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An Investigation of Intimidation Strategies in Covid-19 discourse

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by

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Abstract

With the spread of Covid-19 from China worldwide, the virus has been one of the majorly debated issues by journalists, politicians, health authorities and numerous organizations. While discussing Covid-19, Covid-19 discourse, in particular media discourse about Covid-19 creates a dichotomy between the group who is vulnerable to virus exposure and the virus through victimization of the former. Furthermore, discourse about Covid-19 employs various intimidation strategies in the dichotomization of the group and the virus. In order to explain the construal of dichotomous distance between the virus and the group, who is vulnerable to virus exposure and how intimidation strategies participate in the characterization of the virus, we adopted critical discourse analytic approach, proximization theory, which contributes to the understanding of narrowing of distance between peripheral virus entity and the group in the form of home entity through the identification of spatial and temporal lexico-grammatical markers. According to the results, intimidating elements, adopted by media discourse about Covid-19, such as negative metaphorization, modality markers, historical flashbacks, frequent emphasis on preemptive action against Covid-19, characterize the virus intrusion in the form of peripheral entity as negatively within spatio-temporal dichotomy and build credible writer or speaker who use these strategies as a means of convincing people in order to legitimate claims about the danger of Covid-19 and the need for preparedness against it.

Key words: Covid-19 discourse, media discourse about Covid-19, intimidation, intimidating dichotomization

Contents

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In December 2019, scientists found a new coronavirus in Wuhan, China which was supposed to be animal-born. Since the emergence of the virus from China in December 2019, Covid-19 has spread fast around the world within three months. After the fast globalization of the virus, The World Health Organization (2020) declared Covid-19 to be "Global Public Health Emergency" on January 30. In March 11, WHO (2020) officially declared Covid-19 a pandemic by stressing 118,000 cases in 119 countries and the death of 11,291 people from the virus infection.

The fast spread of the virus from China around the globe is associated with its highly transmissible nature. Being highly transmissible, the virus surpassed SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) in terms of number of exposed people. As a result, hospitals were overwhelmed by Covid-19 patients. Many people with Covid-19 symptoms rushed to hospitals. To control high infection rates, cities were shut down, all travel and transportation was banned, outdoor activities and gatherings were limited. In many countries, distance learning became a necessity in lower and higher education. Since Covid-19 is mainly transmitted through respiratory droplets, most countries have made masks mandatory in order to prevent the risk of transmission of the virus. Though almost all age groups are vulnerable to the virus exposure, older people are more susceptible to the virus. Depending on the person, some people might have mild symptoms or no symptoms at all while others suffer severe symptoms. In order to

prevent high death tolls, scientists are working to find solutions to Covid-19. In particular, experts are working at full capacity to develop vaccine against the virus.

Since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, there has been substantial coverage of Covid-19 in many discourses that can be categorized under Covid-19 discourse. In that respect, international attention is paid to the virus due to the sudden spread of the virus from China to the world and its high transmissibility, leading to an increasing number of infections. In order to warn people about higher infection rates, governments hold daily press briefings. In addition, coronavirus content is leading the international media. The virus has received massive news coverage. As Chaiuk&Dunaievski (2020) emphasized, "the intensive media coverage of the coronavirus pandemic is unprecedented: no other disease has become the core of vigilance of the media dominating the news cycle" (p.187). The massive coverage of the virus in news discourse is the indicator of it to be a newsworthy topic. Generally, news media prefers to frequently cover the events which are considered dangerous, catastrophic or disastrous. In that sense, news media gives negative depiction of the catastrophic event. Bell (1991) characterized negativity as "the basic news value" (p.156). In other words, it is one of the basic criteria that makes a topic newsworthy. The preference for negativity doesn't only intend to inform the audience about the dangerous event but also to get more public attention since people find negative news more exciting and important (Shoemaker & Cohen, 2012). Because Covid-19 is generally characterized as disastrous negative event, news media selects it as a worthy topic to cover. In that way, Covid-19 reflects the negativity criterion of news values.

The virus as a newsworthy item has become one of the discussed topics in the media. LexisNexis (n.d.) data also showed that since the emergence of the virus the most talked about subjects in the media are related to Covid-19. From the outbreak of coronavirus till January 29, 2021 4,992,551 articles were about "Vaccines" and 2,733,974 articles covered "Pandemics" Moreover, articles discuss terms such as "school closure", "panic buying", "social distancing", "stay at home", "work from home".

Table 1. The most talked about subjects in the media since the outbreak of the virus till January 29, 2021 according to LexisNexis (n.d.)

Vaccines	4,992,551 articles
Pandemic	2,733,974 articles
US Presidential Candidates 2020	1,815,061 articles
Covid-19 Coronavirus Vaccine	1,682,367 articles
Negative Personal News	1,647,901 articles
Vaccination & Immunization	1,545,299 articles

1.2 Statement of the problem and the purpose of the study

When informing on coronavirus and discussing different topics related to the virus, discourse about Covid-19 sets a distance between the virus and the group who has been exposed to the virus or vulnerable to virus exposure by signaling that the virus doesn't belong in the group. Covid-19 discourse creates a dichotomy between the virus and the group through depicting the virus exposure as negatively consequential to in-group. In that way, the in-group becomes the victim of virus exposure since the construction of oppositions between the victimized group and the virus aims to present virus's movement as threatening to the former. As a result, the virus-group distinction is achieved through negative virus presentation. In other words, the dichotomous vision of the virus and the group presents the former in a bad light. Furthermore, to reinforce the dichotomous representation of the virus and the group, Covid-19 discourse adopt various intimidation strategies. Although several studies investigated intimidating elements in discourse about Covid-19, the use of intimidation in the negative characterization of the virus within the dichotomous construal needs further research. Taken this into consideration, we hypothesise that Covid-19 discourse, in particular media discourse about Covid-19 uses intimidation strategies to portray Covid-19 negatively in the dichotomous construal of the virus and the group who has been exposed to the virus or vulnerable to virus exposure. We claim that Covid-19 discourse

uses intimidation strategies to signal the potentiality of growing threat emerged from the virus movement by depicting its movement as negatively consequential to the victimized group. In that context, most public discourse, in particular media discourse about Covid-19 is intimidating. To achieve this intimidating goal, Covid-19 discourse adopts various discursive strategies. Our aim is mainly to identify these intimidating discursive strategies.

1.3 Significance of the study

Compared to previous research studies which mainly focus on intimidation in Covid-19 discourse, the findings of this study give more systematic classification of various intimidation strategies which contribute to the negative portrayal of the virus within dichotomous construal of the virus and the group who is vulnerable to Covid-19. In that sense, the study adopts interdisciplinary approach for not only investigating intimidation but also how intimidation plays a role in the polarization of alien virus/home group entities. The findings also help to reveal the strategic nature of Covid-19 discourse, especially media discourse about Covid-19 which intends to construct intimidating effect through various discursive strategies. Finally, the study provides critical understanding of the main purposes of producing such intimidating effect by looking at broad social, economic, political contexts.

1.4 Research questions

As we stated above, the aim of the study is to identify discursive intimidating strategies, adopted by Covid-19 discourse, in the dichotomy of peripheral virus/home group entities. In that sense, we attempt to answer the following questions:

- What roles do the intimidation strategies have in characterization of virus in the dichotomous construal the group who has been exposed to the virus or vulnerable to virus exposure and the virus?

- What are the main purposes for characterizing the virus as negative by setting a distance between the virus and in-group?

Regarding to these research questions and aim, the main objectives of the study include identifying discursive elements which carry intimidation and classifying intimidating elements that take part in the characterization of the virus within a dichotomous construal of the virus and in-group.

1.5 Definitions of key terms

Covid-19 - Covid-19 is a disease, caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 which belongs to the family of viruses, Coronaviridae. It was emerged from Wuhan, China in December 2019

Intimidating act – Intimidating act warns a person of a dangerous event that may happen in the future. In other words, intimidating intentions aim to persuade that the future action is dangerously consequential to the person.

Media discourse - Media discourse refers to the verbal and non-verbal interactions carried out through the broadcasting platform, where the discourse is aimed at the un-presented reader, listener, or spectator (O'Keeffle, 2012). Cotter (2015) stated that we shouldn't define media only as a purveyor of news. Fetzer (2014) defined media discourse both as public and institutional since it is a social action that is carried out in public and affects all parts of live.

1.6 Limitations of the study

The present study has several limitations. First of all, the research limits itself mainly to the investigation of intimidation in media discourse within Covid-19 discourse. Secondly, this study has focused on the limited portion of articles taken from news and media websites and transcripts of Covid-19 press briefings and press conferences.

Lastly, the current study's scope is limited to the samples which have been collected from British and American sources.

1.7 Organization of the thesis

In response to the main objectives, the research study is divided into several chapters. Chapter 2 discusses relevant literature. It focuses on intimidation as illocutionary commissive act and how media as reality-constructive power uses intimidation to realize certain intentions and influence the people's mind through generating fear. It also reviews the studies which examine intimidating portrayal of the viruses such as Ebola, flu pandemic, Covid-19 in media discourse. Chapter 3 explains data selection and relevant methods and theories for the analysis of research material. The explanation of identified intimidation strategies and the lexico-grammatical markers that contribute to the construal of the dichotomy between the virus and the victimized in-group are presented in chapter 4. Moreover, chapter 4 discusses the main purposes for the use of such strategies. Finally, chapter 5 presents main conclusions and highlights limitations and recommendations, implications of the current research for further studies.

Chapter 2. Literature review

2.1 Review of theoretical background

2.1.1 Discourse as reality-reflective

There has been continuous discussion in linguistic sphere whether discourse mirrors the reality or also constitutes it. One of the dominant viewpoints related to this discussion is that language is the description of the reality. The transmission model supports this viewpoint since it defines communication as the "transmission of signals or messages over distance for the purpose of control" (Carey, 1992, p.15). Similarly, in "conduit view", "language functions like a conduit, transferring thoughts bodily from one person to another and words accomplish the transfer by containing the thoughts or feelings and conveying them to others" (Reddy,1993, p.170). As a result, the transmissive nature of language aims to view linguistic communication as a container which describes the thoughts and feelings. The descriptive function of linguistic communication is also relevant to structural linguistics. In Saussurean structuralism, language is an autonomous whole, a symbol system for expressing ideas (Al Umma, 2015). Structuralism highlights the following point of view that meaning is an intrinsic element of the language system and cannot be ascribed to external sources or references. (de Walle et al., 2006). In other words, it defines linguistics as inward-looking discipline. Jaworski & Coupland (2006) also emphasized this idea by stating that linguistics has always been an inward-looking field because it has not always recognized the importance of language and discourse to anyone other than linguists. As mentioned, this inward-looking nature of linguistics is associated with Saussurean structuralism which separates langue (language system) from parole (varied language behavior) by abstracting langue from historical, psychological, and social factors. The reason behind this abstraction is to strengthen the place of language studies in science and "to justify the principle of the autonomy of linguistics (i.e. its independence of other disciplines)" (Lyons, 1981 p.221). Widdowson's (1996) "wood" metaphor is a perfect

example to explain Saussure's efforts to achieve scientific status of linguistics as he states Saussure leaves the wood in order to see the wood itself since he wants to achieve scientific status of language studies by separating language system from shared, varied language behavior.

