

# **A Linguistic Analysis of Political Blogs in the British Press**

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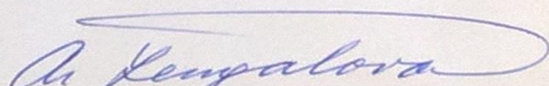
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## ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá analýzou politických blogů britských novin. Pro účely této práce bylo zvoleno téma EU referendum, které je tento rok nejdiskutovanějším tématem ve Velké Británii.

Teoretická část práce se nejprve zabývá historií internetu. Dále potom odkrývá historii blogů. Také definuje blogy samotné, uvádí jejich charakteristiku, typy blogů a jazyk, který je pro ně charakteristický. Dále tato kapitola představuje způsoby, kterými autoři blogů vyjadřují své názory. Následující kapitola popisuje řečnické figury užívané v blogích. Čtvrtá kapitola se zabývá rozdílem mezi novinovým článkem a blogovým příspěvkem. Závěrem teoretické analýzy jsou popsána použitá periodika.

Praktická část se zabývá samotnou analýzou politických blogů zveřejněných na webových stránkách seriózního tisku. Pro účely této práce byly vybrány periodika The Guardians, The Telegraph a The Financial Times.

Klíčová slova: Blog, EU referendum, jazyk, analýza, seriózní tisk

## ABSTRACT

This bachelor's thesis deals with the analysis of political blogs in British newspapers. For purposes of my work, I chose the topic of EU referendum as it is the most discussed topic in the UK this year.

Firstly, the theoretical part describes the history of internet. The following chapter reveals the history of blogs. Furthermore, this chapter defines the blogs themselves, describes their characteristics, types and characteristic language. This chapter also reveals the ways in which bloggers take stances. The next chapter covers figures of speech used in blogs. The fourth chapter deals with the difference between a newspaper article and a blog post. At the end of the theoretical part, the newspapers used for these purposes are described.

Practical part deals with the analysis of political blogs in British newspapers themselves. For the purposes of this thesis The Guardian, The Telegraph and The Financial Times were chosen.

Keywords: Blog, EU referendum, language, analysis, broadsheet

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## INTRODUCTION

Blogging is a rapidly changing medium that has been gaining its popularity for nearly twenty years. It became a great platform for amateur writers and journalists that otherwise would not have an opportunity to express their ideas, opinions and attitudes with the rest of the world. This thesis analyses the language of British newspaper political blogs. I focused on the most discussed topic in the UK politics of this year, the EU referendum, where British nation will vote whether they stay in or leave the European Union.

I chose this topic, because blogs are changing the whole culture of writing. They are easy to access through the Internet from any place and any device. Furthermore, I am interested in the EU referendum as well as it would also affect the Czech Republic in case that British people would decide to leave.

The main purpose of this thesis is to analyse and compare the language of the political blogs that appear in three different broadsheet newspapers. I selected newspapers with different political orientation, The Guardian, The Telegraph, and The Financial Times. The thesis is divided into two parts, the theoretical part and the practical part.

The theoretical part starts with the history of the Internet followed by the history of the blogs. It continues with a definition of blogs, its features, types and characteristic language. Later on, the ways how bloggers express their opinions are studied. Furthermore, the difference between a newspaper article and a blog post are revealed. The thesis continues with a figures of speech description. At the end of the theoretical part, different British newspapers are introduced and the main focus is put on the broadsheets as tabloids will not be part of the analysis.

The practical part is analysing the selected material and compares the differences between the individual posts.

The goal of the thesis is to find what are the differences in the blogs of popular British press from the linguistic point of view. Furthermore, the thesis examines if the newspapers' political orientation reflects in the text.

## **I. THEORY**



## 1 HISTORY OF INTERNET

O'Regan (O'Regan 2012) claims that Internet roots go back to 1940s where American scientist Vannevar Bush wrote an inspiring article. Bush marked in his essay an idea of an information management system which he named the “*memex*” (memory extender). This vision of memex represents a device that is electronically connected to a library in order to display books and movies. It illustrates a proto-hypertext computer and affects the later phenomenon of hypertext systems.

In 1960s there were around 10,000 computers around the world. However, as O'Regan (O'Regan 2012) states these machines did not have the functions that people nowadays are used to have. The communication among these computers did not exist. Many scientists dreamed to have networks that computers will be interconnected to each other. As an example of these scientists Mr. Licklider can be mentioned. He wrote an inspiring work called “*Man-Computer Symbiosis*” where he states the idea of intercommunication between users and computers. At the end of 1950s the US Department of Defence established DARPA (Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency) and Licklider took a place as a head of its computer research program. Computers' standards for data representation were different. Fortunately, in 1963 the US government committee came with a development of ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange). It brought the same standards for data exchange and also computers from different producers could swap their data with each other. Year 1965 brought first wide area network connection. It consisted in connection of the computer of MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) to a computer in Santa Monica via a telephone line. (O'Regan 2012)

With regard to the fact, that the American agency DARPA needed to come up with some new idea and thus stay ahead of The Soviet Union in science and technology field, ARPANET was invented. ARPANET was presented publicly in 1972 and it brought a great success. Ray Tomlinson from BBN Technologies evolved a program which enabled electronic mail (e-mail) to be transmit over the ARPANET. In the early 1970s more than thirty institutions were connected with this new technology. (Peterka 1996)

Later on civil networks were originated. In 1979 Usenet was found. This network had been established especially for researchers and working groups. Other network called Bitnet was designed in 1981. It was appointed to American high schools, universities and communication among them. (Poláček and Šalanda 2000)

In early 1980s TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol and Internet Protocol) were invented by DARPA. They help to describe how data should be packetized, addressed, transferred, directed and received. Thanks to TCP/IP ARPANET was later split into MILNET and the other part kept the same name ARPANET. (Leiner et al 2012)

In 1984 Domain name servers came. This new system helped to identify the computer. The following examples can be given: edu (education), org (international organization), com (commercial), gov (governmental). (Brečka et al 2009)

Year 1985 showed that Internet was already well formed and it represented a technology that supported a vast group of researchers as well as developers. In addition, other communities were also prepared to use Internet on daily bases. Later on that year, National Science Foundation came up with a project called NFSNET (The National Science Foundation Network). One year later, Steve Wolf became responsible for the project and identified the need for a large sphere of networking infrastructure that would help to the communities of general academics and researchers. Another demand included the independent from direct federal funding. These strategies were successfully implemented to this project. (Leiner et al 2012)

In 1998, Tim Berners-Lee came up with an idea of World Wide Web, in shorten version WWW or Web. This invention made Internet an easy platform where to find information. (Brečka et al 2009) Internet has been gaining its popularity over years. Internet statistics (InternetLiveStats.com) shows that in 2000 there were about 414 million users worldwide, five years later the number reached its first billion of users. In 2010 it was already over two billions and 2014 brought a third billion of users. Actual number of internet users in 2016 adds up to 3424 million users which is about 46 % of world population.

An invention of wireless mobile internet and increasing number of devices that support this kind of connection played an important role in spreading the Internet. Internet Society in her Global Internet Report of 2015 (InternetSociety.org) explains that first generation (1G) wireless analogue radios were developed in 1980. Ten years later second generation (2G) radios were found. They were of better speech quality and encrypted transference. General Packet Radio Service (GPRS) also marked as 2,5 G technology appeared in Mid-2000 followed by 3G. Fourth generation (4G) was developed in 2010 which is nowadays used in 102 countries, however, with limitations in coverage.

## 2 BLOGS

Blogs can be generally described as means of communication providing information about the issues people are interested in. Furthermore, blogs represent a unique opportunity for the authors to share their own opinions with an audience. (Axel and Joanne 2007).

Oxford dictionary ([www.oxforddictionaries.com](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com)) offers a similar definition and explains that blog is “a website where a person writes regularly about recent events or topics that interest them, usually with photos and links to other websites that they find interesting”. (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/learner/blog>)

Blogs appear on the World Wide Web in many forms: as a diary, a source of news, a marketing tool, etc. Content of blogs include not only text, but also pictures, photos and videos as well. They can have many purposes. The format of blogs opens an effective way to the world of information, considering the personal sphere, but also the professional one, where authors offer fresh and recent posts to the readership. (Gardner and Birley 2010)

Furthermore, Myers describes genre of blogs as “emerging, unstable and changing from month to month.” (Myers 2010, 3)

### 2.1 History of Blogs

Hussey (Hussey 2012) claims that basis for blogging is centuries old. People have been writing their thoughts in journals. However, the opportunity to write electronically online has appeared and therefore, the readership has become much wider.

