Conceptual Metaphors in English and Croatian Media During the COVID – 19 Pandemic

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Diplomski sveučilišni studij anglistike – nastavnički smjer (dvopredmetni)

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Student/ica: Mentor/ica:

Albina Korotaj   Izv. prof. dr. sc. Sanja Škifić

Zadar, 2023.

Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

Ja, **Albina Korotaj,** ovime izjavljujem da je moj **diplomski** rad pod naslovom **Conceptual Metaphors in English and Croatian Media During the COVID – 19 Pandemic** rezultat mojega vlastitog rada, da se temelji na mojim istraživanjima te da se oslanja na izvore i radove navedene u bilješkama i popisu literature. Ni jedan dio mojega rada nije napisan na nedopušten način, odnosno nije prepisan iz necitiranih radova i ne krši bilo čija autorska prava.

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Zadar, 2023.

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1. Introduction

Languages have always been changing throughout history. Sometimes the change progressed throughout many years and other times there were abrupt changes in the language in short periods of time. It can be said that linguistic changes are especially common under the influence of certain devastating events like pandemics. This is especially accurate for the COVID-19 pandemic, the latest pandemic, which induced many changes in the language. The changes occurred not only in English but also in all world languages, which is one of the reasons why this pandemic is considered to be exceptionally influential. When it comes to the COVID-19 pandemic, it started at the end of 2019 in Wuhan, China. As the virus started to spread from China to other countries, soon the whole world was affected by it. The measures that were introduced against the virus were implemented in almost every country. Since many restrictive measures were introduced during the pandemic, media had lots of information available for the creation of their content. Moreover, with the emergence of COVID-19 tests, and especially with the development of the COVID-19 vaccines, a massive division in society has occurred, which was also evident in media. It can be observed that media plays a great role in creating and supporting different opinions and attitudes because of how they choose to represent the information to the general public. With the dissemination of information, media are also contributing to the spread of language, which in today's world mainly refers to the transfer of English words and expressions. Thus, there was a great change in vocabulary with many new COVID-19-related terminology entering the language, as well as transmission of that terminology to other languages. Moreover, in the media's content, there are many metaphorical expressions. While reporting about the pandemic, media employed distinct conceptual metaphors to depict the issue and attract the attention of the audience. These conceptual metaphors were, as well, transferred from English to other languages, including Croatian.

The motivation for the topic of this paper arises from the fact that COVID-19 is a new pandemic that has instigated many social and linguistic changes in a short period of time. These changes were so rapid and had a great impact on people's behaviour and their usage of language. Media has contributed to the spread of those changes even more. In today's globalised world where the Internet is available almost everywhere, the news and information on the COVID-19 pandemic have reached millions of people simultaneously. Most of them were published in English. Since English is a *lingua franca* of today's world and there is a great number of English speakers, the information on COVID-19 could rapidly reach a broad audience. Therefore, it is compelling to investigate what linguistic and social changes have occurred, which new words emerged, which metaphorical expressions were utilized, and how, during the time of the pandemic, English influenced other languages such as Croatian.

This paper can be divided into two main parts - the theoretical part and the research part. In the theoretical part, there are several concepts that have to be explained. Firstly, the concept of English as a *lingua franca* is introduced and explained in the context of globalization and Internet development. Secondly, there is a need to explain how English influences Croatian and its role in Croatian media. Then, it is crucial to explain how the pandemic of COVID-19 induced linguistic changes and which problems occurred globally. It is also necessary to mention concepts of public discourse and mass media, and to describe how media used language in their reports about the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, the theoretical part of the paper provides definition conceptual metaphors. The second part of the paper deals with the research based on English and Croatian media articles about the COVID-19 pandemic that were collected from October 2021 to March 2022. In this part, there is an analysis of conceptual metaphors in the aforementioned corpus.

2. ELF and the Croatian Language

It is known that English is a *lingua franca* of today's world; therefore, the transfer of English vocabulary to other languages is inevitable. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic the influence of ELF has been especially strong. Many new words appeared in English and were transferred to other languages. English was the main language utilized for discussions about the virus. This includes politicians, medical experts, journalists, and generally all the people around the world that had access to this information via mass media channels or the Internet. Globalization and the influence of English were especially evident since all the countries in the world had to cooperate in order to combat the virus. Most of the countries introduced universal measures that were agreed on the international level, while the language utilized for communication was English. It can be said that English confirmed its status as the main language for global communication during emergency times. Without English having this function it would be much more challenging for governments to achieve agreement. Moreover, most of the information about the pandemic disseminated through social media platforms was in English. This implies that the speakers of English were at an advantage because they were able to receive most of the information. Furthermore, English is a global *lingua franca* that has a strong influence over all world languages, including Croatian. Namely, Croatian seems to be highly susceptible to the English influence and its speakers are willingly adopting many English words and expressions. At present times this process is even more prominent because of globalization, new technology development, and the connection of people from all around the world via the Internet.

In continuation, there is a need to define the concept of ELF, explain its role in today's globalized world and its relation to the Internet. Then, the influence of English in Croatia is explained. Lastly, the influence of English on Croatian media is described since they have a significant role in English language expansion.

2.1. ELF in Today's Globalized World

According to Mauranen (2018), *lingua franca* can be defined as "a contact language, that is, a vehicular language between speakers who do not share a first language." (p.7). Smokotin et al. (2014) define *lingua franca* as "language functioning as a means of interethnic communication" (p. 510). Therefore, it is a language that people from different ethnic backgrounds utilize to converse with each other. Mauranen (2018) states that English as a *lingua franca* (ELF) is so significant that it surpasses the contact of any person or group of people with English because it is not just the domestic language, but also a non-local *lingua franca* that is used for global communication. This contact with English can be established from any part of the world without moving anywhere physically, especially through the usage of digital media (Mauranen, 2018). English is not the only *lingua franca* at present times, and in the past many other languages served similar purposes (Moran Panero, 2018). Smokotin et al. (2014) claim that the other widespread languages, such as Spanish, French, Chinese, Russian etc., were traditionally known as 'regional *lingua francas'*, while English is different in terms of having acquired the status of "…a language of global communication, and as such it presents a unique phenomenon that has no parallel in the history of the world languages" (p. 510). Moran Panero (2018) claims that the global status and functions of ELF are greater than the status and functions of any other *lingua franca* before. Pašalić and Marinov (2008) describe English as "…the language of science and technology, commerce and banking, aviation and shipping industry, and of mass entertainment" (p. 256). It can be said that it is the first time in history that some language has spread its power so intensely around the world. Moreover, English is crucial for the advancement of globalization nowadays.

Globalization can be defined as the "…interdependence and interconnectedness of the large number of countries in economic, cultural, scientific, linguistic and many other domains" (Pašalić & Marinov, 2008, p. 250). Throughout history English was in contact with many

different languages; nevertheless, its influence was never as strong as it has become since the middle of the 20th century (Brdar, 2010). It means that English started to gain global influence since globalisation emerged. The process of globalisation started developing after World War II as a consequence of deregulation and liberalisation of financial markets and trade among countries that have the strongest economies (Pašalić & Marinov, 2008). Since then the national frontiers have been opened, which enabled a global exchange of "goods, capital, labour and information" (Pašalić & Marinov, 2008, p. 251). Today's globalized world is characterized by strong interconnectivity in which people from distinct linguistic backgrounds are coming into contact with each other, which makes the overall interaction between people very diverse (Moran Panero, 2018). Therefore, millions of people started using English as the main language for global communication. Predominant usage of English worldwide is considered to be a consequence of globalisation and it is the only language nowadays that has "the status of the world or global language" (Pašalić & Marinov, 2008, p. 251).

There are two main reasons why English has become the main global language. The first one includes the powerful British colonial expansion in the 16th century, which enabled the expansion of language as well (Pašalić & Marinov, 2008). Since English already had a wide distribution all over the world as a consequence of colonialism, it had a great advantage to become the main global *lingua franca*. The second reason was the rising power of the United States' economy in the 20th century, which resulted in an even greater influence of English (Pašalić & Marinov, 2008). Unlike the colonial times when British English was expanded to British colonies, today the American English influence dominates the world as a consequence of the power and status of the United States, and the consumption of American popular culture. Xue and Zuo (2013) claim that "as English is spread and used worldwide, it inevitably becomes an important tool for the output of Western culture…" (p. 2262). Thus, by learning English, the world population is not only learning a foreign language, but also adopting the Western culture

closely connected to the language. Xue and Zuo (2013) describe this cultural dominance phenomenon as modern colonialism in which language is used as a tool to dominate other countries. In this view, English is seen as a threat to other languages and cultures. However, when it comes to cooperation on the international level the spread of English has become an advantage, especially in emergency times such as the outbreak of pandemics.

Because of the development of digital means of communication, nowadays globalisation is especially strong. The Internet development accelerated the way information is being spread globally. This enabled information to be transferred much more quickly to large numbers of people simultaneously. The role of ELF has risen in these conditions because most of the information is published in English (Pašalić & Marinov, 2008). Segal (2021) describes English as a language that dominates the digital landscape and claims that it can be considered an official language of social media. It is known that around 80% of all the content published on the Internet is in English, which together with the influence of the omnipresent American popular culture enables English to be easily spread worldwide (*Kako je engleski jezik poplavio hrvatski?,* 2021). Since English has become the leading language in global communication on the Internet, it is necessary to know it to some degree to make use of most of the Internet services. Pašalić and Marinov (2008) describe English as a "language of the Internet", and as "…one of the most widely used means of transmitting data and knowledges and of establishing intercultural communication" (p. 252). In these circumstances people from all around the world are able to communicate online with each other even though they do not share the same mother tongue, and, as a consequence, the number of English speakers is continually rising.

2.2. ELF and its Influence on Croatian

According to Škara (2005), speakers of Croatian are highly prone to adopting the Anglo-American culture, which has a strong influence on the Croatian society (as cited in Pašalić &

Marinov, 2008). Many English words and expressions are today commonly used as a part of younger Croatian speakers' jargon (Pašalić & Marinov, 2008). In the Croatian school system, English has an important place. It is widely taught as a foreign language from the very beginning of schooling, which includes kindergartens, elementary schools, high schools, and universities. There are also many foreign language schools in which the greatest number of learners are enrolled in English. Furthermore, since globalisation induced changes in the economy, one of the consequences was the expansion of foreign businesses to different countries. Thus, many companies expanded their businesses in Croatia as well. Most of these companies require their employees to have an adequate level of English to be able to work. Pašalić and Marinov (2008) claim that "a fair knowledge of English has become a prerequisite for professional and social promotion in Croatia" (p. 255). Since the importance of English has risen in the labour market, there is less interest in learning and teaching some other world languages in Croatian schools (Pašalić & Marinov, 2008). During history, learning other languages was usually imposed on the Croatian people, while nowadays knowing English has become a desirable skill (*Kako je engleski jezik poplavio hrvatski?,* 2021). Since the globalisation reached Croatia, a decrease in interest in learning other languages was also magnified (Pašalić & Marinov, 2008).

Nowadays, there is a new trend in which English words overflow the Croatian language and stay in a language in the original form (Balenović & Grahovac-Pražić, 2016). The same can be claimed for the English expressions people use in their everyday life. This influx of English words and expressions changes the language, which some people consider to be problematic. Namely, language is considered to be one of the greatest symbols of national identity (Brdar, 2010). The idea is that "language is the carrier of culture…" (Xue & Zuo, 2013, p. 2262). Language plays a great role in building cultural identity; thus, it is strongly connected to national culture and traditions. Xue and Zuo (2013) claim that language cannot exist without culture, and vice versa. This leads us to the conclusion that in order to maintain an ethnical

identity it is crucial to preserve the national language (Xue & Zuo, 2013). According to this view, it is understandable why so many language purists deprecate the influx of English words and expressions. Pašalić and Marinov (2008) claim that there are too many Anglicisms in Croatian which should be replaced by adequate Croatian equivalents. However, they also claim that people should not be forced to use Croatian terms that are not adequate equivalents. It can be said that it is difficult to change Croatian speakers' habits of using English words in their everyday speech. Even if adequate equivalents do exist, chances are that most people are not going to utilize them. Perhaps people should accept that the language is changing constantly, which cannot be halted anymore.

The strong influence of ELF on Croatian is also evident in the way the Croatian media uses language (Balenović & Grahovac-Pražić, 2016). Croatian is one of the many languages that are strongly susceptible to the reception of English words (Brdar, 2010). The role of media in this process is great because they contribute to the spreading of this kind of language saturated with English words and expressions (Brdar, 2010). Since media has a strong impact on its audience's linguistic awareness, it certainly contributes to the changes in basic principles of how Croatian is used (Balenović & Grahovac-Pražić, 2016). Nowadays, it is noticeable that Croatian speakers tend to use nonstandard Croatian forms that are highly influenced by English in everyday speech. Balenović and Grahovac-Pražić (2016) claim that it is questionable whether an average Croatian speaker understands the language that Croatian media use since many English borrowings can be detected in their discourse. Hudeček and Mihaljević (2009) state that there is a significant problem of inserting English words into Croatian texts, which is especially observable in texts published by media. The problem occurs mostly because there are no adequate Croatian terms to be used instead, while inserting English borrowings makes the text less readable. This especially occurs in publicist texts. For average Croatian speakers to completely understand the language of Croatian media it is often required for them to be the

speakers of English as well (Hudeček & Mihaljević, 2009; as cited in Balenović & Grahovac-Pražić, 2016). Brdar (2010) states that people are aware of how strongly English influences their everyday communication; however, they do not resist this influence because using English has become popular. Media has an exceptional role in this process because they greatly contribute to the importation of English words and expressions into Croatian (Brdar, 2010). Since English has a powerful influence on Croatian media, it has also influenced the way they use language to report on the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, in Croatian media reports, it is common to find English expressions and words linked to COVID-19.

3. ELF during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The news published in English by mainstream media reaches large masses of people all around the world via the Internet. During the COVID-19 pandemic the World Health Organization (WHO) was one of the main sources of information for the media. One of the languages that the Organization uses for public discourse is English. Namely, they have been publishing COVID-19 news in English and a few other '*lingua francas*'. Since English is the most commonly used *lingua franca* today, there are many speakers of English; thus, it was possible to spread important information to a wider audience simultaneously.

