protecting Privacy and Discourse of Individual's Psychological State*. While it is not true to claim that language use can be divided and categorized into men's and women's language nor into typical gender-based linguistic forms, our research has showed us that female debaters prefer to construct their argument in a more cooperative and objective way, while male debaters tend to be more concerned of elaborating and mentioning their viewpoints without acknowledgment of the opposing view.

Bearing mind that there is no neutral discourse and that language is a form of social practice, our construction of ourselves as masculine or feminine is largely determined by the discourse we chose to use. That is, we use language to project ourselves as a certain kind of person and having a certain social role and from this analysis we see that male and female debaters are led by gender-based preferences in their language use as well as argument positioning which reflects and constructs their gender identity.

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APPENDIX 1

Would Covid passports be damaging to public health? | Melinda Mills and Stephen Reicher | The Guardian

Melinda Mills: Covid passports could be workable, but they'll need to meet certain criteria

Many have argued that Covid passports – certificates showing whether someone has had the vaccine or a negative test, or has Covid immunity – wouldn't work. In our recent Royal Society report, we concluded that they could be feasible in some cases, but only if they meet certain criteria. The crux is how and where these passports would be used.

For international travel, where testing infrastructure and a "yellow card" system are already in place**,** Covid passports seem a reasonable move. The UK government is also trialling Covid passports at large gatherings such as sports events. Earlier this month, when the Texas Rangers played in front of a sold-out baseball stadium, we got a glimpse of what can happen when the floodgates open without restrictions: there was no social distancing in place and few people wore masks – all in a context of rising infections and when only a fraction of the population had received their second jabs.When used alongside other measures such as ventilation, social distancing and an effective test-and-trace system, Covid passports could offer added certainty at large events. But they need to meet certain immunity and infection benchmarks. There are four ways to show whether someone has Covid: proof of vaccination or the results from a PCR, lateral flow or viral antibody test. In our report, we concluded that only proof of vaccination or a PCR test result would be viable benchmarks for Covid passports.

This is because antibody tests aren't a reliable measure of infection, and lateral flow tests aren't as effective at identifying people who have Covid but only have a low viral load. The latter can be unreliable, particularly when they're not administered by an expert.

The government has correctly drawn some red lines. Certification would never be required for essential services, such as supermarkets or transport. But entry into nonessential outlets, such as pubs and restaurants, will be a battleground for this measure. The prime minister noted on Monday that a number of fences will have to be jumped before it's clear where Covid passports would be required, but business owners may feel that the government is sitting on the fence rather than jumping it.

Ministers may want to shift some of the responsibility for administering Covid passports on to individual businesses, but this would be mired in legal and ethical issues. The US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, for instance, recently informed businesses that if employees cannot get vaccinated because of a disability or religious belief and businesses are unable to take additional measures, it would be legal to exclude them from workplaces.

These are only some of the issues that Covid passports will face. It will be crucial to ensure they don't discriminate or exacerbate inequalities, particularly among those who may be hesitant about getting tested or receiving a vaccine. There are also questions about the technology they would use and the extent of data collection. Would they work across different devices and via the NHS app? How could paper passports be built to resist forgery? And how would they ensure people's data remains private and secure? The government also needs to be clear about whether it intends Covid passports to be the birth of a digital healthcare system, or whether this policy will have a "sundown clause", like Denmark's Covid certification, where data is soon deleted.

These are all questions that require detailed attention. Covid certificates could provide added certainty – but only if they meet these criteria.

Stephen Reicher: Making people prove they're vaccinated will harm everyone's health

The government has flown so many kites about "Covid passports" and "vaccine passports" that we have ended up with a hopelessly confused debate where people are disagreeing over entirely different things. Certificates that allow people entry to potentially crowded spaces could take one of two forms: a "Covid passport" would show the results of a recent Covid test, whereas a "vaccine passport" would show whether people had been vaccinated.

So let's focus on vaccine passports. First, a crucial distinction: there is a world of difference between requiring a vaccine to undertake activities that are seen as nonessential and applying this requirement to activities that are basic to our everyday lives. In the former case, vaccination is perceived as a choice, whereas in the latter it becomes effectively compulsory.

Once people begin to see vaccines as compulsory for everyday social participation (going to the pub, even going to work), two things follow. Those who aren't vaccinated are, in effect, excluded from society. They will view the threat of such exclusion as a means of controlling them and forcing them to get a jab.