An early blogger, Rebecca Blood (Blood 2002) attributes the beginning of blogging to 1997 when Blogger Jorn Barger referred to links with commentaries as *weblogs*. This compound word is composed of *web site* and *logging*. In 1998 Jesse James Garret, editor of Infosift, gathered a list of pages that were similar to his site and sent it to another early blogger Cameron Barrett who placed it to his weblog Camworld. Authors with same kind of sites started to send him their URLs and the list grew. In 1999 this list carried 23 known pages. Later on, Petr Merholz, one of the first weblog authors, posted on his site that he is going to pronounce *weblog* as *wee-blog*, which was afterwards shortened to a *blog*. This word gained such a popularity that it was announced a word of the year 2004 by dictionary publisher Merriam Webster. ([Merriam-webster.com](http://Merriam-webster.com)) In 1999 American blogger Brigitte Eaton also completed a list of pages with dated entries that she was aware of and set up Eatonweb Portal. ([Portal.eatonweb.com](http://Portal.eatonweb.com)) It was the most complex list of weblogs that could be found. (Blood 2002)



Furthermore, Blood (Blood 2002) states that in 1999 users got the possibility to create own page from their browsers without any knowledge of HTML system. This invention was first made by a small software corporation Pitas created by Andrew Smales. One month later, Pyra Labs, company, which was found by American computer programmer Evan Williams and Internet entrepreneur Meg Hourihan, came with a similar product called Blogger. These two services have enabled people to write personal diaries, political comments, recipes and any other genres they were interested in. Myers (Myers 2010) adds that Blogger software was in 2003 bought by Google that is still considered to be the biggest base for blogs.

The popularity of blogs has been increasing and year 2002 brought an establishment of Technorati. This website became soon an important place for searching the blogs. In 2008 Technorati already listed over 100 million blogs. It was the only place in the online world where one could find blogs classified by Authority, content and type. The Technorati Top 100 blogs are chosen with the help of algorithms. (Technorati.com)

Hussey (Hussey 2012) thinks that very important step to improve blogging was created by Six Apart company, whose founders, bloggers Ben and Mena Trott in 2003 came up with Movable Type and Typepad blogging service. Users were able to sign up for the service, but also install the service to their computers. That represented a stable and extendable blog engine for their servers.

Year 2004 brought the presidential elections in US and it was historically the first campaign where blogs became an essential tool and easy way how to communicate with the voters. (Okulska and Cap 2010)

Hussey (Hussey 2012) points out that in 2006 Twitter was found as a way of microblogging. It is also called SMS Internet.

As Pederson (Pederson 2010) claims, the amount of blogs written in English can be only estimated. While year 1997 brought only 27 websites that were considered to be blogs. In 2010 the quantity of English blogs grew to 450 million. However, Crystal (Crystal 2008) adds that this amount includes also dead blogs that are no longer updated. Furthermore, the number of readers can be also only estimated from five to six hundred million readers. As it can be seen the popularity of blogs has been increasing throughout the time and numerous of blogs are launched every day.

## 2.2 Characteristics of Blogs

For defining blogs, Blood (Blood 2002) uses its format which distinguishes whether a Web page is a Weblog or not. She describes blogs as webpages with dated entries displayed in a reverse chronological order, habitually being updated. A reader does not have to scroll down the page, because the newest entries are placed on the top. Blogs are usually financed by the links among sites. Users can follow the links on different pages and thus get from one page to many others. Blood calls it traffic of currency. Moreover, these links are also important, because they enable a transparency that is not possible with a paper.

A controversial opinion appears when discussing whether a blog is a genre or not. Barton and Lee (Barton and Lee 2013) states that blogs create the space for many genres such as book reviews, political discussions, personal diaries, etc. However, they do not represent a genre on their own. Mauranen (Mauranen 2013) describes blogs as a group of genres. On the other hand, Myers (Myers 2010) describes blog as a genre with its typical features.

Davis (Davis 2009) adds that each post may hold the same topic as the previous one, usually enriched by a new point or it may as well represent a new topic. In both cases each post has its own identity. Hudson (Hudson 2008) says that blogging is basically sharing author's opinions and commentaries on a certain issue with the rest of the world. Therefore, biases and judgements of an individual are also included.

Myers (Myers 2010) mentions another typical feature of blogs. It is HyperText Mark-Up Language (HTML) which forms the basis for creating the blogs but also other texts on the web. Hyper Text part means that there is a possibility to link to other texts on the web. Mark-Up part signifies the ability for users to create text that can be read by any machine with the similar format.

It is a post what represents a basic unit of blogs. (Myers 2010) Except the text itself, blogs can include pictures, sounds and videos as well. Furthermore, Crystal (Crystal 2006) describes that if posts are sent through a mobile phone it is named *a moblog*. Blogs containing voice recordings are called *audioblogs*. Furthermore, use of digital pictures makes one's blog *a photoblog* and by posting videos blogger creates *a vlog*.

Blogs are connected with other pages by links. Readers usually do not hold the role of passive recipients, but as Myers (Myers 2010) claims they can actively participate through the commentaries and suggest other links to an author. Bloggers have more choices when creating the links. According to Myers, a link can come in a form of a word, a phrase,

URL, a highlighted text or a picture, for instance. Phrases are the most common way of linking. Less common are whole clauses. Mostly often used word for linking is *Link* having a role of an empty placeholder. In case of blogs which are similar to the list of links, deictic words (e. g. *this*, *here*, etc.) are commonly used. However, this is not intended with blogs more close to diaries and articles where the links are secondary. (Myers 2010)

### 2.2.1 Function of links

Myers states (Myers 2010) that mainly link is the thing that differentiates blogs from other genres. Links first enable a reader to find out more information about the text a thus help a writer to solve lack of information. Second, they provide an argument or evidence for the statement in the text. Third, they lead a reader to make some action, for example donate or invest money or buy something. Myers also claims that users usually credit the people who tell them about certain links. These credits are often the reason why bloggers link with names. In practice, it works in a way that the less-read bloggers link to more popular ones with an intention to get a return click and therefore raise their own popularity. This act is already so usual that it is used under the abbreviation h/t (hat tip). This expression has been taken from older times when men were tipping their hats to show an acknowledgement to other person. (Myers 2010)

## 2.3 Types of Blogs

Herring (Herring et al. 2004) and Blood (Blood 2002) divide blogs to five different categories. First category represents *personal journals* also called *diaries*. This kind of blogs gives readers information about author's life, his or her ideas, feelings, opinions, etc. The second place is taken by *filter blogs*. Filters are types of blogs which offer information from outside such as for example world's news. Another type is represented by *K-logs* (knowledge blogs). These types of blogs are usually created and used by companies and institutions. The purpose of K-logs is to create an environment where people could share their knowledge. Fourth category includes blogs that combines two or more types of blogs above. Last category includes blogs which do not fit to any of these categories.

American professor of Public Relations Kent (Kent 2007) distinguishes between two basic kinds of blogs: *traditional blogs* and *news blogs*. He claims that traditional blogs are of smaller audience than news blogs. Authors of these kinds of blogs write about events that happened during the day and incidents that attracted their attention. They are more similar to personal diaries and function as a place where to argue, criticize or on the other

hand give a compliment or advice. By contrast, the purpose of news-blogs is to report on actual news from other online news or different sources of information and create a discussion with the readers. The audience is much wider than in case of traditional-blogs.

Dearstyne (Dearstyne 2005, 41) states that it is intricate to clearly categorize blogs. Despite of this fact, he created five general groups:

1. *Individuals' personal news and views*: these blogs are written by individuals, usually by teenagers to tell publicly about their lives and everyday situations.
2. *News/commentary/journalism*: this group of blogs offer a news reporting, sometimes comments on other sources or in some case even replace a traditional printed media.
3. *Advertising/promotion/marketing/customer service*: The purpose of these blogs is mainly to promote, advertise and captured potential customers' attention.
4. *Business/professional issue commentary and insight*: This category of blogs is considered to be most powerful in business sphere. The involvement of CEOs as well as employees and other professionals is not rare and topics may include law, education, etc.
5. *Internal information sharing/knowledge management applications*: These blogs serve as a place where CEOs share information with their employees. They are used as a cheap way how to communicate with all sectors within a company. The big advantage is the possibility to refresh a data and thus stay current.