In continuation, there is a need to provide the social context, that is, to explain the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused many changes in language and social relations. Then, linguistic changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic are described. Since the multilingual communication problem became more prominent, there is also a need to explain it in the context of the pandemic. Lastly, there is a need to explain how English-centric global communication during the COVID-19 pandemic became a great global problem.

3.1. COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 was first reported in 2019 in the city of Wuhan, China (Moore, 2021). Soon, the virus spread across all the countries and the pandemic was proclaimed. In the beginning, there was no official name for the virus; therefore, it was initially named 2019-nCoV. In February 2020, the novel virus was officially named COVID-19 (Moore, 2021). Since then the novel name for the virus could be seen in many headlines of online articles, and was excessively in use on social media as well. The news about the virus became so popular and important that many online newspapers even made special rubrics dedicated exclusively to COVID-19. Initially, China was the so-called epicentre of the pandemic and they were the first country to introduce the measures against the virus (Moore, 2021). With China being known to be the

epicentre of the virus, people started discriminating against Chinese people. Thus, a new social problem occurred as well. In March 2020, Europe was declared to be the new epicentre of the pandemic (Moore, 2021). Along with measures such as social distancing, lockdowns, and restrictions on travelling, the first vaccines were developed as well (Moore, 2021). The highly restrictive measures and the pressure for vaccination created serious divisions in society. Furthermore, a great problem was the appearance of new variants of the COVID-19 virus (Moore, 2021). Thus, there was a need to develop new terms that would denote each variant. The WHO decided to use the letters of the Greek alphabet (Katella, 2022). The first variant that emerged was the Alpha variant. Other most notable variants were Beta, Delta, and Omicron (Katella, 2022). In each wave of the pandemic, there was a particular variant predominantly represented in the media, and people themselves started using these names in their everyday conversations. It can be said that not only people's habits have changed, but also their vocabulary has extended to include different terminology related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.2. Linguistic Changes during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic initiated many linguistic changes, from the introduction of the new words to the occurrence of many new conceptual metaphors. Since the outbreak, global mass learning has started to happen at unprecedented rates (Piller, 2020). The first significant change in vocabulary occurred when the novel virus had to be named. The name COVID-19 soon entered the vocabulary of people around the whole world regardless of their linguistic background. Piller et al. (2020) state that the word COVID-19 "…may well take the crown as the vocabulary item that has entered the linguistic repertoire of the largest number of people in the shortest amount of time" (p. 504). Indeed, it never happened before that a particular vocabulary item has entered the language of so many people from distinct linguistic backgrounds simultaneously. Learning the name of the novel virus was just the beginning. Soon

much new vocabulary related to public health and restrictive measures entered people's everyday speech. As Štrkalj Despot and Ostroški Anić state:

> We have witnessed the emergence of many neologisms that have spread extremely fast thanks to social networks, but also the appearance of new collocations and phrases, changes in the meaning of existing words, the borrowing of medical jargon into general language, and more or less expected metaphorical framings of the coronavirus discourse. (2021, p. 174).

In addition, there was a problem with how to introduce the term 'social distancing' to people and how to translate it accurately into all world languages to avoid confusion and stigmatization (Translators without Borders, 2020). Translating the term was challenging because it was a key concept whose wrong translation could lead to serious consequences. If such crucial concepts are incorrectly translated it can cause confusion and also stigmatization of particular groups of people. In the worst case, wrong translations can lead to life-threatening decisions. That is why alternative expressions began to be used along with the technical term, and these included 'physical distancing' and 'keeping distance from other people' (Translators without Borders, 2020). Furthermore, large masses of people soon became exposed to and engaged in public debates on the virus, which often resulted in divisions among people. Piller et al. (2020) claim that "…never before have so many people globally engaged with the same topic of public communication". Therefore, the importance of the topic of COVID-19 is unprecedented since it became the main topic to discuss in all parts of the world.

3.3. Linguistic Problems during the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the pandemic of COVID-19 multilingual communication became problematic since linguistic minorities were excluded from receiving high-quality information on time (Piller et al., 2020). Generally, only a few world languages are used for global public

communication. There was a study on Wikipedia entries conducted in 2015 (Piller, 2016; as cited in Piller et al., 2020), which indicated that only five percent of all of the languages in the world were used on this website. The majority of the entries were in only 15 languages with English taking the first place. It means that there is a limitation on global dissemination of knowledge since a small number of languages are used for this purpose. This especially became a problem during the COVID-19 pandemic since there were millions of people who did not have the access to basic information about how to behave to protect themselves and keep their communities safe (Translators without Borders, 2020). Most of these marginalized people were the ones who did not have knowledge of the dominant language of their country, the illiterate ones, and the ones who did not have access to different communication forms. Thus, employing only international lingua francas and official languages of the countries for public communication accentuated the marginalization of particular groups of people making them even more vulnerable (Translators without Borders, 2020).

Additionally, it is known that the World Health Organization (WHO) is the main international body that coordinates global response and was in charge of providing information on the COVID-19 pandemic (Piller et al., 2020). The problem is that the WHO releases information in nine languages: English, Spanish, French, Russian, Chinese, Arabic, German, Portuguese, and Hindi. In practice, English is the dominant language and it is "the language of press conferences and the immediate "language of record" in a fast-changing information environment" ("Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic", 2020; as cited in Piller, 2020, p. 505). It means that most of the information on COVID-19 was published in English. Thus, knowing English became crucial since English speakers were able to receive the greatest amount of information. In fact, English is the official language of 35 countries worldwide and most of the people that live in these countries did not learn it as a native language (Translators without Borders, 2020). The WHO was in charge of providing timely information to its member

countries, and national health authorities of the member countries further to their citizens (Piller et al., 2020). The challenge occurred in providing relevant information to people who spoke only minority languages. During the pandemic, exclusion of linguistic minorities became a serious problem since it is of vital importance for people to receive accurate information on time during such a crisis (Xiang et al., 2020; as cited in Piller et al., 2020). Social media, political parties, media corporations, and community groups also contribute to disseminating information in languages not used by the countries. Nevertheless, this facilitated the occurrence of inaccurate information (Zarocostas, 2020; as cited in Piller et al, 2020). It means that under these circumstances it became easier to spread different kinds of information, some of which were not in accordance with the official ones published by the state institutions.

During the pandemic of COVID-19, ELF became even more significant. Since the outbreak, China had to inform the people about what was happening in their country, and English had a great role in this process. The so-called "English-centric global mass communication" prevailed, which became even more problematic in these circumstances (Piller et al. 2020, p. 503). Namely, when it comes to the concept of intercultural communication, English is the language considered to be firmly associated with it (Piller, 2017; as cited in Piller et al., 2020). The number of people who utilize English indicates how dominant it is (Xue & Zuo, 2013). On a global level, there are 380 million people whose mother tongue is English and 250 million people who use English as their second language, while around 1 billion people are learning it. It is estimated that proficiency in English will be the characteristic of half of the world's population by the year 2050 (Xue & Zuo, 2013). Xue and Zuo (2013) also claim that "English dominance in international communication is particularly evident in the field of scientific research" (p. 2263). During the COVID-19 pandemic, English was used as a universal language for writing research papers, which made it easier for scientists to access the newest discoveries. On the other hand, Piller et al. (2020) claim that "…the pandemic has exposed the

fallacy of the belief in English as the universal solution to global communication problems in an unprecedented way…" (p. 507). This means that there have been some downsides to the reliance on English as a universal language for global crisis communication. Piller et al. (2020) explain that there have been efforts made to reduce reliance on English not just because "the monolingual paradigm of English-centric global communication excludes too many people from vital information", but also because geopolitical tensions started to rise at that time (p. 508). Global tensions are related to the fact that English is not only the global lingua franca but also the national language of Anglophone countries, which makes them privileged because they do not have to invest any effort and resources to learn English as a second language (Gazzola and Grin, 2013; as cited in Piller et al., 2020). It can be said that favouring English as the main language for international communication has its downsides because it is deeply connected to Western culture and the countries that use it as an official language. Therefore, English can be seen as a threat to countries whose citizens do not speak English as a mother tongue since they are the ones who have to learn English in order to be able to participate in international agreements.

Furthermore, the pandemic of COVID-19 also induced many changes in the way English is used in everyday life. A change occurred especially in terms of employment (Chaudhary, 2020). With social distancing and lockdowns, people had to find a way to keep working safely. Therefore, remote working and online learning were introduced and many people switched to the new system rapidly. The importance of English has increased in these conditions. Employers realized that they are able to find competent workforce all around the world. With the increase in the number of online jobs available to people worldwide, knowing English has become an important life skill since working online mostly requires knowing English (Chaudhary, 2020). However, this can make certain groups of people disadvantaged since not knowing English decreases their chances of employment and advancement in a career.

4. Public Discourse and the Media

Since this paper deals with the representation of the COVID-19 virus and language use during the pandemic in mainstream media, it is important to explain the concept of public discourse and to define mainstream media which engages with public discourse. Moreover, it is important to describe public discourse in media during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.1. Defining Public Discourse and Mainstream Media

Public discourse can be generally defined as "speeches, publications and other statements made in pursuit of the public good" (Sellers, 2003, p.62). Its greatest purpose is seeking the right answers to questions of public concern. In this way, the country and each individual know how to act in compliance with the common good and justice (Sellers, 2003). Cap (2017) describes public discourse as issues of public culture and concern that are communicated and have an influence on individuals or particular groups of people in a certain civilization. Different practices are being used through which the ones in power target the wider public to accept the policies that will benefit the political or social group they are representing (Cap, 2017). In order to reach this goal, public leaders often legitimize their actions by introducing the opposition, such as, right - wrong, and good - evil. Thus, the created social and political divergences are implemented into mental representations that those in power constantly define and redefine, discuss, and impose through language usage in order to spread the shared views of reality (Cap, 2017). Woodly (2015) claims that public meanings can be reshaped by changing mainstream public discourse. In this way people can change their opinion on a particular issue of public concern because their perception of the issue has been modified through the prevalent public discourse in the media.

In the modern world, media has a vital role in representing politics, institutions, governments, et cetera (Kenix, 2011). Generally, it can be said that it is crucial to have multiple

perspectives that will help with generating a mutual understanding of the divergences and similarities found among the people. The role of the media in this process is to provide help in constructing the reality people live by (Kenix, 2011). Yu et al. (2021) describe media as "…important windows for the public to get to know timely information" (p. 36). Thus, it is crucial to have different media that support the diversity that can be found in society (Kenix, 2011). Generally, media can be divided into two main groups: mainstream and alternative. According to Kenix (2011) mainstream media can be defined as media whose goal is to increase the number of its spectators utilizing pack journalism that is subject to conventions and is highly formulaic. The result is often that its content can be characterized as reductive and binary. On the contrary, there are alternative media which can be defined as media that favour programs of social change. They do this through the framework of extensive social commentary that can be found in divergent journalism that does not depend on any conventions (Kenix, 2011). It can be said that alternative media are more prone to include different perspectives since their content is more diverse and does not follow particular conventions. Meyen (2020) believes that mainstream media are problematic because they cover and validate only particular interests, while others become non-existent since they are not equally represented in the media. Mainstream media have an essential role in creating background knowledge because everyone is familiar with the information they represent. According to this view, mainstream media "define what is and what is allowed to be" (Meyen, 2020, p. 250). Therefore, they are contributing to the construction of reality, which can be observed in people's everyday behaviours and worldviews (Meyen, 2020).

4.2. COVID-19 Discourse in Media

During the pandemic of COVID-19, mainstream media have shown their power and were responsible for providing relevant information to their audience. However, Bulatović and Bulatović (2021) claim that during that time media also used this power to create mass panic

and hysteria. Throughout years, media has shown some weaknesses, some of which are discordance between facts and politics, and obedience to the ones in power, which results in journalism that is devoted to a particular belief or is more subjective than factual (Chomsky, 2002; as cited in Bulatović & Bulatović, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an abundance of information in the media, some of which were accurate and some of questionable accuracy. This resulted in the creation of the so-called infodemic. Furthermore, in order to attract the attention of the audience, today's media often uses the discourse of fear, which can be explained as "…the pervasive communication, symbolic awareness and expectation of danger and risk as central features of the effective environment…" (Pfuhl & Henry, 1993, p. 53; as cited in Altheide & Michalowski, 1999, p. 476). Fear is one of the essential human emotions that is prevalent in public discourse, both in popular culture and in news media (Ming Wai Jim, 2008). It is known that many newspapers often use pretentious headlines to affect the audience, especially during emergency times such as pandemics. When fear prevails in public discourse it can lead to the occurrence of social policies which are used for surveillance of people and overall state control (Altheide & Michalowski, 1999). According to Cap (2017), in health discourse, there is a broad usage of strategies that induce fear. The disease is represented as something extremely evil by which a person in charge or an institution creates the fear appeal that makes it easier to justify the need for a preferred treatment choice (Cap, 2017). This theory can be applicable to the COVID-19 pandemic discourse and how the fear appeal was generated as a result of depicting the coronavirus as evil.

In addition, in the public discourse, there is a common occurrence of conceptual metaphors that evoke certain emotions in the audience. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an abundance of such metaphors (Štrkalj Despot & Ostroški Anić, 2021). Moreover, the prevalent type of metaphor was WAR metaphor, which can be linked to the emotion of fear. Cap (2017) claims that in discourse that deals with cancer prevention there is a common usage

of WAR metaphors. Similar instances of WAR metaphors can be found in health discourses dealing with viruses (Cap, 2017). WAR metaphors certainly attract the attention of the audience, thus generating fearful reactions. Štrkalj Despot and Ostroški Anić (2021) claim that when it comes to emotions "…war metaphors instantly capture attention because they express strong negative emotional valence of fear and anxiety, highlighting the urgency and motivating action" (p. 178). Therefore, WAR metaphors can be used in the conceptualization of almost any disease (Štrkalj Despot & Ostroški Anić, 2021). They also claim that it is almost impossible not to include WAR metaphors while talking about diseases; however, such expressions are mostly detested by the public (Štrkalj Despot & Ostroški Anić, 2021). Panzeri et al. (2021) claim that WAR metaphors are usually considered to be misleading and even harmful. It could be dangerous to present the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of a conflict because referencing war seems to have a negative impact on the way people might conceptualize the pandemic and react to it (Panzeri et al., 2021). Indeed, during the pandemic of COVID-19 WAR metaphors have proven to be harmful and inappropriate in depicting the pandemic because other aspects of the pandemic were overlooked (Štrkalj Despot & Ostroški Anić, 2021). Moreover, Marron et al. (2020) noticed that in comparison to WAR metaphors in cancer discourse, WAR metaphors in COVID-19 discourse seem to be more passive. Thus, patients are no longer seen as heroes that fight against a disease, but rather as victims, while healthcare workers are now depicted as heroes (Marron et al., 2020). It can be said that WAR framing can negatively affect people's perception of the pandemic because in this view individuals seem to not have much power over the virus.

