



# **Communicative Purposes of Guardian Newspaper Headlines: The Case of Covid-19**

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The study focuses on the investigation and analysis of Guardian newspaper headlines related to Covid-19, the pandemic disease, and they are collected from the Guardian newspaper from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 2020 up to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2020. The study aims to identify how the editor succeeds to grab the reader's attention towards the seriousness of this pandemic on all human's life fields. Additionally, its aim is to reveal the most utilization of discourse modes that the editor depends on for paying the reader's attention to the content of online headlines. To this end, Brooks and Warren's discourse modes (1950) adopted to be the model. The result shows that merely two types of discourse modes are significantly utilized, they are exposition and argument. Exposition is frequently used to inform the reader all the news. Then, the argument mode occupies the second place to show how the editor discuss certain facts related to Covid-19 with his readers to convince them about specific topic.

**Key Words:** discourse modes, Covid-19, newspaper headlines

### 1. Introduction

The term 'discourse modes' is also known as 'text types' or 'rhetorical modes'. It means how language is spoken or written to create a communication among people throughout certain kinds of texts that the speaker/ the writer follows to achieve. According to the studies of scholars, the number of discourse modes are verified from one scholar to another. Some presents four, others classify them into five and so on. What it is important to know is that each mode has two major features. The first feature is that each mode identifies particular situations, such as event, state, generalization and abstraction, to the discourse universe. Secondly, these modes include progressing, temporal and atemporal principles. Hence, the association between linguistics and these features are existed. In other words, knowledge of one's language leads to knowledge of both the forms and meanings of these modes (C. S. Smith, 2003:8). D. Biber (1988:170) makes a difference between genre and discourse texts in that discourse texts mean a number of texts which are similar in their linguistic form, but irrespective genre.

The study aims to analyze the Guardian's newspaper online headlines that deal with the pandemic disease of Covid-19 in all fields of life. In other words, it shows how the editor presents the seriousness of this disease not only on human's existence on this planet but also its effect on economics, tourism, politics, ...etc. These newspaper online headlines are analyzed in terms of C. Brooks and R. P. Warren's discourse modes (1950), which are four types: narration, exposition, argumentation and description, to show how they can grab the reader's attention to such news and which discourse type is frequently utilized to grab his/her attention to the content of these online headlines. The analysis data are collected from The Guardian newspaper from the 1<sup>st</sup> of Jan., 2020 up to the 31<sup>st</sup> of Dec., 2020.

### 2. Literature Review:

Many researchers study discourse types form different aspects. The first study was presented by A. Şahin (2013) whose study concentrated on the effect narrative and informative text types on reading comprehension. The researcher dealt with Primary Education 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in 2011-2012 academic year. Plus, the researcher aimed to make a comparison between females and males in order to show the text type effects on their comprehension. The findings revealed that the students comprehended the narrative text type more than informative one when they read. Different rates of these text types recorded between females and males.

S. M. Isnaini (2014) studied text types of reading texts in National Examination at Junior High School for raising comprehension through such types. The study was specialized for the academic year 2011. Its objectives were to describe the text types of reading text and to show the role of text types in describing the whole reading text. The results proved the four text types were used in the analysis data.

K. S. Utomo (2014) conducted a study to analyze the reading exercises of text types in English textbook whose title was "English for a Better Life" for the 11<sup>th</sup> graders published by P. Raya that viewed from KTSP requirements. The researcher's aim was to illustrate the reading exercises of text types realized in the textbook and to discover the agreement extent between the reading exercises of text types in the textbook with the KTSP requirements. The results found that there was less compatibility between the reading exercises of text types realized in the textbook with the KTSP requirements.

The fourth study was tackled by Wei Song et al (2017) to study the manual and automatic identification of various discourse modes, namely narration, exposition, description, argument and emotion found in narrative essays. The corpus was the narrative essays written by Chinese students in native language. The results revealed that discourse modes had the ability to improve automatic essay scoring.

