War and Apocalypse Metaphors in Media Discourse on the Pandemic and Earthquake in Croatia 2020/2021

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SUMMARY

The way we talk about complex and abstract ideas is abundant in metaphors. Many research studies have shown that even the most subtle metaphor can have a significant influence on the way people try to tackle various social problems. Thus, the assumption is that metaphors are not just a simple rhetorical tool, but also have a profound effect on how we conceptualize reality and respond to important social issues. In the last two decades, scientists have studied the impact of metaphorical framing on political discourse from different research perspectives. Metaphors are often used for framing political topics, and these metaphorical frames are considered to affect the way people regard these issues, perceive the world, and act, on both the individual and collective level.

In accordance with these research studies, in this paper, we will regard the metaphor as a cognitive tool that classifies our conceptual system and enables the understanding of our experiences. The objective of this paper is to examine the use of conceptual metaphors in media discourse on the corona crisis and the earthquake crisis caused by the quake in Petrinja. The research was conducted in three steps, following the methodology of critical metaphor analysis (Charteris-Black, 2004). In the first step, the identification of metaphorical expressions

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was performed by using a big data corpus of articles published by Croatian web-portals from the beginning of the pandemic (from January 2020 to April 2021) and after the Petrinja earthquake (from 29 December 2020). In the second step, the dominant conceptual metaphors employed in communicating the two crises were interpreted. The results of this interpretation are that war metaphors are ubiquitous in reporting on the COVID-19 disease pandemic, and the apocalypse metaphor is used in reporting on the earthquake. In the third step of the analysis, the reasons and implications of the occurrence of these metaphors are explained.

Introduction

This paper examines the ways conceptual metaphors participate in shaping the media discourse on two crises that struck Croatian society in 2020 – the crisis caused by a world pandemic of the novel coronavirus disease, and the national, Croatian crisis caused by earthquakes that struck the region of Banija in December. The approach used in tackling this topic is interdisciplinary, comprising communication and media studies, linguistics and political science in analyzing media discourse on the aforementioned crises.

The link between metaphors and infectious diseases outbreaks is not new in social sciences. The role of metaphors in thinking and acting in the context of infectious diseases was intensively studied in Susan Sontag's works on cancer and tuberculosis (1978) and AIDS (1989). Papers that followed studied the usage of metaphors for Ebola (Joffe and Haarhoff, 2002), avian flu (Nerlich and Halliday, 2007; Hanne and Hawken, 2007; Martin de la Rosa, 2008), Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome – SARS (Chian and Duann, 2007), HIV/AIDS (Hanne and Hawken, 2007; Nie et al., 2016), cancer, diabetes, heart disease (Hanne and Hawken, 2007). On the other hand, the studies that discuss metaphors in the context of natural disasters are relatively scarce. Some papers address the metaphorical representations of earthquakes (Kaya, 2010), hurricanes (Tierney, Bevc and Kuligowski, 2006), tsunamis (Trčkova, 2011) and natural disasters in general (Trčkova, 2012).

One of the most prominent metaphors in conceptualizing pandemic diseases is the war metaphor, which entered the public discourse immediately after the outbreak of the COVID-19 in China. While visiting the coronavirus-stricken city of Wuhan in March 2020, Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, said that

China will win a "People's War" (Reuters, 2020). After his Wuhan visit, state news started disseminating propaganda video stating that "the People's Leader was commanding the decisive battle" (Reuters, 2020). Since then, it is hard to find a leader that has not invoked war imagery in the discourse on the pandemic. There are several reasons for the dominance of war metaphors in the COVID-19 crisis. As argued by Sonntag, the origins of this trend are linked to the public health education, "where the disease is regularly described as invading the society, and efforts to reduce mortality from a given disease are called a fight, a struggle, a war" (Sonntag, 1989: 10). The author concludes that "where once it was the physician who waged *bellum contra morbum*, the war against disease, now it's the whole society" (Sonntag, 1989: 10). Furthermore, war metaphors are prevalent in our societies and are used for representing numerous social problems and phenomena. According to Flusberg et al., "war metaphors are ubiquitous in discussions of everything from political campaigns to battles with cancer to wars against crime, drugs, poverty, and even salad" (Flusberg et al., 2018: 1). They are also easily applied to infectious diseases as they connote the seriousness of purpose. Moreover, as Reisfeld and Wilson suggest, "war has an exceptionally strong focusing quality, and its images of power and aggression serve as strong counterpoints to the powerlessness and passivity often associated with serious illness" (Reisfeld and Wilson, 2004: 4025).

Although militaristic or war metaphors have prevailed in public discourse during the health and social crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, several papers examined the way media used the war metaphor (Connolly, 2020; Rajandran, 2020; Rohela et al., 2020; Alsaedi, 2021; Semino, 2021). In general, the findings are rather critical of the usage of war metaphor as predominantly negative and damaging. Critics say that war metaphors are inherently masculine, power-based, paternalistic, and violent", that they construct enemies, demonize others, shift responsibility and lack precision and clarity. An additional problem with the war metaphor is that its usual purpose is to galvanize people, while in the context of the corona crisis, people are expected to do nothing, or, to put it more precisely, to *stay at home*.

War metaphors are divisive by their very nature, and divisions between people have already been created, stigmatizing those perceived to be possible carriers of the virus or those infected by it. In her seminal work on illness and metaphors, Sonntag argued that the war metaphor defines how especially dangerous diseases are considered as an alien "other", similar to the enemies in a modern war. The shift from the demonization of the illness to the attribution of fault to the patient is an inevitable one, no matter whether the patients are considered victims or not. Victims suggest innocence, and innocence, by the inexorable logic that governs all relational terms, suggests guilt. Military metaphors contribute to stigmatizing certain illnesses and, by extension, of those who are ill (Sonntag, 1989: 11).

On the other hand, several studies challenge this criticism claiming that politicians use war metaphors for a different purpose, not exclusively negative. It is argued that the recurrent use of war metaphors during health crises may be very positive and effective as a rhetorical tool "preparing the population for hard times; showing compassion, concern and empathy; persuading the citizens to change their behaviour, ensuring their acceptance of extraordinary rules, sacrifices; boosting national sentiments and resilience" (Seixas, 2021). Flusberg et al. argue that "war metaphors are omnipresent because (a) they draw on basic and widely shared schematic knowledge that efficiently structures our ability to reason and communicate about many different types of situations, and (b) they reliably express an urgent, negatively valenced emotional tone that captures attention and motivates action" (Flusberg et al., 2018: 1). Nevertheless, the authors conclude that the "meaning (and consequences) of war metaphors is intimately tied to the context in which they are used, which may result in either positive or negative outcomes, depending on the situation" (Flusberg et al., 2018: 1).