5. Conceptual Metaphors

When it comes to language itself, it is known that the outbreak of COVID-19 induced distinct linguistic changes, one of which was the appearance of new conceptual metaphors. Mass media often uses conceptual metaphors with the aim of leaving an impression on the audience. Thus, many COVID-19 –related conceptual metaphors can be found in the public discourse of English and Croatian mass media. These metaphors were utilized in order to describe the illness and to emphasize the seriousness of the pandemic. Some of them can be easily identified, while others are firmly incorporated into people's everyday language making it challenging to recognize them. In continuation, there is a need to provide the definition of conceptual metaphors and determine the ways of recognizing them within a text.

5.1. Defining Conceptual Metaphors

In general, it can be said that metaphors contribute to the way people conceptualize the world (Štrkalj Despot & Ostroški Anić, 2021). Metaphors shape and create people's understanding of significant social problems and influence their opinions and beliefs (Štrkalj Despot & Ostroški Anić, 2021). They are used as a basis which helps people understand diverse abstract concepts (Gibbs, 2017). Their purpose is "…understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (Lakoff & Johnson, 2017, p. 7). Since Lakoff and Johnson published their book *Metaphors we live by* in 1980, conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) started to develop (Kövecses, 2017). According to this theory, metaphors are not just ornamental devices, but also conceptual devices whose aim is to structure, restructure, and create reality (Kövecses, 2017). Therefore, Lakoff and Johnson (2017) provide an example of the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR and explain that this is one of the metaphors that people nowadays live by. It is inevitable in today's culture, and its role is to structure the actions people perform during arguments (Lakoff & Johnson, 2017). "Conceptual metaphors arise whenever

we try to understand difficult, complex, abstract, or less delineated concepts, such as arguments, in terms of familiar ideas, such as wars" (Gibbs, 2017, p.4). Thus, it can be said that using conceptual metaphors enables speakers to become more familiar with abstract concepts. Furthermore, similar conceptual metaphors can be found among many different cultures in the world (Gibbs, 2017). Therefore, many conceptual metaphors are universal. However, there are some divergences among different cultures, as well as within the same culture, which is the result of "…various diachronic, social, ethnic, geographic, and individual factors" (Gibbs, 2017, p. 39). Generally, Lakoff and Johnson (2017) claim that metaphors are present in the everyday life of ordinary people and are not limited exclusively to aesthetic purposes. They are not just used in a language, but also in people's thoughts and actions. People's conceptual system is metaphorical and people's concepts have a strong influence on their perception of reality (Lakoff & Johnson, 2017). Gibbs (2017) considers that while conducting research mere identification of the number of metaphors in distinct language samples underestimates how powerful metaphor is when it comes to structuring people's thoughts. Thus, it can be said that more profound research on metaphors should be done to understand them better.

When it comes to the types of metaphors they can generally be divided into three types: structural, orientational, and ontological (Lakoff & Johnson, 2017). Structural metaphors are the ones "…where one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another" (Lakoff & Johnson, 2017, p. 14). In other words, one concept that is more abstract is conceptualized as other concept that is more concrete. The examples are ARGUMENT is WAR, or TIME is MONEY. Orientational metaphors are the ones where one concept "…organizes a whole system of concepts with respect to one another" (Lakoff & Johnson, 2017, p.14). They are named orientational because they mostly imply spatial orientation, for instance, UP and DOWN, ON and OFF, NEAR and FAR, and the like. Finally, there is one more kind of metaphor, ontological metaphor, which implies that people's experiences are being understood

in terms of entities and substances. People always tend to impose certain boundaries on objects that are not concrete in order to facilitate their categorization; thus, the ontological metaphor enables "…viewing events, activities, emotions, ideas, etc., as entities and substances." (Lakoff & Johnson, p. 24). Orientational and ontological metaphors are often unrecognized as having metaphorical meaning since they are used for very limited purposes. One common type of ontological metaphor is personification. Here the physical object is being comprehended as a person. In this way people can better understand the experiences with different entities "…in terms of human motivations, characteristics, and activities." (Lakoff & Johnson, p. 31).

5.2. Identifiying Conceptual Metaphors

Gibbs (2017) considers that in order to understand how metaphorical language and thought are related there has to be a particular method that will help with the identification of metaphors in discourse. Steen (2017) claims that without a reliable instrument for the identification of metaphors, researchers depend merely on their intuition to recognize them. Nevertheless, it is very challenging to develop an appropriate method (Gibbs, 2017). People often find it difficult to decide whether particular words are metaphorical or not. Thus, many scholars discuss whether it would be appropriate to recognize certain words and expressions found in discourse as metaphorical. This resulted in attempts to create schemes for the identification of metaphors. Furthermore, there is one more problem in identifying metaphorical expressions and it arises from the fact that many expressions that seem to be metaphorical do not have metaphorical meanings. Since it is difficult to reliably determine the literal meanings of words and expressions, it is consequently challenging to determine if their meaning is metaphorical. There is a view that not every word or expression which seems to be metaphorical should be recognized as such because it has become conventional. The meaning of these words has detached from their physical source with time and became so familiar that it is seen just as one more meaning and not as a metaphor. According to this view, "…metaphors are creative

instances of language that are distinct from conventionalized word uses" (Gibbs, 2017, p. 65). In other words, only metaphors that are not conventionalized in a language should be considered relevant in research.

In order to recognize metaphors in discourse, corpus linguists investigated distinct procedures whose purpose is to facilitate marking the metaphors, especially when there are large databases (Gibbs, 2017). "Manual search" is the basic method in which an analyst manually marks the metaphors in texts. This can be done only on smaller corpora and its results depend on whether the analyst considers some word or expression to be metaphorical or not. Therefore, the results are not completely reliable. The second method is "searching for source domain vocabulary" (Gibbs, 2017, p. 77). This method includes the selection of potential source domains which could be related to particular metaphorical expressions. In order to apply this method the analyst has to be familiar with semantic fields that are used in the creation of metaphorical expressions. The third method is "searching for target domain vocabulary" whose aim is to detect metaphors that have a connection to particular topics. It can be explained as "…seeking the specific words related to individual target concepts, and then identifying the more general source domains from which these lexical items emerge" (Gibbs, 2017, p. 77). The downside of this approach is that it will fail to recognize the metaphors that do not contain specific vocabulary of a target domain. The fourth method combines the previous two methods, that is, it includes searching for source domain and target domain vocabulary. Lastly, metaphors can be investigated by the method called "searching for metaphors based on markers of metaphor". This method incorporates the search for particular linguistic devices that usually emerge together with metaphors in discourse. Furthermore, due to the existing problem of reliable identification of metaphors in discourse, different "…automatic, computational systems for metaphor identification…" have been created (Gibbs, 2017, p. 79). These systems as well vary in their ability to recognize metaphors which depends on which type of metaphors are in

question and which genre is included in the research (Gibbs, 2017). It can be generally said that there are several methods of identifying conceptual metaphors in a particular corpus; nevertheless, the results of such research vary in their accuracy. This is due to the fact that every method has its disadvantages, and the accuracy of the research still largely depends on the expertise of the researcher.

6. Previous Research

There are many relevant research papers on the COVID-19 pandemic in the field of sociology, anthropology, economy, law, politics, and linguistics. Some of them deal with the representation of COVID-19 in mass media. Linguistic research is mostly aimed at COVID-19 neologisms and at the ways in which the pandemic has changed how people use the language. For instance, Delić and Dedović-Atilla (2022) conducted quantitative research regarding the knowledge and frequency of usage of English words related to COVID-19 in their original form in the Bosnian language. They claim that the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the integration of certain English words into the everyday vocabulary of the Bosnian language because of the high frequency of their usage (Delić & Dedović-Atilla, 2022). Then, Al-Salman and Haider (2021) investigated new English words and expressions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The research concluded that the appearance of so many neologisms indicates how English is a creative and vital language in times of crisis. Moreover, some COVID-19-inspired neologisms are partly responsible for changing and reshaping the habits of social communication (Al-Salman & Haider, 2021). Bharati (2020) analysed some English words and expressions that emerged as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The research concluded that COVID-19 induced the appearance of a number of COVID-19-related words and expressions in the English language. Bharati (2020) also claims that already existing terms related to disease control and epidemiology were being introduced to the public. Therefore, many new terminologies that have been used only in medicine have now entered people's everyday language (Jozić, 2020). The frequently repeated safety guidelines, which included terms such as *mask-wearing, work from home,* and *social distancing,* have had a huge influence on people's thoughts, discourse, and lifestyle (Bharati, 2020).

Furthermore, there are several studies conducted on the topic of the representation of COVID-19 in mass media mostly in the field of social sciences. Some of them used the

discourse analysis method as a means of indicating how media informs the public about the pandemic, and some research used questionnaires to collect the data. For instance, Yu et al. (2021) conducted a corpus-based critical discourse analysis. The analysis indicated that China Daily's discourse included more objective and neutral words in describing the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, more active attitudes to suppressing the pandemic were detected. On the contrary, in The Guardian's discourse, more negative words were detected in descriptions of the pandemic. In addition, they used weaker language when it comes to policies that are aimed at controlling and preventing the spread of the virus. After the lockdown, The Guardian's discourse became more objective and neutral, while China Daily's discourse put an emphasis on sharing experiences and cooperation (Yu et al., 2021). Then, Vaishali and Rukmini (2020) conducted noteworthy research from the field of linguistic anthropology in which they analysed hashtags related to COVID-19. They concluded that people's lifestyles as well as social reactions could be interpreted from the usage of hashtags on social media platforms (Vaishali & Rukmini, 2020).

There are also several studies that deal with conceptual metaphors that were used in public discourse dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, Štrkalj Despot (2020) states that in public discourse that deals with COVID-19 there is a domination of WAR metaphors. There are different ways in which people conceptualize the pandemic. It can be conceptualized as a disaster, or as a fight. The latter implies WAR metaphors and SPORT metaphors. Moreover, personification is also frequently found. In public discourse, WAR metaphor is the basic way of conceptualization of the coronavirus, which is, therefore, represented as an enemy that needs to be defeated (Štrkalj Despot, 2020). In continuation, there are several relevant studies on conceptual metaphors and their results that have to be mentioned and explained in more detail.

Štrkalj Despot and Ostroški Anić (2021) analysed conceptual metaphors found in Croatian media discourse dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of the analysis was

to "…outline the conceptual and inferential structure of the pandemic and to discuss the structure, function, and (in)aptness of the war metaphor" (Štrkalj Despot & Ostroški Anić, 2021, p. 202). A qualitative corpus-based analysis has shown that metaphors found in the media used several figurative source frames. The pandemic was mostly described using figurative source frames of DISASTER, COMBAT, and LITERARY FORM. Rarely, figurative source frames of RELIGION or CULT, MOVIE SERIES, DENTAL CAVITY, and PLANT were used. The analysis has indicated that in Croatian media discourse prevails framing of the COVID-19 pandemic as COMBAT or WAR. It was concluded that besides the negative effects of using WAR metaphor to describe the pandemic, such as evoking anxiety and fear, it also has positive effects such as establishing a "…rich, dynamic and potentially creative source…" that influences the way people think about the pandemic (Štrkalj Despot & Ostroški Anić, 2021, p. 203). Moreover, some other source frames could be even more detrimental. Thus, WAR metaphor is not dangerous or inappropriate, but its appropriateness and harmfulness depend on the context of its usage (Štrkalj Despot & Ostroški Anić, 2021).

Lacković et al. (2021) investigated the usage of conceptual metaphors in Croatian media discourse on the topic of the COVID-19 pandemic and earthquake crisis. The results indicated that the most dominant conceptual metaphors in reporting about the COVID-19 pandemic were WAR metaphors, and in reporting about the earthquake there is a prevalence of APOCALYPSE metaphors. It was concluded that the COVID-19 virus was depicted as an invisible enemy and the actions taken in order to deal with the virus were depicted as the war against it. Metaphorical framing was more intense in portraying the COVID-19 pandemic than in portraying the earthquake. The reason for this is that virus is a more abstract concept that had to be described in a more comprehensible and visible way in public discourse. Nevertheless, utilizing WAR metaphors in conceptualizing the pandemic may conceal other aspects of the pandemic (Lacković et al., 2021).

Rasool et al. (2021) were concerned with evaluating the usage of metaphors in language of Pakistani English newspaper articles. The data was analysed with the help of AntConc software. The results indicated that there is an excessive use of WAR metaphors in the articles. Other conceptual metaphors that were identified were KILLER, POSSESSION, and EARTHQUAKE metaphors. WAR metaphors are believed to help increase solidarity among the people; however, they also represent a source of fear. KILLER metaphor has a negative connotation and is used for the purpose of describing the nature of the COVID-19 virus. Overall, source domains WAR, KILLER, and POSSESSION contribute to the representation of COVID-19 as a disastrous disease. Moreover, infected people are no longer represented as victims, but as carriers who are responsible for spreading the virus. Thus, media and society perceive them in a negative way. Furthermore, it was concluded that there is a persuasive ideology present in the articles. Articles were not just written to provide facts, but also to convince the public, through the usage of conceptual metaphors, that the pandemic is very serious (Rasool et al., 2021).

7. Research – Conceptual Metaphors in English and Croatian Media During the COVID-19 Pandemic

This paper primarily investigates the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on language changes. The focus was on detecting conceptual metaphors in COVID-19 discourse in the English and Croatian media. Moreover, the paper indicates whether there are similarities between English and Croatian usage of conceptual metaphors in media.

7.1. Aims and Hypotheses

The first aim of this paper is to identify conceptual metaphors used in COVID-19 discourse. The second aim of this paper is to determine which type of conceptual metaphor was most frequently used. The third aim of this paper is to identify the similarities in usage of conceptual metaphors in the English and Croatian media.

Furthermore, the hypotheses in this paper include:

H1 – There is a frequent occurrence of similar conceptual metaphors in the COVID-19 discourse in English and Croatian media;

H2 – WAR metaphors prevail in the COVID-19 discourse in English media;

H3 – WAR metaphors prevail in the COVID-19 discourse in Croatian media.