The present study is similar to the previous studies in that all of them deal with discourse modes and show their impact on the receiver's comprehension. Certain points of differences can also be summarized between them. First of all, the data selected is the newspaper online headlines whereas the previous ones are either reading comprehension textbooks or narrative essays. Secondly, the model of the study is Brooks and Warren's discourse modes (1950), but a variety of models is used in the previous studies. As a result to what mentioned above, it is possible to say that the study paves the way to new perspective, analyzing newspaper online headlines, for discovering the effect of discourse modes on the receiver's attention not only in education curriculum but to other field which is represented through printed media, including the online newspaper.

### 3. Newspaper Headlines

Newspaper Headline can be defined as a brief summarized title of newspaper article which is largely and boldly typed and printed to pay the reader's attention to the gist that follows. C. A. Tabe1 and N. I. Fieze (2018:65) illustrated that newspaper headlines are formed intentionally to reflect the editor's mind. The shape and the structure of the headline are not arbitrarily created but to reflect the gist, that can be described as "politically oriented and ideologically driven." The nature of the news headline can briefly tell the summary of the story. Van Dijk (as cited in Tabe1 and Fieze, 2018:65) assured that it is essential to notice certain facts about the discourse of newspaper headlines: the headline position, the headline boldness, the utilization of vocabulary on the headline, the punctuation mark use, the headline syntax, the occurrences number on the same event and the presenter power. Dijk prospects three significant functions for the headlines: providing a brief summary of the main news to the reader, paying the reader's attention an finally giving the news values of the newspaper throughout its content and style.

D. Reah (1998:22) indicates specific ways to make the editor's headline more effective and striking ones and they are as follows: word choice, word play, intertextuality, sound, loaded language, omission of grammatical words, noun phrases , and class shift.

### 4. Discourse Modes

For communication, discourse modes state the purposes and conventions of the major language kinds. The taxonomy of these modes varies from one linguist to another. Smith (2003:8) suggests five discourse modes: narrative, description, report, information and argument. J. Langan (1993) (as cited in C. Tribble 1996:47) prospects a number of discourse modes for text language and they are exposition, description, narration, argumentation and persuasion. Exposition can be subdivided into: exemplification, process, definition, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, definition, division and classification. Brooks, and Warren (1950) mentioned four main discourse modes of texts that are exposition, argument, description and narration. The latter is the model of the study to depict how the editor is able to effect on the receiver's mind through the newspaper online headlines about Covid-19. Brooks and Warren's discourse modes (1950) adopted to be the modal. They divide them into four kinds as follows:

#### 4.1 Exposition

This type of discourse explain the subject. It is the most common discourse mode among the other modes. It states something related to the subject. It is deemed as the answer to a question about the subject." Exposition embodies certain methods to answer the question, identification is considered one of its simplest ways to answer it. Identification can absorb other exposition methods "it begins, for example, to use analysis, comparison, or contrast; and the simple intention of identification may be lost in other and perhaps more interesting intentions in the discussion." Additionally, exposition occasionally tends to absorb description and it is known as expository description which differs from ordinary description according "the different types of occasion from which they arise" (ibid, 38- 42).

#### 4.2 Argument

This discourse mode aims to make the receiver think or it indicate the arguer's desire. The mode has two appeals: the appeal of understanding, which is the most prominent one, and the appeal of emotions. The former plans to convince and the latter aims to persuade. It connotes the conflict or the conflict possibility between positions. The mode addresses a person who opposed the arguer's opinion. The argument generally aims to "resolve the conflict in which the argument originates." The arguer argues for persuasion and winning (ibid, 125- 126 ).

#### 4.3 Description

This type is associated with the world appearance. It depicts the qualities that a thing has, it tells the thing as it seems before an observer. It is called a suggestive description. It is commonly related to other discourse modes, specifically narration, to understand the scene as it is real one. It occasionally comes to subordinate narrative texts (ibid,195- 196).