Furthermore, this Saussurean tradition of focusing on structural properties of the language in its present state is also carried by American descriptive linguists who "attempt to provide good descriptions of the grammar and pronunciation of utterances at the level of the sentence" (Jaworski & Coupland, 2006, p.4). Similar to Saussure, Bloomfield has been accredited to give American structuralism its basic form, establishing linguistics as a separate discipline (Campbell, 2017).

2.1.2 Discourse as reality-constitutive

In opposition to the viewpoints which define linguistic communication as description or representation of reality, some argue that linguistic communication doesn't only represent reality but also constitutes it. In particular, cultural and critical approaches to discourse support the constitutive power of linguistic communication. Dell Hymes's ethnography of communication shows that the emphasis of discourse analysis lies in the way how language works to form and reflect cultural components in the various communication occurences. (Suciu, 2019). In reality-constitutive view, Shi-Xu stated that (2004)

> I redefined linguistic communication into a broader notion, termed as discourse, in which both text and context, both language and the word, are included as part of the same meaning-making activity. I argued that discourse and the world make each other up, such that the former constitutes the latter. (p.40)

Similar to cultural approach, critical discourse analysis also emphasizes the constitutive force of discourse. CDA considers discourse to be both social and constitutive, implying a dialectal link between the social environment and the text (Flowerdew, 2018 p.165). According to Jager & Maier (2009), discourses do more than simply mirror

reality since they also make social (reality) possible and there would be no social (reality) without discourse. Scollon (2001) stated that "the programme of CDA is founded in the idea that the analysis of discourse opens a window on social problems because social problems are largely constituted in discourse" (p.140).

2.1.3 Performatives as tool to construct reality

The constitutive force of discourse is also associated with its performative nature. In that sense, linguistic communication doesn't only describe reality but also performs an action which contributes to the creation of reality by triggering the meaning-making ability of language. In his speech act theory, Austin (1962) stated that language is not only used to talk about the world but to act since it is also a means of communication.

Similarly, Searle (1969) also held the same opinion:

> The reason for concentrating on the study of speech acts is simply this: all linguistic communication involves linguistic acts. The unit of linguistic communication is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol, word or sentence, or even the token of the symbol, word or sentence, but rather the production or issuance of the symbol or word or sentence in the performance of the speech act. (p.16)

2.1.4 Intimidation as illocutionary commissive act

In speech act theory, "the act of doing something in saying something" is referred as illocutionary act (Hidayat, 2016, p.4). In Searle's (1979) classification of illocutionary act, one of the five main categories of it is commissives which he defined as illocutionary act "commit the speaker to some future course of action" (p.14).

Taken Searle's definition of commissives into consideration, intimidation is illocutionary commissive act since it produces warning effect which prepares the audience to respond for threatful future action (Blake et al., 2017). In other words, the intended effect of a warning expresses to the addressee:

1   the belief that some unfavourable state of the world exists or will exist;

2   the belief that this state of the world is unfavourable to the addressee's best intentions;

3   the intent to inform the addressee before a harmful effect can ensue. (Fraser 1998, p.164)

As a result, the intimidating effect informs the addressee that "a threatened future action is detrimental to the receiver" (Salgueiro, 2009, p.217). If you are warning about a particular behavior, you feel that is dangerous and is not recommended in certain circumstances (Weigand, 2010).

As it is mentioned above, an intimidating act intends to warn about threatening future action. This also emphasizes the role of intention in the act of doing something, in particular in the act of intimidating. In Gricean pragmatics (1957), intention is an important element in meaning-making process since the belief-producing must be regarded as being impaired or destroyed if we take away the recognition of intention. Prelević (2011) defined communicative intention as phenomena helping hearers to recognize the meaning of an utterance and this recognition of an "intention tells us about illocutionary force and improves communication" (p.108). Speakers communicate their intentions, and the audience attribute those intents to the speakers (Haugh, 2008). In other words, the design of recipient and the identification of the intentions make up communication (Kecskes & Mey, 2008).

2.1.5 Media discourse and its reality constitutive power

Denis McQuail (1979) enumerated five factors which determine influential effect of media:

First, the media can attract and direct attention to problems, solutions or people in ways which can favour those with power and correlatively divert attention from rival individuals or groups. Second, the mass media can confer status and confirm legitimacy. Third, in some circumstances, the media can be a channel

for persuasion and mobilization. Fourth, the mass media can help to bring certain kinds of publics into being and maintain them. Fifth, the media are a vehicle for offering psychic rewards and gratifications. (p.21)

The above-mentioned factors explain how media influences opinions. As Wahab & Othman & Muhammad (2017) stated, media contributes to shaping the cultural homogeneity that is formed as a result of the media's influence on the personal values, thoughts, and behavioral systems.

The opinion-shaping power of media discourse also leads many scholars to adopt constructivist approaches which emphasize the reality-constitutive ability of media. In other words, media doesn't only describe reality but uses its influential power to persuade the audience to believe the reality that it constructs. Schudson (2003) stated that the media's ability to evaluate and build reality is undeniable since media members do not just ""transcribe" a series of transparent events" and have a certain degree of authority to present the world according to their own thoughts (p.18). Molotch & Lester (1974) saw media "as reflecting not a world out there, but the practices of those having the power to determine the experience of others" (p.111). Ionescu (2012) defined media as the one of the various agents that construct reality which includes "both individual and mass media systems, corresponding to the media-cultural constructivism current" (p.191). According to Yan (2019), the construction of reality by the media entails not only the choice of events or topics to be covered, but also how to define and interpret these events or topics. In other words, media uses various strategies which also include extra-discursive factors in constructing the reality (Lau, 2012).

2.1.6 Proximization theory as an interdisciplinary approach to analyze construction of fear in the dichotomous construal of Self and Other group

Recently, in order to emphasize the interdisciplinary and diverse nature of CDA, the term "critical discourse studies" is more preferred. Cap (2014) located CDS "at the intersection of contemporary linguistics and social sciences" which involves a large

number of different interdisciplinary methodologies within its area (p.189). In other words, CDS provides the researchers with greater methodological and theoretical tools to conduct interdisciplinary analysis.

One of the latest advances in the terrain of Critical Discourse Studies is the "critical application of Cognitive Linguistic", examining the cognitive and semantic processes involved in interpreting discourse and the important role of these processes in the formation of knowledge and the legitimization of action (Hart, 2018, p.77). Chilton's (2004) Discourse Space Theory reflects the relationship between CDA and cognitive linguistics by looking at how language serves as ideological and legitimating tool. Proximization theory is a recent model of coercion and threat construction which extends Chilton's (2004) "Discourse space theory". According to Chilton (2004), "in processing any discourse people tend to place people and things along a scale of remoteness from the Self, using background assumptions and indexical cues" and the end of this scale is Other (p.58). In other words, discourse space represents a text world and includes the deictic center from which the narrative is done (Plotnikova, 2019). By placing the Self in the deictic center, the distance is created between Self and Other entities which is crucial for the understanding of Self-Other dichotomy. Remoteness signals the ideological difference between Self and Other groups and Self exploits remoteness strategy to legitimate his action. However, PM involves not only the "opposition between the Self and the Other, but also the discursively constructed movement of the Other toward the Self" (Cap, 2019, p.339).

Proximization theory reflects the diverse nature of Critical Discourse Studies. We also have to mention that the theory doesn't only take insights from cognitive linguistics but also from various other disciplines. In that sense, "the approach is essentially critical discourse analytic, combining insights from pragmatics, cognitive linguistics, text linguistics and several non-linguistic theories within social and political sciences" (Cap, 2017, xi). According to Cap (2013), "proximization is a discursive strategy of presenting physically and temporally distant events and states of affairs (including

"distant", i.e. adversarial, ideological mind-sets) as directly, increasingly and negatively consequential to the speaker and her addressee" (p.3).

Proximization analyzes through generating fear how Self (home-group) strategically portrays Other (out-group) as threat by warning about narrowing distance between Self and Other entity within discourse space. Cap (2019) proposes that:

> communication nearly always presupposes distance between the Self party (the home group of the speaker) and the Other party (the possible "intruder") in a way that the "good" and "right" are conceptualized and then lexicalized as "close to Self" and the "wrong" and "evil" as peripheral, "remote to Self". (p.339)

"The threat comes from DS-peripheral entities, referred to as outside-deictic-centre (ODCs) entities, which are conceptualized to be crossing the Space to invade the inside-deictic-centre (IDC) entities, the speaker and her addressee" (Cap, 2017, p.16).
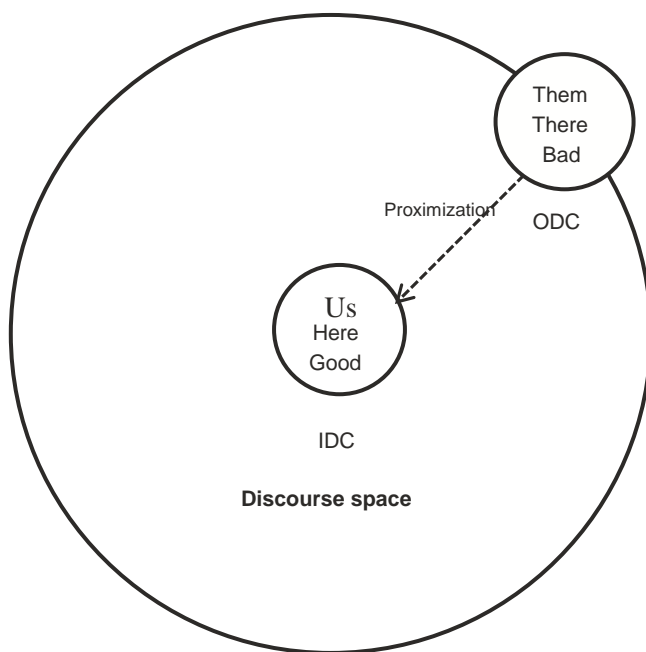

Fig 1. Proximization in discourse space (DS) (Cap, 2017, p.18)

The threat comes from ODC alien entities possesses spatio-temporal as well as ideological nature, which means that proximization can be considered in three aspects:

'Spatial proximization' is a forced construal of the DS peripheral entities encroaching physically upon the DS central entities (speaker, addressee). 'Temporal proximization' is a forced construal of the envisaged conflict as not only imminent, but also momentous, historic and thus needing immediate response and unique preventive measures. 'Axiological proximization' involves construal of a gathering ideological clash between the 'home values' of the DS central entities (IDCs) and the alien, antagonistic (ODC) values. (Cap, 2017, p.17)

In SPT model, the cognitive categories of space, time and value are represented by a number of lexico-grammatical items which mark a dichotomy between deictic center and deictic periphery. In other words, the representation of distance is presented through deictic markers. The noun "deictic" is derived from the Greek to point or indicate, and its typical representatives include demonstration words, first and second personal pronouns, verb tenses, adverbs of particular time and place (such as now and here), and various other grammatical elements directly related to the conditions of utterance (Levinson, 1983). According to Cap (2017), in the proximization theory, the idea of deixis is not only restricted to a limited group of 'deictic expressions' but is extended to cover larger phrases which has the potential to be a legitimizing, persuasive and coercive tool.