7.2. Methodology

The main method that was used for the purpose of conducting the research in this paper is critical discourse analysis, which can be defined as an approach concerned with a study of discourse which analyses transparent and opaque "…structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language" (Wodak, 2001, p. 2). The corpus used for the research consists of randomly chosen relevant online articles published by the English and Croatian media in the period from October 2021 to March 2022; therefore, the

corpus can be divided into two groups (Table 1.). The first group includes online articles published by the English media websites. The second group includes online articles published by the Croatian media websites. Articles were grouped with the aim of comparing the two groups and discovering whether there are similarities between English and Croatian media reports on the pandemic of COVID-19. From each media website there were two articles collected for each month during the aforementioned period. In total, 72 articles were used as sources for the purpose of the research. Corpus of English articles consisted of 35 964 tokens, and corpus of Croatian articles consisted of 24 028 tokens. The articles were collected randomly from each website and they were analysed. BBC and The Guardian are British mainstream media, while CNN is an American mainstream media. They have regularly published articles about the COVID-19 pandemic. Dnevnik.hr, 24sata, and Jutarnji list are Croatian mainstream media, which have also published articles about the COVID-19 pandemic regularly.

Table 1. English and Croatian media websites used as sources for the purpose of the research.

Group 1: English sources	Group 2: Croatian sources
www.bbc.com	www.24sata.hr
www.theguardian.com	www.dnevnik.hr
www.us.cnn.com	www.jutarnji.hr

During the analysis, the focus was on the conceptual metaphors found in the aforementioned articles that deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. Manual search was used as the main method for the identification of conceptual metaphors. Then, searching for a source and target domain was also used as a method after the primary identification of the metaphors within the text. Thus, sentences containing the conceptual metaphors were manually extracted from the articles and put into tables according to the relevant source domain (WAR, FIRE, MOVEMENT of a
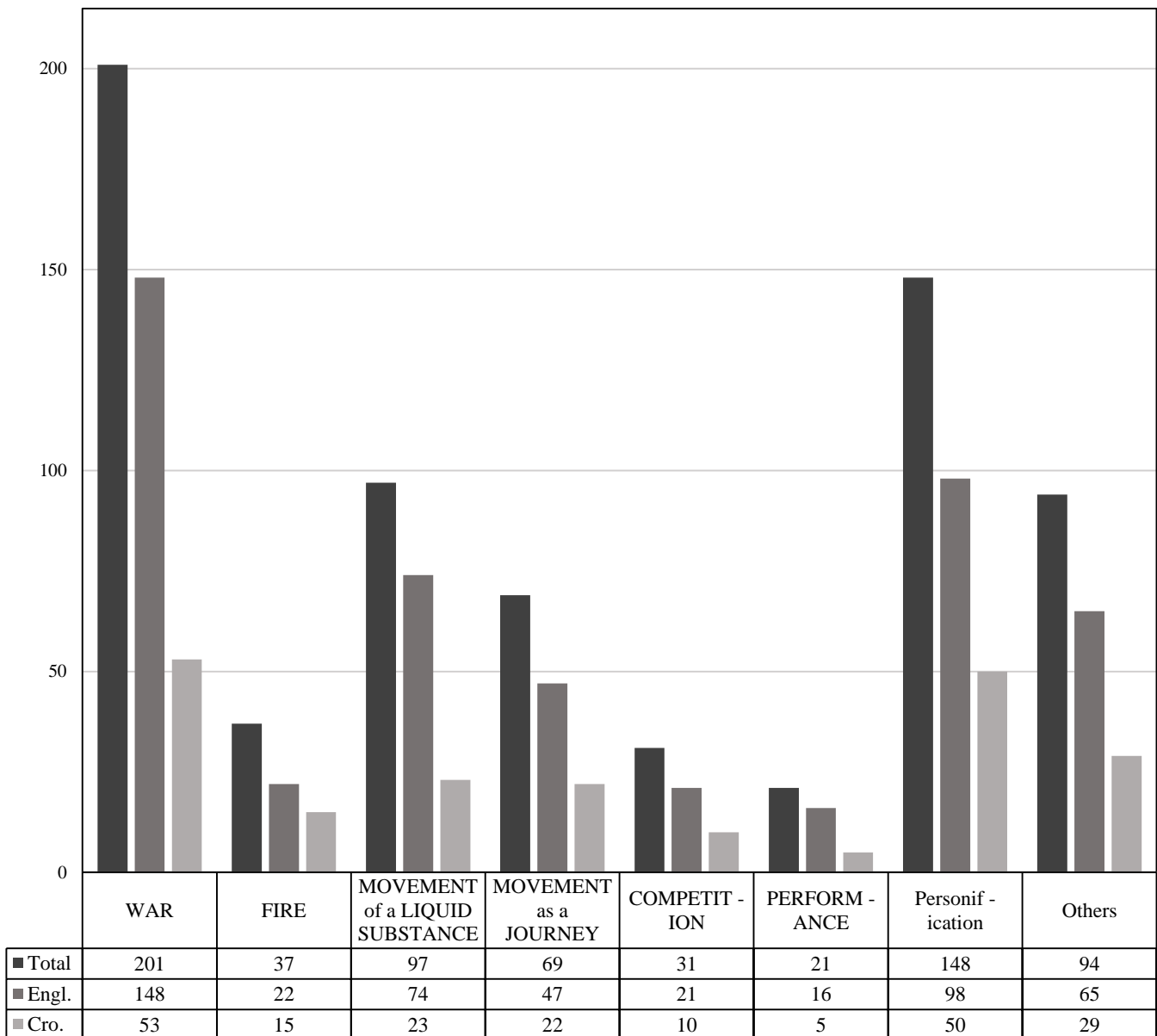
LIQUID SUBSTANCE, MOVEMENT as a JOURNEY, COMPETITION, PERFORMANCE, personification and others). Afterwards, conceptual metaphors were formed inside each category according to secondary source and target domains, and were used as the examples in this paper.

7.3. Analysis of Conceptual Metaphors

This section analyses conceptual metaphors found in the collected Croatian and English media articles related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Firstly, conceptual metaphors were manually extracted into tables according to the detected main source domains. Many of these conceptual metaphors belong to two or more categories. Personification is frequently one of them, and is, therefore, analysed in more detail at the end of this section. The analysis of the listed and categorized conceptual metaphors begins by determining the specific conceptual metaphors according to the identified source and target domains. Target domains include the following concepts: COVID-19 VIRUS, COVID-19 PANDEMIC, COVID-19 VACCINE / TREATMENTS, HEALTH WORKERS and the like. It can be said that target domains are not as versatile as source domains since they refer to terms related to the COVID-19 pandemic in general. Source domains, on the other hand, are more distinct and include framing the COVID-19 pandemic as WAR, FIRE, MOVEMENT of a LIQUID SUBSTANCE, MOVEMENT as a JOURNEY, COMPETITION, PERFORMANCE, PLANT, ANIMAL, TECHNOLOGY, PARTY, STORM, EARTHQUAKE, and so on. Each source domain has its subcategories which are mentioned as constitutive parts of the identified conceptual metaphors below.

The conceptual metaphors identified in the English and Croatian media were classified into eight categories (Picture 1.), or more precisely, eight main source domains: WAR, FIRE, MOVEMENT of a LIQUID SUBSTANCE, MOVEMENT as a JOURNEY, COMPETITION, PERFORMANCE, Personification, and Others. Taking into consideration that the equal

number of English and Croatian articles were analysed, it can be said that in the English media the occurrence of the conceptual metaphors is more frequent than in the Croatian media. However, it was observed that both English and Croatian media employ similar conceptual metaphors. There is a similarity in a frequency of their usage as well. WAR metaphors were the most frequently found in both media, and in the second place there was personification. Then, MOVEMENT of a LIQUID SUBSTANCE is in the third place in both English and Croatian media, followed by the conceptual metaphor of MOVEMENT as a JOURNEY. In addition, there are FIRE metaphors that occurred less frequently, and in the last place there are PERFORMANCE metaphors, which were the least represented in both media. All other conceptual metaphors, whose occurrance is scarce, were put into one category. This category contains metaphors belonging to source domains of ANIMAL, PLANT, TECHNOLOGY, PHYSICAL OBJECT, EARTHQUAKE, CONTAINER, PARTY, STORM, BOOK, AEROPLANE, PRISONER, and MONEY.

	WAR	FIRE	MOVEMENT of a LIQUID SUBSTANCE	MOVEMENT as a JOURNEY	COMPETIT - ION	PERFORM - ANCE	Personif - ication	Others
Total	201	37	97	69	31	21	148	94
Engl.	148	22	74	47	21	16	98	65
Cro.	53	15	23	22	10	5	50	29

Picture 1. Number of occurrences of conceptual metaphors in English and Croatian media

according to a source domain.

7.3.1. WAR Metaphors

There is a wide usage of WAR metaphors in the language of English and Croatian media covering the COVID-19 pandemic. In total, 201 WAR metaphors were found in the analysed English (148) and Croatian (53) media articles. The pandemic was compared to a war where the virus became the enemy that needed to be defeated to save people's lives, health workers served as soldiers on the frontline, and vaccines and other treatments were considered to be

weapons that help fight the virus. Therefore, considering the source domain of WAR, a few major conceptual metaphors were detected in the English and Croatian media content which include: COVID IS AN ENEMY / KILLER (Table 2.), PANDEMIC IS AN ENEMY / KILLER, DEALING WITH PANDEMIC IS WAR / BATTLE (Table 3.), VACCINE / TREATMENT IS A WEAPON (Table 4.), and HEALTH WORKERS ARE SOLDIERS (Table 5.). COVID IS AN ENEMY / KILLER and PANDEMIC IS AN ENEMY / KILLER metaphors belong also to the category of personification since the COVID-19 virus and the pandemic have acquired the characteristics attributable only to human beings.

Considering the conceptual metaphor COVID IS AN ENEMY / KILLER (Table 2.), the research has indicated that COVID-19 virus was conceptualized as a deadly enemy that has to be defeated (examples 1, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12); an enemy from whom people have to shield (example 2); a killer who has the ability to kill a huge number of people simultaneously (example 5); an enemy that threatens people (example 7); and an enemy who is breaking through to reach the people (example 8), and does not have the intention to surrender (example 9).

Table 2. Examples of conceptual metaphor COVID IS AN ENEMY / KILLER in English and Croatian media.

Conceptual metaphor:	COVID IS AN ENEMY / KILLER
Source domain:	Enemy / Killer
Target domain:	Covid-19
Examples in English media:	1) "But we are already seeing the signs that **Covid is becoming less deadly** as our bodies become more familiar with fighting it." (BBC)
	2) "**He shielded during the first wave of Covid, but coronavirus eventually found him** in December 2020." (BBC)

	3) "**The UK was hit by the more infectious variants** Alpha and then Delta before other parts of Europe." (BBC)
	4) "Two competing forces will determine **Omicron's impact on the nation** over the next few weeks." (The Guardian)
	5) "**Covid-19 is killing more people** now than during most of the pandemic." (CNN)
	6) "Extremely high transmission rates mean **the virus is reaching everyone, but it's hitting those from disadvantaged neighborhoods** especially hard…" (CNN)
Examples in Croatian media:	7) "Opasnost nije prošla, **sada prijeti omikron-varijanta**." (24sata)
	8) "Upitali smo ih razmišljaju li o uvođenju testiranja i cijepljenih djelatnika u zdravstvu, obzirom na **sve veći proboj virusa u bolnice**… (24sata)
	9) "Ipak, **virus se ne predaje tako lako**: nakon oštrog pada, brojke novozaraženih u nizu europskih zemalja … posljednjih tjedana ponovno rastu... " (Jutarnji list)
	10) "**U borbi protiv novog opasnog soja** ... najučinkovitiji su pranje ruku, fizička distanca i beziznimno nošenje maske za lice." (Jutarnji list)
	11) "Voditelj Stožera civilne zaštite RH Davor Božinović i ravnatelj HZJZ-a Krunoslav Capak u petak su predstavili **nove mjere za borbu protiv koronavirusa**." (Dnevnik.hr)
	12) "A neistomišljenici zapravo imaju **zajedničkog neprijatelja - koronavirus.**" (Dnevnik.hr)

In addition, conceptual metaphor that emerged less frequently, but belongs to the same source domain is PANDEMIC IS AN ENEMY / KILLER. This conceptual metaphor is the same as the previous one; however, it is possible to differentiate it according to whether the target

domain is COVID-19 or the pandemic. Considering these specific examples, the whole pandemic was perceived as an enemy that people have to defend themselves from, for example:

1) "**The pandemic has killed almost 780,000 people** in the US." (The Guardian);

2) "**The pandemic first hit Europe** in March 2020…" (The Guardian);

3) "Svi znanstvenici su unisoni u promišljanju da je treća doza apsolutno prihvatljiva i da je to ono što će nam pomoći **u borbi protiv ove epidemije** - rekao je." (24sata);

4) "Nitko nije za represiju, ali cijepljenost starijih od 65 je nedovoljna, tu je i **proboj epidemije u staračke domove**." (Jutarnji list);

5) "Život na društvenim mrežama i kako se oblikuje narativ i priča na društvenim mrežama je nešto što ostavlja posljedice i na društvene odnose i društvo u cjelini, ali ostavlja i posljedice na to **kako se borimo s pandemijom**…" (Dnevnik.hr)

The third conceptual metaphor that has emerged frequently is DEALING WITH PANDEMIC IS A WAR (Table 3.). This metaphor implies that people's behaviours and actions during the pandemic of COVID-19 were similar to the actions people take during a war. Thus it was required from people to shield (examples 1 and 2), and to prepare plans and strategies for a battle (examples 3, 4, 8, 10). Moreover, this fight can be won or lost (examples 5, 6, 7), and the people working within a health system can affect the outcome of this war (example 9).

Table 3. Examples of conceptual metaphor DEALING WITH PANDEMIC IS A WAR in English and Croatian media.

