

# Power relations through the prism of critical discourse analysis and systemic functional grammar

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## Abstract

The paper aims to evaluate the role of language in a specific socio-political context. It offers a critical approach and evaluation of the political statements of the European Union representatives regarding the process of the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the European Union. The focus of the linguistic investigation is on the identification of language structures that participate in the development of communicative models that enable the establishment of power relations between participating entities. The linguistic data is obtained through systemic functional grammar and evaluated using critical discourse analysis.

**Keywords:** systemic functional grammar; critical discourse analysis; presupposition; power relations; ideology.

## 1. Introduction

The paper aims to analyse the statements of the High Representatives and other relevant European officials regarding the status of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its likelihood of becoming a member state of the European Union. The envisaged analysis is conducted employing critical discourse analysis and systemic functional grammar.

According to Hart (2014), systemic functional grammar is concerned with what speakers do and why they choose particular modes of communication in specific communicative settings. The theory is designed to relate the language structure to its communicative function since it provides required descriptive tools (Fowler, 1991).

The data obtained from the linguistic analysis is interpreted using critical discourse analysis since this perspective enables linguists to understand and expose (van Dijk, 2015) different meanings and ideologies, which are knitted in the text under investigation. Furthermore, the perspective helps in under-

standing the relationship between language and power (Wodak, 2002), as well as the nature of the imbalance of power between participating entities.

The reasons for investigation of the discourse of the European Union officials rests in the fact that the institutional discourse itself promotes 'power relations'<sup>1</sup> since "power abuse is enacted, reproduced or legitimised by the text or talk of dominant groups or institutions" (van Dijk, 2003: 84).

### 1.1. Literature review

Critical discourse analysis is a type of discourse analysis that explores relationships between discursive practices and community structures. It aims to investigate how discourse is ideologically shaped by power relationships and the distribution of power (Fairclough, 1995). Fairclough (2003) sees society as a network of interconnected social practices of different kinds where every social practice has its semiotic elements.

The relationship between discourse and context is realised through language use. In a nutshell, the context shapes the formation of discourse, leaves signs, and draws inferences. Fairclough (1995: 134) highlights the importance of intertextuality, which he refers to as *interdiscursivity*, which allows for "a historical view of texts as transforming the past – existing conventions, or prior text – into the present". In his view, the analysis of text may encompass different levels of social structure and involve issues of power and ideology.

Systemic functional grammar, as a descriptive language tool, offers a methodology that helps critical discourse analysis to remain void of ideological bias since it provides explicitness, transparency, and precision (Young & Harrison, 2004). In both fields of investigation, researchers share some common characteristics. First and foremost, they both look at language as a social construct in the context of its role in society and how society shapes the language form. Secondly, they both share the dialectic perspective on language, where language form affects the context and vice versa. And lastly, both approaches emphasize cultural and historical aspects of meanings (Young & Harrison, 2004).

Being aware of the power of language and the potential it gives, as well as its role in the process of communicating desired ideas, politicians use its power to promote, influence, and persuade people to support their political goals. Political discourse has always been a point of interest for linguistic scientific circles. Linguists who were interested in language in use have

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<sup>1</sup> Teun A. Van Dijk talks about different dimensions of dominance and discusses various realizations of power relations. He defines power "as a property of relations between social groups, institutions or organizations" (2003: 84).

shown a great concern for the relationship between language, politics, and culture. The most prominent was the Frankfurt School and the trend gained in popularity in England as well (Chilton, 2004: ix-x). The question of identity in the promotion of political ideologies is a key factor for politicians and their parties since the notion of identity helps them in creating relationships with the masses and it helps them in promoting their political platforms (Hamdaoui, 2015). The concept and idea of identity are always wrapped up in ideology which remains hidden and in the shadows (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004).