## 2.4 Language of Blogs

Language of blogs belongs to the group that is called Computer Mediated Language (CMC). Greiffenstern (Greiffenstern 2010) describes CMC as any message send or received via a computer and Internet as well as mobile phones. As Myers (Myers 2010) points out, blogs adopted some features of newspaper style of writing enriched by a personal point of view. In practice, authors use modal verbs and mental process verbs such as *I think* to express their opinions and attitudes.

Crystal and Rettberg (Crystal 2006, Rettberg 2013) states that many different blogs can be found throughout the blogosphere. However, there is one common feature which they share. Unlike published materials such as for instance a book, a newspaper article or a website with authoritative signs that needs to be double checked by editors, the written language of blogs is displayed in its original unrevised form.

### 2.4.1 Jargon

Jargon is a use of technical terminology that is connected with certain specific sphere and helps to differentiate between *insiders* and *outsiders* of the field. (Yule 2010)

Crystal (Crystal 2006) uses a term *netspeak*. The meaning of the term is similar to Internet language, electronic language, interactive written discourse, etc. Dictionary (dictionary.com) defines the netspeak is a jargon commonly applied by internet users. Furthermore, an expression *blargon* can be found. It combines words 'blog' and 'jargon' and it is used for technical terms that appears throughout blogosphere. (Urbandictionary.com)

Despite of the fact that blogs appear in a written form, they may often show signs of spoken language. (Crystal 2006) Many writers refer to the language of Internet as a *written speech* (Elmer-Dewitt 1994) or *writing talking* (Davis and Brewer 1997) or *write the way people talk* (Hale and Scanlon 1999). However, Crystal states (Crystal 2006) that the factual common features of speech and netspeak are limited. There are certain criteria typical for spoken and written language.

From the list of spoken language criteria, Crystal states (Crystal 2006) that language of blogs is *spontaneous*. Authors use expressions so-called fillers (*you know, you see, um,* etc.) to recall a speech and engage a reader. Furthermore, it is *loosely structured*. It follows on the spontaneity of the language. Use of informal language as for example contracted forms (*it's*) is characteristic for spoken language. Authors sometimes create new words, use obscene words, and sort of slang that is not normally found in writing such as for instance a graphic euphemism (e.g.: f\*\*\*).

Crystal (Crystal 2006) continues with written characteristics, blogs' language is *space-bound*. It means that in most cases writers are not aware of who will be the readers. Moreover, there is a distance between authors and recipients. Secondly, the language is *visually decontextualized* in a way that there is not enough of visual contact nor immediate feedback. Therefore, writers have to be careful with using ambiguous words to state their point clearly. Furthermore, blogs are *factually communicative*. Written materials are easier to work with. One can comfortably keep the records. Furthermore, reading helps to improve memorising of the text and reader can absorb it at a pace that fits to his or her own ability to learn.

### 2.4.2 Formal and Informal Language

Crystal (Crystal 2008) says that blogs can be written in both formal and informal style. Authors have to consider a type of blog that they want to write. Moreover, corporate blogs tend to be of more formal style. Crystal (Crystal 2006) observes that the growing number of corporate blogs will demand for higher editorial control and thus cause a greater standardization. Bon and Hughes (Bond and Hughes 1994) describe that formal style of writing is characteristic by its impersonal tone and a lack of descriptive language. They further explain that impersonality can be seen in usage of passive voice and avoidance of a first person *I/We* as well as a second person *you* (e.g. *We must take action.* → *Action must be taken.*) In the example active voice is replaced by the passive voice and personal pronoun *we* in the position of an agent is deleted. Furthermore, formal style uses formal words such as for instance *numerous*, *interrogate* and *approximately* instead of *many*, *ask* and *about*.

In contrast, Crystal points out (Crystal 2006) that personal blogs usually acquire the informal style of writing. The informality can be seen in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, grammar, contracted forms (*doesn't*, *I'm*), use of emoticons, use of two or three dots symbolizing the pause, abbreviations (*US* - *United States*), clippings (*phone-telephone*), omission of words (*always in the dark x I am always in the dark*), etc. Informal language is also characteristic by using personal pronouns *I*, *you* or *we*. Use of *we* when authors mean himself or herself as well as the addressee is called *inclusive we*. As Jackson and Stockwell (Jackson and Stockwell 2011) points out that inclusive *we* is a signifier of equal social situation. Yus and Hoffman (Yus 2007, Hoffman 2012) adds that comments of blogs also differ in their style. Blog post written in formal style does not ensure a formal comment and the other way around.

## 2.5 Expressing Opinions in Blogs

Bloggers offer readers their opinions. However, they are very careful doing it and thus, they use many different markers to indicate what they think. As Myers says (Myers, 2010), the original form of blogs, the list of links, already contained a certain interest and preferences of the author. For a better interaction with readers, authors use stances to express their attitudes and at the same time they leave a space for the recipients to react and thus continue the discussion.

Myers (Myers 2010) specifies that a stance includes modal verbs (*can, might*), main verbs (*think, claim*), hedges (*possibly, probably*), reported speech, conversational particles (*well, uhm*), etc. In addition, Jaffe (Jaffe 2009) claims that considering one's speech or writing, neutral position does not exist. Therefore, neutrality is considered to be a stance as well. Barton and Lee (Barton and Lee 2013) distinguishes between two different kinds of stance, *epistemic* and *affective*. Biber (Biber et al 1999) adds third, stylistic stance.

Barton and Lee (Barton and Lee 2013) further explains epistemic stance and claims that when taking epistemic stance authors use cognitive verbs such as *think* and *know* to express degree of certainty, beliefs, and knowledge. Myers (Myers 2010) adds that with comparison to other stances, epistemic markers used in blogs are rather less common. On the other hand, they are important, because they influence the claim that blogs are part of news and political debates. In contrast, there is attitudinal stance also called affective stance. Through verbs such as *love, hate*, etc. authors assert their preferences, moral judgements, attitudes, and feelings. The last one, stylistic stance considers the way something is said. While speaking people can express the meaning through the intonation and volume of their voice, which is impossible in case of writing. Therefore, there was a need to replace it by something else. Solution has been found in smileys. Their function is to soften a seemingly harsh or rude comment or to express and irony. Crystal (Crystal 2011) adds that emoticons help to avoid ambiguity in the meaning. Myers (Myers 2010) continues that stylistic stance and its shift in tone uses also adverbs such as *seriously, humbly, frankly*, etc. These adverbs, however, do not signify their real intend of seriousness and honesty but the meaning is shifted.

Myers (Myers 2010) states that very commonly used word while stance-taking is a verb *think*. Authors could skip using this verb, but they want to show that it is their own opinion and it may not be agreed by other people. There are other expressions that are weaker and do not carry a full power of *I think*. As an example the following can be mentioned: *I wonder if, I suppose, I guess, I rather suspect, It is my personal feeling*, etc. It can also be weakened by using for instance *I like to think* or strengthened by expressions such as *I am sure, I truly believe*.

Stance can also come in a form of an adverbial giving the clause an extra meaning. The adverbial is a whole clause, a phrase or a single word. It is a movable part of the clause that comes in a form of a subject, an object, a predicate or a complement. Myers (Myers, 2010) mentions that other stances can be expressed through modal verbs which stand

before the main verb. There are three different classifications of modal verbs vis-à-vis stance-taking positions: *epistemic*, *deontic* and *dynamic*. *Epistemic stance* expresses certainty and uncertainty (e.g.: *may*, *might*). *Deontic stance* deals with commitment and obligation (e.g.: *should*, *must*). This category appears frequently in blogs and their commentaries when participants are telling each other what should or has to happen. Third, *dynamic stance* includes capability and incapability (e.g.: *can*).

Moreover, modals help to make a hypothetical situation that is opposing the reality, for instance *could* or *would*. Semi-modal verbs (e. g. *need to*, *dare*) have a similar function as modals. They can be used for example to create an obligation. (Myers, 2010)

Another stance-taking category is pre-modifying adverb. Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or adverbs itself. Furthermore, adverbs are often confused with adverbials. However, unlike adverbials an adverb is usually one word and it cannot be moved in a sentence. Its function is to emphasize author's attitude to a certain statement. As an example it can be mentioned *so*, *just*, *absolutely*, *totally*, *kind of*, etc. The adverb *just* can be always deleted. However, it serves as a limitation of the effect in case of a noun, a phrase or a verb. Stance nouns create the last group of stance-taking. When the stance appears in a form of a noun it is called nominalization. Concretely, instead of the sentence *I think it is important* author uses noun *the importance*. It can be done with almost all categories of stance-taking (*It is possible* → *the possibility*). (Myers 2010)

### 2.5.1 Ways of Taking a Stance

The categories of stance-taking previously described were connected with grammar. However, there are also structures that depend on readers' perception a use in the context and Myers (Myers 2010) represents the following ones.