#### 4.4 Narration

It is concerned with action and life motion. It tells a story and it is the question answer 'what happened?' and ' how did it happen?'. 'Action' here is related to certain aspects: movement, time and meaning. This type of discourse shows "a moving picture", "its object in operation" and "life in motion". It confirms both the thing in motion and the motion nature. It refers to how the action transforms from one stage to another (ibid,237).

#### 5. Methodology

This study conveys the discourse modes of newspaper headlines regarding Covid-19 to reveal the editor's communicative purpose by which the message conveyed correctly. The data of the study is Guardian newspaper headlines related to Covid- 19, the pandemic disease, from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 2020 up to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2020 are selected for the sake of analysis adopting Brooks and Warren's discourse modes (1950) as being the most comprehensive treatment of the subject and a standard model in this area.

#### 5.1 Data Collection

The study data are the newspaper online headlines taken from The Guardian. These online headlines are related to Covid-19, the pandemic disease. They are collected from the 1<sup>st</sup> of Jan.,2020 up to the 31<sup>st</sup> of Dec.,2020. The data will be analyzed in terms of Brooks and Warren's discourse modes (1950).

#### 5.2 Data Analysis

NO.	The Online Headlines	The Discourse Mode	Interpretation
1	"Coronavirus live Cruise operator bans Chinese nationals from its" .... (7 Feb 2020).	Exposition	It gives an information of how coronavirus live Cruise operator bans.
2	"Coronavirus 'could cost global economy \$1.1tn in lost income "' ( 19 Feb 2020)	Exposition	Informing the reader how the pandemic effect on the global economy if it continues.
3	"Dissent becomes the next victim of coronavirus as China cracks Down" (19 Feb 2020)	Exposition	It provides the reader a specific fact as an inevitable victim of the coronavirus.
4	"Coronavirus kills young Wuhan doctor as hundreds infected in China's prisons" (21 Feb 2020 )	Exposition	Illustrating a fact that a doctor was died because of coronavirus.
5	"China prisons report 500 cases, as virus spreads in South Korea – as it happened" (21 Feb 2020)	Exposition	It explains to the reader the impact of Coronavirus spread which arrives to China prisons.
6	"Trump puts Pence in charge of US virus response – as it happened "(26 Feb 2020)	Exposition	It states to the reader how Trump directed Pence to be the responsible of US virus response.

7	"Sensationalist media is exacerbating racist coronavirus fears "( 27 Feb 2020)	Exposition	It clarifies an information about the role of such media in exacerbating racist coronavirus fears.
8	"Nigeria confirms first coronavirus case in sub-Saharan Africa" (28 Feb 2020)	Exposition	It informs the reader that Nigeria has a first coronavirus case.
9	New Zealand confirms first " coronavirus case " (28 Feb 2020)	Exposition	It shows the reader a news of the first coronavirus case in New Zealand.
10	"Coronavirus: death toll passes 3,000 worldwide as second person ".... (2 Mar 2020)	Exposition	An information about death toll of coronavirus.
11	"WHO urges countries to 'track and trace' every Covid-19 case "... (13 Mar 2020)	Exposition	It conveys to the reader the WHO's advice to countries of coronavirus.
12	"Covid-19 could cause permanent shift towards home working "... (13 Mar 2020)	Exposition	The headline informs the reader the effect and result of spreading Covid-19 on human's work.
13	"Coronavirus: travel companies allow trips to be postponed free of ".... (13 Mar 2020)	Exposition	Another result of spreading Covid-19 around the world
14	"The Covid-19 crisis is a chance to do capitalism differently" ... (18 Mar 2020).	Argument	It is used for convincing the reader's mind about capitalism.
15	"Boris Johnson says he expects mass Covid-19 testing to be possible " ... (19 Mar. 2020) .	Exposition	An information is given to the mass by B. Johnson about the Covid-19 test.
16	"Defeating the Covid-19 crisis could need a wartime coalition" ... (19 Mar. 2020).	Exposition	It informs the reader how to defeat Covid-19 throughout a wartime coalition.
17	"Garment workers face destitution as Covid-19 closes factories"... (19Mar 2020).	Exposition	It states a fact that because of Covid-19, garment workers face destitution as factories close.
18	"Elon Musk downplays coronavirus as Tesla factory stays open amid"...(19 Mar. 2020).	Exposition	A news states that Musk tries to downplay the effect of COVID -19 as Tesla factory is still open.
19	"Coronavirus means difficulty, life-changing decisions for me and my" ... (19 Mar. 2020).	Exposition	Here, Coronavirus shows the difficulty in human's lifestyle at all.