Vaccination would cease to be something that is done with and for people. It would instead be something imposed by an external agency – and hence both political and medical authorities would be repositioned as the "other". All this would do is generate anger, and lead people to reassert their autonomy by refusing the vaccine.

This is bad enough in itself, but it is raised to a whole new level of significance when you consider the divisions between those who are and those who aren't vaccinated. These divisions aren't random: they map precisely on to existing social cleavages. In the UK, those who have a more troubled relationship with authority have lower vaccination rates. Increased deprivation is closely related to decreased vaccination. Ethnic minorities, particularly black people, also have greater concerns about Covid vaccines. Based on painful

historical experience, they need to be convinced that vaccines are being rolled out *for* them, rather than being done to control them.

Passports would undermine the take-up of vaccines and feed the very concerns that fuel hesitation among minority communities. They would also nurture the narratives of anti-vaxxers, whose mantra is that vaccines are about control rather than health. Compulsion fosters alienation among the very people who are most likely to feel hesitant about getting the vaccine at the very point where this reassurance is most urgently needed.

Vaccine inequity plus vaccine passports will translate into vaccine apartheid. That is why we must immediately take down these "vaccine passport" kites and instead focus on what public health practitioners have long known: good health depends on sustained community engagement. Vaccine passports threaten both our physical health and the health of our society.

APPENDIX 2

Should schoolchildren be made to run a mile every day? | Sarah Phillips and Toby Moses | The Guardian

Sarah Phillips: Let's teach kids that fitness can be free, easy and fun

I despised PE at school. I faked sick notes, had my period more frequently than was biologically possible – did anything to avoid the ritual humiliation of running around cones in the cold followed by an even colder communal shower. It was as if they were trying to put you off fitness for life.

Luckily it didn't work and when I turned 20 I discovered running, which has enhanced my life in so many ways, which other people have described far more eloquently than I ever could. This is why I think the "daily mile" initiative to get schoolchildren to run or walk en masse for 15 minutes each day is ingenious.

There is no easier form of exercise than running. You put on your trainers, leave the house, and hey presto, you're exercising. No expensive gym subscription necessary; no competitive neon lycra uniform. Just run. So what better thing to teach kids – especially in the midst of a childhood obesity epidemic – than the fact that fitness can be free, easy and most importantly fun, as you chat to your mates along the way. It also dispels the myth that you have to be good at sport, as many of us aren't, in order to be fit.

Elaine Wyllie, who is headteacher of St Ninians, the primary school in Stirling in Scotland that pioneered the scheme, says of its success: "The children are fit and healthy, they come in energised, ready to learn and focused, apple-cheeked and bright-eyed." While this may sound like something out of Enid Blyton, Wyllie is definitely on to something, with signs that not only the children's health but also possibly their grades have improved (a study is under way to assess this). I'm quite sure they are happier for it too.

Obviously there is the issue of making sure those who can't run or walk a mile very easily don't feel excluded from this social in the fresh air; and of course there's the delightful British weather, which looms large in most people's traumatic memories of PE. But running in the rain is definitely character-building, as we all know. And it's only 15 minutes.

In fact we shouldn't stop with children. Office workers would benefit immensely from a mile a day to combat our increasingly sedentary lives. I'm off now …

Toby Moses: Forget enforced running – make exercise entertaining

I'm sure all the fitness freaks, cross-country enthusiasts and the naturally skinny will raise a glass of kale juice to the "daily mile" scheme. But spare a thought for us poor fat kids forced out on to the road for a painful, wheezy jog, and then ask yourself whether this ritual torture is really the best way to encourage a life-long exercise habit in those struggling with obesity. After all, this scheme isn't aimed at those who are already fit – it's the fat kids it's supposed to help.

Enforced running would have been a further trauma for somebody who already found PE traumatic enough

As a once "cuddly, big-boned" child, I remember all too well the agony of cross-country, the regular pre-football laps, the sweaty, jiggly embarrassment of the always last to be picked. That was enough to be put me off exercise for a decade.

I remember vividly faking a groin strain to get out of cross-country one year – the only injury my juvenile mind felt assured no teacher would feel comfortable examining. I got a friend to leave his bag in between the desks and staged an elaborate tumble over it, before lying in a heap on the floor. It worked a treat. My friend got in trouble, but I got to help marshall the race – feeling smug as fellow chubsters who lacked my ingenuity struggled around the field.

Enforced running would not have cured my aversion, it would have been a further trauma for somebody who already found PE traumatic enough. I do jog now on occasion – but I still hate it. Some of us simply aren't built for that type of exercise.