Many researchers dedicate a lot of attention to the analysis of political speeches to reveal hidden ideological platforms in their statements. Blommaert & Verschueren (1992) investigate the role of language in the development of European nationalist ideologies. In their investigation, they focus on articles about ethnic conflicts and separatist movements. O'Regan & Betzel (2016) use the tools of critical discourse analysis to explore the question of extremism in the context of Islamism, white supremacy, and multiculturalism. Sadeghi et al. (2014) investigate applied discursive strategies in reports of Voice of America and Fars News in the context of support for the regime of Hosni Mubarak and the de-legitimization of his opponents. Wodak (2018) explores the dynamics and fluid co-construction of European identities through the prism of critical discourse analysis. In the paper, she is trying to deconstruct the impact of media on the construction of pro-European or Eurosceptic attitudes. Aydin-Düzgit (2014) analyses the potential of critical discourse analysis in the context of the European Union's foreign policy. Carta (2015) in her work investigates the implications of institutional reforms concerning the development of the discourse of the European institutional actors. Majstorović (2007) and Osmankadić (2016) explore issues related to the political discourse of the European Union representatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In her analysis of press releases from the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Majstorović (2007) discusses the question of power in the discourse of international representatives. Osmankadić (2016) analyses the functions of linguistic negation in political discourse to investigate the relationship between the semantic meaning of negation and semantic and pragmatic phenomena such as presupposition, implicature, and others.

The assumption in this paper is that the analysis of press releases of the European Union representatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina might show how the choices of lexical expressions influence the perceptions, convictions, and identities of those who are directly or indirectly affected by their communiqué. An attempt is made to identify and understand how the European Union representatives use language to balance between different actors, and

under specific circumstances regarding the accession process of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the European Union.

### 1.2. Aim of the paper

The paper aims to explore lexico-grammatical and pragmatic features of the discourse of the European Union officials and the models of communication that they use when addressing the political entities from Bosnia and Herzegovina and discussing the process of the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the European Union.

For this investigation, a discourse-analytic approach is used. It combines *micro* and *macro* analytical methods. The first relates to features of linguistic investigation of the text, while the latter is concerned with social processes and their function within language (Baxter, 2010).

### 1.3. Corpus

The analysis in this paper encompasses the press releases of the High Representatives, Christian Schwarz-Schilling (henceforth CSS), Miroslav Lajčák (henceforth ML), Valentin Inzko (henceforth VI) and other European Union officials who appear in the analysed press releases, which are issued for five years, from 2006 until 2011.

Table 1: Number of texts and distribution of clauses.

Corpus	Year	Number of texts	Number of clauses	Total
CSS	2006	14	341	590
	2007	10	249	
ML	2007	8	138	583
	2008	18	307	
	2009	8	138	
VL	2009	15	255	740
	2010	14	252	
	2011	13	233	
<b>Sum</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>1,913</b>	<b>1,913</b>

The data in Table 1 show that the analysis encompasses 100 press releases published over the period of five years. The sentences from every text are divided into clauses, and Table 1 shows that 1,913 clauses are assessed for their structure to gather the necessary data. Every text and clause is marked for the sake of tracking clauses and assigning them to the right source. For example, the marking *xy: a.b-c* denotes that *xy* stands for the speaker, *a* stands for the clause number, *b* stands for the number of text, and *c* refers to

the year. Thus, the marking CSS: 5.1-06 is read in the following way: Christian Schwarz-Schilling, clause number five, text one from 2006.

The reason behind the choice of three different High Representatives and three different time frames rests in the intention to explore the differences in language and context. Systemic functional grammar makes such an investigation possible since it “offers powerful tools for comprehensively exploring meaning in language [...] for accounting for differences between speakers, differences over time, or differences in context” (Schlepppegrell, 2012: 29).

#### **1.4. Methodology**

In this study, a discourse-analytic approach is used. The linguistic investigation (the micro-analytic approach) is carried out utilizing descriptive language tools derived from systemic functional grammar. The investigation encompasses several steps: the division of sentences into clauses, the analysis of ideational, interpersonal, and textual strands of meaning, the investigation of the transitivity system, and the development of the communicative models.