Conceptual metaphor:	DEALING WITH PANDEMIC IS A WAR
Source domain:	War / Battle
Target domain:	Pandemic
	1) "After long periods **shielding through the pandemic**…" (BBC)

	2) "**The government ended shielding advice** for people previously considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable..." (The Guardian)
	3) "**Elimination might be the preferred strategy** for responding to new emerging infectious diseases with pandemic potential…" (The Guardian)
	4) "**President lays out pandemic battle plan** for the winter months…" (The Guardian)
	5) "'**We have not won yet**,' Mayor Eric Adams said Tuesday, but 'we are winning.'" (CNN)
	6) "It's premature for any country either **to surrender, or to declare victory**…" (CNN)
Examples in Croatian media:	7) "'**Pobjeda dolazi iz ustrajnosti**', rekao je Xi na sastanku stalnog odbora Politbiroa…" (24sata)
	8) "Pozitivna je vijest **da će austrijska vojska razviti strategiju** kojom će se povećati kapacitet kreveta u bolnicama za čak 10 posto." (24sata)
	9) "**Upravo je to bitka zdravstvenog sustava** - nastavak cijepljenja, kaže Rončević." (Jutarnji list)
	10) "Ne znamo što nas čeka, i moramo biti pripravni. Zato je napravljen **plan i za aktivaciju Arene.**" (Dnevnik.hr)

Conceptual metaphor VACCINE / TREATMENT IS A WEAPON (Table 4.) was used in order to conceptualize the newly developed vaccine, other medications, and people's actions to prevent the illness, for example washing hands and wearing masks, as weapons that are going to help people fight the virus more efficiently. Thus, vaccine was considered to be a weapon that is going to provide freedom to the people that are trapped by the virus (example 1); as a weapon that efficiently targets the virus (examples 2, 5, 6); as the main weapon in the fight against the virus (examples 3, 7, 8, 9); as a weapon that makes the impact of the virus seem less harmful (example 4), and which prevents the virus from spreading (example 10).

Table 4. Examples of conceptual metaphor VACCINE / TREATMENT IS A WEAPON in English and Croatian media.

Conceptual metaphor:	VACCINE / TREATMENT IS A WEAPON
Source domain:	Weapon
Target domain:	Vaccine / Treatment
Examples in English media:	1) "**A vaccine has been used to free a man** who was trapped at home by a Covid infection..." (BBC)
	2) "Unlike most Covid vaccines, **which target the spike protein** on the outside of the virus, the treatment works by **targeting an enzyme the virus uses** to make copies of itself." (BBC)
	3) "It is hard to imagine **fighting a foe as formidable as Delta that a vaccine-only strategy can be effective**." (The Guardian)
	4) "...new antiviral drugs that have been shown to **lessen the impact of the virus** if given soon after infection." (The Guardian)
	5) "We treated her with **a drug combination that targets both corona and flu**…" (CNN)
	6) "The spike protein gene [is] **the protein which is the target of most vaccines.**" (CNN)
Examples in Croatian media:	7) "Predstavnici stručne skupine Gecko … su istaknuli **kako je cjepivo 'snažno oružje, instrument u borbi protiv korona virusa'.**" (24sata)
	8) "Vojska je tu za planiranje najgoreg mogućeg scenarija. **Cjepivo je glavno oružje. S razlogom upotrebljavam riječ oružje jer se s time borimo.**" (24sata)
	9) "Docijepljivanje bi, za razliku od preboljenja trebalo biti **glavno oružje protiv pandemije**, dodao je." (Jutarnji list)
	10) "Ministar gospodarstva Zdravko Počivalšek rekao je da **gospodarstvo od vlade očekuje strategiju cijepljenja**

	kako bi se usporilo sadašnje širenje epidemije…" (Dnevnik.hr)

Taking into consideration the following conceptual metaphor, HEALTH WORKERS ARE SOLDIERS (Table 5.), it can be noted that healthcare workers were conceptualized as soldiers on the frontline of a disastrous war, which is the COVID-19 pandemic. They were represented as brave people with a great responsibility that were exposed to the virus the most. Thus, in the the media they were compared to soldiers who fight on the frontline (examples 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7), and were perceived as an armed force that is readily waiting for the virus to come (example 2).

Table 5. Examples of conceptual metaphor HEALTH WORKERS ARE SOLDIERS in English and Croatian media.

Conceptual metaphor:	**HEALTH WORKERS ARE SOLDIERS**
Source domain:	Soldier
Target domain:	Health worker
Examples in English media:	1) "Those entitled to a booster jab include people aged 50 and over, care home staff and residents, and **frontline health and social care workers.**" (BBC)
	2) "**About 9,300 armed forces are available on standby**." (The Guardian)
	3) "Health officials involved in the 2016 coronavirus exercise believed levels of PPE were '**of crucial importance for frontline staff** '" (The Guardian)
	4) "Britain's Health Secretary Sajid Javid on Monday scrapped **an order forcing all frontline medical workers in England to get vaccinated**…" (CNN)
	5) "Are you **a health care worker fighting Covid-19**?" (CNN)
Examples in Croatian media:	6) "Sada su na meti novinari i liječnici: **istureni na prvim linijama borbe protiv Covida** i borbe protiv laži, manipulacija, opsjena, huškanja, politikanstva." (24sata)

	7) "**Tako mala vojska nije to mogla iznijeti iako smo na prvoj crti.**" (Jutarnji list)

Other conceptual metaphors belonging to the source domain of WAR that have been identified in the English and Croatian media less frequently include:

- ANTIBODIES ARE SOLDIERS, e.g. "David, 59, is getting a one-off infusion of **Covid-fighting antibodies.**" (BBC)

- IMMUNE SYSTEM IS A SOLDIER, e.g. "Ian Lester, 37, has **a weakened immune system that was unable to defeat the virus on its own.**" (BBC)

- INFECTED PEOPLE ARE CASUALTIES, e.g. "Hospitals, schools, theatres, transport providers and football teams are also being affected **as workers succumb to the new wave of Omicron infections.**" (BBC)

- SCHOOLS ARE BATTLEGROUNDS, e.g. "**Schools are new battleground in war** of disinformation over Covid-19 vaccines…" (CNN)

- ANTI-VAXXERS ARE ENEMIES, e.g. "**Anti-vax campaigners also targeted** Lytham St Annes High School in Lancashire…" (CNN)

Metaphors ANTIBODIES ARE SOLDIERS and IMMUNE SYSTEM IS A SOLDIER belong to the category of personification as well.

7.3.2. FIRE Metaphors

There is a common occurrence of metaphors that conceptualize the COVID-19 pandemic as a disaster, among which, framing the pandemic as a fire was identified as the most prevalent. In total, 37 FIRE metaphors were found in the analysed English (22) and Croatian (15) media articles. The most common metaphor detected in both English and Croatian media belonging to the source domain of FIRE is PANDEMIC / COVID IS A FIRE (Table 6.). The research has shown that the COVID-19 virus was conceptualized as a burning and even

explosive fire that has to be extinguished (examples 1, 3, 7, 8); a fire that represents a threat to the people (example 2), and from which people have to protect themselves using all possible measures (example 5). Moreover, the pandemic was also conceptualized as a fire (example 6).

Table 6. Examples of conceptual metaphor PANDEMIC / COVID IS A FIRE in English and Croatian media.

Conceptual metaphor:	PANDEMIC / COVID IS A FIRE
Source domain:	Fire
Target domain:	COVID-19 pandemic
Examples in English media:	1) "There were two options - **either we would extinguish Covid**…" (BBC)
	2) "**Coronavirus will flare up again and continue to pose a threat…**" (BBC)
	3) "...the head of one of the city's intensive care units said last week **after a boom in hospital admissions.**" (The Guardian)
	4) "Sort of **their firewall has broken down with Omicron**, and they have a massive amount of people who are susceptible to this virus…" (CNN)
Examples in Croatian media:	5) "Čini mi se neprimjerenim kukati o uvjetima rada kad je ovako veliki broj zaraženih. No, s druge strane, **to su hitne vatrogasne mjere.**" (24sata)
	6) "Pozitivno je da interes za cijepljenje u Hrvatskoj **nakon ponovnog razbuktavanja epidemije** raste." (Jutarnji list)
	7) "**Korona se širi eksplozivno** gdje god su ukinute mjere, a imunost od omikrona je izuzetno površna." (Jutarnji list)
	8) "**Korona bukti**, ali ni gripa nije nestala." (Dnevnik.hr)

Second common metaphor under the source domain of FIRE is PLACES ARE HOTSPOTS (Table 7.). This conceptual metaphor was used to describe places with the greatest numbers of COVID-19 infections as hotspots. These hotspots represent sources from which COVID-19 can

easily spread to other parts of the world. Thus, places in Europe were considered to be hotspots (example 1), as well as other places such as parts of the South African Republic (example 4), cities in China (example 6) and others (examples 2, 3, 5).

Table 7. Examples of conceptual metaphor PLACES ARE HOTSPOTS in English and Croatian media.

Conceptual metaphor:	PLACES ARE HOTSPOTS
Source domain:	Hotspot
Target domain:	Place with high number of COVID-19 cases
Examples in English media:	1) "**The UK is Europe's virus hotspot.**" (BBC)
	2) "The UK government also continued to allow people to enter the country **unscreened from Covid hotspots**…" (The Guardian)
	3) "But that share is even larger now, as **nursing homes have become less of a hotspot.**" (CNN)
Examples in Croatian media:	4) "**U bivšem žarištu, pokrajini Gauteng**, koja uključuje i Johannesburg, dnevne infekcije također padaju." (Jutarnji list)
	5) "To je za sada **najveće žarište omikrona izvan Južne Afrike**, kazao je norveški liječnik sa Instituta za javno zdravstvo." (Jutarnji list)
	6) "...pošto se broj zaraženih više nego udvostručio u sjeverozapadnom gradu Xianu, **najnovijem kineskome žarištu te bolesti.**" (Dnevnik.hr)

Another conceptual metaphors belonging to the source domain of FIRE are COVID IS A FIRE IGNITER and COVID IS A FUEL. Conceptual metaphor COVID IS A FIRE IGNITER implies that the virus is able to create a spark that can light a fire (e.g. "**Omicron**, a new Covid-19 variant with high number of mutations, **sparks travel bans and worries scientists**…" (CNN)).

Conceptual metaphor COVID IS A FUEL was used in order to conceptualize the COVID-19 virus as a fuel that makes the fire burn, that is, that fuels the pandemic, for instance:

1) "The request for emergency authorization comes as **the Omicron variant fuels a record rise in pediatric infections**." (CNN);

2) "It means that **explosive growth falls off rapidly once it is deprived of fuel**." (The Guardian)

7.3.3. MOVEMENT of a LIQUID SUBSTANCE Metaphors

The COVID-19 pandemic was often described as having properties of different moving entities, such as water and other similar liquid substances. There are MOVEMENT metaphors which describe the COVID-19 pandemic as having properties of a great liquid entity; therefore, the pandemic was conceptualized as a wave and as a surge. In total, 97 conceptual metaphors related to the MOVEMENT of a LIQUID SUBSTANCE were found in the analysed English (74) and Croatian (23) media articles. Taking into consideration the source domain of WAVE, conceptual metaphor PANDEMIC IS A WAVE has been detected most frequently in both English and Croatian media (Table 8.). The research has shown that the pandemic of COVID-19 was conceptualized as a series of great waves that flood places with infection (examples 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10). There were several such waves and people were searching for options to diminish their strength (examples 3, 11, 12) Moreover, it was probable that a new variant would bring another wave (example 5), which could result in even more victims (example 7).

Table 8. Examples of conceptual metaphor PANDEMIC IS A WAVE in English and Croatian media.

Conceptual metaphor:	PANDEMIC IS A WAVE
Source domain:	Wave
Target domain:	Pandemic
Examples in English media:	1) "And there could still be new and concerning variants **which cause further waves of infection**." (BBC)
	2) "We've already had the original virus, then the Alpha, Delta and Omicron variants **causing significant waves of Covid** in the UK." (BBC)
	3) "In western Europe, the question now is whether countries can **curb this latest wave** without having to resort to full-scale lockdowns." (The Guardian)
	4) "What we are experiencing in France clearly looks like **the beginning of a fifth wave**…" (The Guardian)
	5) "A new variant could certainly come along in the future **that will bring another wave**…" (CNN)
	6) "**With the Delta wave waning**, many Americans say they've largely returned to their pre-pandemic activities." (CNN)
Examples in Croatian media:	7) "Svaki dan imamo sve više i više oboljelih i obaramo praktički rekorde **koje smo imali u prijašnjim valovima**." (24sata)
	8) "**Europa na udaru četvrtog vala korone:** Neke države postrožile su mjere, a neke idu u lockdown." (24sata)
	9) "**Posljednji val koronavirusa** do sada je za Hong Kong, u kojem su pacijente počeli liječiti na parkiralištima, najgori." (Jutarnji list)
	10) "Bili smo šampioni sigurnosti na Mediteranu, **danas smo na platou četvrtog vala,** a sutra..." (Jutarnji list)

	11) "Liječnici obiteljske medicine su nam važni **da iznesemo ovaj val na najbolji mogući način**", rekla je." (Dnevnik.hr)
	12) "**Ovisno o pritisku novog vala koronavirusa** na zdravstvene institucije, u ponedjeljak stupaju na snagu nove mjere." (Dnevnik.hr)

Another conceptual metaphor of frequent occurrence related to the MOVEMENT of a LIQUID SUBSTANCE is PANDEMIC IS A SURGE, which is similar to the previous conceptual metaphor where the pandemic was conceptualized as a wave. This metaphor has been detected in the English media, and the examples are:

1) "If nothing else **really rapid surges in infection** should be a thing of the past because of the amount of immunity in the population…" (BBC);

2) "These results suggest that **Omicron has the potential to cause substantial surges** in cases, hospital admissions and deaths..." (The Guardian);

3) "The only other time that deaths have been this high for this long was **during the first winter surge**, before vaccines were available." (CNN)

Furthermore, the COVID-19 virus was framed as having properties of liquid substances such as liquid chemicals. The virus was conceptualized as a liquid chemical, therefore it was able to leak out of a laboratory. The conceptual metaphor that occurred was COVID IS A LIQUID SUBSTANCE, and the examples are:

1) "Mađari priložili nove dokaze da je **korona procurila iz laboratorija**..." (Jutarnji list);

2) "Ovo otkriće daje za pravo tvrdnjama **da je virus možda nastao kao laboratorijski eksperiment koji je slučajno procurio**." (Jutarnji list);

3) "...Institut za virusologiju u Wuhanu, za koji neki stručnjaci smatraju da je najvjerojatnije bio **mjesto curenja virusa**." (Jutarnji list)

One more conceptual metaphor related to the MOVEMENT of a LIQUID SUBSTANCE that was identified less frequently was COVID IS A RIVER. The virus was conceptualized as a river that swells and floods the areas with infection, and the examples are:

1) "…Omikronska varijanta je puno blaža, ali se brže širi od delte i **preplavila je Austriju.**" (24sata);

2) "**Opet buja koronavirus na zapadu Europe**, svemu pogoduje idealna kombinacija za savršenu oluju." (Dnevnik.hr)

7.3.4. MOVEMENT as a JOURNEY Metaphors

The COVID-19 pandemic was often conceptualized as having properties of different moving entities, such as people, other species, and things that can move in space. Thus, there are MOVEMENT metaphors which belong to the source domain of JOURNEY. In total, 69 conceptual metaphors related to the MOVEMENT as a JOURNEY were found in the analysed English (47) and Croatian (22) media articles. The most common metaphors in this group that have been recorded are DEALING WITH PANDEMIC IS A JOURNEY (Table 9.), and COVID IS A MOVING ENTITY (Table 10.). The former metaphor implies that dealing with the pandemic is similar to taking a journey. The research indicated that dealing with the COVID-19 infection was conceptualized as a journey that people take (example 1), and the recovery from it is very unpleasant (example 2), Furthermore, each person or country gets a unique experience of this journey (example 4). The experts are investigating which way to go (examples 3 and 5), and are contemplating how to quit this journey (example 6), and how to overcome the obstacles (example 7).