In the Croatian context, the paper of Štrkalj Despot (2020) deals with the increased usage of war metaphors in the context of referring to the pandemic in the Croatian language, but it discusses the phenomenon mainly from the linguistic standpoint. This paper aims to examine the way these metaphors are used in particular media discourse and to employ empirical evidence. Therefore, we conducted specific corpus-based research as a means to explore the quantity and quality of the metaphorical rhetorical tool employed in reporting on the pandemic and the earthquake.

Research goals and methodology

The research of conceptual metaphors in the media discourse on two major crises that shaped Croatian reality in 2020 was conducted in three phases.

In the *first phase*, we carried out preliminary research in order to extract the keywords to be utilized in the next phase. Certain patterns were identified in this limited corpus, which served as indicators for the conceptual metaphors in a much larger, purposely created corpus.

In the *second phase*, a big data corpus of news articles was analysed by using previously identified keywords. The purpose of this step was to provide *all* or *most of* the metaphorical expressions containing the chosen keywords. In addition, it enabled the examination of certain longitudinal phenomena regarding the number of metaphors in the chosen corpus.

In the *third phase*, a much smaller and targeted corpus of extracted metaphorical expressions was thoroughly read and analysed, which pointed to conclusions on the nature and content of the observed conceptual metaphors.

The preliminary research has shown that the most common metaphors are the war metaphor (regarding the pandemic) and the apocalypse metaphor (regarding the earthquake). In the next phase, the big data corpus was used to explore the specific manifestations of these metaphorical concepts. As guides to these manifestations in the discourse, we used the roots of Croatian words for *war*, *fight*, *battle*, *victory*, *to win*, *enemy*, *victim* in the coronavirus corpus and *apocalypse*, *enemy* and *monster* in the earthquake corpus.

The Presscut media database was used as a corpus for this research[1]. In order to compile it, we conducted a database search for all the articles published from 1 January 2020 to 29 April 2021 on the websites *Index.hr*, *24sata.hr*, *jutarnji.hr*, *večernji.hr* and *t-portal.hr*, which are some of the most popular news websites in Croatia.

Subsequently, a search was made for articles that contained any of the following keywords – "koronavirus" OR "korona-virus" OR "korona virus" OR "virus korona" OR "coronavirus" OR "corona-virus" OR "corona virus" OR "sars-cov-2" OR "covid-19" OR "covid 19" OR "covid" OR ("korona" NEAR(5) "virus"). Fitted the previous description were 154 484 articles. The first article dated back to 7 January 2020. It was published by *24sata.hr* and contained the sentence "The disease is transmitted by the coronavirus, and symptoms include fever, cough, severe headache, dizziness and other ailments such as the flu" (24sata, 2020)[2].

## Quantitative research of the COVID corpus

The big data corpus of coronavirus related articles was limited to only those articles that contain words that could lead to a metaphorical expression. It was done by using the previously mentioned keywords, which we could call *metaphor keywords* or, to be more precise, word basis of Croatian words – *rat, borb*, bitk*, pobjed*, pobijed*, neprijatelj* and *žrtv**. The results showed there are 38.709 articles in the corpus that contain at least one of the words with such a word basis.

This corpus included plenty of language material unrelated to conceptual metaphors. For example, the letter combination *r-a-t* in Croatian is very common and indistinctive and can point to numerous words unrelated to 'war'. On the other hand, many articles in Presscut's "coronavirus database" mention 'war' in its original domain or in a non-metaphorical context. Overall, the letter combination *r-a-t* appeared in 9 470 articles through the observed period, so researchers conducted the content analysis of this raw material to disregard unnecessary content.

Since three coders had done the coding process, the reliability was checked by performing an inter-coder reliability test (Hayes and Krippendorff, 2007). Krippendorff's alpha was calculated on 14% of the sampled corpus (374 out of 2.614) with

a score of 0.9 (scale of 0.0 to 1.0). Out of 374 occurrences, the letter combination *r-a-t* was used 35 times as part of a conceptual metaphor and 343 in some other context.

After the coding process was completed, some interesting phenomena could be observed. The following diagram shows the longitudinal trends of using the war metaphor in the coronavirus context.
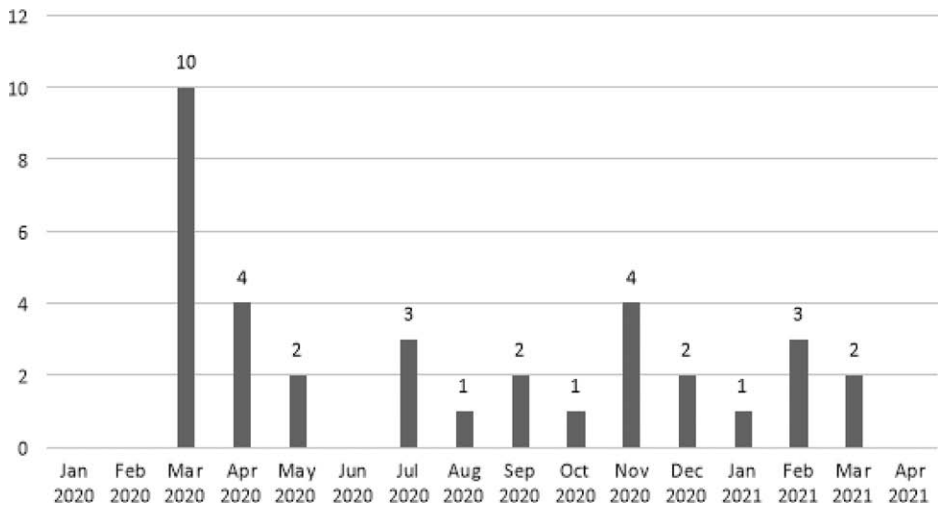
Graph 1.   Number of articles in which a word for 'war' was used in a metaphorical context related to the coronavirus pandemic, Jan 2020 – April 2021
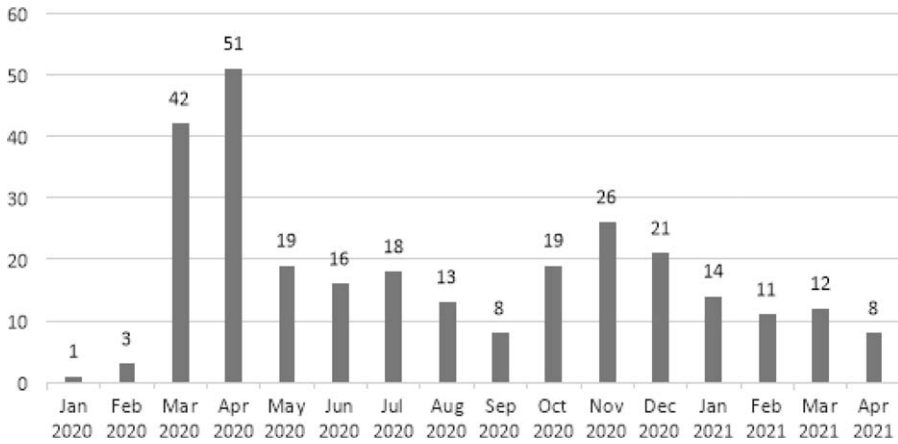
Grafikon 1. Broj članaka u kojima je riječ "rat" korištena u metaforičkom kontekstu u vezi s pandemijom koronavirusa, siječanj 2020. – travanj 2021.