In that sense, in order to distant peripheral entities from deictic center and to introduce the negative characterization and destructive consequences of the former, spatial proximization framework includes the following deictic items:

Table 2. Key lexico-grammatical items of the spatial-proximization framework (Cap, 2013, p.109)

Category	Key items
1. (Noun phrases (NPs) construed as elements of the deictic center of the DS (IDCs))	["USA", "United States", "America"]; ["American people", "Americans", "our people/nation/country/ society"]; ["free

	people/nations/countries/societies/world"]; ["democratic people/nations/countries/societies/world"]
2. (Noun phrases (NPs) construed as elements outside the deictic center of the DS (ODCs))	["Iraq",4 "Saddam Hussein", "Saddam", "Hussein"]; ["Iraqi regime/dictatorship"]; ["terrorists"]; ["terrorist organizations/networks", "Al-Qaeda"]; ["extremists/radicals"]; ["foreign regimes/dictatorships"]
3. (Verb phrases (VPs) of motion and directionality construed as markers of movement of ODCs towards the deictic center)	["are determined/intend to seek/acquire WMD"]; ["might/may/could/can use WMD against an IDC"]; ["expand/grow in military capacity that could be directed against an IDC"]; ["move/are moving/head/are heading/have set their course toward confrontation with an IDC"]
4. (Verb phrases (VPs) of action construed as markers of impact of ODCs upon IDCs)	["destroy an IDC"]; ["set aflame/burn down an IDC or IDC values"]
5. (Noun phrases (NPs) denoting abstract concepts construed as anticipations of impact of ODCs upon IDCs)	["threat"]; ["danger"]
6. (Noun phrases (NPs) denoting abstract concepts construed as effects of impact of ODCs upon IDCs)	["catastrophe"]; ["tragedy"]

Cap also identified the deictic markers in temporal and axiological framework. The temporal proximization framework doesn't only include various time adverbs and adverbials, but also more complex set of lexico-grammatical phrases.

Table 3. Key lexico-grammatical and discourse items of the temporal proximization framework (Cap, 2013, p.116)

Category	Key items
1. (Noun phrases (NPs) involving indefinite descriptions construing ODC actual impact acts in alternative temporal frames)	["a September morning"]; ["a clear/sunny/busy September morning/day/workday/Tuesday"]; ["a/another New York/Manhattan morning/day/ workday/Tuesday"]; ["a train/underground/tube ride/journey to work"]

2. (Discourse forms involving contrastive use of the simple past and the present perfect construing threatening future extending infinitely from a past instant)	["Americans/America/we used to think/believe that IDCs were safe as ODC threat was far away. September the 11th/9/11/September attacks has/have changed the/that IDC belief"]; ["It used to be that IDCs were safe as ODC threat was far away. September the 11th/9/11/September attacks has/have changed the/that IDC belief"]; ["In the past/for centuries/long ago America's/our enemies/adversaries needed extensive conventional military capacity to endanger/threaten America/ us. Now/at present/today new/different threat/ threats has/have emerged from terrorists/terrorist networks/terrorist organizations"]
3. (Noun phrases (NPs) involving nominalizations construing presupposition of conditions for ODC impact to arise anytime in the future)	["IDCs will act against emerging WMD threat/ threats/danger/dangers before it/they is/are fully formed / before it/they materializes/materialize / before it/they appears/appear / before it is too late"]; ["IDCs will act against emerging WMD threat/threats/danger/dangers to preempt/prevent/forestall its/their formation/presence/appearance"]
4. (Verb phrases (VPs) involving modal auxiliaries construing conditions for ODC impact as existing continually between the now and the infinite future)	"Terrorists/terrorist networks/terrorist organizations can/could now/today/at this moment/at the moment impact IDCs"]; ["Nowadays/today/now terrorists/terrorist networks/terrorist organizations can/could impact IDCs at any moment/at any time/in no time"]
5. (Discourse forms involving parallel contrastive construals of oppositional and privileged futures extending from the now)	["Some IDCs think/believe America/we can wait. The US government think/believe the opposite as they have evidence of ODC threat"]; ["Some IDCs ask why America/we must act pre-emptively. The US government think/believe pre-emptive action is necessary given the evidence of the ODC threat"]

Table 4. Key lexico-grammatical and discourse items of the axiological proximization framework (Cap, 2013, p.122)

Category	Key items
1. (Noun phrases (NPs) construed as IDC positive values or value sets (ideologies))	["freedom/liberty"]; ["democracy"]; ["equality"]; ["peace"]; ["justice"]; ["progress"]; ["prosperity"]; ["economic freedom/liberty"]
2. (Noun phrases (NPs) construed as ODC negative values or value sets (ideologies))	["radicalism"]; ["extremism"]; ["terrorism"]; ["dictatorship"]; ["political regime"]; ["military regime"]
3. (Discourse forms no longer than one sentence or two consecutive sentences involving linear arrangement of lexico-grammatical phrases construing materialization in the IDC space of the ODC negative ideologies)	["(1) NP denoting ODC value(s) followed by or combined with (2) VP denoting a remote possibility of the ODC-IDC conflict followed by (3) VP denoting a close probability of the ODC-IDC conflict followed by or combined with (4) NP denoting physical consequences of the ODC-IDC conflict"]

2.2 Review of empirical background

2.2.1 Studies on construction of intimidation through media discourse

Intimidation is one these discursive strategies, adopted by media discourse, to produce warning effect on the audience. However, in discourse, particularly in media discourse, intimidating act doesn't only express warning but also other intentions such as persuasion, manipulation, legitimization, construal of othering. Several studies analyzed how media discourse frequently use intimidation to realize such intentions. In their study, Arcimaviciene & Baglama (2018) investigated the use of metaphors as intimidating delegitimizing tool to divide between us as "good" and migrants as "bad" in media discourse. Setiawan et al. (2018) analyzed the role of lexical choices in the dichotomous construction of positive-self and negative-other in online news and found that negative-other representation is achieved through figurative nouns, noun signifying provocation, negative action verbs, and provocative verbs. Kassayae et al. (2016) examined discriminative media discourse which creates a dichotomy between Muslims

and "victimized" groups through intimidating portraying of the former. Similarly, in Silva's (2017) study, news articles were investigated in the light of their use of intimidating radicalization discourse to depict Muslims as "alien other" entities to the West. Altheide & Michalowski (1999) found that while analyzing news reports fear is more prevalent in news today rather than it was several years ago, and it appears in more sections of the newspaper, particularly headlines. Ozyumenko & Larina (2020) stated how discourse of threat is strategically used to persuade and manipulate the audience:

> Regular appeal to all sorts of threats, which are abundant in media texts, exercises a significant impact on the emotions of the audience, causes fear and anxiety in society, and thus, in a broad sense, it can itself be a well-designed strategy of manipulating opinion. (p.913)

Altheide (2009) studied how media discourse uses fear to legitimate the necessity to take strong action against "Columbine school shocking" as an act of terrorism.

2.2.2 Studies on intimidation as a discursive strategy to depict virus/pandemic

In order to depict the virus as dangerous, media adopts intimidation strategy and negativity as extra-discursive factor. In that way, media is influencing opinions through persuading the audience that the virus is a threat to the public. By influencing public opinion via intimidation, media constructs the reality of threat in the form of the virus. Several studies examined the use of intimidation in the depiction of Swine flu end Ebola viruses in media discourse. In their study of Norwegian print news coverage of the 2009 pandemic, Bjorkdahl & Carlsen (2017) found that fear is the most notable aspect of the coverage. Doudaki's (2011) analysis of news about swine flu in Greece and Cyprus also focused on the use of fear in the portrayal of the swine flu pandemic since she stated that media frequently presents swine flu as a threat to the people's lives. In the investigation of representations of the Ebola virus/disease in South African news reports, Moodley (2019) identified four discourses in which disease/virus was

constructed: through the threat to human discourse, the text transforms the Ebola virus into a threat to humans, predatory discourse portrays the virus/disease as a dangerous predator, invasion discourse describes the Ebola virus as an invasive entity, moving from one country to another, leaving tragic death tools and destruction and discourse of conspiracy creates the fabricated image of Ebola virus/disease through reports that use lexicons such as "lie", "invented", "fake", and "scam".

In the analysis of local newspapers in West Africa, Halsey (2016) found the frequent use of fearsome photos, horror images and sensationalist headlines in the portrayal of Ebola virus.

2.2.3 Studies on the use of intimidation in the depiction of Covid-19 in media discourse

Intimidation strategy is also dominant in the portrayal of Covid-19 in media discourse. In Sun's (2021) study of the major news stories, documentaries, opinions, and analyzes published in the Australian media, one of the major findings is the dominance of fear narratives about Covid-19 and racism-singed sensationalism in the tabloid media and on shock-jock radio. The investigation of Covid-19 language of fear and phobia in Pakistani newspapers' political cartoons by Aazam et al. (2020) revealed that the political cartoons of coronavirus attempt to convey Covid-19 related messages to its audience through depicting the severe downfall of the economy, the fear of coronavirus, the failure to control the pandemic. While analyzing Twitter users Covid-19 discourse, Xue, Chen J., et al. (2020) found that fear for the unknown nature of Covid-19 and fear for the uncertainty about Covid-19 consist of almost 50 % of the Tweets. Wicke & Bolognesi (2020) analyzed the fear producing effect of metaphors in the analysis of corpus of tweets about Covid-19 in which they stated that the war frame is most frequently used to talk about Covid-19 since discourse around Covid-19 often include words such as "fighting", "combat", "battle", and "fight" to refer to Covid-19.