The linguistic investigation is followed by the macro-analytic approach. At this stage of the investigation, a framework developed by Fairclough (1995) is used and supplemented by the pragmatic investigation of presuppositions. The framework unfolds through three stages: description, interpretation, and explanation. In the first stage, the text is described in detail with a particular emphasis on the parts of the text which represent the focus of the analysis. A key descriptive tool at this stage is systemic functional grammar. This part of the analysis is concentrated on the identification of a problem and it involves ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). The phase enables the identification of the main participants involved in the discourse.

The second stage is the stage of interpretation. At this stage, the aim is to provide an interpretation that is based on assumptions and understanding of the analyst. The focus is on material activity, social relations and processes (power, institutions), mental phenomena (beliefs, values, and desires), and discourse (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

In the final stage, the critical approach enables the elaboration of the nature of relationships between text and discourse. The role of shared background knowledge becomes significant at this stage. It is important to identify the propositional content “which is conveyed thanks to the background knowledge and the beliefs shared by the participants” (Degano, 2007: 363). For the reason stated before, a part of the analysis includes an investigation of the implicitly transmitted messages, which are communicated but not said (Yule, 2010). To infer such messages, the analysis of presuppositions is

conducted since “a presupposition is something the speaker assumes to be the case prior to making utterance” (Yule, 2010: 25).

## 2. Theoretical background

Generally speaking, the basic purpose of language is to maintain the process of the exchange of information. However, Gee (2011) claims that one of the uses of language resides in the fact that it is also used to do things and be things. This aspect of language is particularly important when analysing context and identifying speakers, what is being said, and what the speaker intends to accomplish (Gee, 2011: 2). In this regard, Fairclough (1993: 134) argues that the use of language implies a type of action that is “socially and historically situated”, and as such should be investigated concerning the contexts of its use. The key element in structuring the right methodology for such an endeavour rests in the relationship between *micro* and *macro* analytical approaches, which combine the linguistic investigation of the narrative on the one hand, and social processes and their functions within language on the other (Baxter, 2010).

### 2.1. Critical discourse analysis

While discussing the nature of critical discourse analysis, Wodak (2002) argues that it originates from classical rhetoric, text linguistics, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and pragmatics. Thus, the main feature of this perspective is that it takes a critical approach toward language. It focuses on analysing different discourses to identify ideologies and values interwoven in them (Koussouhoun & Dossoumou, 2015). Critical discourse analysis strives to identify the imbalance between participants in a social context and how different texts are used for the investigation of power and ideology (Martin, 2000). In the field of linguistics, researchers make use of this perspective to “understand, expose, and ultimately challenge social inequality” (van Dijk, 2015: 466). The approach is gaining popularity among researchers investigating language use and a number of them are arguing that the study of language should be based on a sound socio-political intellectual basis allowing for better analysis of power in language and language use (Wodak, 2011).

### 2.2. Systemic Functional Grammar

Hart (2014: 5) believes that a sound grammar investigation is important because the models of grammar help in developing “systemic, theoretically driven, comparative approaches to analysis.” It empowers a researcher with the technical language needed for analysis, provides a close investigation of

meaning, contributes to precision, and allows for engaging in quantitative analysis where necessary.

Systemic Functional Grammar is a theory of language that focuses on purpose and choice (Halliday, 1994). According to Fowler (1991), its purpose is to relate the language structure to its communicative function.

Systemic Functional Grammar allows for the description of language as a social and cultural phenomenon and sees language as a formal system for the expression of meaning (Young, 2011). Functional focus provides an opportunity for text analysis and explains the meaning of the text. Language is seen as a system of choice. Systemic Functional Grammar explores the methods used by participating entities in the process of meaning exchange in diversified socially conditioned situations. The language system provides additional linguistic choices in a particular circumstance where interlocutors make lexical selections that fit the given context (Young, 2011). In this regard, Systemic Functional Grammar creates a theoretical framework, which offers researchers methodological tools for discourse analysis.

### 3. Linguistic analysis

This part of the paper provides a summary of the obtained data for the period 2006–2011. At this stage, the focus of the investigation is on the ideational and representational strata. The goal of the linguistic analysis is to help in the identification of different types of syntactic-semantic structures, and presentation of the common language models, which are used by the participating entities in communicating intended meanings and ideas.