Table 9. Examples of conceptual metaphor DEALING WITH PANDEMIC IS A JOURNEY in English and Croatian media.

Conceptual metaphor:	DEALING WITH PANDEMIC IS A JOURNEY
Source domain:	Journey
Target domain:	COVID-19 Pandemic
Examples in English media:	1) "For most of us that would be the end of it, but **Ian's Covid journey was only just beginning**." (BBC)
	2) "For some, **the road to recovery will be long and arduous**." (BBC)
	3) "Experts are divided about **the best route to take when it comes to vaccinations**…" (The Guardian)
	4) "**We're in different trajectories**, with the US case numbers going down and kind of plateauing at this point in time, so the direction is different." (CNN)
	5) "**We are now heading in the right direction** ... but with cases still high, we must remain vigilant heading into the colder, drier winter months…"(CNN)
Examples in Croatian media:	6) "No svi znanstvenici su suglasni **da je cijepljenje jedini izlaz iz krize,** ali naglašavaju da moramo poštivati epidemiološke mjere..." (24sata)
	7) "Ukoliko građani ne prihvaćaju znanstvenu činjenicu **teško možemo napraviti velike iskorake**." (Jutarnji list)

When it comes to the COVID-19 virus, it was conceptualized as an entity that has the ability to spread in space, which cannot be stopped easily. It can be said that the conceptual metaphor COVID IS A MOVING ENTITY was frequently utilized to describe the characteristics of the COVID-19 virus (Table 10.). The virus was, therefore, conceptualized as an entity that is able to spread very quickly to all the countries around the world (examples 1, 3, 5, 6, 8), and which is able to circulate in particular areas (example 2); as an entity whose spread has to be stopped (example 9), and whose spread affects all groups of people (example 11). The virus also has the ability to arrive to different countries (examples 4 and 12). Since the virus is always a few

steps ahead (example 7), it is best to overtake it on this journey (example 10). Examples 4, 7, 10, and 12 also belong to the category of personification since the virus gained the ability to travel as a person.

Table 10. Examples of conceptual metaphor COVID IS A MOVING ENTITY in English and Croatian media.

Conceptual metaphor:	COVID IS A MOVING ENTITY
Source domain:	Moving entity
Target domain:	COVID-19 virus
Examples in English media	1) "A number of countries have introduced travel bans affecting South Africa and its neighbours … but **this has failed to stop it from spreading around the world**." (BBC)
	2) "We'll soon be in a situation where **the virus is circulating**…" (BBC)
	3) "The **Omicron variant of coronavirus has spread rapidly** around the UK, leading to a sharp rise in infections…"(The Guardian)
	4) "...it was possible **the new variant was already in his country** but was yet to be detected." (CNN)
	5) "Authorities have spent two years focused on **keeping Covid-19 out of China's borders and quashing its spread.**" (CNN)
Examples in Croatian media:	6) "Razvoj novog **soja s potencijalnom sposobnošću da se širi jednako brzo kao omikron** ili dovede do težih slučajeva izazvala je isprva zabrinutost." (24sata)
	7) "Što god da radite, **bolest je tri koraka ispred vas**…" (24sata)
	8) "**Eksplozivnom širenju smo svjedočili u zemljama koje su pustile virus da se širi** bez ograničenja..." (Jutarnji list)

	9) "Unija još ima 63 posto ukupno cijepljenih što nije dovoljno za **zaustavljanje ovako visokozaraznog virusa**." (Jutarnji list)
	10) "Važno je biti **korak ispred virusa**." (Jutarnji list)
	11) "**Virus se širi** s blažim posljedicama i kod ljudi koji su cijepljeni."(Dnevnik.hr)
	12) "**Je li u Hrvatsku stigao deltakron?**" (Dnevnik.hr)

In addition, there were a few examples of the conceptual metaphor PANDEMIC IS A MOVING ENTITY. This metaphor can be considered to be the same as the previous one since it belongs to the same source domain; however, it can be differentiated according to a target domain. Here the target domain is the pandemic. The pandemic of COVID-19 was conceptualized as having the ability to move in space, just as people are moving through space in the process of dealing with the pandemic. For instance:

1) "Though it's difficult to predict **the trajectory of the pandemic** in the US…" (CNN);

2) "With so many people getting sick globally, what also could change **the direction of the pandemic** in the US is another variant." (CNN);

3) "And pediatric hospital admissions for Covid-19 are the highest they've ever been **over the course of the pandemic**." (CNN);

4) "**The pandemic has a long way to go** and … people and their leaders will influence its long-term impact through actions they take now." (The Guardian)

7.3.5. COMPETITION Metaphors

The pandemic of COVID-19 was often framed as a competition. In total, 31 COMPETITION metaphors were found in the analysed English (21) and Croatian (10) media articles. Therefore, most frequent conceptual metaphors identified in the English and Croatian media are PANDEMIC IS A COMPETITION (Table 11.) and PLACES / COUNTRIES ARE

COMPETITORS (Table 12.), which is at the same time a personification. The former conceptual metaphor implies that the pandemic of COVID-19 was conceptualized as a competition in which there are certain rules, goals and strategies (example 1), and as a competition in which new records are being set (examples 3, 4, 5, 6). It was also framed as a marathon people have to win against the virus (example 2).

Table 11. Examples of conceptual metaphor PANDEMIC IS A COMPETITION in English and Croatian media.

Conceptual metaphor:	PANDEMIC IS A COMPETITION
Source domain:	Competition
Target domain:	COVID-19 pandemic
Examples in English media:	1) "The right way to respond to an unknown disease is **to fix a goal and work towards it, adjusting your strategy as you learn**." (The Guardian)
	2) "Now is not the time for happy talk, but to instead show **we can persevere, run this marathon, make it to the finish line**." (The Guardian)
	3) "...and limiting home gatherings to four guests **after case numbers hit new records**." (The Guardian)
	4) "In Louisiana, Covid-19 hospitalizations have tripled in the past two weeks as **a new record for cases was set**, according to the state." (CNN)
Examples in Croatian media:	5) "Svaki dan imamo sve više i više oboljelih i **obaramo praktički rekorde** koje smo imali u prijašnjim valovima." (24sata)
	6) "Građanima koji nisu cijepljeni protiv covida-19 od ponedjeljka neće biti dopušten ulazak … jer se **broj zaraženih bliži rekordu prije godinu dana**…" (24sata)

When it comes to the approach of the countries towards the pandemic, conceptual metaphor PLACES / COUNTRIES ARE COMPETITORS implies that they became competitors in the

pandemic (Table 12.). The research indicated that the pandemic was seen as a competition, in which each country wanted to win (examples 1, 6, 7). Moreover, each country competed with one another as well (example 3). Countries were also hitting new records (examples 4 and 5), and racing to improve their measures (example 2).

Table 12. Examples of conceptual metaphor PLACES / COUNTRIES ARE COMPETITORS in English and Croatian media.

Conceptual metaphor:	PLACES / COUNTRIES ARE COMPETITORS
Source domain:	Competition
Target domain:	COVID-19 virus
Examples in English media:	1) "But **No-Covid's early champions** had to shift in part because other countries let the virus rip." (The Guardian)
	2) "...**France races to improve its booster campaign**…" (The Guardian)
	3) "Texas has reported more Covid-19 deaths than any other state in the past week and **is on track to soon outpace California in terms of total Covid-19 deaths**." (CNN)
Examples in Croatian media:	4) "**Crni rekord koji je Nizozemska postigla** je 16.300 novozaraženih u jednom danu." (24sata)
	5) "**Iako je u Hong Kongu zabilježen rekordan broj slučajeva**, on je i dalje mnogo manji nego u gradovima slične veličine u ostatku svijeta." (Jutarnji list)
	6) "Bili smo prvaci u turizmu, a sada možemo biti i **prvaci u cijepljenju**." (Jutarnji list)
	7) "Prvaci smo u sportu, možemo biti i **prvaci u cijepljenju**", navela je Markotić." (Dnevnik.hr)

Another conceptual metaphor related to the source domain of COMPETITION is COVID IS A COMPETITOR, which is a personification as well. Here the individual variants of COVID-19 became competitors which had an aim to take over the domination. Examples of this conceptual metaphor are found only in the English media:

1) "The only major curve ball would be **a new variant that can outcompete Omicron** and cause significantly more severe disease." (BBC);

2) "**The [BA.2] subvariant of Omicron is not an entire leap ahead of Omicron**…" (CNN)

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic was sometimes framed as a game. Therefore, there are a few conceptual metaphors found only in the English media belonging to the source domain of GAME, which, in this case, can be classified under the source domain of COMPETITION. The pandemic was depicted as a game, and the COVID-19 virus was the main player. Thus, the pandemic was framed as a competitive game where other players, such as health workers, infected people, governments, et cetera, play against the COVID-19 virus. The first such conceptual metaphor, which is as well a personification, is COVID IS A PLAYER, and the examples are:

1) "There is growing confidence that **Omicron could be hurtling the UK into the pandemic endgame**." (BBC);

2) "**Omicron,** to compare it to other variants before it, **has really changed an awful lot of the playing field**…" (CNN)

The second identifed conceptual metaphor that belongs to the source domain of GAME is PANDEMIC IS A GAME, and the examples include:

1) "**Is the pandemic entering its endgame?**" (BBC);

2) "If you're willing to tolerate zero deaths from Covid, then we're facing a whole raft of restrictions and **it's not game over**…" (BBC);

3) "**Senior health officials who war-gamed** the impact of a coronavirus hitting the UK…" (The Guardian)

The last example (3) belongs to the source domain of WAR as well.

7.3.6. PERFORMANCE Metaphors

The COVID-19 pandemic has been quite frequently depicted as a performance where every human being has its role, and plays according to a certain scenario. In total, 21 PERFORMANCE metaphors were found in the analysed English (16) and Croatian (5) media articles. Taking into consideration the source domain of PERFORMANCE, conceptual metaphor PANDEMIC IS A PERFORMANCE has been identified as the most frequent in the English and Croatian media (Table 13.). The research has shown that the pandemic was conceptualized as a performance that is played out according to a prewritten scenario (examples 1, 2, 3, 6, 7). Moreover, particular crucial events of the pandemic were considered to be scenes (example 4), while riots during the pandemic were described as plays (example 5), and it was the time when people were revealing their real faces (example 8).

Table 13. Examples of conceptual metaphor PANDEMIC IS A PERFORMANCE in English and Croatian media.

Conceptual metaphor:	PANDEMIC IS A PERFORMANCE
Source domain:	Performance
Target domain:	COVID-19 pandemic
Examples in English media:	1) "**The likely scenario is** life won't look much different to the autumn of 2019, when we all turned up for our flu vaccines." (BBC)
	2) "...**the first scenario – poor Omicron escape from immunity** matched by effective booster jab protection – would trigger a wave of infection..." (The Guardian)
	3) "By contrast, **the most pessimistic scenario – high immune escape from vaccines** and low effectiveness of booster jabs…" (The Guardian)

	4) "**It's a scene playing out across the country** as record case counts are reported from New Jersey and New York to Arkansas and Chicago…" (CNN)
Examples in Croatian media:	5) "**Kad se u prvom činu predstave pojave vješala,** možemo računati s tim da će u trećem činu netko biti obješen." (24sata)
	6) "**Slični scenariji organizirali su se proteklih desetljeća** kad je politika s najvišeg mjesta huškala na "izdajnike" ili sudila "izdajicama"…" (24sata)
	7) "**Spremamo se za najcrnje scenarije**, nabavili smo velik broj respiratora, radili smo na edukaciji liječnika..." (Jutarnji list)
	8) "Što više reći, **osim da su maske pale**…" (Dnevnik.hr)

Other conceptual metaphors detected only in the English media that belong to the source domain of PERFORMANCE are COVID IS AN ACTOR and TREATMENTS ARE ACTORS. Thus, COVID-19 was conceptualized as the antagonist in a play, while treatments were conceptualized as protagonists. Both conceptual metaphors belong to the category of personification as well. The examples of conceptual metaphor COVID IS AN ACTOR are the following:

1) "BA.2, which is **playing a role in the spike in cases** in China and is now the dominant strain in the US, is especially contagious." (CNN);

2) "...a vaccine is needed for children ages 5-11, because **Covid-19 is a "very bad actor"** with even these younger kids." (CNN);

3) "Dr. Ashish Jha, dean of Brown University's School of Public Health, told CNN **the variant was "acting differently,"**…" (CNN)

The examples of conceptual metaphor TREATMENTS ARE ACTORS are the following:

1) "These drugs, such as Paxlovid and molnupiravir**,** are currently **playing a vital role in saving lives** and are one reason restrictions are being eased." (BBC);

2) "Dr Tedros said **boosters could play an important role** in curbing the spread of Covid-19, but that it was "a question of prioritisation"." (BBC)