Far better to try to develop PE in primary schools that offers a variety of different, and fun, activities. For those not naturally inclined or physiologically suited to exercise, running is likely to be the worst possible option. There's no purpose, no distraction from the pain, no fun to be had. And that is the key.

If you want to tackle childhood obesity, make exercise a form of entertainment. These are very young children after all – capture their imagination and you can start a habit for life. Sports like tennis, rugby, even good old British bulldog are more likely to appeal to a broad range of children. Even better, offer a choice – rather than trying to pigeon-hole kids into one amorphous group. Adults don't all excel at, or enjoy, the same types of sport – why should children?

What do you think - to run or not to run? Vote on Guardian Opinion Twitter

Guardian Opinion
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Should schoolchildren run a mile a day? http://gu.com/p/4hk2e/stw Read @sarahlphillips and @tobymoses views & vote

Yes
65.7%
No
34.3%
613 votes·Final results

4:51 PM · Mar 17, 2016

APPENDIX 3

Is Digital Connectedness Good or Bad for People? - Room for Debate - NYTimes.com

A Way to Explore and Build Relationships We Wouldn't Otherwise Form

NOA GAFNI SLANEY 3:20 AM

As social creatures, we seek out opportunities to connect with others. The internet is particularly effective in helping us do that.

As a child growing up in the United States with foreign parents, every summer we would visit my mother's family in Israel. There I would marvel at the artists on MTV Europe. And every four years, my Chilean father would hole up in our New Jersey basement to watch the Mundial on Univision — a cultural phenomena in other parts of the world, but unknown to our American neighbors.

Today's globalized success stories are wonderful because they are undeniably influenced by their local context.

Nowadays, music, sport and culture spread easily across the globe. Chinese artist Ai Weiwei is the darling of the art world. Shakira's fans go beyond Latin America. And even Black Friday sales are now a global phenomenon. It's clear that the internet is having an impact on much more than our preference for music. For 18- to 24-year-olds, the heaviest social media users, it is the top source of news. For millennials, it is the biggest influence on voting behavior and the reason that they are more likely to give to global, as opposed to local, causes. The success of economy superpowers such as AirBnB, which has inspired millions to travel differently, points to a generation that is more open to connecting with strangers based on mutual interests and a willingness to trust people based on their online profiles.

But the internet, like all platforms, can be used for positive and negative interactions. We cringe with horror at hateful speech and people who leverage 140 character sound bites to further their anti-openness agenda. In the wake of the U.S. presidential election, many observers claim that social media has created "filter bubbles" that reinforce our views as opposed to opening us up to new ones.

As our world becomes more closely intertwined, we want to hold on to the elements of our identity that define where we come from. It can be sharing our home or showing pride in our local government. That is what makes today's globalized success stories so wonderful — they are undeniably influenced by their local context.

Online Sharing and Selfies Erode the Value of Our Private Lives

EMERSON CSORBA 3:20 AM

About a year ago, I attended a meeting in Geneva focused on gathering 450 "changemakers" to tackle some of the world's most pressing challenges. I thought the participants would emerge with new relationships and perspectives on complex issues such as poverty and climate change. But very little meaningful conversation took place. Instead, participants spent the summit glued to their phones, taking selfies and sharing on Facebook — their posts usually accompanied by inspirational quotes and messages on how grateful they were to be included in this group of leaders.

The authenticity of these online activities is often more an attempt to curate a particular image than an expression of a person's actual beliefs and convictions.

This experience is representative of a values shift taking place in society toward concepts such as authenticity, transparency and vulnerability. Arthur C. Brooks, of the American Enterprise Institute, describes this shift through what Jean-Jacques Rousseau called "amour de soi" to an "amour-propre"; that is, individuals partake less in activities for the sake of activities' intrinsic worth than for their use in satisfying others. Indeed, it is virtually impossible to spend time on social media without coming across friends sharing random thoughts, requests for advice and updates on personal relationships. Although heartfelt, the

authenticity of these activities is often suspect, often more an attempt to curate a particular image than an expression of a person's actual beliefs and convictions.

We celebrate this behavior, and see it modeled by many of society's leaders. As a Canadian, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau comes to mind. Recently named one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People and appearing on the cover of GQ as the "Prime Minister of Suave," Trudeau is active on Instagram and is considered by many to be the sort of open and authentic leader that we need in the world. Trudeau's visit to the White House, for instance, was accompanied by numerous "candid" Instagram photos and clever hashtags with the Obamas. Among these, a photo of the Trudeau and Obama families captioned "Meeting the neighbours," and a second with Trudeau in black tie, tagged #StateDinner. Though an important meeting between Canada and the United States, the Trudeau Instagram feed was at times more suggestive of a Vanity Fair shoot than a serious gathering between national leaders.