Source: Authors

Similar time patterns can be noticed regarding the word-basis *borb** (*a fight*) used in a metaphorical context, as well as a word-basis *pobijed** (*to win*), *pobjed** (*victory*) and *neprijatelj* (*enemy*).

On the other hand, the opposite trend is noticed regarding the usage of the word-basis *bitk** in a metaphorical context, which occurs more frequently during the second Croatian wave of the pandemic (which peaked in November – December 2020).

This observation could be brought in connection with extralinguistic events or, to be more precise, with the notion that, regarding the coronavirus pandemic, it would be more correct to perceive it in terms of consecutive *battles*, not a single *war*.

Graph 2.   Number of articles in which a word for 'fight' was used in a metaphorical
            context related to the coronavirus pandemic, Jan 2020 – April 2021

*Grafikon 2. Broj članaka u kojima je riječ "borba" korištena u metaforičkom kontekstu
            u vezi s pandemijom koronavirusa, siječanj 2020. – travanj 2021.*

Source: Authors
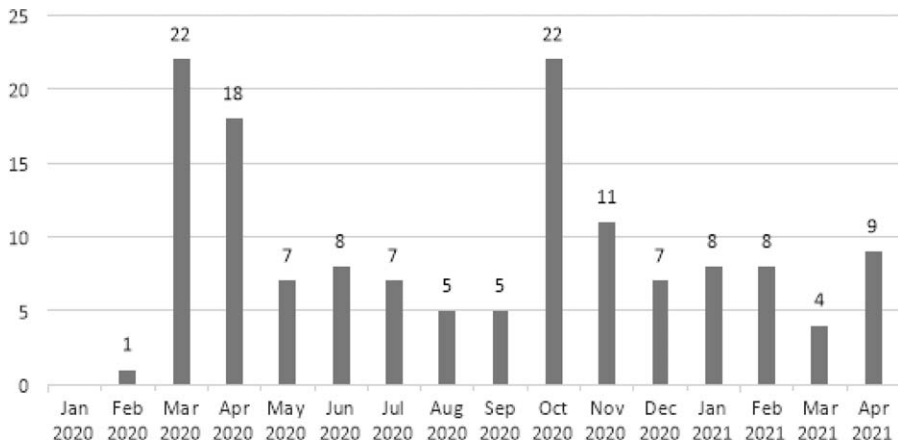
Graph 3.   Number of articles in which a word for 'battle' was used in a metaphorical
            context related to the coronavirus pandemic, Jan 2020 – April 2021

*Grafikon 3. Broj članaka u kojima je riječ "bitka" korištena u metaforičkom kontekstu
            u vezi s pandemijom koronavirusa, siječanj 2020. – travanj 2021.*

Source: Authors

Quantitative research of earthquake corpus

In order to find metaphors in the media discourse on the Petrinja earthquake, re-searchers also used the Presscut media database. The database search was for all website articles from *Index.hr*, *net.hr*, *jutarnji.hr*, *večernji.hr* and *t-portal.hr* (which are some of the most popular news websites in Croatia) from 29 December 2020 (when the strongest earthquake of the Petrinja series, with the intensity of 6.2 on the Richter scale, occurred) to 29 April 2021 – which contained any of the following keywords: "potres u petrinji" OR ("potres" NEAR(15) "petrinja") OR ("potres"[2] AND "petrinja"[2]). Matching the search requirements were 6 269 articles.

The big data corpus of earthquake-related articles was limited to only those articles that contain words that could lead to a metaphorical expression. It was done by us-ing "metaphor keywords", which means the word basis of Croatian words for "apocalypse", "enemy" and "monster" – *apokalip**, *neprijatelj* and *čudovišt**.

The coding process resulted in identifying 18 metaphorical expressions related to apocalypse, 1 for enemy and 4 for monster. Overall, media reporting on the earth-quake was significantly less metaphorical than reporting on the coronavirus.

Interpretative framework

In the interpretative part of the research presented here, the main research tool we applied is the approach called "the critical metaphor analysis" (CMA), an interdis-ciplinary analytical tool originally derived from the field of cognitive linguistics, which has been used recently in media and communication studies worldwide.

To explain the fundamentals of the critical metaphor analysis, we have to point out that the theoretical construct of conceptual metaphors was introduced in linguistics by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their book *Metaphors We Live By* (trans-lated into Croatian as *Metafore koje život znače*) written in 1980. Lakoff was one of the pioneers of cognitive linguistics, which is defined as a linguistic approach that is interdisciplinary and incorporates "knowledge and research from cognitive psy-chology, neuropsychology and linguistics" (Robinson, 2008) in shaping its theo-retical framework. Lakoff's work and the work of other cognitive linguists inspired many scholars who have investigated how conceptual metaphors appear in various contexts, both for the purposes of linguistic and various social sciences research.