20	"Covid-19 lockdown turns Qatar's largest migrant camp into 'virtual' ....(20 Mar. 2020)	Exposition	The reader is informed that Covid-19 led to close a largest migrant camp.
21	"Britain had a head start on Covid-19, but our leaders squandered it ".... (23 Mar 2020)	Exposition	Accordingly, the reader knows that Britain makes the first step on Covid-19 as compared with other leaders.
22	"Bafta-winning film-maker becomes hospital cleaner   Coronavirus "....(8 Apr 2020)	Exposition	Another news informs the reader how Bafta-winning film-maker tries to help the staff of hospital and to face the pandemic.
23	"Federal education minister orders independent schools to reopen" ... (9 Apr 2020)	Exposition	It informs the reader that the minister orders to reopen the independent schools.
24	"Boris Johnson missed five coronavirus Cobra meetings",... (19 Apr., 2020)	Exposition	Because of coronavirus, he missed them.
25	"NHS workers don't want applause, they want PPE "... (19 Apr. 2020)	Exposition	The headline informs the reader about what they want to.
26	"Trump holds Covid-19 briefing as governors ask for more help".... (19 Apr. 2020)	Exposition	Showing how Trump deals with Covid-19 after governors need more help.
27	"UK bulk buys hydroxychloroquine as potential Covid-19 treatment".... (19 May 2020)	Exposition	Hydroxychloroquine, as the Covid-19 treatment, is bought by UK.
28	"UK coronavirus: George Eustice urges furloughed workers to pick" ... (19 May 2020)	Exposition	It gives an information about t G. Eustice 's advice associated with coronavirus.
29	"Did a coronavirus cause the pandemic that killed Queen Victoria's"...?(31May 2020)	Argument	Focusing on the cause of Queen Victoria's death, it could be coronavirus. It argues her cause death.
30	"Could Covid-19 have reached the UK earlier than thought?" ... (1 Jun 2020)	Argument	It is a question that expose to argue and to reach to a reasonable result to convince the reader.
31	"Brazil stops releasing Covid-19 death toll and wipes data from" ... (7 Jun 2020)	Exposition	It is a fact about Brazil's death toll and data related to Covid-19.