Several studies investigated the effects of the use of intimidation in the presentation of coronavirus pandemic on media audience. The studies show how media portrayal constructs public fear through intimidation. According to Manzoor & Safdar (2020), the presentation of Covid-19 in media cultivate fear especially among upper-class and middle-class people since they are the heavy users of media. Mertens et al. (2020) assumed that the outbreak of coronavirus is strongly correlated with increased levels of fear. In that sense, it was important to understand what exactly leads to increased levels of fear. Taken this into consideration, threat information and media exposure were included as one of the predictors of elevated levels of fear. The data provided by 439 respondents from 28 different countries showed that these predictors result in increased fear of coronavirus:

> Additionally, we expected that more media exposure and higher personal relevance of the threat (for both oneself and loved ones, and less risk control) would predict increased levels of fear. In line with these predictions, we found that all these factors predicted higher scores of FCQ. (Mertens et al. 2020, p.6)

Garfin et al. (2020) stated that in order to protect themselves from the virus, people are looking for accurate information related to Covid-19. In that respect, people mostly rely on media as one of the basic tools that provide information about Covid-19. Though receiving accurate information from trusted sources is helpful to tackle with some Covid-19 problems, continuous media exposure may result in psychological distress as public fear may escalate when media portrayal is filled with ambiguity.

In that respect, Mertens et al. (2020), Garfin et al. (2020) suggested that in order to reduce increased levels of fear related to Covid-19, policymakers, journalists, health care providers should communicate clearly by avoiding ambiguity and sensationalism through providing critical information.

According to Singer (2020), Covid-19 related hysteria is the outcome of exaggerated media portrayal of disease. Influenced by media, even people who have

only a slight cough rush into the hospitals and demand to be hospitalized immediately. Furthermore, Singer (2020) stated that the media, the representatives of various economic sectors, the US government benefit from the hysteric media portrayal of Covid-19 since each Covid-19 related material boosts views and subscribers, economic sectors make a large amount of money by "panic buying" of medical masks, gloves, antibacterial gels, antiviral medication, and US government is interested in to slow the economic growth of China since the virus has become one of the weapons of the USA in the trade battle between China and the United States of America. In that sense, media became a tool of control.

Chaiuk & Dunaievski (2020) discovered sensational language in the portrayal of Covid-19 in various British newspapers. The British media is filled with alarming phrases that use the vocabulary of medical and military discourse in the portrayal of pandemic. Far from offering facts on the virus itself, the UK media has devoted emphasis to pieces on public fear. (Chaiuk & Dunaievski, 2020).

Chapter 3. Methods

3.1 Restatement of the objectives of the study

As mentioned in the introduction, the main objective of the research is to identify intimidating elements that take part in the characterization of the virus within a dichotomous construal of the virus and in-group. This includes the following sub-objectives:

- to identify lexico-grammatical markers which contribute to the construction of dichotomy between the virus and in-group
- to explain the relationship between intimidating elements and lexico-grammatical markers, create an opposition between the virus and the group who has been exposed to the virus or vulnerable to virus exposure
- to explore the goal-oriented nature of Covid-19 discourse through analyzing the role of intimidation in the selected data

3.2 Corpus

3.2.1 Sample source

The study investigates the patterns of intimidation tactics in Covid-19 discourse, particularly in media discourse. We claim that media discourse, framing Covid-19, generates fear through persuasive intimidation strategies.

Due to its influential power, media has become a power resource. Media exploits its power as a control mechanism. The power is also associated with authoritative status of media to make decisions on how to present and interpret events. The manipulative and persuasive influence of media can shape attitudes, opinions, ideologies. In that respect, controlling people's mind is achieved by specific discourse structures, such as "topics, arguments, metaphor, lexical choice, and rhetorical figures" (Dijk, 2015,

p.472). Taken this into consideration, the study aims to identify discourse structures adopted by media discourse in the intimidating portrayal of Covid-19. Media as public discourse uses its influential power to persuade the audience that the virus is dangerous. The sample source includes articles (news articles, opinions, headlines, analyzes) taken from British and American news and media websites (Guardian, BBC news, Time, CNN, Newsweek) and transcripts of Covid-19 press briefings and press conferences held by WHO, the former president of United States of America Donald Trump and the current Prime Minister of United Kingdom Boris Johnson between March-December 2020.

3.2.2 Sampling

We adopted purposive qualitative sampling by selecting the samples intentionally depending on whether they possess intimidating nature or not. After the identification of research topic and questions, the above-mentioned sample source was investigated in order to purposively select articles and transcripts which carry the elements of intimidation. The articles and transcripts, which didn't meet the purpose of the study, were rejected. The selected articles and transcripts were further analyzed to collect specific samples with the intimidating elements.

3.2.3 Sample size

After careful examination of the research material including 42 articles and 23 transcripts, samples containing intimidating elements were determined. Overall, we collected 77 samples for the analysis of intimidation in the dichotomous construal between the virus and the group that is vulnerable to virus exposure. The collected samples were inserted into various tables in a way that each table represents one intimidation strategy adopted by Covid-19 discourse.

3.3 Model of analysis

For the analysis of the intimidation strategies, critical discourse analysis, particularly proximization theory has been chosen. Since CDA focuses on the critical understanding of power relations in society, we choose it to look at the ways media discourse legitimates the claims about the virus posing a threat to society. Dijk (2015) also emphasized this goal of CDA by enumerating several properties of it:

- It focuses primarily on social problems and political issues rather than the mere study of discourse structures outside their social and political contexts.

- This critical analysis of social problems is usually multidisciplinary.

- Rather than merely describe discourse structures, it tries to explain them in terms of properties of social interaction and especially social structure.

- More specifically, CDA focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power abuse (dominance) in society. (p.467)

Take the above-mentioned Cap's classification of spatial, temporal, axiological frames into consideration, we decided to find deictic markers in the selected data, in particular by focusing on spatio-temporal markers. After the identification of various intimidation strategies, we analyzed samples in each table according to spatial proximization framework. In other words, spatial proximization markers were selected through the close examination of data collected from research material. Spatial proximization deictic markers create a dichotomy between the virus and the group, who exposed to virus intrusion, within discourse space. Regarding to this, the virus represents outside deictic center that attempts to pass discourse space and the group, located in the deictic center, is defined as inside deictic center. In that way, Covid-19 discourse creates a geographical distance between Self-group and the virus in the form of Other-group. Spatial proximization framework characterizes the virus's encroachment to IDC entities as destructive. In other words, ODC always represents the negative values and its impact upon IDC is generally characterized as threatening. The positioning of virus

and the group, exposed to virus attack, in the form of peripheral and central entities leads to gradual narrowing of distance in the discourse space since peripheral entity attempts to invade IDC territory.

After the identification of spatial proximization framework, the study also examined temporal proximization framework markers in the corpus. In particular, it attempted to explain in what ways temporal proximization framework signals the virus's intrusion into deictic center. In other words, we aimed to clarify how the relationship between outside deictic center and inside deictic center is presented within past, present, future frames.

Chapter 4. Results and discussion

4.1 The findings from the analysis of selected data examples

The analysis of selected data shows that Covid-19 discourse adopts various intimidation strategies to give negative characterization of the virus in spatial-temporal dichotomous construal of Covid-19 in the form of ODC and IDC entities.

Table 5. The classification intimidation strategies in Covid-19 discourse

Negative metaphorization
The comparison of the virus with other historical events
Low and high modality markers,
Frequent emphasis on the necessity of preemptive action against the virus intrusion

Furthermore, we emphasized that the data was also analyzed for the identification of spatial-temporal deictic markers. The identification of lexico-grammatical deictic markers sets the opposition between ODC and IDC entities by signaling the movement of ODC towards IDC space and intimidation strategies depict the movement of ODC as negatively consequential to IDC. In that regard, fear of the remote is achieved through intimidating elements bound up with spatio-temporal proximization framework.

As shown by the above-inserted table, one of the intimidation strategies, that is adopted by Covid-19 discourse, is the negative metaphorization of the virus. We observe the frequent framing of the virus as "the enemy" through conceptual metaphor "Disease is an enemy". By portraying the virus as "invisible enemy", "public enemy", "invader", "monster" with the spatial deictic markers, the speaker alarms that the alien entity is intruding Discourse space and threatens IDC. In that sense, spatial proximization uses metaphorization to characterize virus intrusion negatively. Negative characterization of the virus with the usage of spatial deictic items aims to describe the virus "an evil" invading the home entity. As the result of this intrusion of

the peripheral entity, the home entity in Discourse space becomes the victim of virus invasion. In particular, the intrusion of ODC into IDC space is realized through the repetitive use of metaphorical spatial deictic verb "threaten" and its nominalization "threat" which signal the virus's dangerous nature.

Table 6. Spatial proximization markers in the selected data

1. They are among the greatest victims of coronavirus (CNN)	They, the greatest victims of coronavirus
2. Britain besieged by the coronavirus invader (Guardian)	Britain, coronavirus Invader
3. The victims come from a variety of racial backgrounds, from different age groups, locations and occupations; and no state in the nation has been unaffected as the coronavirus pandemic took hold. (Guardian)	The victims, no state in the nation, coronavirus pandemic took hold
4. This virus is public enemy number one (WHO)	This virus, public enemy number one
5. US coronavirus cases near 200,000 a day as catastrophic crisis hits new heights (Guardian)	Catastrophic crisis hits, new heights
6. unknown disease which threatened to tear through its population (BBC news)	An unknown disease, threatened to tear through IDC, its population
7. We have a real threat now to our country (Boris Jonson)	We, to our country, real threat
8. But on the national effort to protect those whose jobs, whose livelihoods are threatened, I think everybody understands the challenge that the whole country now faces. (Boris Johnson)	Challenge, the whole country, are threatened by
9. this epidemic is a threat for every country rich and poor (WHO)	This epidemic, threat, for every country rich and poor
10. it threatened East and Southeast Asia (Time)	It, threatens IDC, East and Southeast Asia
11. Falling care home demand since Covid poses threat to UK (Guardian)	Covid, threat, to UK
12. Racism and Covid-19 threaten our health – we can't fight them as separate battles (Guardian)	Racism and Covid-19, threaten our health, we
13. Covid-19 is threatening Macmillan's vital cancer care. (Guardian)	Covid-19, is threatening IDC, vital cancer care
14. A big day today in the White House, all of American society is engaged and	All of American society, this invisible enemy

mobilized in the war against the invisible enemy. (Trump)	

However, the relationship between IDC and ODC is not one-way. Although the home entity is frequently portrayed as the victim of "enemy" virus, IDC counterattacks in response to virus intrusion. In that sense, the home entity is depicted as military people fighting against threatening virus attack. Spatial proximization markers construct a dichotomy between "military" entity and "enemy" entity through metaphorical framing of the virus invasion. The metaphorical framing of the virus as "enemy" entity also aims to depict Covid-19 negatively.