*Reported speech* is the first example of such a structure. One way how to represent one's thoughts is through the reported speech, or in other words through someone else's view. The purpose of reported speech is that author is representing someone else's opinion, but at the same time reader can deduce author's attitude to that statement.

The stance-taking can also come as *rhetorical question*. Rhetorical question is this kind of question where author and reader of the text know the answer. Furthermore, it contains a clear point of view and the answer is not needed. An ordinary question, also called a real question may not bear an author's stance. It can only demand for some information. However, rhetorical question always carries a stance. Black (Black 1992)



says: “A rhetorical question uses the auditor’s silence for its own confirmation. It may be the most miniature of iterated persuasive patterns.” (Black 1992, 2) He also claims that rhetorical questions are either so deep in a meaning that the respond is almost impossible to make or so shallow that the answer is extremely evident.

Myers (Myers 2010) continues with description of an *irony* as another stance taking device a says that use of irony works well as a criticism, mockery or warning and as a rhetorical question, it carries an opinion. Another example is *concession*. To make a concession, authors usually express contradictory view first. The adversative conjunction *but* signifies the beginning of an opinion someone has and emphasizes it. The purpose of concession is to show that alternative stances were considered, but author expresses different or a new point of view.

Writers of blogs use a high number of particles and non-word sounds, which is more typical for speaking than writing. These words are called conversational particles or fillers (yesssssss, ummmm, etc.). Its purpose is to enable a reader imagine an interaction easily. Furthermore, they have a specific meaning in the context, but separately they do not make a sense. These expressions can be found in a response to some previous post or to a commentary. (Myers 2010)

## 2.6 Evidence in Blogs

There are certain techniques how to describe the evidence or a lack of it. Authors have invented codes to mark how sure they are about their statements. American linguist Wallace Chafe (Chafe 1986) distinguishes among four different modes of knowing how to mark a claim in English: *deduction*, *induction*, *hearsay*, and *belief*.

*Deduction* describes a knowledge which comes from general principals. It includes arguments that derive from general truths and are shifted to particular cases. Authors usually use generalization when they mock a serious advice from authoritative genres. The origin of deduction is hypothesis. *Induction* is a knowledge that originates from concrete examples. It uses an opposite tactic than deduction. Authors create an argument from the specific case to a general one. The origin of induction is evidence. *Hearsay* (heard from others) means that author gives evidence based on someone else’s statement. The origin of hearsay is language. The last mode, *belief* is unlike any of these categories, a matter of one’s certainty. It is usually supported by evidence but it is also based on what one just thinks. Among expressions signifying beliefs belong clauses such as *I think*, *I guess*, etc.

Blogs are expected to carry author's point of view. Therefore, many statements have something to do with belief which is not supported by any evidence.

Evidence is connected with the same devices as stance (modal verbs, adverbials...). When these devices increase or decrease certainty of a claim, they are called hedges. The use of hedges can serve as a tool of uncertainty. Author leaves a reader in doubts about the statement. Moreover, hedges may often have a comic impact. (Myers 2010)

### 3 FIGURES OF SPEECH

Figures of speech analyzes the way how is certain statement said. Morton (Morton 2014) points out that there are two different types of figures of speech. One kind plays with the meaning of language and it is called tropes. The other kind, schemes, plays with sounds of language. Tropes include rhetorical devices such as a metaphor, a simile, a personification, a hyperbole, and a synecdoche. Schemes covers an alliteration, an anaphora, an epiphora, and antithesis.

#### 3.1 Metaphor

According to Morton (Morton 2014), a metaphor means comparing two seemingly different things which have certain features in common. The purpose of metaphor is to attract attention of a reader and make the text more interesting. Furthermore, it also serves as a way how to understand better a new concept and remember it easily. *Life is a journey* is one example of metaphor.

#### 3.2 Simile

Simile, similarly as metaphor creates colorful text which is more understandable for a reader. Simile compares two unlike things by using the words *like* and *as*, for instance *Sun is shining like a diamond*. (Morton 2014)

#### 3.3 Personification

Morton (Morton 2014) explains personification as attributing the human characteristics to inanimate things such as animals, objects or ideas, for example *Trees were dancing in the wind*.

#### 3.4 Hyperbole

Hyperbole can be labeled as an exaggeration. An author is exaggerating the reality such as a size or a scope of a certain thing, for example *If you want to get a visa to New Zealand, you have to sign a million of documents*. (Morton 2014)

#### 3.5 Synecdoche

Synecdoche is a part of the speech where a part stands for the whole or the whole for a part. It is a part of metonymy. (Morton 2014)

### **3.6 Alliteration**

Alliteration is characteristic with its repetition of the first letters at the beginning of the words that follow one another. The purpose of alliteration is to stress the importance.

### **3.7 Anaphora**

Anaphora signifies a repetition of a whole word or a phrase at the beginning of a successive clause. Similarly, as alliteration, anaphora draws the readers' attention and emphasizes the importance of used words and sentences which are with use of anaphora easy to remember. (Morton 2014)

### **3.8 Epiphora**

In contrast to anaphora there is epiphora. Epiphora is, similarly to anaphora, a repetition of an entire word or a phrase at the end of the successive clause. (Morton 2014)

### **3.9 Antithesis**

Antithesis means putting two opposite phrases or sentences to create a balanced meaning. A reader focuses on impossible situation and

#### 4 PRINT MEDIA VERSUS BLOGS

Big advantage of blogs over print media is a possibility to revise a statement that was already made. In fact, printed news can also make a correction, but it takes a day or even more to do so. In case of blogs, author can correct a mistake or any uncertainties immediately. However, with blogs complications might occur as well. Other users may comment on the faulty blog post, link to it or quote it in their own post and thus, mistakes continue to spread through the internet despite of the fact that they have been corrected. (Myers 2010)

Moore (Moore 2006) states that blogs enable public to enter the world of mass media production and thus, consumers become creators of the text. Tremayne (Tremayne 2007) calls it 'amateur journalism'. (Tremayne 2007, 21)

Coleman (Coleman 2005) argues that blogs suit for people who believe more in their own discernment than in usual sources. Weintraub (Weintraub 2003) contributes with the claim that the main value for blogs is considered to be immediacy at the expense of correctness. On the other hand, Lowrey (Lowrey 2006) states that newspaper reporters should put emphasis rather on accuracy and objectiveness in order to preserve reputation and avoid all possible accusations.

Fowler (Fowler 1991) claims that news is a result of process where information is precisely selected. Furthermore, he adds that news is more created than found or collected. In contrast, Tremayne (Tremayne 2007) sticks to the point that blogs enable to publish information, which mainstream media decided to omit.

According to Bruns and Jacobs (Bruns and Jacobs 2007), particular power of blogs is seen in micro-news. Bloggers who create this sort of reporting are usually directly involved and interested in the happenings themselves and thus they have an access to first-hand information of micro-news. However, first-hand reporting is significant in certain key events of a world format as well. While mass media are gathering all the materials, bloggers are usually already posting updates on the Internet.

In addition, Blood (Blood 2003) says that collecting and verifying information is daily work for journalists, but less usual for bloggers. Therefore, printed media are still considered to be more reliable than blogs. It is also connected with the fact that most bloggers blog without any compensation and in their free time.

## 4.1 Difference between a Newspaper Article and a Blog Post

According to Roessler (Intechnic.com) both terms, an article and a blog post, are often interchanged. However, they have separate characteristics that need to be considered.

### 4.1.1 Characteristics of Blog Post

Spencer (Writingthoughts.com) says that blog post is a part of conversation which has the following characteristics: *conversational language, use of comments, and opinions*.

Conversational language often uses a second person *you* to address a reader and enables the readership to participate. Myers (Myers 2010) contributes with the claim that bloggers try to engage their readers. Persuasive genres such as for instance political speeches and advertisements use pronouns to do so. The most common are pronouns *you* and *we* creating the feeling that a reader is a part of an audience. Furthermore, *you* can rather refer to more people or to a single person. *You* can be also used as a generic pronoun referring to anyone. (Myers 2010) In addition, Shing (Shing et al. 2014) claims that blogs contain of more personal words (e.g.: family, please, etc.) than newspaper articles.

The vast majority of blogs allows readers to participate in a discussion through commentaries. To induce a reader for making a comment authors sometimes use questions. Myers (Myers 2010) adds that authors can use a rhetorical question which reader is not supposed to answer. The intention of this kind of question is to call upon the reader for acknowledging certain view or experience.