In our digital world, it comes as no surprise that these posts play such a central role in our lives, and that carefully curated social media images and comments gain such traction. But I cannot help but wonder what it is that we lose in the process of sharing so much of ourselves publicly. Social media "likes" and new followers provide us with public approval, but this need for constant sharing of ourselves — and the immediate gratification that comes with it — diminishes the meaning and significance in the things we share.

Lost in the online sharing and advice-gathering is the ability to reflect on questions ourselves, coming to our own decisions in whatever amount of time is required. In her book "How to Be Alone," philosopher Sarah Maitland wonders how it is that in a world that glorifies the individual, we have become so afraid of spending time alone. And she is right: Our digital lives favor public image at the expense of private reflection.

When it is possible to share widely, the approval we gain from followers leads us to forget that something even could be private, and moreover, that some parts of our lives are worth keeping private. Indeed, our digital connections might increase the ease in sharing certain parts of ourselves, but we must ask whether these are things better worth protecting.

Online Activism Is Having a Positive Effect in the Real World

NOA GAFNI SLANEY 3:20 AM

“Clicktivism” and “slacktivism” are derogatory terms for online activism. It suggests that digital campaigns do nothing more than generate likes on Instagram. Many argue that these campaigns do more harm than good by providing participants with a sense of satisfaction that they’ve taken an action without actually contributing to the cause through tangible, “real-world” means. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Our online interactions influence our offline behavior. The myth of clicktivism dismisses the powerful movements that are taking place — on and offline.

One of the most notable examples of proported "slacktivism" was the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge. The campaign attracted worldwide attention with leaders such as Lei Jun and Victor Koo taking part along with Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Gates. Although the campaign was criticized with simply raising awareness (2.2 million Twitter mentions and 2.4 million Facebook videos of people pouring buckets of ice water over themselves), it raised more than $115 million. More recently, the Ice Bucket Challenge was credited with funding a research breakthrough.

There are other examples of online interactions fueling real-life actions. Lean In, founded by Sheryl Sandberg, uses high profile campaigns featuring Beyoncé and other celebrities tweeting their support for gender equality. These tweets sparked a conversation on and offline about the collective responsibility to close the gender gap and as a result, more than 900 companies have officially partnered with Lean In to support female leadership.

The United Nations Foundation is leveraging online interest to create a continued focus on the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition to creating compelling messages that are easy to share on social media, the foundation uses its +SocialGood community, a platform for changemakers to share resources around global issues, to spread the word and make the goals locally relevant.

Our online interactions influence our offline behavior. The myth of clicktivism dismisses the powerful movements that are taking place — on and offline.

The Constant Sharing Is Making Us Competitive and Depressed

EMERSON CSORBA 3:20 AM

The relationships we form are superficial at best, and the social comparison that these connections fosters can be psychologically damaging.

The relationships we form are superficial at best, and the social comparison that these connections fosters can be psychologically damaging.

Over the past three years, I have conducted hundreds of one-on-one interviews with early and mid-career professionals on how they see their lives and careers developing in an uncertain world. Through these discussions, a theme of "ruthless comparison" emerges, where we become acutely aware of how our friends and colleagues portray themselves online. Noa highlights campaigns such as the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge and Lean In, where the collective action of celebrities and average citizens creates a social pressure for others to engage in a particular socially conscious activity. While useful in generating real-life action, this pressure to engage is in large part based on social comparison: a need to portray oneself

in a particular light to appear to be a person committed to doing good. These online actions are increasingly required to "keep up with the Joneses" in a connected world.

Although many interviewees were aware that these self-representations are illusory, they nevertheless felt pressured to engage in this competition, sharing their achievements and experiences over social media to show others how they are keeping up. This fuels a perpetual competition, focused on the sharing of successes and other updates, regardless of how accurately these portrayals represent real life — and they rarely do.

This sharing has psychological consequences. A handful of studies, including one recently conducted by the University of Michigan, suggest that increased Facebook usage contributes to anxiety and even depression. By constantly seeing what others are doing, and in paying attention to their lives as they seem to be unfolding in real-time, our anxiety and uncertainty as to whether we are leading lives that fulfill our own potential deepens.