Lakoff and Johnson noticed that, when talking about the concept of *discussion* in the English language, a lot of war-like metaphors are being used (*I refuted his claim*; *I turned out to be the winner of the debate*; *He refuted my arguments* etc.). Along with this observation, we can state that by using war metaphors on the linguistic level, a conceptual metaphor "Discussion is war" is being shaped in the minds of the

members of a language community. Essentially, we can say that some aspects of the meaning of war as an armed conflict are transferred from the source domain to the target domain of discussion as a verbal discourse (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). In other words, conceptual metaphor means "understanding one domain of experience (that is typically abstract) in terms of another (that is typically concrete)" (Kövecses, 2016). This relation, explained using the example of Lakoff and Johnson, is shown in the picture below.
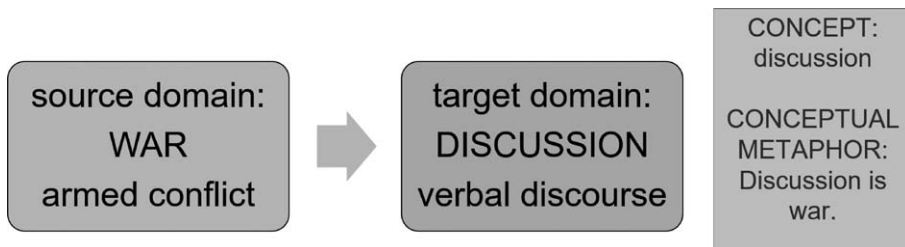
source domain:
WAR
armed conflict

→

target domain:
DISCUSSION
verbal discourse

CONCEPT:
discussion

CONCEPTUAL
METAPHOR:
Discussion is
war.

Figure 1. The example of conceptual metaphor
Slika 1.   Primjer konceptualne metafore, Izvor: Lakoff & Johnson, 1980
Source: Lakoff and Johnson, 1980

The analytical apparatus of the critical metaphor analysis as an approach was introduced in a book called *Corpus Approaches to Discourse Analysis* written by Charteris-Black in 2004. The author's model is based on a creative blending of four linguistic approaches – the aforementioned conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), which stems from cognitive linguistics; the critical discourse analysis (CDA), which is used as a tool for reaching ideology behind language; corpus linguistics, which enables the author to focus his research on the specific domains and make conclusions on the occurrences of metaphors in various areas of public discourse by using various limited sources of linguistic material (corpora); and pragmatics, which provides a tool to investigate language in its use. This book is the most cited work on critical metaphor analysis (CMA) and consists of chapters that address metaphors in three domains – 1) domain of political discourse, 2) press reporting, and 3) religious discourse. In the political discourse domain, Charteris-Black (as a British author) analysed the metaphors of New Labour by analysing their speeches and their 1997 manifesto, metaphors of both Labour and Conservative party and metaphors in American presidential speeches. In the press reporting domain, Charteris-Black focused on sports and financial reporting.

After Charteris-Black established the discipline, the CMA has recently transcended its origins in linguistics to become a legitimate research tool across the Communication discipline and a legitimate method of analysis in Communication and Media

studies (Nguyen and McCallum, 2015). In some recent examples, the CMA has been used for examining news media discourse on immigration and asylum seekers in Australia (Nguyen and McCallum, 2015), teachers' union strike in Nigeria (Ezeif-eka, 2013), personal and professional obesity blogs (Atanasova, 2018), government's discourse on citizenship education in Singapore (Lee, 2015), and on British miners' strike of 1984–1985 (Hart, 2017), to mention just a few of the recent papers using this paradigm. One of the main conclusions of these studies is that the way "social (…) problems are metaphorically constructed [in the media] may influence how the public conceptualize the issue" and that the CMA can improve the understanding of political and social issues (Charteris-Black, 2004).

Nguyen and McCallum (2015) have noticed that there are two ways or two coexisting approaches of carrying out the CMA. We have labelled one of them the "agent/agenda focused approach" because it addresses the questions such as: *Who is responsible for the metaphor x? What is the intention/ideology behind it?* The purpose of such research is to reveal the implicit speaker's intentions, covert agendas, and potentially conscious intentions behind the metaphors (Nguyen and McCallum, 2015). In our research, we have adopted the structure-approach, which deals with the way metaphors shape and structure reality, and tries to identify "discursive possibilities that are made available to the […] public via the metaphorical language in use" and implications of news framing (Nguyen and McCallum, 2015: 9).

In conducting critical metaphor analysis, Charteris-Black proposes the 3-steps-procedure, which consists of identification, interpretation and explanation.

The first step, identification, implies a close reading of sample texts to figure out candidate metaphors in order to determine whether a certain linguistic expression is a candidate for a metaphor or not (Li, 2016). For the purpose of identifying potentially metaphorical expressions, the big data corpus and database requests were used, as previously described in the chapters on the quantitative part of the research. The most important outcomes of the interpretation process will be presented in the next chapter.

Interpretation of metaphorical expressions

COVID-19 related metaphors

In the examined corpus of news articles, researchers have extracted some examples of war metaphors on the corona crisis – *to lose a war, to win a war, to fight a war, victims of war, war victory, a war against the virus, a war against the aggressor (defensive war)* and *national war*. We have also found metaphors on the virus itself, which conceptualize it as an enemy.

Based on these insights, the conceptual metaphor can be established as follows: the concept of war has been transferred from its original domain of armed conflict to a target domain of the COVID-19 crisis, which is actually a public health crisis. Thus, the conceptual metaphor "COVID-19 crisis is a state of war" is established. This relation is shown in the picture below.
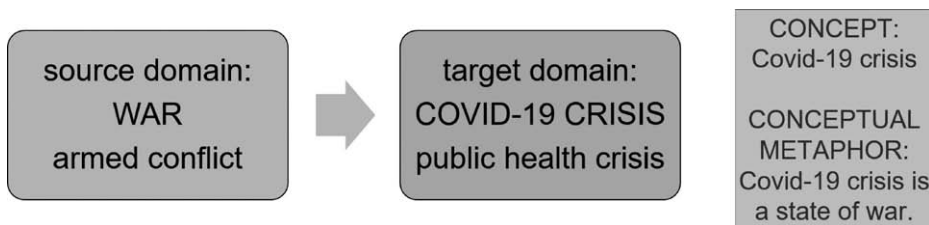