Moreover, posts usually contain author's opinion and attitude to a certain issue. Roessler (Intechnic.com) and Spencer (Writingthoughts.com) claim that the language tends to be more informal in an attempt to establish a connection with a readership. Furthermore, they add that blog posts are often of shorter format, usually of one page or sometimes only a single paragraph.

### 4.1.2 Characteristics of Newspaper Article

In contrast to a blog post, Spencer (Writingthoughts.com) states that the main function of article is to convey the information, to interpret the news or facts. An article should contain these features: *factuality, less familiar language, absence of commentaries*.

Authors of articles should provide an objective and factual information. They may refer to source information or use quotes. Therefore, author's opinion should not be evident. Bell (Bell, 1991) also supports this opinion that media should offer a disinterested view on the situation. However, he also says that there are many newswriters included in

process of creating a final text. As a result, the attainment of objectivity is very often an intricate thing.

Furthermore, articles should contain a language that does not directly address a reader. Therefore, use of third person more likely appears. As the articles are factual, comments are usually not allowed, because there is simply no need to make a discussion. (Writingthoughts.com)

Roessler (Intechnic.com) adds that articles are often formal and well structured. They contain an introduction, a middle part and a conclusion. Despite the fact that articles should be objective, Roessler mentions that some articles aim to change readers' opinions or force them to an action. In addition, newspaper articles are likely to be longer.

## 5 BRITISH PRESS

Tunstall (Tunstall, 1996) differentiates among three kinds of British newspapers divided by social class. The first type, *upmarket dailies* such as *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Telegraph* and *The Times* are mainly read by middle class. The second type includes the *midmarket dailies*, that is *The Express* and *The Daily Mail*. The third type covers *downmarket dailies* such as *The Sun*, *The Mirror*, and *The Star*. There are also other types of newspaper which do not fit to this division of press, for example, local newspapers. In addition, Higgins (Higgins et al 2010) reduces the division to two groups. First of them, *broadsheets* or *quality press*, is comparable to upmarket dailies. The other category, *tabloids*, covers midmarket dailies and downmarket dailies. In my thesis I am going to collect the blog posts only from the category of broadsheet newspapers and therefore, I am going to describe only this section in more details.

### 5.1 Tabloids

Word *tabloid* comes from medical term tablet. It originally referred to mini-newspapers and picture newspapers as well. Tunstall (Tunstall 1996) states that midmarket and downmarket newspapers were fully transferred to form of a tabloid in 1980s. The interesting design of tabloid papers incite readers to go through all the pages which is the general interest. (Tunstall 1996)

The midmarket dailies are sometimes called *lower tabloids*. Their main focus targets on light news and entertainment and it covers crime, sport, television schedule, celebrities and also blockbusting human interest stories. Readers can find a lot of pictures, distinct headlines and number of advertisements. The tabloids use mainly sales for financing their expenses. However, advertising brings certain benefits as well. (Tunstall 1996)

### 5.2 Broadsheets

Broadsheets mostly offer the readership serious news. That includes serious financial news, arts, and political news. However, sport and entertainment is not missing. The broadsheets' source of financing comes from advertising. Broadsheets approximately consist of three times more words than tabloids. Therefore, reader is supposed to select only articles that he or she is interested in and not all of them. (Tunstall 1996)



### **5.2.1 The Guardian**

The Guardian, initially named *The Manchester Guardian*, was first published in 1821. It is considered to be a leftist liberal press. At the beginning The Guardian was released weekly until 1836 and became a daily newspaper in 1855. Furthermore, it has been the first full-colour national newspaper. It offers information about current news, business, sport, politics, and so on. Sundays' version is called The Observer. (Theguardian.com)

Since 2005 Guardian has been published in a new design and size. The creators decided to replace a regular broadsheet format for a Berliner format that is nearly as same as a size of tabloids. (Bladh 2010)

### **5.2.2 The Telegraph**

The Telegraph, was first launched in 1855. It is considered to be a right-wing Conservative orientate newspaper. (telegraph.co.uk)

### **5.2.3 The Financial Times**

The Financial Times were first published 1888. This newspaper is published daily and it is considered to be a Centrist Newspaper.

## **II. ANALYSIS**

## 6 INTRODUCTION TO ANALYSIS

The aim of the analysis is to identify the language of political blogs and find a typical characteristics. For purposes of my work I have focused my attention on political blogs dealing with EU referendum in British online newspapers The Guardian, The Telegraph and The Financial Times. I have selected these broadsheets because of their different political orientation. I have collected blog entries in the period from 9 October 2015, when the group Vote Leave was Launched, and 15 April 2016, when official campaign started. I selected British referendum about leaving the EU because in my opinion, it is the most important issue of this year. I was mainly interested in the initial reactions of British politicians to this situation.

The analysis contains fifteen blog posts which were posted before the official campaign of EU referendum. I picked up the articles which argue that UK should leave the European Union as well as their opponents' view which claims that remaining in EU is the way where to go.

In the practical analysis I am going to focus on the total number of links in each post, their appearance and references to the web pages and their function in the text. In the qualitative analysis I am going to focus on level of formality in the text, mainly usage of personal pronouns, punctuation, spelling, contracted forms, use of emoticons, use of two or three dots, abbreviations, clippings, and omission of words), and figures of speech that occur in the text. Furthermore, I am going to study what stances appear in the text the most and ways of taking the stances (reported speech, rhetorical questions, irony, concession, and conversational particles).

I expect blog posts to use conversational language which is more typical for speaking than writing. However, I think that formal language will appear as well taking in account that most of the bloggers that write under the name of newspaper web sites are journalists or writers as well.

The practical part will be divided into three categories according to the newspaper web pages on which the blog posts were found. Each entry will be analysed and examples found will be provided. A short description of every entry will be given at the beginning of a new topic. At the end of the practical part, there will be summary of all three sections together. I will refer to the blog posts by the initial name of the newspapers and the by its order. (G1=first article from The Guardian). The analysed articles are enclosed on a CD which will be provided simultaneously with the thesis.

## 7 THE GUARDIAN BLOG POSTS

In this chapter I chose six randomly selected blog posts published before 15 April 2016 when started the official campaign of EU referendum.

### 7.1 Let's be brutally honest: this remain campaign is failing, Jackie Ashley (G1)

Jackie Ashley is a former television news reporter and newspaper journalist. Since 2002 she has been a columnist and political interviewer for The Guardian. Ashley's article is about growing power of Vote leave, organisation aiming for "Brexit". She talks about certain practices of the organisation and how it is getting its influence. Even though author herself thinks Great Britain should stay in EU, she comments on this situation rather in a pessimistic way.

This post contains six links where three of them are single words (*TTIP*, *Momentum*, *Labour*), two of them are phrases (*Project Fear*, *Gove's essay on sovereignty*) and one clause appears as well (*Scare tactics that would shame the most shameless tabloid editor*). Except one case, all other links refer to The Guardian articles. The exception is linking to Gove's blog post in Spectator's blog site. Some of the links in this text are of a significant importance and without opening and reading them reader could lose certain key points.

The vast majority of the text is written in an informal style as it can be already seen when reading a headline where contracted form is used (*Let's be...*). The text itself also contains contracted forms (*It hasn't been..., who's really at it..., I don't believe...*). Furthermore, author uses personal pronouns *inclusive we* (*we know..., we are heading..., we could face...*) to make a reader feel that he or she is as a part of we. Person pronoun *I* appears as well (*I grant you..., I think..., I'd like to hear...*) and except informality it also signifies author's attitude or opinion. Omission of a verb is another sign of informality (*Just a yowl to spread panic*). The text also shows the elements of formal language in a form of a passive voice (*Criminals have been tightened..., Gove's essay on sovereignty has still not been properly answered.*) Ashley's post is mostly filled with affective stance (*I am beginning to think..., I think it would be wise..., it seems to me...*) as she expresses her attitudes. In addition, she ends her post by a rhetorical question that carries a strong opinion (*So I'd would start the fightback with a simple question: what would Boris's Brexited, Broken Britain actually feel like to live in?*).

From figures of speech, antithesis appears (*shame the most shameless*). Moreover, anaphora (*no consideration..., no context, no thoughtfulness*) as well as alliteration (*Boris's Brexited, Broken Britain*) can be found in the text with the purpose of catching the readers' attention and stressing the importance of the words.