32	"New Zealand drops Covid-19 restrictions after nation declared 'virus' .... (8 Jun 2020)	Exposition	The reader is informed about New Zealand and Covid-19.
33	"Donald Trump calls Covid-19 'kung flu' at Tulsa rally" (June 21, 2020)	Exposition	It gives the reader an explanation of Trump's calling Covid-19 'kung flu'.
34	"Covid-19 may cause brain complications in some, say doctors" ...(25 Jun 2020)	Exposition	It states to the readers some brain complications probably happen due to Covid-19.
35	"UK coronavirus live: Boris Johnson tells people to stop 'taking too' ..." (26 Jun 2020)	Exposition	It shows what B. Johnson tells people about coronavirus.
36	US secures Covid-19 restrictions "remdesivir".... (30 Jun 2020)	Exposition	It informs the reader of how US securing Covid-19 restrictions
37	"UK paid employment falls by almost 650,000 as Covid-19 crisis bites" ...(16 Jul 2020)	Exposition	It gives an information about how UK paid employment falls....
38	"Tasmania records first Covid-19 case since May" .... (20 Jul 2020)	Exposition	It announces the first record of Covid-19 case in Tasmania since May.
39	"Arizona orders bars and gyms to close, joining other states in" ... (29 Jun 2020)	Exposition	Arizona closes bars and gyms due to Covid-19.
40	"Mexican families mourn workers claimed by Covid in the US" ... (7 Aug 2020)	Exposition	It is a headline about the mourning of workers because of Covid-19 by Mexican families.
41	"Federal government had no Covid-19 aged care plan, royal" ... (9 Aug 2020)	Exposition	The headline affirms that no care plan was occurred for Covid-19 age by Federal government.
42	"Russian vaccine must follow safety procedure",.... (11 Aug 2020)	Exposition	It talks about Russian vaccine and safety procedure.
43	"Exposure to air pollution may increase risk of Covid death", ... (13 Aug 2020)	Argument	It discusses how air pollution increases risk of Covid death.
44	"UK coronavirus: France could quarantine British visitors; UK reports".... (14 Aug 2020)	Exposition	The quarantine of British visitors is done by France due to Covid-19.
45	"Sweden records highest death tally in 150 years in first half of 2020" ... (19 Aug 2020)	Exposition	It makes the reader know about the highest death tally Sweden

			records in first half of 2020.
46	"Nottinghamshire woman, 75, may be first known UK Covid victim" ... (25 Aug 2020)	Exposition	It tells the reader that a woman ,75 years, is the first victim of Covid-19 in UK.
47	"UK sees highest number of new Covid-19 cases since mid-June".... (27 Aug 2020)	Exposition	The highest record of new Covid-19 cases is discovered in UK since June.
48	"Pregnant women in hospital with Covid-19 may not show symptoms" ... (1 <sup>st</sup> Sep 2020)	Exposition	It shows a pregnant women with Covid-19 doesn't have its symptoms.
49	"Covid symptoms: diarrhoea and vomiting may be key sign of" ... (3 Sep 2020)	Exposition	It states Covid symptoms in children, such as diarrhoea and vomiting, are signs of coronavirus to the reader.
50	"As Covid-19 resurges, we've <b>lost</b> a sense of solidarity" .... (13 Sep 2020)	Exposition	Because Covid-19 resurges , a sense of solidarity is lost.
51	"Covid-19 <b>drives</b> leaders to make unprecedented interventions but" ... (13 Sep 2020)	Argument	It argues how leaders make unprecedented interventions due to Covid-19.
52	"Matt Hancock <b>is losing</b> control of Covid-19 in UK, says Labour" ... (15 Sep 2020)	Exposition	Matt Hancock declares that Covid-19 becomes out of control in UK.
53	"Flu and Covid-19 at same time significantly <b>increases</b> risk of death" ... (22 Sep 2020)	Exposition	Suffering of Flu and Covid-19 at the same time lead to death.
54	"UK economy <b>shows</b> signs of faltering before second Covid-19 wave" ... (29 Sep 2020)	Exposition	The impact of Covid-19 on UK economy is faltering.
55	"Neanderthal genes <b>increase</b> risk of serious Covid-19", ....(30 Sep 2020)	Exposition	A study proved that Neanderthal genes is related to the risk of Covid-19.
56	"Covid-19 and the climate crisis are part of the same battle".... (2 Oct 2020)	Argument	It discusses how Covid-19 and the climate crisis are part of the same battle.
57	"Trump hospitalized following Covid diagnosis as" .... (3 Oct 2020)	Exposition	The headline focuses on Trump's entrance to