Figure 2. Establishment of the conceptual metaphor "Corona crisis is a state of war"
Slika 2.   Uspostavljanje konceptualne metafore "koronakriza je ratno stanje"

The analysis has shown that war metaphors are ubiquitous and that they are used on several levels regarding participants who are "in a state of war". The whole world is in a war (*the whole world is struggling with a new disease[3]*), so are the states (*countries with high disease transmission rates… must prepare for a major battle[4]; India is fighting a battle with time[5]*), societies (*the battle of us all against the virus[6]*), institutions (*The Croatian Institute of Public Health in its efforts to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic in Croatia[7]*), professionals (*healthcare professionals who wage a daily battle with this disease, which is not harmless at all[8]; our medical staff leading difficult battles[9]*), and individuals (*Famous musician loses battle with the coronavirus[10]*). On the other hand, the virus is portrayed as an enemy that is *invisible[11], common[12], biological[13], lethal[14], unpredictable[15], sudden[16], preponderant[17], dangerous[18], unfamiliar[19], challenging[20]*. Almost as a rule, the virus is depicted as an *invisible enemy*, and very often additionally personified (*a cunning enemy[21]*). On the other hand, citizens are in many cases portrayed as *warriors[22]* in the battle against the virus.

Earthquake related metaphors

Regarding the earthquake, the primary goal of the research was to investigate whether the metaphors were employed with reference to the earthquake and, if yes, to identify major metaphor themes employed in media discourse on earthquakes. The analysis of the newspaper articles gathered in the corpus reveals that newspapers did employ metaphorical expressions regarding the earthquake. The natural phenomenon itself is mainly framed as an *apocalypse[23]*, *apocalyptic moments[24]*.

Furthermore, the destroyed city is commonly described in terms of *apocalyptic pictures* or *apocalyptic scenes[25]*. Hence, the analysis has shown that "apocalypse" is a dominant metaphorical concept, which is thus materialized in discourse and through which the newspapers make sense of the natural phenomena in question. Furthermore, "apocalypse" is sometimes coupled with the concept of "catastrophe" (*Catastrophic earthquake that caused the devastation of apocalyptic proportions[26]*) and with the concept of "horror" (*the scenes are apocalyptic, equal to horror[27]*). There is only one example where the earthquake was labelled as 'an enemy'. It can be concluded that the concept of apocalypse is the main metaphor employed in the media reporting on the Petrinja earthquake, and the establishment of the conceptual metaphor "Petrinja earthquake is the end of the world" is shown in the picture below.
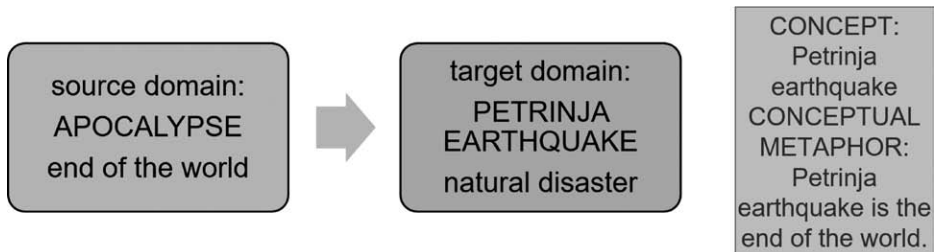

Figure 3. Establishment of the conceptual metaphor "Petrinja earthquake is the end of the world"

Slika 3. Uspostavljanje konceptualne metafore "Petrinjski je potres kraj svijeta"

Explanation

In the final step of the CMA, we have tried to answer questions such as: *Why are these metaphors chosen in the media discourse instead of others? What is their function?*

War metaphors are being used, as one possible explanation could say, to impose on society the sense of a "state of war", or, as Agamben would conceptualize it, a "state of exception" (Agamben, 2005). As evident in many cases, authorities claim that countries *are at war and, in the war, clear and quick decisions need to be made*. In the corpus that was consulted for the purpose of this research, there are also many examples of comparisons of the current public health crisis with the Second World War[28] by international protagonists and with the Homeland War[29] by domestic politicians and healthcare professionals. There are also cases of evocation of victorious battles from the past (*In this battle, COVID-19 will be defeated as the Turks once*

were[30]). As argued by Agamben, the state of exception is "a provisional and exceptional measure" which is in "close relationship to civil war, insurrection, and resistance" (Agamben, 2005: 2) and which is defined as "state power's immediate response to the most extreme internal conflicts" (Agamben, 2005).

The purpose of imposition of the *sense of exceptionality* is to create or impose a situation of urgency which is supposed to convince the citizenry to be alert and to raise awareness of the seriousness of threat imposed by the virus (*We need to raise the nation's awareness of a state of war against the virus[31]; The battle against the coronavirus cannot be won by the decisions of the Headquarters, nor by punishments, but by the awareness that we can save someone's life with our responsibility.[32]*). Additionally, the ubiquitous employment of war metaphors creates an atmosphere of fear. Furthermore, the sense of exceptionality also has the function of convincing the citizenry that this "war" could be won only if they *act together, united and in solidarity* and *solely by guarding each other in such a way that we do not leave our homes*.

As expected, the analysis has shown that the usage of war metaphors is mainly related to describing the way the state officials and public health sector deal with the crisis caused by the virus. On the other hand, it also shows that the usage of war metaphors very quickly expanded to other parts of social life and has permeated all spheres of social reality. Hence, there are cases where the distribution of masks and other necessary medical materials are framed as *war profiteering[33]*, the state economy is framed as *a war economy[34]* and *the battle to maintain production, employment and jobs[35]*, while entrepreneurship during the crisis is portrayed as *company fighting a survival battle over a pandemic[36]*. Furthermore, there are also: *global war for vaccines[37], fierce battles being fought for each shipment of vaccines[38]* and *struggles for democratic institutions[39]*.

The results of our study suggest that war metaphors have become almost a "natural" way of describing the situation related to the COVID-19 crisis and the most common way of framing the problems and solutions to the spread of the virus. As argued by Refaie, "'naturalization' of particular metaphors can contribute to a blurring of the boundaries between the literal and the non-literal" (El Refaie, 2001: 352). Furthermore, we can talk about the "securitization" of public discourse that surrounds the pandemic. According to Lukacovic, "securitization reflects on the discursive acts of justification of extraordinary means to eliminate a threat. This sort of process can be essentially understood as a strategic persuasive master frame that is articulated by elites and passed through media coverage, to convince various publics of the appropriateness of the employed measures." (Lukacovic, 2020).