7.3.7. Personification

In total, 148 personification examples were found in the analysed English (98) and Croatian (50) media articles. In previous sections it was noted that many conceptual metaphors found in the English and Croatian media belong to more than one category, and in most cases one of them is personification. Therefore, the most common combined conceptual metaphors were WAR and personification metaphors, JOURNEY and personification metaphors, COMPETITION and personification metaphors, and PERFORMANCE and personification metaphors. Considering WAR PERSONIFICATION METAPHOR, it can be said that the COVID-19 virus was conceptualized as a person who is responsible for attacking people and causing deaths, for example:

1) "**He shielded during the first wave of Covid, but coronavirus eventually found him** in December 2020." (BBC);

2) "**Covid-19 is killing more people now** than during most of the pandemic." (CNN)

3) "A neistomišljenici zapravo imaju **zajedničkog neprijatelja - koronavirus**." (Dnevnik.hr)

Then, the cases of JOURNEY PERSONIFICATION METAPHOR have been detected in the English and Croatian media, where the COVID-19 infections, the virus, and the pandemic were conceptualized as a person that has the ability to travel, climb, and the like, for example:

1) "**UK Covid infections climb** by a million in a week…" (BBC);

2) "**The pandemic has a long way to go**…" (The Guardian);

3) "Što god da radite, **bolest je tri koraka ispred vas**…" (24sata);

4) "**Je li u Hrvatsku stigao deltakron?**" (Dnevnik.hr)

In continuation, COMPETITION PERSONIFICATION METAPHOR was used in the media to frame the pandemic and the COVID-19 virus as a person that has the ability to participate in competitions and games, for example:

1) "**Is the pandemic entering its endgame?**" (BBC);

2) "The only major curve ball would be **a new variant that can outcompete Omicron and cause significantly more severe disease.**" (BBC);

3) "**The [BA.2] subvariant of Omicron is not an entire leap ahead of Omicron**…" (CNN)

Lastly, PERFORMANCE PERSONIFICATION METAPHOR was utilized in order to conceptualize the COVID-19 virus as a person that has a role in a play or a performance, and acts according to a certain scenario, for example:

1) "...**the first scenario – poor Omicron escape from immunity** matched by effective booster jab protection – would trigger a wave of infection..." (The Guardian);

2) "**BA.2, which is playing a role in the spike in cases** in China and is now the dominant strain in the US, is especially contagious." (CNN)

There were many other examples of personification discovered in the analysed English and Croatian media articles. Accordingly, the research has indicated that the COVID-19 virus was conceptualized as a person who has the ability to move and cause damage (e.g. "**When Omicron has finished and moved through**, immunity in the UK will be high, at least for a

while…" (BBC)); as an unpleasant person people have to live with (e.g. "**Covid is here to stay - we need to discuss what we are willing to live with.**" (BBC)); as a person who can be blamed for the damage (e.g. "And when a selection of them were sequenced to **check what type of Covid was to blame,** virtually all were Omicron…" (BBC); "**Varijanta BA.2 "vjerojatno je jedan od krivaca** za ponovni rast broja slučajeva"…" (Dnevnik.hr)); as a guilty person people are looking for (e.g. "Trenutačno radimo **dvije opcije 'potrage' za omikronom.**" (Jutarnji list)); as a person who is able to capture people (e.g. "**Covid trapped me at home** for more than seven months…" (BBC)), and has the ability to take away their freedom (e.g. "**The virus deprives us of liberty**; the efforts preserve it." (The Guardian)); as a sneaky person who has the ability to escape (e.g. "There is therefore a concern that **this variant may have a greater potential to escape** prior immunity than previous variants,"…" (CNN)), and who is able to change its appearance (e.g. "We don't know how often this **coronavirus can change its clothes and emerge with a new look** ..." (The Guardian)); as a person who has ancestors (e.g. "U svibnju 2021. tim američkih evolucijskih biologa objavio je istraživanje o tome **kako bi predak covida-19 trebao izgledati** te je došao do dvije opcije." (Jutarnji list)); as a dominant person that takes over other people's lives (e.g. "Razlog je tome, objašnjavaju stručnjaci, **što je još uvijek dominantan delta soj**, na koji cjepivo dokazano djeluje te još uvijek ne znamo **hoće li omikron preuzeti dominaciju.**" (Dnevnik.hr)); and as a free-willed person who has its life goals (e.g. "**Virusu nije cilj da ljudi umiru, nego da se ima gdje širiti**…" (Dnevnik.hr)), possesses emotions, and has the ability to decide other people's fate (e.g. "The picture looks very different in America, where mounting hospitalizations and deaths have dashed hopes that **Omicron would be kinder to the country** than previous waves." (CNN); "**Prepušteni smo na milost i nemilost nove varijante** koja se … može očekivati u jesen …" (Dnevnik.hr)).

7.3.8. Other Conceptual Metaphors

In total, there were 94 conceptual metaphors that do not belong to any previously mentioned source domain found in the analysed English (65) and Croatian (29) media articles. Firstly, there were instances of conceptual metaphors describing the COVID-19 pandemic whose source domain is ANIMAL or PLANT. The research has indicated that the COVID-19 virus was commonly depicted as a wild animal that has to be put under control, or as an invasive plant that has to be rooted out. Moreover, media frequently described a group of people as a herd, and the main goal was to achieve so-called herd immunity. Accordingly, the following conceptual metaphors have been identified in the English and Croatian media articles:

- COVID IS AN ANIMAL, e.g.:

    1) "So does this mean **we are finally taming the virus**?" (BBC);

    2) "**It would join the swarm of endemic diseases**…" (BBC)

- COVID IS A PLANT, e.g.: "**Da srežu COVID u korijenu**, uveli su lockdown i stroge mjere." (Dnevnik.hr)

- PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS, e.g.: "Na pitanje **jesmo li blizu postizanja imuniteta krda,** Santini je rekla da ga u ovom trenutku zasigurno nemamo…" (24sata)

Sometimes the source domain of TECHNOLOGY was utilized in reports on the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, scientists were updating the new COVID-19 vaccines. Taking into consideration the source domain of TECHNOLOGY, the conceptual metaphor VACCINE IS A SOFTWARE has been recognized in the English media, for example:

1) "...and reacting accordingly, **such as updating vaccines**." (BBC);

2) "...we will be dependent on antivirals to buy us time **until an updated vaccine can be developed** and rolled out." (BBC)

The pandemic of COVID-19 was also perceived as an earthquake in which places with the highest numbers of COVID-19 cases were considered to be the epicentres. Hence, the conceptual metaphor PANDEMIC IS AN EARTHQUAKE was identified in the English and Croatian media sources, and the examples are:

1) "WHO warns **Europe once again at epicentre of pandemic**." (BBC);

2) "**Europe is once again "at the epicentre" of the Covid pandemic**, the World Health Organization (WHO) has warned, as cases soar across the continent." (BBC);

3) "Europa se polako zatvara, histerija je sve jača, a **iz epicentra omikrona stižu znakovi nade!**" (Dnevnik.hr)

Sometimes the source domain of CONTAINERS was also utilized in the COVID-19 discourse. In this way large groups of people, such as groups of vaccinated or unvaccinated people, and groups of healthcare workers, were conceptualized as pools. The metaphor that arose was GROUPS OF PEOPLE ARE POOLS, and the examples are:

1) "...the more people who have had Covid, the greater **the pool of individuals that could potentially be reinfected**…" (The Guardian);

2) "In other words, there's **a more limited pool of people who might become infected** in the US than in China." (CNN);

3) "U ovoj situaciji koja sad postaje ozbiljna kao i prošle zime trebamo svakog čovjeka, a tu je **značajan pool kolega u primarnoj medicini** koji imaju dvojaku ulogu…" (Jutarnji list);

4) "Upravo **velik bazen necijepljenih** dao je život novom soju virusa." (Jutarnji list)

Conceptual metaphors whose source domain is PARTY became also popular in media discourse describing the COVID-19 pandemic. There were events with lots of people at the same place, who were not respecting the protective measures; therefore, it was common to find the articles

in media describing such events as 'corona parties'. Thus, the following conceptual metaphors, which frame the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccination as a party, were detected in the observed Croatian media content:

- PANDEMIC IS A PARTY, e.g.:

1) "Kao nacija bili smo složni i za primjer, a **sad više nemamo party nego korona tulum**." (Jutarnji list);

2) "Božićna zabava se pretvorila u **omikron party:** 'Zaraženo bi moglo biti više od 60 ljudi'." (Jutarnji list);

3) "**Mi smo kao nacija izbjegli koronaparti** u prvom valu, **sad smo ne pred partijem, nego tulumom**…" (Dnevnik.hr)

- VACCINATION IS A PARTY, e.g.:

1) "A **možemo imati cijepljenje tulum** kao jučer na Velesajmu, što je ohrabrujuće." (Jutarnji list);

2) "...umjesto koronatuluma **možemo imati cijepljenje tulum**." (Dnevnik.hr)

Other even less frequently identified conceptual metaphors in the analysed English and Croatian media articles include:

- PANDEMIC IS A STORM, e.g.:

1) "Opet buja koronavirus na zapadu Europe, **svemu pogoduje idealna kombinacija za savršenu oluju**." (Dnevnik.hr);

2) "Broj slučajeva COVID-a ponovno raste u zapadnoj Europi **zbog idealne kombinacije za savršenu oluju**." (Dnevnik.hr)

- PANDEMIC IS A STORY / BOOK, e.g.:

1) "...**it could mark a transition from this Covid-19 pandemic chapter** to an endemic phase." (CNN);

2) "In Europe, **leaders are starting to turn the page on the pandemic**." (CNN)

- COVID IS AN AEROPLANE, e.g.:

1) "So it is hardly surprising **a virus** that thrives on human contact **has taken off in the UK** compared with the rest of Europe." (BBC);

2) "Jha, too, said scientists were concerned by **the speed with which the Omicron variant has taken off**." (CNN)

- INFECTED PEOPLE ARE PRISONERS, e.g.:

1) "He says **he became a prisoner in his home** in Caerphilly, Wales, as he isolated for months on end." (BBC);

2) "**It slowly became my prison cell,** especially when it got to the summertime and the restrictions were lifting for everyone else…" (BBC)

- TIME IS MONEY, e.g.:

1) "If a new variant emerges that significantly bypasses our immunity, **we will be dependent on antivirals to buy us time**..." (BBC);

2) "Even if their strategy didn't remain the optimal one, **it bought them time to prepare others**." (The Guardian);

3) "**Lockdown interventions buy time**, that is true, but they also cause wider harm." (The Guardian)

During the research, there was also a frequent occurrence of conceptual metaphors in which the COVID-19 virus and other more abstract terms gained the characteristics of physical objects; therefore, they were conceptualized as more concrete terms. The virus itself could be caught, the infections could be picked up, immunity could be built, restrictions could be lifted, and the like. The following conceptual metaphors that belong to this category have been discovered in the English and Croatian media:

- COVID IS A PHYSICAL OBJECT, e.g.:

  1) "**People are catching Covid** even if they have been triple-jabbed or have caught Covid before." (BBC);

  2) "...but it was clear **his body wasn't easily shrugging off Covid**." (BBC);

  3) "Those considered clinically extremely vulnerable are advised to follow the same guidance as the general public, but consider taking extra precautions to reduce their **chance of catching Covid-19**." (The Guardian);

  4) "...it was possible for people **to carry more than one virus** in their noses at any given time." (The Guardian);

  5) "...**even fully jabbed individuals catch the virus – and pass it on**." (The Guardian);

  6) "What's made things more difficult is exactly **how easy it is to catch Covid** with Omicron." (CNN);

- INFECTIONS ARE PHYSICAL OBJECTS, e.g. "Currently, daily Covid case figures reported by the government - which reflect **the number of infections picked up by people** coming forward for testing..." (BBC)

- IMMUNITY IS A PHYSICAL OBJECT, e.g.:

  1) "It is important to remember we have **a significant wall of immunity** that should continue to provide protection even against new variants." (BBC);

  2) "...when months of having the virus **did not build up enough immunity**?" (BBC);

  3) "That alone tells us 74% isn't enough, and that prior Covid (without vaccination, what some refer to as "natural immunity") is unreliable for representing **a solid immunity wall against the Delta variant.**" (The Guardian);

  4) "**The US population has built up immunity** that China does not have." (CNN);

5) "Radi se o varijanti soja koji je ranije izazvao zabrinutost kod znanstvenika jer je djelom **uspijevao zaobići imunitet** dobiven cjepivom ili prebolijevanjem korone." (24sata);

6) "…nego je ta mogućnost i jasan poziv otišao svima koji su se cijepili prije više od 6 mjeseci da je **treća doza potrebna kako bi se podigao imunitet**." (Jutarnji list)

- RESTRICTIONS / MEASURES ARE PHYSICAL OBJECTS, e.g.:

  1) "...especially when it got to the summertime and **the restrictions were lifting** for everyone else." (BBC);

  2) "As a result, many of them say that caution needs to be taken **in lifting the last Covid restrictions** in England..." (The Guardian);

  3) "...prompting the government to U-turn on its pledge **to drop all restrictions** by the end of the year." (The Guardian);

  4) "This country just **dropped all Covid restrictions**." (CNN);

  5) "He blamed in part a sudden change in policy in those nations, saying **they lifted measures 'brutally, from too much to too few'.**" (CNN)

7.4. Discussion

In both English and Croatian media there are many occurrences of similar conceptual metaphors on which the metaphorical expressions related to COVID-19 are based. This indicates that Hypothesis 1 is accurate since the pandemic was conceptualized similarly in both languages. Many of the identified conceptual metaphors also belong to the category of personification. In most cases, personification was used to give human characteristics to the virus, and there were 148 instances of it detected in the texts. Comparing the COVID-19 virus to a human being facilitated the perception of the virus as an evil creature that hurts people and causes great damage. Hence, it is understandable why there are many combined personification and WAR metaphors. Personifiction captures the attention of the audience, and makes COVID-19 seem more familiar and relatable. However, since the virus was depicted as someone with evil intentions and motives, people could become even more frightened.