Table 7. Spatial proximization markers in the selected data

15. At this critical moment in our nation's fight against COVID-19 (Time)	In our nation's fight, againstCovid 19
16. Black Americans are fighting against two distinct yet interlaced enemies this week: institutionalized racism and a pandemic that is disproportionately infecting and killing them. (Time)	Black Americans, two distinct yet interlaced enemies,institutionalized racism and a pandemic, infecting and killingthem
17. Workers like Monicaare fighting an enemythat has already killedmore than 95,000 people, including over16,000 in the United States, (Time)	Workers like Monica, an enemy, has already killed more than 95,000 people, including over 16,000
18. Italy's battle with a coronavirus outbreak that has now killedmore than 13,000 people in the country (CNN)	Italy's battle, witha coronavirus outbreak, killed more than 13,000 people
19. Parts of Kent, London, north Wales and Scotland are still battling significant Covid-19 outbreaks (Guardian)	Parts of Kent, London, north Wales and Scotland, significant Covid-19outbreaks
20. We're in a very critical phase of our war against the coronavirus (Trump)	We, the coronavirus,
21. And I watched the doctors and the nurses walking into that hospital this morning. It's like military people going into battle, going into war (Trump)	The doctors and thenurses, military people
22. We're at war with a deadly virus (Trump)	We, deadly virus
23. America is engaged in a historic battle to safeguard the lives of our citizens, our future society (Trump)	America, lives ofour citizens, ourfuture society, historic battle
24. They're going into war, they're going	They, war,battle

into a battle that they've never really trained for. (Trump)	
25. This week, America continues our aggressive effort to defeat the virus as we enter a crucial and difficult phase _of the battle. (Trump)	America, our aggressive effort,we, the virus
26. Across the country we're attacking the enemy in all fronts, including medical, scientific, social, logistical and economic, (Trump)	We, the enemy
27. This is a monster we're fighting, (Trump)	This, a monster, we
28. in our national fight back against the coronavirus (Johnson)	In our national fight, coronavirus
29. We're fighting an invisible enemy and no one is safe, frankly, until we're all safe. (Johnson)	We, an invisible enemy, no one, we all
30. It's a crisis that will touch every sector, so every sector, and every individual, must be involved in the fight, (WHO)	It, crisis, willtouch, every sector, so every sector, a every individual
31. This is a time for all of us to be united in our common struggle against a common threat, a dangerous enemy. (WHO)	In our common struggle, for all of us, a common threat, a dangerous enemy
32. So America continues to wage all out war todefeat the virus, (Trump)	America, thevirus
33. 24 hours inside oneUK intensive care unit battling coronavirus outbreak (CNN)	UK intensive careunit, Coronavirus outbreak
34. Victoria declares'state of disaster,' locking down millions in Melbourne to fight a soaring coronavirus outbreak (CNN)	Coronavirus outbreak, Victoria

The use of conceptual metaphor "The bad situations are locations" also intends to warn that Covid-19 has already entered deictic center.

Table 8. Spatial proximization markers in the selected data

35. Our country is in the midst of a great national trial, unlike any we have ever faced before (Trump)	Our country, a great national trial, we
36. Britain is in the middle of a coronavirus disaster. (CNN)	Britain, coronavirus disaster,
37. We're in the midst of the great national struggle (Trump)	We, great nationalstruggle

In the above-mentioned examples, the first-person plural pronoun, the first-person possessive pronoun, synecdochic rhetoric caution the vastness of the threat

mechanism of ODC. In addition, metaphorical noun phrases "great national trial", "great national struggle", "coronavirus disaster", which represent the elements of ODC, indicate the negative characterization of virus in spatial proximization framework. Moreover, this negative characterization alarms that the deictic center has already been surrounded by the virus attack.

The warning of the virus's successful intrusion into IDC is also attained by using another conceptual metaphor "Pandemic/Disease is a big/main natural force. In spatial proximization framework, the lexico-grammatical items of motion and directionality such as "spread", "surge" indicate the virus's dangerous movement towards IDC. The spatial deictic items such as "devastate", "upend" mark that the virus has already achieved its destructive goal through the negative impact on IDC. It shows that spatial proximization framework uses metaphorization as the intimidating tool to give dangerous characterization of the virus intrusion.

Table 9. Spatial proximization markers in the selected data

38. As coronavirus cases surge around the country, laboratories are facing crippling shortages of key supplies and growing backlogs of samples (Time)	coronaviruscases, surge around the country, laboratories, America's testing infrastructure
39. While COVID-19 has upended everyone's life, the novel coronavirus' impact on cancer patients is especially disruptive (Time)	COVID-19 has upended IDC, the novel coronavirus' impact on cancer patients
40. The worsening coronavirus epidemic in the U.S. has upended the country's medical system (Time)	The worsening coronavirus epidemic, in theU.S, has upended IDC
41. Specter of Coronavirus Second Wave Haunts Europe asCases Surge (Newsweek)	Specter of Coronavirus Second Wave, Europe
42. The largest public health emergency in a century also equates to an economic disaster, for the US and its industries as well as for families and individuals struggling to survive in the face of a strong resurgence of Covid-19 this fall and winter (Guardian)	The largest public health emergency, an economic disaster, for the US and its industries as well asfor families and individuals1 a strong resurgence of Covid-19

43.	What we do know is that despite quarantines and travel bans, the coronavirus has spread to every continent on the globe with the exception of Antarctica in just three months. (Guardian)	the coronavirus, has spread to every continent on the globe, perfect predator, it, mostpeople, they

Covid-19 discourse also refers to the notion of death for intimidation purposes. In that sense, the characterization of Covid-19 is associated with the concept of the death. Here we again observe the metaphorization of virus intrusion within IDC through conceptual metaphor "Disease is an enemy" by using spatial noun phrases "invisible killer", "deadly disease", "deadliest coronavirus outbreak", "ruthless disease". The characterization of the virus as "deadly", "killer" is also manifested in the metaphorical depiction of devastating consequences of the virus intrusion. This depiction involves the spatial verb phrases of action such as "cost IDC lives", "divide IDC", "turn IDC upside down", "pick IDC lives" "hit IDC" which mark the killer impact of ODC since it results in increased death tools in deictic center.

Table 10. Spatial proximization markers in the selected data

44.	COVID-19 is dividing the country in many dangerous – even deadly – ways and now (Time)	COVID-19, the country, is dividing IDC
45.	Famous tourist siteswere deserted, a smattering of bar-goers kept at arm's length from each other atformerly lively establishments andworried citizens stood in line outside once bustling stores in Italy after drastic restrictionswere imposed to containthe deadliest coronavirus outbreakoutside China. (CNN)	In Italy, the deadliest coronavirus outbreak outsideChina
46.	It will be forever defined by coronavirus - the deadly disease that has cost so many lives and turned others upside down. (BBC news)	The deadly disease, turnedIDC upside down, cost so many lives
47.	It is a frightening time to live in the United States. COVID-19, a novel disease as ruthless as it is seemingly random, is picking us off by the thousands; even many of those who "recover" may never truly be the same again (Time)	COVID-19, a noveldisease, is picking IDC off, us

48. We're seeing the devastating impact of this invisible killer. (Boris Johnson)	We, the devastating impact of this invisible killer
49. Haunting images of army trucks carrying coffins away from the same cemetery to be buried or cremated elsewhere in March, when the northern Italian province was at the centre of the unfolding pandemic and funeral services struggled to cope, gave a hint to the rest of the world of what was to come (Guardian)	northern Italian province, was atthe centre of the unfolding pandemic

Furthermore, the virus is frequently depicted as the leading cause of the death. The frequent portrayal of Covid-19 as the leading cause of the death in news headlines alarms that the deadly killer has already entered IDC. The headlines constantly highlight the number of fatalities caused by virus intrusion.

Table 11. Spatial proximization markers in the selected data

50. More than 250,000 Americans have died from coronavirus as UScases soar - as it happened (Guardian)	More than 250,000Americans, from coronavirus
51. Black people in theUK four times more likely to die from Covid-19 than white people, new data shows (Guardian)	Black people, from Covid 19
52. UK coronavirus: 367people die within 24 hours, highest since end of May - as it happened (Guardian)	367 people
53. A disease that didn't even exist one year ago is now one of the leading causes of death in parts of the US. (CNN)	A disease, in parts of the US
54. Covid-19 was the biggest cause of death in Wales (BBC news)	Covid-19, in Wales
55. Covid had last been the leading cause of death in both April and May before dropping back. (BBC news)	Covid

Another intimidation strategy adopted by Covid-19 discourse is the comparison of Covid-19 with other historical events. In that respect, the historical flashbacks, analogy serve the function of intimidation. Through flashbacks the speaker and the writer use analogy to compare the threat levels of Covid 19 with other historical events

such as 9/11 attacks, 2009 flu pandemic, 2007-2008 global financial crisis and portray the disease even more deadly than them. As a result, Covid-19 discourse generates fear by emphasizing the virus is even more dangerous than 9/11 attacks, 2009 flu pandemic, 2007-2008 global financial crisis. Again, the deadliness of disease is presented as a result of its fast encroaching into IDC. Using past analogy also aims to warn about the future catastrophic consequences of Covid-19 disease. In particular, the spatial proximization lexical item "tragedy" alarms the probability of massive death toll in the infinite future. The IDC items are depicted as the victims suffering from "evil" disease.

We should mention that intimidating historical flashbacks also possess temporal nature since it uses other real time (RT) historical events to construe future envisaged actions of ODC intrusion.