But if we return to Lakoff's original notion of metaphors as a phenomenon ubiquitous in everyday language and thought (cf. Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), and go be-

yond the question "What is the intention/ideology behind metaphors?", a slightly different view on the abundance of metaphorical expressions is conveyed. To the questions: "Why are these metaphors chosen in the media discourse instead of others?" and "What is their function?", possible answers could be that particular metaphors are chosen 1) to create an affective public response and shape public opinion, 2) to refer to previous experiences of the linguistic community, 3) to establish links between a novel situation and a familiar one, 4) to explain a more abstract threat with a more concrete one and 5) to persuade the audience that the threat for the well-being of the community is real. However, the most important explanation here, in our opinion, is "to explain a more abstract threat with a more concrete one". This explanation is in line with the well-known fact that conceptual metaphors are used to "explain" complex concepts, especially abstract concepts and previously unknown concepts. That being said, we must go beyond language and meaning and grasp the cultural, historical and political context. Historically, Croatian society (which applies to most Western society countries) had not experienced a public health threat similar to the COVID-19 since the Spanish flu, and the memory of this event vanished from the collective memory. However, the nation's memories of war are still very vivid, so 'war-state' is certainly a more familiar concept.

Another argument to support this claim about the occasionally "innocent" nature of conceptual metaphor usage is the longitudinal trend of using the "metaphorical keywords" (especially for 'war'). War metaphor keywords and conceptual metaphors in general were more present during the first wave of the pandemic, when the COVID-19 disease and threat was something very abstract and unfamiliar to the Croatian linguistic and political community. In other words, the number of conceptual metaphors used in Croatian media decreases with time (see *Graph 1* and *2*) as the COVID-19 disease and necessary measures to prevent it are becoming an integral part of people's lives since more and more people have some experience with the disease itself, directly or indirectly.

Furthermore, we must point out the finding that public discourse on the earthquake crisis is significantly less metaphorical, which can be explained by the simple fact that most people in Croatia experienced the quake first-hand. The collective emotional response to earthquakes in Zagreb, and especially in Petrinja, was huge, and there was no need to *persuade the public* to feel like a community, to feel empathy for the victims. Conceptual metaphors are often used as a tool of persuasion by which the media constructs readers' representations and, consequently, influence the way the public think and feel about the event. The purpose of framing the earthquake as an apocalyptic event was to produce a sense of empathy, solidarity and unity with people affected by the devastating quake.

Conclusion

The findings of our research drew attention to several important points. The metaphors employed to represent the virus and the earthquake come out from the different sets of underlying themes. On the one hand, the virus is dominantly portrayed as an invisible enemy, and efforts to deal with it are portrayed as the war against the virus. On the other hand, the earthquake is dominantly framed as an apocalyptic event. Furthermore, the analysis shows that the variety and frequency of metaphorical framing were much more intense in the case of the coronavirus than in the case of the earthquake. These results are not surprising since the coronavirus is invisible, hence the need to make it visible and comprehensible in terms of public discourse. Namely, the coronavirus, its origins, the way it spreads and the way it impacts the human body are of an abstract nature and our findings illustrate how these abstract concepts are understood in terms of more concrete concepts. Basically, to explain the coronavirus concept thoroughly, a large number of metaphors were employed in media discourse. In order to convince people to act responsibly, politicians and media dominantly rely on war metaphors. Authorities imposed the framework in which "the war against the virus" could be won solely by responsible media coverage, responsible citizens and the state's actions. Regarding the citizens' role, they were invited to go out as little as possible, to refrain from socializing, to be responsible, solidary, prudent, and to care for each other.

In the end, the conclusion of this paper is in line with the structure-focused approach of the CMA that has been adopted here. The use of conceptual metaphors is a common thing in conceptualizing abstract and previously unknown phenomena. However, the recurrent utilisation of one notion (war) to conceptualize another (the public health crisis) often conceals other aspects of the target domain. Lakoff and Johnson exemplified this phenomenon by using the metaphor of discussion. If one emphasizes the war and discussion equation, then they fail to perceive substantial benefits provided from a discussion on a certain topic (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). In the same manner, if the war metaphor is frequently used concerning the public health crisis, then perhaps we will fail to notice its other aspects.

ENDNOTES

1   Authors want to thank Presscut for providing their corpus for the purpose of this research.

2   https://www.24sata.hr/lifestyle/azija-u-panici-kinom-zavladao-misteriozan-virus-upale-pluca-669040

3   „cijeli svijet [se] bori s novom bolesti dok je ishod te bitke još uvijek nepoznat" (16. 8. 2020.) https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/udruga-za-medicinsko-pravo-neshvatljiva-je-hajka-na-lijecni-ke-iz-stozera/2205512.aspx

4   „zemlje s velikom stopom prijenosa bolesti, uključujući brazil i Indiju, moraju [se] pripremiti za veliku bitku" (4. 8. 2020.) https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/who-mozda-nikada-nece-biti-cudo-tvornog-rjesenja-za-covid19/2202660.aspx

5   „Indija vodi bitku s vremenom te provodi najbržu kampanju cijepljenja u svijetu" (17. 4. 2021.) https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/cijepljenje-daje-rezultate-i-kod-nas-zaustavljen-porast-teskih-obo-ljenja-1485265

6   „Ovo je bitka svih nas" (17. 4. 2020.) https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/vec-16-dana-zaredom-virovitica-nema-novih-slucajeva-koronavirusa/2175733.aspx

7   „[…] odlučio poduprijeti Hrvatski zavod za javno zdravstvo u njegovim naporima da porazi pande-miju bolesti COVID-19 u Hrvatskoj" (30. 4. 2020.) https://www.jutarnji.hr/promo/generali-doni-rao-vise-od-milijun-kuna-hrvatskom-zavodu-za-javno-zdravstvo/10261126/

8   „[…] zahvaliti svim liječnicima i medicinskim sestrama kao i svim drugim zdravstvenim djelatni-cima koji svakodnevno vode bitku s ovom nimalo bezopasnom bolešću" (25. 7. 2020.) https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/radosni-todoric-kaze-da-je-prebolio-koronu-cestitam-mladenci-ma-na-svadbi-na-kojoj-sam-se-zarazio-15010185