#### 3.1. Ideational level of analysis

The section gives an overview of the language models belonging to the experiential strand of meaning. The foundation for the development of models relies on lexico-grammatical choices made by the participating entities engaged in the interactional process.

Table 2: Representation of the process types, 2006-2011.

	Process material	Process verbal	Process relational	Process mental	Process behavioural	Process existential
CSS	195	143	142	36	27	5
ML	188	169	133	64	16	11
VI	238	234	145	63	38	15
<b>Sum</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>31</b>

Three transitivity systems that dominate at this level of investigation are process material, process verbal, and relational processes.

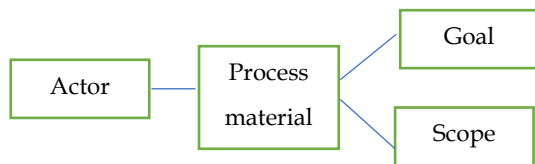


Figure 1: Transitivity system: Actor + process material + Goal/Scope

The model shows how the process type affects the choices of participating entities at the ideational stratum of representation. Halliday & Matthiessen (2004: 179) argue that “material clauses are clauses of doing-&-happening.” The choice of the verb may affect one of the two possible structures; whether someone does something (Actor + Goal), or is involved in the realization of a process over a longer period (Actor + Scope), as can be seen in examples (1) and (2).

(1)

Clause	Actor	Process	Goal
CSS: 15.9-07	<i>They</i>	<i>have failed</i>	<i>to enact reforms</i>

(2)

Clause	Actor	Process	Scope
CSS: 9.7-07	<i>I</i>	<i>have sought</i>	<i>to bring about a transition</i>

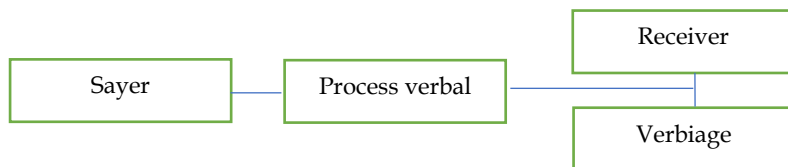


Figure 2: Transitivity system: Sayer + process verbal + Receiver/Verbiage

The model in Figure 2 stands for the participating entities in the verbal processes. Halliday & Matthiessen (2004: 252) claim that verbal clauses contribute to the creation of narrative, to the development of accounts of dialogue, and in attributing information to sources. This type of transitivity can be detected in examples (3) and (4).



- (3)
- | Clause        | Sayer     | Process            | Receiver                      |
|---------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| CSS: 20.10-06 | <i>He</i> | <i>had invited</i> | <i>leaders of all parties</i> |
- (4)
- | Clause      | Sayer    | Process          | Receiver       | Verbiage                  |
|-------------|----------|------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| CSS: 6.9-07 | <i>I</i> | <i>presented</i> | <i>the PIC</i> | <i>with my assessment</i> |

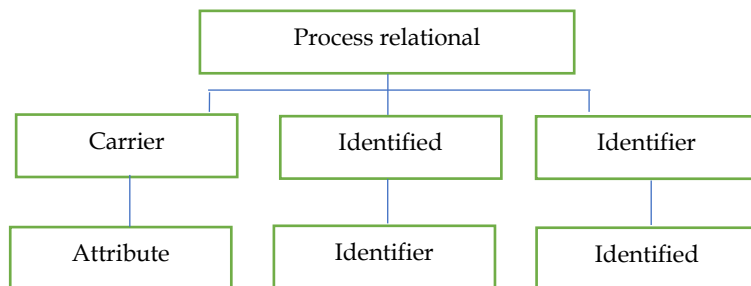


Figure 3: Transitivity system for relational processes

The purpose of relational clauses is to “characterize and to identify” (Halliday & Matthiessen: 2004: 210). The data, which is obtained for the period 2006-2011, show that the participating entities in this transitivity system are realised through three different structures to show that a participating entity possesses a certain quality that is recognized (Carrier + process relational + Attribute), to identify an entity involved in the process of encoding a credited quality (Identified + process relational + Identifier), and to identify an entity that is engaged in the process of decoding a credited quality (Identifier + process relational + Identified). Sentences (5), (6), and (7) provide an insight into the transitivity system for relational processes.