## **7.2 Why Brexit would be nothing less than an act of political arson, David Miliband (G2)**

David Miliband is a president and CEO of International Rescue Committee and a former foreign secretary, he was a Labour MP for South Shields from 2001 to 2013. The article clearly shows authors opinion which is strongly against the British exit from the EU. Miliband claims that leaving the EU would be enormous mistake and would weaken Great Britain at international level. He even compares Brexit to "*an act of arson on the international order*".

This blog post contains of six links. In this text links are represented by a single word (*referendum*), a clause (*vote to leave would be a 'poison'*) and by phrases (*European Union, Somali pirate attacks, Project Fear, Project Fantasy*). All these links refer only to Guardian articles and offers its readers more information about the text. Terms Project Fear and Project Fantasy are not explained in the original text. Therefore, if a reader does not know what a writer has on his mind he or she has to follow the link.

The article is written in an informal style. Author uses inclusive *we* (*we must do that..., ...what we get out of Europe, we lead...*). At the end of the article the personal pronoun *you* appears (*Think of the big questions (you)..., Vote leave if you want to...*). It seems that at the beginning author signifies that they are all part of one nation by using the personal pronoun *we*. He expresses his opinion why United Kingdom should not leave the European Union. At the end he starts to use personal pronoun *you* to stress the importance of readers' choice while voting in EU referendum. Furthermore, emotionally coloured words appear in the text (*strange, devastating, destruction, positive, passionate*) and one contracted form (*Don't...*) was found throughout the whole text. However, signs of formal language appears as well in a form of passive voice (*International humanitarian law is being flouted, global economic institutions are being tested*). Moreover, stances appear throughout the text (*I would argue..., It is utterly fantastical to claim...*).

Figures of speech are represented by metaphors. First of them be found in the headline. Author compares there Brexit to an arson (*Why Brexit would be nothing less than an act of*

*political arson*) and then also in the text itself (*At the heart of our British success*). In addition, an anaphora (*The power to help set rules for the world's largest single market, rather than accept the rules being set for us; the power to help decide on the deployment of the largest humanitarian budget in the world; the power to help shape the negotiation of global trade deals; the power to help deploy the political resources of 28 countries/ whether global capitalism has more bust than boom; whether enlightenment values can be sustained in the face of global pressures; whether the climate crisis is past resolution.*) and an epiphora (*International humanitarian law is being flouted, global economic institutions are being tested to the limit*) can be found as a call for a readers' attention. Personification appears as well when attributing human characteristics to the country (*Britain cannot solve these problems alone.*) In this sentence Britain can be also considered to be a synecdoche where Britain is a substitution for British people. Similar synecdoche appears at the end of the post (*Britain needs Europe and Europe needs Britain*).

### **7.3 So what if I'm black and thinking about voting Brexit?, Dreda Say Mitchell (G3)**

Dreda Say Mitchell is an award winning crime novelist. She is also a broadcaster on BBC Radio 4 and a journalist at The Guardian, The Independent and The Observer. The author is for leaving the EU, because she thinks that this union does not respect democracy, by her own words: *There doesn't seem much point in electing MPs if their votes can be overridden by... EU.*

The text carries six links that appear in a form of one single word (*suggests*), a name (*Peter Shore*), and phrases (*shadow chancellor, compared to Hitler, flying into Havana, exploding cigars*). In this post links play an important part of the text. The phrases shadow chancellor and compared to Hitler are on their own meaningless, because reader does not know about whom is the author speaking of. However, the links reveal that shadow chancellor is John McDonnell and the person compared to Hitler is Donald Trump. In this text four links refer to Guardian's articles, one refers to The Telegraph web page and the last one to The Times article.

This post is written in an informal style. Author uses mostly the first person (*I've found..., I've managed..., I'm thinking..., I recommend*) through which she takes the stances and expresses her own point of view. She uses a personal pronoun *you* (*You might think...*) which can be found exclusively in the first paragraph and nowhere else in the text.

Moreover, inclusive we (*We have..., we are becoming...*) can be found as well Contracted forms (*I'm, I've, isn't, doesn't*) can be found already in the title and then in the whole text. However, formal forms that are not contracted (*it is*) appear as well. Hence, it can be seen the text is not united. Formal language does not appear in this text as the author is using descriptive language and tells her stories (*As a youngster, I was brought up to think of Grenada as "back home".*)

In addition, *Grenada as "back home"* is considered to be a simile. Furthermore, an alliteration emerges from the text (*There aren't many ways to blindside people politically..., I recommend it to anyone looking for sun, send and sea*).

#### **7.4 The EU is a sham. Vote no to let a new Europe take root, Simon Jenkins (G4)**

Simon Jenkins is a journalist and a writer. In the article, author creates an imaginary situation where EU referendum is over and Vote Leave campaign has won the elections. Author is describing what would happen after the UK left the EU and its consequences. Author stands behind the Brexit solution.

The article contains twelve links were found in a form of a word (*Europe*), a name (*Roger Bootle*), a date (*May 2017*), a phrase (*1972 European Communities Act, article 20 of the Lisbon treaty, article 50, The Trouble with Europe, Scottish Referendum, Syrian migration*) and finally in a form of a clause (*Brexit would "cost every Briton £450 a year", George Osborne talks trade in China, Cameron sends his drones to bomb Syria*).

Seven links refer back to Guardian articles, two links are directed to Lisbon treaty web page and other links refer for example to Legislation web page, an article from The Times and there is even one link which links to a Wikipedia article. All these links enable a reader to find out more information about the text, but the text itself would be meaningful without the links as well.

The language of this entry is mostly of formal character as contracted forms do not appear and passive voice (*The options for such s deal are set out..., The new treaty would be put..., Some version of a new single market must be found*) can be found as well as numerous of formal words (*instigate, embrace, incompetent*) and technical terms (*gross domestic product, floating currencies, oligarchy*). In addition, it is written in a third form. Stance- taking appears in the text as well (*We must recognize..., They are tough to believe...*).

The headline contains an idiom (*turn the tables*). This expression means changing the situation from the position of a disadvantage to the advantageous one. There is a synecdoche and hyperbole in one sentence (*As the European Union faces the worst and most dangerous crisis since its creation...*). Personification can be found in the text as well (*England had argued...*).

### **7.5 Michael Gove: the big beast who gives Eurosceptics the leadership they need, Daniel Boffey (G5)**

Daniel Boffey is the Observer's policy editor. He is commenting on Gove's decision to support Brexiters. Boffey is a pro-Brexit supporter.

Article contains only two links, a name (*Michael Gove*) and a phrase (*European Union*) both referring to Guardian articles. These two links offer some further information about European Union and Michael Gove, however, the text would have a same meaning without these links.

This blog post is mostly written in a formal style. Author uses a third person and a plenty of formal words (*au fait, credibility, obey*). Passive voice is not used throughout the text. However, an informal style of writing appears as well. Contracted forms are used (*isn't, don't*), but forms that are not contracted can be found as well. Therefore, the text is united. Furthermore, emotionally colored words appear. In the title reader can see a word with a bad connotations (*beast*). Further in the text evaluative words are used (*painful decision, overwhelming, restless*). In the last paragraph author addresses readers by a second person *you* (*Just don't expect...*).

A stance can be seen in the article (*Just don't expect...*). However, there is not much of it as the article is written mostly in formal style and author does not reveal much of his opinions.

From the list of figures of speech, a metaphor appears when Gove was answering a question while cabinet meeting (*He told of taking his decision with heavy heart.*). In addition, a personification appears (*EU's inability to deal with...*). EU can be also seen as a synecdoche representing the members of European Union.



## 7.6 The war drums are beating again – The Tories have begun their battle of Brexit, Matthew d’Ancona (G6)

Blog post contains seven links, four of them in a form of a phrase (*his resignation in 2011, his intention to campaign for withdrawal, the Brussels summit, Commons debate on air-strikes*), two of them in a clause form (*declined to rule out heading the campaign for Brexit, As he explained...*) and a word (*Conservatives*). All of the links link to The Guardian articles and have an informative function.

The qualitative analysis shows combination of formal and informal language. Formality can be seen in usage of third person and formal words (*condemn, enumerate, dissent*). Informality is expressed by using a second person *you* (*Cruel, you might suppose*). Furthermore, spelling mistake appears as well (*projet* instead of *project*).

Numerous of stances are used in this post (*Cruel, you might suppose, It is not hard to decode..., This illustrates precisely what..., So here the Tories are again, Corbyn can’t beat the Conservatives*).