9   „[…] budimo odgovorni, solidarni, razboriti, vodimo računa jedni o drugima, o našem medicin-skom osoblju koje vodi teške bitke" (22. 10. 2020.) https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/jandrokovic-predsjednik-ne-razmislja-i-namjerno-uvlaci-premijera-u-konflikte-1440415

10   „Slavni glazbenik izgubio je bitku s koronavirusom" (29. 11. 2020.) https://www.index.hr/magazin/clanak/basist-riblje-corbe-preminuo-od-korone-kolege-u-suzama-kao-da-sam-brata-izgu-bio/2234531.aspx

11   „Korona je nevidljivi neprijatelj, s tim se bori cijeli svijet." (10. 4. 2020.) https://www.index.hr/vi-jesti/clanak/bandic-o-prosvjedu-na-balkonima-to-su-oni-isti-koji-prosvjeduju-vec-20-godi-na/2174034.aspx

12   „vozač Shi Chengwei izrazio je optimizam u razgovoru za AFp: 'nova upala pluća naš je zajednič-ki neprijatelj'" (24. 1. 2020.) https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/wuhan-je-zbog-ubojitog-virusa-postao-grad-duhova-pogledajte-snimke/2150739.aspx

13   „na planu gena, čovjek će gubiti utrku s parazitom, ali zato ima dodatno oružje koje paraziti nema-ju – kulturnu evoluciju, evoluciju znanja, koju može iskoristiti u borbi s biološkim neprijateljem" (25. 2. 2020.) https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/miroslav-radman-o-koronavirusu-nece-nam-pomoci-visoke-tehnologije-nego-zdrav-razum-1381711

14   „priznatog eksperta za epidemiologiju i javno zdravstvo, profesora na Sveučilištu u Minnesoti, (…) autora knjige najsmrtonosniji neprijatelj: naš rat protiv ubojitih mikroorganizama" (12. 3. 2020.) https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/americki-epidemiolog-ljudi-nisu-svjesni-da-je-ovo-tek-poce-tak/2164374.aspx

15   „jasno je da smo suočeni s izuzetnim neprijateljem, nevidljivim i nepredvidljivim" (19. 3. 2020.) https://www.tportal.hr/biznis/clanak/tedeschi-kad-idem-u-ured-nosim-masku-ne-razumijem-neoz-biljnost-nekih-gradana-tako-je-trump-negirao-probleme-a-u-sad-u-je-sad-kaos-foto-20200319

16   „A dolazi vrijeme kada ćemo sve više zazirati o iznenadnog i nevidljivog neprijatelja" (19. 3. 2020.) https://www.vecernji.hr/sport/hrvatska-legenda-zbog-toga-smo-jako-izlozeni-virusu-i-to-nas-sve-pogada-1386911

17   „nismo ispucali svu municiju na nadmoćnog neprijatelja odmah" (20. 3. 2020.) https://www.24sata.hr/news/teski-dani-novi-paket-pomoci-ali-sad-moraju-rezati-i-u-vladi-682376

18   „Dodao je kako treba imati na umu da je u srži cijelog problema virus, da je njega teško kontrolirati te kako je on izvorni neprijatelj, opasan za sve" (14. 2. 2021.) https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/obersnel-nakon-napada-vlasnika-rijeckog-kafica-na-hdz-ovce-pozvao-na-smirivanje-u-srzi-problema-je-virus-15050486

19   „Kad je krenuo prvi *lockdown* i svi su bili u paničnom strahu od novog, nepoznatog neprijatelja…" (19. 3. 2021.) https://www.jutarnji.hr/life/zdravlje/estetika-u-pandemiji-zene-traze-liposukciju-a-muskarci-men-shot-za-jacanje-erektilne-funkcije-15059208

20   „Covid-19 […] Vrlo je zahtjevan i izazovan neprijatelj" (18. 4. 2020.) https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/oporavljeni-pacijenti-ponovno-su-pozitivni-na-koronu-moze-li-doci-do-ponovne-zaraze/2175990.aspx

21   „no, pokazalo se da je virus lukav neprijatelj" (19. 6. 2020.) https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/tinejdzer-u-sadu-iznenada-umro-od-korone-majka-drzao-se-svih-mjera-bio-je-zdrav/2191745.aspx

22   „Ja sam samo jedan vojnik u ovoj bitki." (26. 3. 2020.) https://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/clanak/uzivo-na-respiratoru-je-deset-oboljelih-izlijeceno-je-22-ljudi-u-hrvatskoj-hoce-li-vlada-uvesti-izvanred-no-stanje-foto-20200326

23   „Tamo je prava apokalipsa, srušene kuće, dimnjaci koji lete petnaest metara, ogromne rupe u zidovima…" –(30. 12. 2020.) https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/fred-matic-u-trenutku-potresa-bio-nadomak-epicentra-jedan-prizor-koji-sam-vidio-nikad-necu-zaboraviti-15039796

24   „U apokaliptičnim trenucima Siska stradao je […] bivši nogometaš Segeste" (30. 12. 2020.) https://net.hr/sport/na-rubu-sporta/bivsi-nogometas-stradao-u-potresu-pale-su-na-njega-cigle-s-jedne-zgrade-i-tko-zna-sto-jos-situacija-je-teska-bori-se-za-zivot/

25   „I one fotografije što svakodnevno gledamo iz centra Petrinje podsjećaju na apokaliptične scene Vukovara." (9. 1. 2021.) https://www.jutarnji.hr/scena/domace-zvijezde/tuticeva-i-gibonnijeva-pjesma-neformalna-je-himna-humanitarne-akcije-uz-nas-niste-sami-15041521

26   „Ovih smo dana nakon katastrofalnog potresa koji je izazvao pustošenje apokaliptičkih razmjera na Banovini ponovno svjedočili erupciji solidarnosti." (2. 1. 2021.) https://www.vecernji.hr/premium/zasto-nismo-sacuvali-najvazniji-ratni-kapital-sposobnost-funkcioniranja-u-kriznim-situacijama-1458278

27   „Gdje god okrenete glavu, prizori su apokaliptični, ravni hororu." (30. 12. 2020.) https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/uzas-pod-rusevinama-dosli-su-s-bagerima-prvo-su-nasli-oca-a-onda-i-sina-15039720