- (5)
- | Clause      | Carrier                  | Process        | Attribute   |
|-------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| ML: 16.5-07 | <i>The US engagement</i> | <i>remains</i> | <i>firm</i> |
- (6)
- | Clause      | Identified           | Process        | Identifier                                      |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| ML: 15.6-07 | <i>Their outcome</i> | <i>will be</i> | <i>a clear indication of political maturity</i> |
- (7)
- | Clause     | Identifier                                   | Process   | Identified              |
|------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| ML: 7.7-07 | <i>Discussion, agreement, and compromise</i> | <i>is</i> | <i>the European way</i> |



Figure 4: Transitivity system: Senser + process mental + Phenomenon

Unlike material processes which are “concerned with our experience of the material world, ‘mental’ clauses are concerned with our experience of the world of our own consciousness” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 197). The participating entities in this process either sense something or stand for an entity being sensed, which can be seen in example (8).

(8)

Clause	Senser	Process	Phenomenon
VI: 6.9-09	<i>We</i>	<i>expect</i>	<i>the authorities at all levels to abstain from interference in the independence of the judiciary</i>

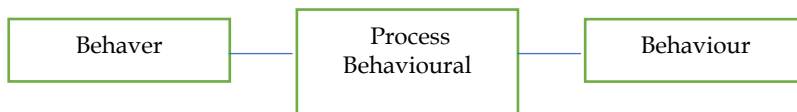


Figure 5: Transitivity system: Behaver + process behavioural + Behaviour

According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2004: 248), behavioural processes represent “physiological and psychological behaviour, like breathing, coughing, smiling, dreaming and staring.” These processes belong to a “border category which represents sensing and saying as activity” (Fontaine, 2013: 90). Sentence (9) is an example of behavioural processes.

(9)

Clause	Behaver	Process	Behaviour
VI: 10.5-10	<i>Europe</i>	<i>can respond</i>	<i>positively to the pragmatic and effective steps regarding visa liberalization</i>



Figure 6: Transitivity system for existential processes

The existential processes belong to the least number of identified systems. According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2004: 256-7) the processes of this

type “represent that something exists or happens”, and their function is to introduce main entities, and to incorporate participating entities into the narrative structure, as can be seen in example (10).

(10)

Clause		Process	Existent
VI: 9.4-09	<i>There</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>confusion about the proper focus of politics</i>

### 3.2. Interpersonal level of analysis

This level of analysis is also known as the level of the exchange of information. Here, the verb tense defines the dimension of time, i.e. the time when the exchange takes place, while modality defines the dimension of evaluation of what is being said (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The data, which is obtained for the period 2006-2011, show that indicative is the prevailing grammatical category used in the exchange of information. The majority of clauses are expressed in the declarative mood, with very few instances of the interrogative forms. The mode of the clause offers an insight into the nature of the information flow from the subject to other participants at the level of exchange. The data show that subjects are realised in two ways, as a nominal group or as nominal forms. The majority of verbs are realised as temporal operators referring to the present, past, or future with their active and passive forms. Thus, active forms prevail over passive ones. Sentences (11) and (12) provide examples of the exchange of information at the interpersonal level.

(11)

CSS: 5.6-06	<i>In this context</i>	<i>the High Representative and EU Special Representative</i>	<i>pointed out</i>
Interpersonal meaning	Adjunct	Subject	Finite/Predicator
	Declarative mood		

(12)

CSS: 5.7-06	<i>[...] that</i>	<i>the package of constitutional reforms</i>	<i>represented</i>	<i>a major advance</i>
Interpersonal meaning		Subject	Finite/predicator	Complement
	Declarative mood			

(13)

ML: 1.1-08	<i>Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>	<i>must meet</i>	<i>any EU conditionality</i>	<i>of its own volition</i>
Interpersonal meaning	Subject	Finite/Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
	Declarative mood			

Regarding the modal operators, they realise in the form of modalization and modulation. In systemic functional grammar, modulation refers to meanings of obligation and inclination, while modalization refers to probability and usability (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The overall results of the linguistic analysis demonstrate that modulation is used significantly more than modalization. Sentence (13) provides an example of modulation.