From figures of speech metaphor can be found in the headline of the blog post (*The war drums are beating again – the Tories have begun their battle of Brexit.*) In this metaphor author is comparing the campaign for Brexit to the war battle which can evoke negative connotations among the readership. Furthermore, text contains an alliteration that stresses the Cameron’s point (*begging bowl*) and also aa personification or a synecdoche (*...the direction of travels in Brussels is at last sympathetic to Britain*). Text also includes an anaphora (*Not trench warfare between big beasts and celebrity politicians, between those who model themselves on Thatcher, those who model themselves on Churchill, and those who...*)

## 8 THE TELEGRAPH BLOG POSTS

Five blog posts have been collected throughout the selected period of time.

### 8.1 The EU referendum is a choice between certainty and risk, Anna Soubry (T1)

Article was written by Anna Soubry who was appointed Minister for Small Business, Industry and Enterprise). Furthermore, she was re-elected as a Conservative MP for Broxtowe in May 2015. Soubry's article presents six myths about European Union and her disproof of them. In the text, she argues that Britain should stay in the European Union which is clearly visible in the sentence *On one side, you have those, like me, who want to remain.*

This blog post does not contain any links. The language is mostly informal. Author uses a personal pronoun *you* to signify the importance of the reader's choice (*you will make one of the biggest decisions; on one side, you have those, like me, who want to remain...on the other, you have those who want to leave*). Although, inclusive *we* is more frequent and by its use author enables a reader to feel as a part of *we* (*we get full access..., if we remain in Europe..., we won't be able to...*). Another sign of informality is a use of contracted forms (*It's vital that..., That's because..., We won't be able to...*). Furthermore, evaluative language appears (*This is nonsense, These claims are untrue, This is not possible*).

Stances appear throughout the text as the author is expressing her opinion. She uses rhetorical questions (What would that uncertainty mean for business and jobs? What would the impact be on the UK economy?). As there are no answers for the questions, author leaves space for the reader to stop and think about it.

From the list of figures of speech, a metaphor can be found (*that's a gamble we cannot take*). Author compares there a decision to leave EU to a gambling which is a risky thing. Therefore, she claims that the decision to leave EU is risky as well. Hyperbole appears in the first sentence (*You will make one of the biggest decisions you'll ever have to make: whether to stay in, or leave, a reformed Europe*). A synecdoche can be found as well (*We should leave Europe*). In this case Europe stands for the organization European Union. Furthermore, a personification appears (*Campaign claims...*) and this clause can be considered as an alliteration as well.

## **8.2 Stubborn old people who want to leave the EU are condemning the rest to a lifetime of uncertainty, Abi Wilkinson (T2)**

The writer of this article, Abi Wilkinson, is a freelance journalist writing about politics, inequality, gender, popular culture, etc. The article, as the headline reveals, says that senior people statistically tend to vote for Brexit as they see migration as a threat. Wilkinson claims that their obligation should be to consider the choice and the pros and cons of both possibilities. On the other hand, Wilkinson points out that young people are expected to vote for Remain. However, many of them are not old enough to vote as it is allowed from the age of 18. Consequently, Wilkinson supports the ‘Remainers’.

Taking a look on the text itself, it contains two links that both lead to The Telegraph articles which tell the readership more about the discussed topic. The blog post is predominantly written in an informal style. The informality can be seen in a use of personal pronouns. First person presents the author’s attitude and it appears when the author has a need to add his commentary to the certain information (*I know I’m certainly not keen to..., I can see that it might be harder to...*) or when she describes her personal experience (*I’m used to hearing a whole range of different languages and accents as I go about my daily life. It’s a mundane fact that many of my neighbours are relatively recent immigrants, not a cause for concerns*). Second person *you* also appears in the text and it uses an indefinite *you* referring to anyone (*When you consider that..., If you’ve not got to worry...*). In addition, the author uses *inclusive we* to make the readership feel included in the group which appreciates the benefits being a part of the EU (*Almost three quarters of us say we’ll vote to remain..., We’re more likely to travel abroad..., Many of us have friends who were born in other countries so we’re less inclined to be wary of other cultures, We’re also much more likely to date someone who was born outside the UK*). Characteristics of formal style of writing appear on the places where the slang is used (*economic shock, competition*). Passive voice appears as well (*generation could be left, entry level roles would often be...*). No figures of speech occur.

## **8.3 It’s just wrong to blame the EU for terrorism, Miriam González (T3)**

The author, Miriam González, is an international trade lawyer and former EU Foreign Affairs Adviser. The article itself responds on the Brexit camp which blames the EU for lack of safety reminding the Islamic State terrorism in Belgium. González claims that

terrorism has never had a political clause. Furthermore, UK is not even a part of Schengen area and has a stronger position in Europe. Hence, González sticks up for the opinion that UK should stay in the EU which is clear at the end of the post where she states that *The fact is that those terrorists appear to be spreading and getting stronger – our response to their attacks cannot be to become smaller and weaker. Whether you instinctively like or dislike the EU, that is just common sense.*

Three links appear throughout the text in a form of a clause (*sort out internal difficulties in the Conservative Party*), and a phrase (*speech by justice minister Dominic Raab, suicide bomb attacks in Brussels's airport and metro last week*). All of them refer to The Telegraph articles their purpose is to extend the awareness about the discussed topic.

The article itself is written in both, informal and formal style. The informality lies in a use of personal pronouns. *I* is used to signify an author's opinion and feelings as well as information about herself (*When I saw..., I was a Middle East and North Africa adviser..., I too feel responsible for not having done more to avoid them*). *Inclusive we* considers reader as a part of a whole (*We are confronted with a terrible threat..., the values we have*). In the end, *indefinite you* appear when there is no one concrete on reader's mind (*whether you instinctively like or dislike...*). In addition, emotionally coloured words are used (*extremely dangerous criminals, brutality, plainly false claim*). On the other hand, formality can be found in a use of passive voice (*These assertions are made..., Some 130 people were brutally murdered..., decisions often taken with good intentions...*).

Figures of speech appear in the text as well. The first sentence contains alliteration to attract the readers' attention from the beginning (*Having felt for five full years...*). Synecdoche can be found as well (*Conservative side of the pro-European camp speak up*). A simile appears as well when comparing British Prime Minister and French president to a rock stars (*One thinks of the victory pictures of the British Prime Minister and then French President Nicolas Sarkozy in Libya, parading like rock stars while not committing to a concerted follow-up.*) This simile can be construed as a mockery.

#### **8.4 The pro-EU minister trying to impress the young...by talking about 'the Twitters', Michael Deacon (T4)**

The author, Michael Deacon, is a writer and political satirical journalist. This article mostly includes a reported speech from Nicky Morgan's speech and the following comments of the author. Michael Deacon seems to mock the Education Secretary, Nicky Morgan, with

his ironical notes. However, the whole text did not reveal whether the author inclines to a one part or another of EU referendum.

Links in this article appear in a number of three. One name (*Nicky Morgan*) and two clauses (*scrap student maintenance grants, cut benefits for the richest pensioners*) are used for linking. Links lead to The Telegraph articles as well as to Cambridge-news.co.uk. Links offer a reader a broader view on the topic.

Informality appears throughout the whole text and can be seen in a use of first person. (*I can imagine..., I know...*). The author uses the first person in situations where he wants to add a comment. Another sign of informality is a use of three dots signifying a pause and calling for reader's attention (*trying to impress the young... by talking about the Twitters*). Contracted forms appear as well (*It wasn't hyperbole..., They're all too busy...*).

In this article numerous of irony can be found. It starts already in the first sentence (*In a bizarre speech...*) and it continues throughout the text (*Nicky Morgan, 43, was attempting to impress; I wish I could have been present when the Education Secretary was brainstorming this speech. Still I can imagine how it went; Interesting to hear that Mrs Morgan shares these concerns*). Furthermore, a repetition appears having an emphasizing effect (*The Education Secretary really did tell the young they should support the EU because they loved Interrailing. She really did tell them they were the generation "of eBay" And she really did promise to communicate with them via "the Twitters" and "the Facebooks"*). At the end of the article irony appears again criticizing the decision that voters in EU referendum must be at least eighteen years old (*Fair enough, really. They're all too busy playing their Gameboys on the Googles.*)

## **8.5 EU referendum: have we lost the ability to run our own country?, Christopher Booker (T5)**

Christopher Booker is a journalist writing comments, columns and in opinion section of The Telegraph and one of the founders of Private Eye magazine. In this article, Christopher Booker is discussing whether the UK would be able to manage itself without being in the EU. Furthermore, he is arguing that no 'Brexit' yet came with a proper plan how Britain could govern itself again without being in the UK. Therefore, he belongs to the box of pro-EU supporters.