			the hospital due to Covid-19 symptoms.
58	"Military will help distribute Covid-19 vaccine," ... (4 Oct 2020)	Exposition	It informs the reader about Military's help in distributing Covid-19 vaccine.
59	"Covid-19 has changed working patterns for good," (5 Oct 2020)	Exposition	Showing how Covid-19 change in working patterns for good.
60	"Did early focus on hand washing and not masks aid spread of Covid" ... (5 Oct 2020)	Argument	It discusses the role of hand washing and not masks in spreading Covid-19.
61	"IMF urges governments to borrow to fight impact of Covid-19" ... (14 Oct 2020)	Exposition	It advises them to face the impact of Covid-19 on their economics.
62	"Can we trust Chinese Covid-19 science"? (11 Oct 2020)	Argument	It asks about the success of Chinese vaccine.
63	"Remdesivir has very little effect on Covid-19 mortality",.... (16 Oct 2020)	Exposition	It assured that Remdesivir has little effect on Covid-19 mortality.
64	"Victoria could have eliminated Covid could have eliminated Covid". (18 Oct 2020)	Exposition	It affirms the ability of Victoria eliminating Covid-19.
65	"China becomes first major economy to recover from Covid-19".... (19 Oct 2020)	Exposition	China announces that its first economy is recovered from Covid-19.
66	"Australia may have recorded first case of Covid-19 reinfection" ... (21 Oct 2020)	Exposition	The record of Covid first case in Australia.
67	"Covid-19 blood plasma therapy has limited effect," (22 Oct 2020)	Exposition	Finding how Covid-19 blood plasma therapy has little effect.
68	"Taiwan marks 200 days without domestic Covid-19 infection" ... (29 Oct 2020)	Exposition	200 days record no infection of Covid-19 in Taiwan.
69	"UK records another 378 deaths." (5 Nov 2020)	Exposition	The survey finds 378 deaths in UK.
70	"Coronavirus live UK deaths rise by 563" (12 Nov 2020)	Exposition	The rising of death toll to 563 in UK due to Coronavirus.
71	"Leaked White House report warns current Covid-19 mitigation efforts" ... (18 Nov 2020)	Exposition	Stating the warning of LWH. that the efforts is mitigation because of Covid-19.
72	"'Autoantibodies' may be driving severe Covid cases",.... (13 Dec 2020)	Exposition	A study proved 'Autoantibodies' leads to severe Covid cases.

73	"UK reports 232 further Covid deaths – as it happened" ... (14 Dec 2020)	Exposition	A report revealed that 232 further Covid deaths were happened due to corona virus.
74	"Donald Trump signs Covid-19 relief and spending bill" (27 Dec 2020)	Exposition	According to D. Trump, Covid-19 relief and spending bill is signed.

### 5.3 The Findings and Discussion

According to the data analysis, the results can be explained as follows: It is noted that two types of discourse modes are widely utilized with different rates for certain reasons, but the other two types are not used at all. The total newspaper on line headlines that are related to Covid -19 with its direct and indirect impact to the one's life, are 74 headlines. Firstly, exposition is mainly found in these online headlines. It records 66 frequencies out of 74 online headlines. Secondly, argument comes in the second-place. It scores 8 frequencies out of the total online headlines. The other two types of discourse modes, namely descriptive and narrative ones, are never used in these online headlines since they are not to convey the story event or to describe something.

### 6. Conclusion

The study concludes that the editor utilizes these two types of discourse mode, exposition and argument, to fulfill particular communicative purposes with the reader. They extensively used the exposition type to give and inform the reader what's going on around the world, especially when he/she quarantines at home because of Covid-19. These online headlines serve to convey information and facts, that are related to the pandemic disease, 'Covid-19', to the reader. Plus, the editor argues certain questions to reach an acceptable result about the serious pandemic to convince the reader about particular topics that he /she believes.

In brief, these two discourse modes, namely exposition and argument, succeeded to make a bridge of communication between the editor and the reader about Covid- 19. He significantly managed to grab the reader's attention to read the content of these online headlines.

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