Regarding the participating entities that occupy subject positions, the data show that the High Representatives and the European Union officials occupy most of the subject positions, while other participating entities are given considerably less space, as can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Participating entities in the subject positions.

Period 2006-2011	Subject positions						
	The High Representative and EU Special Representative	The EU & other international officials	Political actors in BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina	BiH citizens	The EU integration	Reforms and other issues
Sum	47%	16%	12%	11%	5%	3%	6%

The significance of the starting positions within the clause is that the subject element often conflates with the unmarked theme elements, and as such, as argued by Halliday & Matthiessen (2004: 117-118) takes on two functions: the starting point of the message and the function of ‘resting point’ of the argument, or the entity “on which the validity of the information is made to rest.”

### 3.3. Textual level of analysis

Fontaine (2013: 139) claims that the textual metafunction is important since it is “fundamental in the creation of the text.” It enables the tracking of meanings interwoven throughout different clauses. This structure of meaning is known as thematic structure (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The thematic structure consists of two functional elements: Theme and Rheme. In systemic functional grammar, when the theme conflates with the subject it is known as the unmarked theme. The identification of Theme and Rheme can be observed in example (14).

(14)

CSS: 5.5-06	<i>Mr. Schwarz-Schilling</i>	<i>told</i>	<i>partici-pants</i>	<i>at a confer-ence</i>	<i>on the fu-ture of BiH's pro-gress to-wards secu-rity inside Europe</i>
Textual mean-ing	Experien-tial theme/ Unmarked	Rheme			

This type of theme is realised as a nominal group with a pronoun as a head, a nominal group with common or proper nouns as a head, or as nominalization.

In cases when the theme element is realised as something other than the subject, it is known as a marked theme. This type of theme manifests through adverbial groups or prepositional phrases, which function as adjuncts in the clause, as can be seen in example (15).

(15)

CSS: 5.6-06	<i>In this context</i>	<i>the HR and EU Special Representative</i>	<i>pointed out</i>
Textual meaning	Interpersonal theme/Marked	Experiential theme	Rheme

The third type of theme is known as the textual theme which contains elements that come before the unmarked theme. It is realised through continuatives, conjunctions, and conjunctive adjuncts (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 71-81). Sentence (16) exemplifies the textual theme.

(16)

VI: 14.18-10	<i>that</i>	<i>BiH politicians</i>	<i>have</i>	<i>dishonestly</i>	<i>suggested</i>	<i>to voters</i>
Textual meaning	Textual theme	Experiential theme	Rheme			

The identification of the major unmarked theme positions and entities which occupy them contributes to the understanding of the thematic potential of the text and to gaining insight into the thematic progression. One of the functions of the theme is to show relevance. It means that the theme represents the key feature in relating the clause with the remainder of the text (Fontaine, 2013).

#### 4. Critical discourse analysis

The approach proposed by Fairclough (1995) to a great extent simplifies the critical assessment of the data, which is obtained using the linguistic analysis in the previous section. The participating entities that are identified in the subject positions are the focus of investigation in this part of the analysis. The findings from this stage enable the identification of the propositional content.

The role of shared background knowledge becomes significant at this stage. It is important to identify the propositional content “which is conveyed thanks to the background knowledge and the beliefs shared by the participants” (Degano, 2007: 363). To infer such messages, the analysis of presuppositions is conducted since “a presupposition is something the speaker assumes to be the case prior to making utterance” (Yule, 2010: 25). In the end, an attempt is made to provide the communicative model which offers an insight into the functions of participating entities and the nature of relationships between them.

The analysis covers utterances expressed at the ideational stratum to reveal the power relations between identified participating entities. Thus, the investigation focuses on how the representatives of the European Union perceive other participating entities.

To identify presupposed meanings, the analyst follows the adapted model proposed by Levinson (1983) and Yule (2010) focusing on linguistic forms functioning as indicators of potential presuppositions.