28   „Ova pandemija je svjetski rat s bezbrojnim nevidljivim neprijateljem, kojemu neoprezno puštamo da uđu među nas i nesvjesno postajemo kolaboracionisti" (27. 12. 2020.) https://www.jutarnji.hr/life/zivotne-price/moj-bozic-s-najtezim-pacijentima-sve-cuju-do-zadnjeg-trena-zato-je-bitno-da-osjete-da-nisu-sami-15039304 ; "nitko od Drugog svjetskog rata nije vidio nešto slično onome što sada radimo u našoj zemlji" (15. 5. 2020.) https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/trump-razvijanje-cjepiva-najveci-pothvat-od-razvitka-atomske-bombe-1402685

29   „Imam molbu za dizanje svijesti nacije jer ovo je praktički ratno stanje protiv virusa" (20. 3. 2020.) https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/pavle-kalinic-ovo-je-prakticki-ratno-stanje-molim-sve-da-iz-vjese-svoje-zastave/2167010.aspx

30   „I da će u ovoj bitki korona biti poražena kao nekoć Turci" (28. 10. 2020.) https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/reportaza-iz-novog-dalmatinskog-zarista-korona-ce-biti-porazena-kao-nekoc-tur-ci-15028550

[31] Vidi bilješku br. 27.

[32] „Ocijenio je kako bitku protiv koronavirusa ne možemo dobiti odlukama Stožera, ni kaznama, nego sviješću da svojom odgovornošću možemo sačuvati nečiji život.“ (15. 10. 2020.) https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/bozinovic-uvodenje-covid-redara-predlozili-su-sami-ugostitelji-1438819

[33] „Malo maski i rukavica, praksa ratnog profiterstva…“ (23. 3. 2020.) https://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/clanak/ljekarne-rade-od-9-do-17-sati-dezurne-24-sata-soldo-pozvala-gradane-da-bez-valjanog-razloga-ne-dolaze-20200323

[34] „Treba promišljati što nakon ratne ekonomije zbog pandemije.“ (10. 7. 2020.) https://blog.vecernji.hr/tomasevic/moze-li-drzava-majka-trajno-postojati-11820

[35] „ponovio je kako je sada važnije nego ikad očuvati gospodarsku stabilnost te kako je pred nama bitka za održavanje proizvodnje, zaposlenosti i radnih mjesta“ (24. 3. 2020.) https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/plenkovic-ministri-i-ja-cemo-svoje-place-za-ozujak-donirati-za-pomoc-zagrebu/2168421.aspx

[36] „Ono što je trebalo biti rekordna sezona pretvorilo se u borbu za opstanak zbog negativnog utjecaja pandemije koronavirusa“ (9. 9. 2020.) http://www.tportal.hr/biznis/clanak/ugostitelji-istre-i-kvarnera-u-cetvrtak-zatvaraju-lokale-na-60-minuta-20200909

[37] „U globalnom ratu za svaku dozu cjepiva Unija se ponovno zaokupila sobom i svojim potrebama zaboravljajući na neposredno susjedstvo.“ (2. 2. 2021.) https://www.vecernji.hr/premium/iako-ne-salje-cjepivo-i-trgaju-mu-zastave-eu-podrzavaju-dvije-trecine-gradana-bih-1465573

[38] „Ispalo je tako da se vodi žestoka bitka za svaku pošiljku, a čelnici EU-a pritišću tvrtku “AstraZeneca” u vezi isporuke već dogovorenih količina cjepiva.“ (28. 1. 2021.) https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/splicanka-u-centru-sukoba-astrazenece-i-eu-moja-iskra-ovih-dana-niti-jede-niti-spava-15046350

[39] „vodi se već, i to prilično otvoreno, i borba za demokratske institucije“ (11. 4. 2020.) https://www.jutarnji.hr/komentari/pokusaji-kompromitacije-kriznog-stozera-u-politicke-svrhe/10196872/

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Metafore rata i apokalipse u medijskom diskursu o pandemiji bolesti COVID-19 i potresu u Hrvatskoj 2020./2021.

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SAŽETAK

Način na koji razgovaramo o složenim i apstraktnim idejama prožet je metaforama. Mnoga istraživanja pokazuju da čak i najsuptilnija metafora može imati snažan utjecaj na to kako ljudi pokušavaju riješiti razne društvene probleme. Dakle, pretpostavka je da metafore nisu puki retorički alati, već da one duboko utječu na to kako konceptualiziramo zbilju i postupamo s obzirom na važna društvena pitanja. Tijekom posljednjih dvaju desetljeća znanstvenici iz različitih istraživačkih perspektiva proučavaju učinke metaforičnog uokvirivanja na politički diskurs. Metafore se često koriste za uokvirivanje političkih tema, a za te se metaforične okvire tvrdi da utječu na to kako ljudi razmišljaju o tim pitanjima, opažaju svijet i ponašaju se, na razini individualnog i kolektivnog. Na tragu tih istraživanja, metaforu u ovom radu shvaćamo kao kognitivno sredstvo koje ustrojava naš pojmovni sustav i omogućuje razumijevanje iskustva. Cilj je ovog rada istražiti upotrebu konceptualnih metafora u javnom diskursu vezanom uz koronakrizu i krizu izazvanu potresom u Petrinji. Istraživanje je provedeno u tri koraka, slijedeći metodologiju kritičke analize metafora (Charteris-Black, 2004). U prvom koraku, identifikacija metaforičnih izraza provedena je korištenjem velike baze podataka (big data corpus) objava s hrvatskih mrežnih portala nastalih u periodu pandemije (od siječnja 2020. do travnja 2021. godine) te za i nakon petrinjskog potresa 29. 12. 2020. U drugom koraku, interpretirane su dominantne konceptualne metafore korištene u medijskom komuniciranju tih dviju kriza. Rezultati te interpretacije pokazuju da su u slučaju epidemije bolesti COVID-19 sveprisutne metafore rata, dok se u izvještavanju o potresu koristila metafora apokalipse. U trećem koraku analize, nastojali su se objasniti razlozi i implikacije pojavljivanja tih konceptualnih metafora u medijskom diskursu.

Ključne riječi: konceptualne metafore, kritička analiza metafora, medijski diskurs, koronavirus, potres