Table 12. Spatial proximization markers in the selected data

56. If the US suffered a loss of life on the scale of the 9/11 attacks -- 50 times over -- the tragedy would be incomprehensible (CNN)	US, the tragedy
57. Imagine a death toll equal to the 9/11 attacks, times 50. That's what the US suffered with Covid-19 (CNN)	Us, Covid-19
58. We are at war with a virus that is currently winning by taking two 9/11's worth of victims every week—by Christmas it could be three. (Time)	We, virus
59. We know that COVID-19 spreads fast, and we know that it's deadly, 10 times deadlier than the 2009 flu pandemic (WHO)	Covid 19, spreads, it
60. One of the most infectious diseases that anybody has ever seen. Not since 1917, over a hundred yearsago, has anyone seen anything like what we're witnessing now. (Trump)	One of the most infectious diseases, anybody, we
61. First, this is a crisis like no other. Never in the history of the IMF, we have witnessed the world economy coming to a standstill. We are now in recession. It is way worse	This, crisis, we, it, all of us

than the global financial crisis and it is a crisis that requires all of us to come together. (WHO)	

High and low modality markers are other intimidation tools in Covid-19 discourse. In other words, the high and low degree of predictability of the consequences of devastating impact of the virus, passing into IDC discourse space, is achieved by using modality markers. In particular, low modality focuses on the lower degree of probability of impact of ODC upon IDC while high modality markers aim to predict greater probability of devastating effect of Covid-19 on IDC entities. In that sense, the former uses metaphorical verb phrases of action such as "could overrun", "could infect", "could cause", "could leave", "could kill", "could exacerbate" which involve modal auxiliaries as lexico-grammatical items of spatial proximization. As seen below, these verb phrases predict alarming toll of death and infection caused by ODC encroachment.

Table 13. Spatial proximization markers in the selected data

62. As the virus continues to surge in many regions, the tragedy will be national (Time)	virus continues to surge, in many regions, the tragedy
63. One of the scariest parts of the coronavirus pandemic is the idea that anyone could get infected at any time. With the virus circulating as widely as it is, anyone could be unlucky (Time)	Anyone
64. They are growing increasingly anxious that the novel coronavirus, which is particularly dangerous for the elderly and people with underlying medical conditions, could overrun the American healthcare system. (Time)	could overrun an IDC, American healthcare system, novel coronavirus, people with underlying medical conditions
65. The moment of surge, or peak, is now upon us, even if our best scientists simply can't be sure how deep is the horror it will bring. (CNN)	The moment of surge, or peak, it, upon us, horror, will bring
66. The immediate global health emergency is triggering an economic crisis that, in turn, could massively exacerbate inequality and poverty across the world, including within our country. (Guardian)	could massively exacerbate inequality and poverty, an economic crisis (as a result of virus, across the world, including within our country

67.	With fears that Covid-19 could infect two-thirds of the world's population if its spread is not controlled, talk of a pandemic is inevitable. (Guardian)	could infect IDC, Covid-19, two-thirds of the world's population
68.	A number of coalescing forces could cause dramatic increases in deaths in the coming months, although they are far from inevitable (Guardian)	A number of coalescing forces, could cause, dramaticincreases in deaths,
69.	I'm afraid tragically, there will be many, many job losses, and that is just inevitable because of the effect of this virus on the economy, and because of the shutdown that has taken place. (Johnson)	Effect of this virus, on economy,
70.	People are going to go hungry: pandemic effects could leave 54m Americans without food (Guardian)	Could leave,pandemic effects, 54m Americans
71.	19,000 more Americans could die from Covid-19 in the next 20 days, CDC composite forecast shows (CNN)	Could die, from Covid 19, 19,000 Americans
72.	Biden's COVID Advisers Say Immunity Could Kill Millions: 'Just PlainDangerous' (Newsweek)	Could kill,immunity herd, millions

In other examples, high modality, which is expressed through spatial noun phrases denoting abstract concepts, presents higher degree of certainty of devastating effect of virus intrusion within IDC. In the above-mentioned examples, especially spatial lexical markers "tragedy" and "horror" express strong warning of the catastrophic results of the virus encroachment on IDC.

Covid-19 discourse intimidates listeners and readers by emphasizing the necessity of immediate preemptive action against the virus intrusion. The lexico-grammatical items such as "international action", "disruptive action", "urgent action", "swift, decisive action", "control the virus", "to come together" are frequently used by speakers and writers for this emphasis. Again, spatial proximization deictic markers warn the audience both about the danger of virus and its fast intrusion within deictic center with lexical items such as "the spread of Covid-19", "the impact of Covid-19", "common enemy", "deadly virus" and the effects of this intrusion through spatial deictic items "devastation", "disastrous", "indescribable human toll". In that sense,

spatial deictic markers produce warning effect and support the belief that preemptive action is necessary.

Table 14. Spatial proximization markers in the selected data

73. Although COVID-19 presents an acute threat now, it's absolutely essential that countries do not lose this opportunity to strengthen their preparedness system. (WHO)	Covid 19, threat, countries
74. Increasing numbers of infected healthcare workers raise fears that the spread of Covid-19 into wards and care homes – which triggered tens of thousands of deaths last spring – could be repeated unless urgent action is taken. (Guardian)	spread of Covid-19, into wards and care homes, trigger tens of thousands of deaths
75. The third point I want to make today is we need effective international action to reduce the impact of the virus across the globe. (Boris Johnson)	across the globe, the impact of virus
76. This is where the challenge comes: slowing its spread depends on taking disruptive action, particularly in light of the fact that not all carriers will experience easily identifiable symptoms (Guardian)	its spread, all carriers
77. All countries must take a comprehensive blended strategy for controlling their epidemics and pushing this deadly virus back.march (WHO)	all countries, deadly virus

By looking at the selected data, we can realize that Covid-19 discourse warns about the massive impact of coronavirus intrusion and the vastness of the threat mechanism of ODC. In other words, the globality of the virus threat is "typically accomplished by the inclusion of as many entities as possible in the IDC camp, which extends the possible range of the ODC impact and thus increases its consequences" (Cap, 2013, p.84). In particular, the universality of Covid-19 attack is portrayed through the use of spatial deictic markers such as synecdochic rhetoric, pluralization of noun phrases, first person and third person plural pronouns, indefinite pronouns and quantifiers. The frequent use of these lexical phrases signals the virus's ability to penetrate fast and

leads to devastating consequences within IDC through dichotomous construction between alien and home entities.

As we mentioned, the identified spatial deictic markers, inserted into tables, set a distance between the virus in the form of Outside Deictic Center and victimized group as Inside Deictic Center and depicts the virus's encroachment as destructive. In order to give the negative portrayal of IDC movement, the spatial dichotomous construal uses the above-stated intimidation strategies. In other words, the combination of intimidating elements and spatial deictic markers gives the negative characterization of the virus, construes the impact speed of the virus as threatening through informing about the devastating consequences of this impact. In the following table, the more comprehensive classification of noun and verb phrases, which carry these intentions, is presented:

Table.15

Category	Key items
1. (Noun phrases (NPs) construed as elements of the deictic center of the DS (IDCs))	They, the greatest victims of coronavirus, Britain, the victims, no state in the nation, new heights, its population, We, to our country, the whole country, for every country, rich and poor, East and Southeast Asia, to UK, our health, Macmillan's vital cancer care, all of American society, in our nation's fight, Black Americans, workers like Monica, Italy's battle, Parts of Kent, London, north Wales and Scotland, the doctors and nurses, military people, America, lives of our citizens, our future society, they, no one, we all, every sector, every individual, Victoria, UK intensive care unit, our country, you, Britain, laboratories, America's testing infrastructure, the country's medical system, Europe, every continent on the globe, most

	people, in Italy, us, northern Italian province, More than 250000 Americans, Black people, 367 people, in parts of the US, in Wales, all of us, in many regions, anyone, American healthcare system, across the world, within our country, two-thirds of world's population, on economy, 54m Americans, millions, 19,000 Americans, all countries, all carriers, across the globe, into wards and care homes
2. (Noun phrases (NPs) construed as elements outside the deictic center of the DS (ODCs))	Coronavirus invader, the virus, public enemy number one, an unknown disease, this epidemic, it, Covid, racism and covid-19, this invisible enemy, two distinct yet interlaced enemy, institutionalized racism and a pandemic, an enemy, significant Covid-19 outbreak, the coronavirus, deadly virus, into war, monster, it, coronavirus outbreak, a great national trial, coronavirus disaster, great national struggle, the worsening coronavirus epidemic, specter of Coronavirus second wave, the largest public health emergency, a strong resurgence of Covid-19, perfect predator, the deadliest coronavirus outbreak outside China, the deadly disease, this invisible killer, unfolding pandemic, a disease, this crisis, an economic crisis, a number of coalescing forces, effect of the virus, pandemic effects, deadly virus
3. (Verb phrases (VPs) of motion and directionality construed as markers of movement of ODCs towards the deictic center)	Surge around the country, ODC has spread, spreads, ODC continues to surge, trigger IDC deaths
4. (Verb phrases (VPs) of action construed as markers of impact of ODCs upon IDCs)	Coronavirus pandemic took hold, catastrophic crisis hits, threatened to tear through IDC, threatens IDC, is threatening, infecting and killing IDC, killed more than 13,000 people, will touch, has upended IDC, is dividing IDC, turned IDC upside down, cost so many lives, is picking IDC off, could

	overrun an IDC, could massively exacerbate inequality and poverty, could infect IDC, could cause dramatic increases in death, could leave IDC without food, could die from ODC, could kill immunity herd
5. (Noun phrases (NPs) denoting abstract concepts construed as anticipations of impact of ODCs upon IDCs)	Real threat, challenge, threat
6. (Noun phrases (NPs) denoting abstract concepts construed as effects of impact of ODCs upon IDCs)	Crisis, an economic disaster, the tragedy, horror

The analysis of temporal proximization framework in the selected data suggests that temporal deictic markers also contribute to the dichotomous construal between the virus and the victimized group. Temporal proximization signals that now the virus is in the deictic center. The virus's entrance within IDC space is the result of past actions of ODC. Since the virus is in the IDC space, the speaker and the writer visualize the destructive future actions of the virus. In that way, temporal proximization contributes to the dichotomous construal between the virus and the victimized group by warning about the imminent of threat. The warning effect is achieved by the combination of above-mentioned intimidation strategies and the items of temporal proximization framework such as present, present progressive and present perfect tense forms. While present tense signals that the virus is in the deictic center, the use of present perfect tense alarms about both the virus's intrusion upon deictic center and the devastating consequences of this intrusion. Moreover, the present progressive form indicates that the virus's negative impact is still continuing. Overall, these three tense forms imply that if the virus expansion is not taken under control, it will lead to more destructive consequences in the future. In particular, the verb phrases with modal auxiliaries signal the possible continuation of present ODC impact into the future. In that sense, present and present progressive forms contribute to the construction of ODC envisaged actions.