While comparing the usage of WAR metaphors in the English and Croatian media, it can be concluded that in both languages there are similar metaphorical framings of the COVID-19 pandemic. The phrases and words that were commonly identified in the analysed texts include: "shield through the pandemic", "battle plan", "hit by the virus", "killing people", "surrender" ("virus se ne predaje"), "victory" ("pobjeda"), "fight against the virus" ("borba protiv virusa"), "enemy" ("neprijatelj"), "frontline health workers" ("na prvim linijama borbe"), "impact of the virus", "proboj virusa", "target", "cjepivo je glavno oružje", et cetera. In both English and Croatian, the COVID-19 virus was described as an enemy that has to be defeated as soon as possible because it represents a great threat to humankind. Dealing with the pandemic was, in both languages, also conceptualized as a war. People's actions during the pandemic were described as the ones people take during a war, for example, they had to shield from the virus. Moreover, media reported that people should prepare and fight in this war in order to win it. In both English and Croatian media, the focus was, as well, on the vaccines and

other treatments, which were described as the main weapons in this fight against the COVID-19 virus. Healthcare workers were represented as the main soldiers who participated in this fight, and were saving other people while risking their own lives. Nevertheless, this conceptualization can lead to the unrealistic expectations of healthcare workers even though their job is already quite demanding. It can be said that in the Croatian and English media there is a similar conceptualization of the pandemic. Thus, it was most frequently framed as a WAR. The usage of WAR metaphors can be effective in depicting how serious the pandemic is, and that there is a need for urgent action; however, it is also a way to create even more panic and instill fear in people. Besides, people might get a feeling of hopelessness since in a war there are many victims on both sides. Also, conceptualizing a pandemic as a war can potentially lead to people being terrified of each other, and even the exclusion and discrimination of particular groups of people can occur as a consequence. Thus, the usage of WAR metaphors might not be the most appropriate to the situation, and could be potentially dangerous. Considering hypothesis 2, which states that WAR metaphors are the most frequent type of conceptual metaphors found in the analysed English texts, it can be concluded that this statement is accurate since there were 148 examples of this metaphor. Hypothesis 3 is also accurate since in the Croatian media articles there were 53 examples of WAR metaphor detected. Not only that they are most frequently found, but are also the most diverse. Nevertheless, the number of personification metaphors in the Croatian articles (50) was very close to the number of identified WAR metaphors.

The FIRE metaphor was also employed in portraying the pandemic, and 37 examples of it were found. The usage of FIRE metaphors in the English and Croatian media encouraged conceptualizing the pandemic and the COVID-19 virus itself as a disastrous fire. Particular areas with high concentrations of infected people were framed as hotspots, which is a geographical term for areas with intense heat. Again, it can be said that similar conceptual

framings were used in the English and Croatian media. For instance, the COVID-19 virus was depicted as a fire that can burn and explode, and the places with the greatest number of infections were conceptualized as hotspots from which they can spread. Common phrases and words found in these metaphors were: "extinguish covid", "flare up" ("razbuktavanje epidemije"), "firewall", "korona se širi exsplozivno", "hotspot" ("žarište infekcije"), and so on. FIRE metaphors portray the pandemic as something that is spreading very quickly and devastating places it goes through. It is helpful to utilize them since they imply that urgent action needs to be taken in order to extinguish the fire, that is, the pandemic. However, these metaphors also imply the uncontrollable nature of the pandemic; hence, they can also make people feel helpless. This can contribute to creating an even greater panic, which is why their effect can be similar to the effect of using WAR metaphors. Besides, conceptualizing certain places as hotspots can potentially lead to creating negative perceptions about them, and the stigmatization of their residents can occur as a result. For instance, when the pandemic started in 2019 in China, people began to negatively perceive this country and its residents. Chinese people were blamed for the spread of the virus, and people avoided getting in contact with them. The inappropriate and exaggerated usage of conceptual metaphors in media certainly influenced such views.

Furthermore, the pandemic was framed in both English and Croatian media as an entity that is able to move like a liquid substance, or an entity that is able to move in space. There were 97 examples of MOVEMENT as a LIQUID SUBSTANCE metaphors, and 69 examples of MOVEMENT as a JOURNEY metaphors. In the former category of MOVEMENT, the pandemic was, in both media, framed most frequently as a WAVE, which implies that it is coming suddenly in great amounts. Common phrases found in these metaphors were: "waves of infection", "fifth wave", "udar četvrtog vala", "Covid wave" ("val koronaviusa"), and so on. This kind of metaphor is great for describing the pattern of the pandemic movement. It is not

constantly flowing, but rather periodically coming in larger amounts. Nevertheless, this metaphor can also imply that the pandemic is overwhelming, which can make people perceive it as a force they cannot protect themselves from. These examples indicate that in the English and Croatian media there are many similar WAVE metaphors. Then, dealing with the pandemic was conceptualized as a JOURNEY, and more examples were found in English media. People's actions during a pandemic were, thus, compared to the actions they take during a journey. Phrases and words that were detected in these metaphors include: "road to recovery", "Covid journey", "best route", "trajectory / direction of the pandemic", "napraviti iskorake", "izlaz iz krize", et cetera. JOURNEY metaphor implies a sense of togetherness because everyone is on the same journey, and people have to help each other in order to finish it. That is why its usage was perhaps useful during the pandemic. Within JOURNEY metapors, it needs to be noted that the COVID-19 virus was framed as a MOVING ENTITY, and common phrases identified in these metaphors were "the spread of Covid" ("virus se širi"), "virus is circulating", "variant was in his country" ("je li stigao deltacron"), "korak ispred virusa", and the like. With the help of this metaphor, the virus was described as a powerful force or a creature that constantly moves and changes. It has the ability to evolve, and it spreads to different geographical areas causing problems for the people. Moreover, the virus was described as an entity that almost invisibly spreads, which makes it even more dangerous, and requires urgent action against its spread. Nevertheless, this metaphor can also negatively influence people's perceptions since the COVID-19 virus could be perceived as some external force people cannot fight against.

In both English and Croatian media there was a quite frequent occurrence of COMPETITION metaphors, and there were 31 instances of this metaphor. The pandemic was framed as a competition in which people compete with the COVID-19 virus, and in which individual countries compete with each other. The winner of the competition would be the country most successful in controlling the spread of the virus. Common phrases and words

found in these metaphors were: "outpace", "champions" ("prvaci u cijepljenju"), "race", "hit records" ("obaramo rekorde"), "crni record", "leap ahead", "outcompete" and the like. The positive side of the usage of COMPETITION metaphors would be that they are useful in motivating individuals and countries to take action against the virus since everyone wants to be a winner. However, since they imply that each country is competing with each other, there might be a lack of cooperation among the countries. Cooperation is crucial during the events like pandemics and these metaphors could potentially instigate divisiveness, hence putting people's lives in danger. Under this category, there are also GAME metaphors, which were found only in the English media. Phrases and words that were detected in these metaphors include: "pandemic endgame", "playing field", "game over", "war-game", and so on. These metaphors imply that the participants have certain control, which will lead to winning a game against the virus. Nevertheless, comparing the pandemic with a game might result in perceiving the pandemic as not very serious; therefore, it is perhaps not appropriate to utilize this kind of metaphor in this context.

Furthermore, PERFORMANCE metaphors were also identified in the analysed English and Croatian texts, and there were 21 examples of this metaphor found. Common phrases found in these metaphors were: "likely / pessimistic scenario" ("slični / najcrniji scenariji"), "scene playing out", "prvi čin", "playing a role", et cetera. These conceptual metaphors imply that the pandemic is a performance in which there is a certain scenario that has to be followed, and each member of the society has a certain role. For instance, the virus is the villain that kills people, while healthcare workers are heroes that save people. Like GAME metaphors, these metaphors also imply that people have control over the pandemic since there is a pre-made scenario. However, comparing the pandemic to a performance might also trivialize the seriousness of the pandemic, which certainly wouldn't help the governments to convince people that the situation is serious.

All in all, many similar conceptual metaphors were detected in the analysed media articles, which suggests that English speakers, as well as Croatian speakers, tend to conceptualize the COVID-19 pandemic similarly. Even though similar metaphorical expressions were utilized in both languages, it cannot be confirmed that English influenced the formation of COVID-19-related conceptual metaphors in Croatian. Furthermore, some conceptual metaphors have proven to be more harmless than others, for example, JOURNEY metaphors. Nevertheless, it cannot be claimed that the ones which have great potential to cause misconception and damage, such as WAR metaphors, have to be completely avoided. Their accurate use can contribute to taking better action against the infection. Although all of the aforementioned conceptual metaphors have their positive side, that of encouraging people to behave in accordance with the situation to protect themselves from COVID-19, it is noticeable that the exaggerated use of them can potentially lead to strong emotional responses and negative feelings. Hence, media should prioritize disseminating high-quality information over promoting sensationalism, which is a great problem of today's journalism. Utilizing too many conceptual metaphors within an article can contribute to this problem. Therefore, it can make the pandemic seem more trivial, which is contrary to what the authorities intend to achieve. Moreover, using potentially dangerous metaphors can make people feel even more anxious and scared than they should be, which again negatively reflects on society.

8. Conclusion

Since the pandemic of COVID-19 started, many changes occurred within a society. The social consequences of the pandemic were great since social distancing has been introduced as the main measure. This means that any unnecessary physical contact with other people was forbidden, which certainly negatively influenced the relationships among people. There was also a negative effect on people's mental health since people had to be in a lockdown. In these conditions, it was common for people to suffer from stress, anxiety, and live in fear from the virus. Moreover, there were great economic consequences as well since many people have lost their jobs, and many businesses were closed due to the reduced need for certain activities that were not crucial for the everyday life of the people. These financial hardships were accompanied by the economic crisis that occurred. The pandemic also initiated unfavourable changes in the schooling system where students had to take online classes, which resulted in many challenges in education. When it comes to languages, English had the main role during the pandemic. It proved its status as the global *lingua franca* since most of the news published about the pandemic was in English. The positive side of this is that there is a great number of English speakers worldwide, thus the information could be received by many people simultaneously. However, there was also a risk that people who do not speak English or any other *lingua franca* would not receive the high-quality information on time.

Furthermore, during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, many linguistic changes have occurred, and the consequences of it are still present today. The pandemic affected people's vocabulary, and their use of language. There was an influx of many new COVID-19-related terms. Moreover, the vocabulary employed only in medicine was also transferred to people's everyday language. This happened due to the rapid spread of information with the help of media. Thus, media were one of the major contributors to these linguistic changes. Not only did the new vocabulary enter people's everyday language, but also many new conceptual metaphors

were introduced. It can be said that metaphors are powerful linguistic tools that can change the way people perceive things. They contributed to shaping the public perception of the pandemic, and perhaps made it easier for people to understand what is happening. However, even though conceptual metaphors can facilitate the understanding of abstract processes, their usage can also contribute to misunderstanding. Sometimes they were even exaggerated and encouraged intense emotional responses, which contributed to sensationalism. Therefore, media should be careful when using metaphors since inappropriate usage can lead to forming inaccurate perceptions.

To conclude, the research has shown that the WAR metaphor was the most frequent in English and Croatian media. The pandemic was mostly conceptualized as a war in which people had to shield from the virus, and health workers had to fight in it as soldiers. Even though through the usage of WAR metaphors in the media, the audience can better comprehend the seriousness of the situation and act accordingly, it also enhances a feeling of worry and contributes to an even greater panic. It can be said that media should be cautious of how they utilize conceptual metaphors, especially WAR metaphors, since their misuse can lead to serious consequences in the perception of the pandemic. Other frequently identified conceptual metaphors were FIRE metaphors, MOVEMENT of a LIQUID SUBSTANCE metaphors, MOVEMENT as a JOURNEY metaphors, COMPETITION metaphors, PERFORMANCE metaphors, and personification. Since similar conceptual metaphors were detected, it can be concluded that both English and Croatian speakers conceptualize the pandemic in a similar way.

Since the topic on linguistic changes during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic is quite recent, there is more research that still needs to be done in order to understand these changes more profoundly. Most of the recent research focuses on linguistic changes in English; hence, it would be valuable to investigate these changes in more detail in other languages as well. The way people use language influences the way they think and perceive the world, and that is why the research on this topic is of great importance.

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10. List of Tables and Pictures

11. Summary - Conceptual Metaphors in English and Croatian Media During the COVID-19 Pandemic

This thesis analyses the linguistic changes that occurred due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus of the analysis were conceptual metaphors detected in the articles published from October 2021 until March 2022 in the chosen English and Croatian media. The first aim of the analysis was to determine which conceptual metaphors occurred in the COVID-19 discourse. The second aim was to discover which types of conceptual metaphors were found most frequently. The third aim was to identify whether there are some similarities in their usage in the English and Croatian media. The first part of the thesis consists of the explanations of English as a *lingua franca* and its influence on Croatian, the role of English as a *lingua franca* during the COVID-19 pandemic, the explanations of public discourse and the role of media during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the definition of conceptual metaphors. The second part of the thesis provides the corpus-based analysis of conceptual metaphors found in the chosen articles. The analysis revealed that the most frequently detected type of conceptual metaphor was the WAR metaphor. There were also certain similarities in the usage of conceptual metaphors in the English and Croatian media, which suggests that speakers of both languages conceptualize the pandemic in a similar way.

Key words: English as a *lingua franca*, COVID-19 virus, pandemic, conceptual metaphors

12. Sažetak – Konceptualne metafore u engleskim i hrvatskim medijima u vrijeme Covid-19 pandemije

U ovom se radu analiziraju jezične promjene nastale uslijed izbijanja pandemije COVID-19. Fokus rada su konceptualne metafore pronađene u člancima objavljenima u razdoblju od listopada 2021. do ožujka 2022. u odabranim engleskim i hrvatskim medijima. Prvi cilj analize bio je utvrditi koje se konceptualne metafore pojavljuju u diskursu o COVID-19. Drugi cilj je bio otkriti koja se vrsta konceptualnih metafora najčešće pojavljuje. Treći cilj je bio prepoznati postoje li sličnosti njihove uporabe u engleskim i hrvatskim medijima. Prvi se dio rada sastoji od tumačenja engleskog kao *lingua franca* i njegovog utjecaja na hrvatski jezik, uloge engleskog kao *lingua franca* tijekom pandemije COVID-19, objašnjenja javnog diskursa i uloge medija tijekom pandemije COVID-19 te definicije konceptualnih metafora. Drugi dio rada bavi se korpusnom analizom konceptualnih metafora koje su uočene u odabranim člancima. Ratne metafore su se u analizi pokazale najfrekventnijima. Također, utvrđeno je kako postoje određene sličnosti u korištenju konceptualnih metafora u engleskim i hrvatskim medijima, što ukazuje na to kako govornici i jednog i drugog jezika konceptualiziraju pandemiju na sličan način.

Ključne riječi: engleski kao *lingua franca*, Covid-19 virus, pandemija, konceptualne metafore