This vicious cycle is difficult to escape; it requires a significant amount of confidence in oneself to both remain connected and see past the charade we collectively engage in. For every +SocialGood campaign that legitimately builds in-person dialogue, there are countless online campaigns fuelled by individual or corporate need to "curate" images that compare favorably with those of society's influencers. Based on my interviews with early and mid-career professionals, many individuals are at a crossroads in how to act in their online worlds. Skeptical of the authenticity of online activity, they nevertheless feel trapped in a society where sharing is celebrated.

Indeed, we must be weary of the comparisons that our connectedness encourages, knowing that these comparisons are often psychologically exhausting and, in some cases, harmful.

Online Connections Can be Superficial, but the Examples of That Are Outliers

NOA GAFNI SLANEY 3:20 AM

When I first began to research social media in 2004, the reigning narrative was that people who chose to interact online were "socially awkward" and looking for opportunities to connect in the digital realm because real-world opportunities were closed off to them. When I studied teenagers who used chat rooms, I saw that a generation of digital natives were as socially adjusted as their peers and looked to connect online in addition to real life.

Many studies have shown that people who connect with others online are less likely to be socially isolated than their peers who don't.

Although Emerson points to the negative consequences of a digital presence, many studies have shown that people who connect with others online are less likely to be socially isolated than their peers who don't. A particular subset of digital interaction, online dating, is

now the second most common way to meet someone. And couples who have met online have marriages that are just as strong as those who met in real life.

As the No.1 activity on the web, social media has become a key part of our lives. These platforms mimic — not alter— our real world behavior. They just happen to broaden our perspective. I spend the same amount of time on Instagram liking photos of my niece as I do with social innovators living in Singapore. And Twitter allows me to share my opinion on the issues I care about — much as I would at the dining room table. The key difference is that I'm now able to tap into a global community, not just a local one.

The rise of citizen journalism has given us a first-person view into current events, making us more aware and providing us with a greater sense of responsibility as a result. Marginalized groups, such as gay teenagers, have been connecting with similar individuals and finding helpful resources. And movements like #BlackLivesMatter have turned anger toward injustice to positive, peaceful campaigns for change.

Of course, as Emerson mentions, there are many instances where the web is superficial — there is Tinder, #humblebragging and a tendency toward selfies. There are also elements of social media that cause more harm than good, from filter bubbles to fake news. But the deeper connections that take place online more than make up for these outlier examples. I, for one, am continuously amazed at social media's ability to connect us all.

The Potential for Change Through Online Connections Can Lead to Frustrations

EMERSON CSORBA 3:20 AM

In writing about online connections, Noa highlights its "key difference" as being the ability to "tap into a global community, not just a local one." Critically, this global community allows participants to share their opinions, and in some cases, develop relationships that would not otherwise exist. Personally, I have benefited from this interactivity; several of my closest friendships, as well as professional opportunities, began with communication over online tools such as skype — with in-person meetings not taking place until sometimes more than one year into our conversations. These experiences are compelling, as are the examples that Noa shares of Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates and others helping change the world.

There is a danger that belief in global connectivity, and its ability to "change the world," becomes its own religion bereft of critical examination.

But there is a danger that belief in global connectivity, and its ability to "change the world," becomes its own religion bereft of critical examination. Our connectedness means that we are bombarded with success stories — often in the form of lists such as Forbes Top 30 Under 30, or global networks such as the Global Shapers Community, an initiative of the World Economic Forum — that showcase "changemakers" collaborating to solve the world's

problems. These networks focus on the social impact of their members, with the Forbes Top 30 Under 30 Class of 2016 website, framing this as "Your Guide to the Entrepreneurs and Leaders Who Are Changing Our World." As previously argued, however, the change trumpeted in these networks does not always bear out in reality; the stories of these social entrepreneurs, and their ability to disseminate these stories through their online networks, often substitutes for the longer-term and often times unrecognized efforts required to make a lasting impact in the world.

The British psychoanalyst Adam Phillips writes in his book "Missing Out: In Praise of the Unlived Life," that "The myth of our potential can make of our lives a perpetual falling-short, a continual and continuing loss ... though at its best it lures us into the future, but without letting us wonder why such lures are required." Our online connections feed our belief that changing the world is possible for all, reinforced through the numerous success stories we see of social entrepreneurs and innovators overcoming traditional limitations of space and time. Connectedness, in short, strengthens our belief in potential.

But as Phillips writes, a belief in potential to create change can bring disappointment and frustration, as we realize that the stories of social change we consume in our connected worlds are not always as readily achievable as we have been led to believe.