In order to emphasize the presentness of negative effect of the virus upon IDC, time adverbs and time adverbials are also used within temporal proximization framework.

Table 16.

Temporal proximization markers in the selected data
In the coming months
Now
In the next 20days
Within 24 hours
In both April andMay
Currently
Every week
Since 1917
over a hundred years ago
Never now
At this criticalmoment
This week
Already
Still
This morning
Never
Today
For decades
For now
this fall and winter
in just three months
In the days ahead
Last spring

As seen from above-mentioned examples, intimidation strategies, which portray the virus as dangerous through metaphorical constructions, analogy, low and high modality markers, personify the virus as "Other group" in a way that "the Self group" within discourse space becomes the victim of virus attack. Taken this into consideration, personification of virus is used as a tool for fear. In that sense, spatio-temporal dichotomy between ODC and IDC is achieved through negative personification of the virus through intimidation strategies adopted by Covid-19 discourse. Marko (2013) also stated that "constructing the identity of the Self-group, based on negative differentiation from the others, usually requires the discourse of

fear for its construction and this shared fear of a common enemy leads to self-victimization" (p.211). In other words, Covid-19 discourse victimizes the Self-group through alarming that the virus in the form of ODC is "bad". This personification creates a dichotomy between "us" and "them", "victims" and "enemy" by producing the fear of "them" or "others". The dichotomous representation of Self and Other helps to determine what is good for Self-group and what is bad for Self-group. In that sense, Covid-19, representing Other-group, is depicted as bad for Self-group.

The analysis of above-mentioned examples shows that personification of the virus as "the Other group" is mainly achieved through negative metaphorization of Covid-19. Metaphorization is almost apparent in all intimidation tactics adopted by Covid-19 discourse. Negative metaphorization mainly characterizes the virus intrusion as dangerous. The metaphorical characterization also creates a sharp division between IDC and ODC through additional spatial deictic items. Highlighting the dangerous impact of virus intrusion by creating polarization between IDC and ODC displays the persuasive power of metaphor since it is generally characterized as a figure of speech "that is typically used in persuasion through influencing opinions and judgements" (Black, 2004, p.7). As Neüff (2018) stated metaphors emphasize key features to which speakers seek to draw the attention of their audience to and they are shortcuts that cause emotions and judgments to be triggered subconsciously.

In that sense, media discourse about Covid-19 uses negative metaphorization to persuade the audience that the virus encroachment is threatening. However, not only conceptual metaphors contribute to the "Othering", the construction of division is also achieved by first person and third person plural pronouns, pluralization of noun phrases, synecdochic rhetoric. These language markers are also the main components of spatial proximization framework. As stated above, the use of them signals the virus's ability to spread fast by alarming the globalization of destructive consequences

of the virus intrusion. However, pluralization of noun phrases, first person and third person plural pronouns, synecdochic rhetoric do not only indicate the globality of virus intrusion, but also the necessity to act against its fast spread. In that sense, the portrayal of virus spread as a global threat aims to persuade "the Self-group" within deictic center to take action against ODC in the form of "Other". The necessity for pre-emptive action is implied through the warning of destructive movement of the virus within deictic center. As a result, intimidation mechanisms frequently depict the negative impact of this movement on IDC. As Sanford et al. (2016) stated:

> the depicted tendency of the virus to expand in the human population and across geographic regions through multiple boundary transgressions further constructs the virus as having the capacity to colonize individual bodies, territories and populations and this construction of the virus is presented as necessitating particular responses that account for viral potentiality and the mutual vulnerability associated with viral expansion across bodies and national borders. (p.30)

The above-mentioned intimidation strategies also use assertion in order to build a credible speaker or writer who warns the hearer and the reader about the virus intrusion. In other words, the assertive role of intimidation tactics attempts to convince the listener and the reader to accept that the virus is dangerous and threatening. Cap (2006) also put emphasis on the persuasive nature of assertion by stating that "assertion understood broadly as the speaker's firm commitment to the truth of his or her claims and cornerstone of not only legitimization but in fact the art of persuasion in general" (p.28). Generally, assertions attempt to achieve credibility through the frequent use of factual information. In our study, temporal proximization framework contributes to the establishment of the credibility through providing factual information. In that respect, the emphasis to the presentness of the virus threat through time adverbs and time adverbials indicates the factuality of ongoing events. As a result, the factual nature of

ongoing events produces assertiveness. In addition, to stress the present character of virus intrusion via temporal proximization framework enhances credibility of the anticipated OCD threat which is framed through spatial deictic markers. Similarly, as we mentioned above, the factuality is achieved by highlighting the numbers of fatalities caused by virus encroachment. According to Dijk (1988), "few rhetorical plays more convincingly suggest truthfulness than these number games" (p.88). The frequent use of numbers indicate that the virus can easily infect and kill anybody. Moreover, by predicting the possible devastating consequences of the virus as a result of present virus intrusion, high and low modality markers pave the way for future factuality of present event. In particular, high modality markers have stronger assertive force by producing high degree of probability.

4.2 The analysis of main purposes of using intimidation in the dichotomous construal

We realized that negative metaphorization, analogy, modality markers, assertion contribute to the specification of the negative features of the virus and potentiality of virus to destruct the society in various ways. In that way, the society is presented as insecure since there is high probability of deadly impact of virus spread on its members. The portrayal of the virus as widely spread "deadly enemy" imposes persuasive effect on the listener and reader. In other words, this effect, which is particularly strengthened by assertiveness, intends to persuade the listener and reader to believe that the virus poses a threat. The persuasive goals that support such intents is the construction of meanings so as not to be understood, but accepted as truth or at least considered as truth (Dijk, 1988). Moreover, to describe the virus as dangerous also aims to persuade the listener and the reader to believe that preemptive action is required to stop the virus invasion. In other words, Covid-19 discourse is warning the hearer and the reader to act alert against the virus by giving negative characterization of the virus through intimidation tactics As Dijk (1988) stated "we are not easily persuaded to march in a

protest demonstration against a new nuclear plant unless we believe that nuclear waste products are dangerous for people and the environment in the first place" (p.83). Similarly, Covid-19 discourse necessitates pre-emptive action after depicting the virus as dangerous. Moreover, the assertive force, portrays the virus intrusion as negative, presents the speaker and writer as a credible source who promotes the necessity for immediate action against the virus. In that sense, "the task of the persuader is to make a shift from the position of ignorance, being careless and apathetic into a position of knowledge, core and action which suits him" (Ejupi et al. 2014, p.644)

As noted above, intimidation tactics attempt to persuade the audience both about the danger of peripheral entity within the spatio-temporal positioning framework and the necessity of preemptive action against ODC. In that sense, persuasive goal aims to produce legitimating effect. In other words, intimidation strategies enhance credibility in order to legitimate claims about the dangerous nature of the virus and the necessity of preemptive action against virus intrusion. Media discourse aims to create credible speaker to legitimate the construction of oppositions between victims and the virus. To accomplish their goal and to achieve public acceptance of their claims, media elites strategically adopt intimidation strategies. As we seen, the legitimating effect is produced by using intimidation tactics in the form of various lexico-grammatical items and spatio-temporal deictic markers. These markers generate fear through portrayal of the virus as a threat which help to legitimate the interests of media elites. Baldi (2020) also stated that pragmatic and linguistic elements that are successful in shaping the collective imagination, as well as people's sentiments and opinions, and contribute to persuasiveness by invoking a shared cognitive base as the basic dimension of legitimacy. We explained that the use of linguistic and pragmatic tools creates a dichotomy between Self-group in the form of IDC and Other-group in the form of personified virus who is threatening IDC entities. In that sense, dichotomization is one of the ways to achieve the legitimization. The justification for legitimization is built on the basis of closeness and imminence of threat facing the IDC since dichotomization

divides between ODC through personified portrayal of virus invasion in negative light and IDC as the victim of destructive encroachment of the virus. As Cap (2006) stated, dichotomized construal warns the hearer and the reader of the closeness of ODC by positioning IDC near the danger. In other words, the virus is personified as "Other group" whose movement towards discourse space is depicted as a threat. Negative personification also enhances legitimacy through dichotomizing between good and bad in a way that ODC is morally evaluated as "bad". The moral evaluation characterizes victimized "Self-group" as "good" who attempts to defend IDC borders. In addition, the moral characterization of virus as bad reveals its demonized nature. In that respect, legitimization is achieved through demonization which describes the virus as evil and harmful in order to incite hostility (Zukerstein, 2015). The demonized characterization of virus makes the Self-group vulnerable to threatening virus exposure and this designation of nation states and other social configurations (society as a whole) as "mutually" insecure serves as a potent legitimizing mechanism for the demand for global "preparation" (Sanfrod et al. 2016).

It should be emphasized that the demonized portrayal of the virus through persuasive intimidation strategies is also triggered by socio-economic factors. In that sense, we should also understand the impact of Covid-19 on social, economic, political spheres of life. It is because Covid-19 discourse uses intimidating dichotomy to claim that the impact of the virus on socio-economic life is destructive. It also explains that discourse about Covid-19 takes socio-economic contexts as a base for its persuasive intimidating construction of the virus. As Bakir et al. (2018) stated "persuasive force is attained via communicative contexts in which threats and intimidation is in play and communicated threats acquire force from physical, social and economic contexts" (p.324). For example, the analysis of data shows that Covid-19 discourse frequently uses spatial noun phrase "crisis" in order to depict the negative effect of impact of the virus/pandemic upon home entity. In that context, "crisis" indicates the harmful effect of the virus on socio-economic life. Since the impact of Covid-19 affects not only a

single individual but a substantial portion of the population, "the term crisis is used to describe a dangerous social situation" (Neüff, 2018, p.22). "Crisis" warns about a critical situation related to virus's destructive impact upon home entity and signals economic disruption caused by Covid-19 pandemic. Economic disruption signifies far-reaching consequences of the virus intrusion and its ability to spread fast around the world.

Covid-19/pandemic has impact on several aspects of economy. The virus pandemic has negative effect on production and employment. As Pak et al. (2020) stated the pandemic/virus has had direct effects on wages due to deaths, job absenteeism, and decreased productivity, as well as creating negative supply shock, "with manufacturing productive activity slowing down" due to worldwide supply chain disturbances and factory closures (p.3).