The article contains a single link referring to a Telegraph web page enabling to find out more information about the situation. The article is predominantly written in an

informal style as personal pronouns appear. *We* is used in a headline referring mainly to the government of the country (*Have we lost the ability to run our country?*). In addition, *inclusive we* appears as well (*How far we have now become enmeshed in that vast, amorphous system of government centred in Brussels; we would still have to keep huge quantities of EU law on the statute book; how we could learn once again to govern ourselves once we had left*). Personal pronoun *I* is used at the end of the article (*I would require...*) and has a function of evaluation.

A hyperbole appears in the text (*titanic effort*) the purpose of exaggeration. Furthermore, metaphor can be found as well comparing a decision to vote for leaving the EU to the *leap in the dark*.

## 9 THE FINANCIAL TIMES BLOG POSTS

Four blog posts have been collected from the section of Westminster Blog.

### 9.1 Will the Stronger In Campaign alienate swing voters?, Sebastian Payne (F1)

The author of the article, Sebastian Payne, is the deputy editor of the Spectator's Coffee House blog, and has previously worked as the magazine's online editor. He cooperates with The Financial Times since the January 2016. In the article, Payne is criticizing that Strong In Europe campaign did not keep its promise and uses a Project Fear to convince the voters. Payne claims that they should be careful with using the language and thinks that it could drive away some potential voters. However, from this blog post, it is not obvious whether Payne support In Campaign or Out Campaign.

This article consists of five links referring to different pages, such as BlogSpectator.org, BritishFuture.org, The Financial Times, Voteleavecontrol.org and Twitter. Links leads to information that will widen the area of knowledge of the reader.

The style of writing is formal as formal characteristics can be found. Passive voice appear (The contents have yet to be released..., This leaflet will be sent..., Voters will be alienated). Informal characteristics such as use of personal pronouns I, you and we do not appear.

From the list of figures of speech, synecdoche appears (British Future also believes...). Furthermore, alliteration can be found (*to do the doing the same*).

### 9.2 Pollsters face repeat of election failure in EU referendum, researchers warn, Kate Allen (F2)

The author, Kate Allen, is the Director of Amnesty International UK and a political correspondent. Kate Allen's article is about pollsters and their trustworthiness. She refers to the last year's general election predictions and their failure. She points out that there was a study which method of poll is more accurate and the result showed that phone polls are more likely to be right, because they do not offer a 'don't know' answer.

Four links has been found throughout the text, all of them referring to The Financial Times articles. The text itself is written in a third form and passive voice appears frequently (*final inquest is published..., the difference in outcome is caused by..., how the*

*question is phrased...*). Signs of informal language and figures of speech do not appear in the article.

### **9.3 Cameron needs to show he respects Eurosceptic colleagues, Sebastian Payne (F3)**

The author of the article, Sebastian Payne, is the deputy editor of the Spectator's Coffee House blog, and has previously worked as the magazine's online editor. He cooperates with The Financial Times since the January 2016. The article is about a Cameron's rules that he set out for those who want to exit the EU. There are different views on these rules as Europhiles claim that these rules are fair. On the other hand, Brexiter's do not like it. Payne claims that Cameron might *cheese of Eurosceptics*.

The article contains four links. Two of them refer to the Telegraph web page, one of them to The Financial Times article and the last one refers to ConservativeHome.com. The role of links in this article is significant and one would not know much what the writer has on his mind without reading them.

The article is written in a formal style of writing. However, informal signs show up as well. Formality can be seen in a passive voice (*ministers are allowed to...*). Informality can be seen in a use of contracted forms (*It's the Prime Minister's tone...*).

Simile is used in the article when Payle compares Cameron to *an exasperated headmaster* and *Eurosceptics to the naughty school boys*.

### **9.4 What Britain thinks about Europe: five things you need to know, Kate Allen (F4)**

The author, Kate Allen, is the Director of Amnesty International UK and a political correspondent. In this article, Allen is stating five points about the polls. *At the end of the article she sums up that, in her own words, polling is pretty difficult, and even the best, most professional efforts by pollsters with decades of experience.*

There are eight links in the text mostly referring to other web pages. Language is formal when explaining the technical things around the pollsters (*variety of methods to adjust the data, error, different wording*). On the other hand, the headline signifies a sign of informality. It is a typical headline of the informal blog having a function of attracting the readers' attention. Furthermore, the informality appears at the end of the article when the



informal phrase is used (pretty difficult). Moreover, repetition appears (*always, always*) and emphasis the meaning.

## 10 SUMMARY OF THE PRACTICAL ANALYSIS

The aim of the work was to analyse language of political blogs and find common features. As a first thing I focused on the opinion of the reader expressed in the articles. As a result, analysis revealed that four (G3, G4, G5, G6) out of six Guardian articles were supporting pro-Brexit campaign. The Telegraph authors were supporting this campaign in a number of four (T1, T2, T3, T5) out of five articles when the fifth one (T4) did not say clearly whether he supports a vote pro or against the leaving of EU. In most cases, bloggers of The Financial Times did not express their opinions straightly. However, they were using reported speeches of the interviewees.

The practical part followed with analyzing the links that each post carried. Article G1 carried six links where five of them referred back to the articles of The Guardian. G2 contained six links and G6 of seven links. In both cases, there was not any link that would lead to a different article than The Guardian's one. G4 contained twelve articles from which twelve referred to a home page. As it can be seen The Guardian authors referred mostly back to the Guardian web page. Similar is the situation with The Telegraph articles where the first article T1 did not contain any link, the second article T2 included two links and third article T3 had three links, both of these authors referred only to The Telegraph articles. Fourth articles' (T4) links lead two times to the Guardian web sites. Similarly to The Guardian articles, most of the Telegraph links referred back to The Telegraphs' site. However, the number of links was in case of Telegraph significantly lower. The situation changed when studying the links in The Financial Times Blogs. The amount of links was similar to The Telegraphs article. However, most of them led to some other less famous website.

Looking closer on the language used by the bloggers, articles of The Guardian and The Times used predominantly informal style of writing. They were using mainly personal pronouns *I* when expressing their opinions. Secondly, personal pronoun *you* referring to anybody, but letting the reader feel like it is he or she, who it is spoken to. Thirdly, *Inclusive we* was used frequently as a way, how to create a feeling that reader is a part of unity. Furthermore, one spelling mistake appeared throughout all the articles and it was in G6. Moreover, another sign of informality was also put to the emotionally coloured words. In contrast, The Financial Times' authors were more using a formal style. Formality mostly appeared in a use of passive voice and in a use of formal words. Finally, to attract reader's

attention and enable them a better remembering and imagining the text, tropes and schemes were used.

## CONCLUSION

The aim this Bachelor thesis was to analyse the language of political blogs that appeared on the web pages of British popular press. Language of blogs was expected to be of more conversational as well as of rather informal character.

The analytical part is based on fifteen articles selected from the British serious newspapers. The goal of the thesis is to analyse selected political blogs and find similarities and differences between them. Furthermore, the thesis examines if the newspapers' political orientation reflects in the text.

The theoretical part of the thesis started with the history of blogs and continued with the history of blogging. Afterwards, the blogs were defined and their features, types and characteristics of the language revealed. Furthermore, the ways how bloggers express their opinions and attitudes were described. Later on, the thesis proceeded with the tropes, schemes and their use in blogs. The difference between a newspaper article and a blog post was clarified. At the end of the theoretical part the analysed newspapers were briefly characterized.

The analytical part was based on the fifteen articles selected from the broadsheet newspapers The Guardian, The Telegraph, and The Financial Times in the period from 9 October 2015, when the group Vote Leave, was to 15 April 2016, when the official political campaign for EU referendum started.

The result of the analysis revealed that a vast majority of blogs posted on The Guardian website was pro-Brexit oriented. There can be find a connection between this result and the leftist political orientation of the newspapers. In contrast, The Telegraph blogs were in all but one cases pro-EU supportive as the newspapers carries a right-wing political orientation. Finally, the The Financial Times' bloggers where mostly simply commenting on a different issues connected with EU referendum, such as for instance polls.

The difference in use of language was significant predominantly between The Financial Times where written mostly in a formal style, while the other group of newspaper' bloggers tent to use informal style of writing.

To summarize this Bachelor thesis, articles from The Guardian and The Telegraph were easier to read as the blog posts were written in more informal way than The Financial Times' articles. Furthermore, the political orientation mostly corresponded with the articles.

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## **APPENDICES**

P I Corpus of analysed articles (see the enclosed CD)

