

THE THEME OF CORONAVIRUS IN POLISH ONLINE PRESS – A CORPUS-ASSISTED STUDY

Abstract

The aim of the study presented in this paper was to analyse how the topic of coronavirus was described by the Polish quality newspaper “Gazeta Wyborcza” in the period between the 1st of March and the 12th of July 2020, i.e. the day of presidential elections in Poland. The methodology used in the investigation follows a corpus-assisted analysis, which allows one to conduct a quantitative study of large collections of data (language corpora). The methodology is typically used in linguistics, yet the study shows that it can be successfully employed in a quantitative analysis of press and political discourse. The data were analysed automatically by computer software dedicated to Polish language (Korpusomat) and by tools available in the Sketch Engine system that allow one to examine English language data. The study demonstrates that the theme of coronavirus presented in March and April focused largely on the description of the virus and the consequences of being infected (hospitalization), whilst the articles published between May and July contain more information about possible vaccines and, contrary to facts, they emphasise a declining trend in morbidity rates.

Keywords: language corpora, press discourse, political discourse, coronavirus, Polish quality press.

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