Foxconn factories, which also produced IPhone and other smartphones were briefly shut down and Apple is experiencing major supply problems (Akbulaev et al. 2020). As a result, these massive closures are negatively consequential. Due to massive closures, many people have lost their jobs since the closures "do have a severe impact on the world economy and employment, and in particular the production of non-essential goods and services" (Walmsey et al. 2021, p.21). The loss of jobs and decreases in economic income are also dependent on several other factors. Not only closures but also "social distancing, self-isolation and travel restrictions have led to a reduced workforce across all economic sectors and loss of jobs" (Bhattacharya, 2020, p.6). The virus spread also results in the expansion of social and economic inequality between higher-income and lower-income communities. Compared to higher-income communities, the effect of the virus/pandemic on lower-income communities is evaluated as more disruptive. Early studies also show that poor people suffer more from the social and economic consequences of the pandemic since the homeless are extremely vulnerable to virus due to lack of shelters and other necessities ("United Nations", n.d.). Moreover, lower-income students suffer the most with distance

education during the Covid 19 pandemic. In that sense, because of the virus's effects on social mobility, schools can no longer able to give free school meals to students from low-income households (Nicola et al. 2020).

As seen above, the socio-economic consequences of the virus pandemic also result from different bans and restrictions. Governments have implemented policies with the intend to control high infection rates and high transmissibility of Covid-19. Countries in the world have adopted several precautionary measures to control the epidemic's exponential growth, including social distance, banning gatherings, border closures, quarantine, social isolation, travel bans (Nicola et al. 2020). In particular, in Western democracies, the fast spread of the virus triggered anti-democratic protective restrictions. In other words, governments don't only allocate funds to support businesses and communities hardest hit by the pandemic but also limit the citizens' movement and freedom of assembly. Almost all states in the US implement restrictions to minimize the impact of pandemic. From March 16, 2021, many states had taken further steps to curb the virus's transmission, such as implementing obligatory stay-at-home restrictions, shutting or reducing capacity at non-essential enterprises, cafes, and clubs, restricting public gatherings, and enforcing masks ("KFF", 2021). Overall, states adopted five sorts of policies: proclaiming the emergency, closing down non-essential enterprises, opening up non-essential enterprises, introducing mask requirements for all individuals, and reclosing some non-essential enterprises (Bergquist et al. 2020). UK introduced fines to punish the citizens who violate gathering rules. For instance, if you gather in bigger numbers in the UK, in particular in England, you can be penalized with £ 200 for the first violation, doubling up to £ 6,400 for additional offenses ("GOV.UK", 2021).

The protective restrictions implemented against the virus pandemic cause problems for the western countries which are loyal to liberal values. The different policy responses, which included extreme experiments with government action, total closures, and rigorous isolations, posed an unprecedented challenge to modern democracies across

the world (Afsahi et al. 2020). Since the protective measures limit the certain constitutional freedoms, citizens might lose the trust in their liberal governments. Some even emphasize the authoritarian nature of these measures. These authoritarian policies implemented by the western governments are the indicator of the virus's ability to reshape the world politics. As Thomson & Eric C (2020) stated:

> In other words, the pandemic has nevertheless sparked authoritarian political behavior worldwide, not merely in regimes already considered to be disciplinarian or tyrannical but also in well-established liberal democracies with robust constitutional protections or fundamental rights since authoritarian governance in the frame of public health intervention is understood in the present context as being characterized by diverse combinations of governmental and administrative overreach, the adoption of excessive and disproportionate emergency measures. (p.4)

The restrictions adopted by western societies and social, economic, political challenges due to pandemic result in the use of intimidating elements in the Covid-19 discourse. Through generating fear, intimidation and intimidating personification of the virus in the dichotomous construal of peripheral-entity and home-entity prepare the societies for the authoritarian policies to stop the virus infection and the negative socio-economic, political impacts of the pandemic. In that sense, covid-19 discourse, in particular media discourse doesn't only inform about the virus. Presenting the virus in a bad light and the home-entity as a victimized group also aims to show how we should behave against it. As we stated, intimidation expressed through language prepares the listeners and the readers for dangerous Covid-19 intrusion and Covid-19 restrictions. This shows the opinion-forming function and influential power of media. Generally, people have an access to Covid-19 news through media discourse. In that sense, media as a public discourse uses its persuasive and discursive power to affect the audience. It explains why different elite groups choose media to convey their goals. As Dijk (1998) stated elites can effectively disseminate their voices to the general public via media.

Media discourse attains this power through language. Media images can influence the mind. Moreover, media benefits from the language to practice one-sided hidden power over consumers. As Fairclough (2013) stated:

> Mass media practices hidden power through one-sidedness in a way that producers exercise power over consumers in that they have sole producing rights and can therefore determine what is included and excluded, how events are represented, and (as we have seen) ever the subject positions of their audience. (p.42)

Taken this into consideration, media uses its power to determine how to present the virus. After the fast spread of the virus throughout the world, Covid-19 has become the main object of media coverage. As mentioned above, intimidating elements are one of the main strategic tools to characterize virus infection. Media adopts intimidation tactics to warn consumers about threatful nature of the virus and its negatively consequential encroachment upon victimized Self-entity. Media raises awareness on the dangers of the virus and attempts to influence the audience's decisions. In other words, media uses intimidation to persuade the audience to accept the claims about how dangerous the virus is and the necessity to act against this danger. Therefore, it frequently portrays the virus intrusion as threatful by naming it "enemy", "deadly", "killer". In that sense, media makes careful lexico-grammatical and rhetorical choices to reach its influential goal. The influence is obtained through naming, how they prefer to refer to people, and emotive language (Ives & Rana, 2018). In other words, the persuasive influence is realized via language.

As we stated, the free choices to represent the virus in a particular way via language is associated with the persuasive goal to legitimate above-mentioned claims. It also shows that in western societies, the legitimacy claims are realized through consent language. In that sense, threatful and intimidating language is a tool for legitimizing the consent. Via various discursive strategies, media elites play skillfully to get consent to fulfill ideological goals and to present their ideology as the best alternative for problem

solution. Moreover, through skillful manipulation, media elites convince the audience to believe that it is the audience who makes the decisions instead of them. As Dijk (1998) stated:

> Ideological communication is often associated with various forms of manipulation, with strategies that manage or control the mind of the public at large, and with attempts to thus manufacture the consent or fabricate a consensus in the interests of those in power. Indeed, modern power and ideological hegemony are precisely defined in terms of effective strategies in the accomplishment of compliance and consent, so that people will act as desired out of their own free will. (p.274)

This also shows that power is not mainly practiced through physical intimidating forces in western societies. Power control is attained by influencing the minds with the help of consent language. As Fairclough (1995) emphasized in industrialized capitalist countries, we live in a time where power and authority are largely wielded by generating consent and not by force.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

By looking at above analysis of intimidation strategies, we concluded there is sufficient evidence to support the hypothesis that "Covid-19 discourse, in particular media discourse uses intimidation strategies to portray negatively in the dichotomous construal of the virus and the group who has been exposed to the virus or vulnerable to virus exposure". In particular, this hypothetical claim is supported by the first research question related to the identification of the role of the intimidation strategies in characterization of virus in the dichotomous construal. In that sense, media discourse about Covid-19 uses various spatio-temporal deictic markers to create the sense of remoteness between the virus as peripheral entity and home-entity. In order to depict the virus encroachment as negatively consequential to home-entity, Covid-19 discourse adopts various intimidation strategies such as negative metaphorization, the comparison of the virus with other historical events, low and high modality markers, frequent emphasis on the necessity of preemptive action against the virus intrusion. In the case of negative metaphorization, "Disease is an enemy" conceptual metaphor bound up with spatial proximization build the image of the virus as "enemy invader". "The bad situations are locations" conceptual metaphor alarms that IDC has already surrounded by the virus enemy. "Pandemic/Disease is a big main natural force" conceptual metaphor combined with spatial proximization construal signals that the virus in the form of ODC has already achieved its destructive goal. The metaphorical construction of death concept imposes the killer effect of the virus through spatial noun and verb phrases. Historical flashbacks generate fear by depicting Covid-19 more dangerous than 9/11 attacks, 2009 flu pandemic, 2007-2008 global financial crisis, High and low modality markers, expressed through spatial verb phrases of action and noun phrases denoting abstract concepts, alarm lower and higher degree of predictability of devastating consequences of virus invasion upon IDC. The frequent emphasis on the necessity

of preemptive action against the virus is intensified by spatial deictic markers. Moreover, intimidation strategies contribute to the negative temporal dichotomy between the virus and victimized group. In that sense, intimidating elements are bound up with present, present progressive, present perfect tense forms, time adverbs, and time adverbials.

The above-mentioned intimidation strategies personify the virus negatively in spatial-temporal dichotomy between IDC and ODC. Negative personification characterizes Covid-19 as other group whose movement is depicted as "bad" to victimized Self-group. Intimidation strategies together with spatio-temporal proximization framework also carry assertive force to portray virus encroachment as dangerous and threatening.

Regarding to the second question related to main purposes for characterizing the virus as negative by setting a distance between the virus and in-group, we found that the main goal is to persuade the readers and the hearers to believe the claims about the dangerous nature of Covid-19 and the necessity of preemptive action to stop the virus invasion in home-entity space. In that sense, intimidation strategies achieve persuasive effect through creating credible speaker and writer. Credibility is necessary to legitimate claims about the threatening virus intrusion towards victimized group and the need for preparedness against Covid-19. It should be noted that persuasive intimidating construal of the virus is also triggered by the impact of Covid-19 on socio-economic and political life. To reduce the virus's impact on socio-economic spheres, the western democracies adopt anti-democratic protective policies which restrict the citizens' certain constitutional rights. In that sense, intimidation in media discourse about Covid-19 prepares the audience for authoritarian restrictions through alarming the threatening nature of the virus. Therefore, different elite groups choose media to realize such intentions since media has opinion-forming and persuasive power. It also shows that in

modern societies, power is mainly exercised by manipulating the opinions of masses through consent language.

5.1 Recommendations for further research

As stated in the introduction, the study includes the analysis of limited portion of articles and transcripts taken from British and American sources. Taken this into consideration, the future studies can extend research material with the analysis of additional articles and transcripts. Furthermore, future studies can conduct comparative analysis of political leaders' Covid-19 discourse and news discourse about Covid-19 by looking at the differences and similarities in the intentions of using intimidating elements. Trump's use of "Othering" as persuasive intimidating strategy in his Covid-19 discourse also needs further investigation.

5.2 Implications and applications

We suggest some implications of current study for future research. Future studies can take the present study's adaptation of proximization theory in the analysis of polarized construal of negative virus entity and home entity in the media as a base for the further investigation of media construction of dichotomous Othering. Furthermore, future studies will analyze whether the identified intimidation strategies also produce the same intimidating effects in other discursive contexts.

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