At this stage, the focus is on four types of power relations between the participating entities. The analysis includes the European Union representatives as political actors, the European Union representatives and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Union representatives and citizens of Bosnia and

Herzegovina, and the European Union representatives and the integration process.

To complete the envisaged investigation, the analysis covers utterances conveyed over the period 2006-2011. Only those statements that are relevant to the aim of the study are considered for the analysis.

#### **4.1. *The European Union representatives acting as political actors***

The obtained data indicate that the European Union is present in Bosnia and Herzegovina and acts as the key political actor. The European Union has its representatives whose task, among others, is to monitor the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and send regular updates to the central office, as can be seen in examples (17) and (18).

(17) *The international community is not withdrawing* (CSS: 13.1-06)

(18) *Mr. Schwarz-Schilling provided an update on the political situation* (CSS: 2.14 -06)

The installed officials act from the position of power showing their supremacy over other political actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina who have to follow instructions coming from the European Union. Throughout the discourse, the European Union creates its identity of power portraying the European Union as 'a capable force' which offers its help to those who are not as strong. The European Union representatives remind Bosnia and Herzegovina's politicians that Bosnia and Herzegovina is not a stable country, meaning that the country needs all help that the European Union can offer. Examples (19), (20), (21), and (22) provide insight into such notions.

(19) *The international community's engagement has left no space for the BiH authorities* (CSS: 28.2-06)

(20) *The European Union would retain a capable force* (CSS: 19.5-06)

(21) *The International community is to help BiH authorities* (CSS: 30.2-06)

(22) *The European Union will not put this country's hard-won security* (CSS: 10.9-06)

In 2007, the Stabilization and Association Agreement is brought up, but it could not be initialled because the political actors from Bosnia and Herzegovina failed to implement the necessary reforms, as can be seen in examples (23) and (24).

(23) *Commissioner Rehn had hoped to be in a position to initial an SAA* (CSS: 38.1-07)

(24) *Commissioner Rehn made clear that the SAA would only be initialled when the entity and the state-level government had adopted an agreement on police reform* (CSS: 7.3-07)

Such a situation points to a power imbalance between the European Union officials and political actors from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The European Union officials are willing to implement concrete measures, but due to the inability of Bosnia and Herzegovina's politicians, they are not in a position to implement the necessary measures.

The European Union officials keep on acknowledging the existence of problems in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but at the same time, they emphasize the positive role of the High Representative and portray the European Union as a responsible institution that honours their promises. Furthermore, the European Union officials promote European values of discussion, agreement, and compromise all that is missing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, suggesting that if Bosnia and Herzegovina wants to get integrated, this is the road to follow. The above-stated notions are exemplified in sentences (25), (26), and (27).

(25) *We should not deny the existence of problems* (ML: 15.2-07)

(26) *He supported the efforts of HR/EUSR Lajčák in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (ML: 8.3-07)

(27) *Discussion, agreement, and compromise is the European way* (ML: 7.7-0)

The European Union officials also represent the European Union as a 'zone of peace, prosperity and democracy' (Sandrin & Hoffmann, 2018). This is noticeable from their communiqué in which they claim that the European Union membership contributes to the improvement of living conditions, as can be seen in the example (28).

(28) *The international community remains a willing and constructive partner in helping Bosnia and Herzegovina move to the next stage of post-war recovery and European integration* (CSS: 1.9-07)

Since 2008, the focus of European Union officials revolves around the issue of the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the European Union. They argue that their main objective is the process of integration and the official body which monitors and assesses the situation in the country is PIC, as in examples (29) and (30).

(29) *The International community's strategic goal in BiH is to see the country accede to both NATO and the EU as soon as possible* (ML: 1.8-08)

(30) *The PIC is in a position to make a positive assessment of the situation* (ML: 12.10-08)

For the first time, the European Union Representatives acknowledge that the International community has political partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, these politicians are not capable of normalizing the country and the European Union aims to help them. The European Union representatives acknowledge that Bosnia and Herzegovina is still in a political



crisis that drives Bosnia and Herzegovina away from integration into the European Union. The political system in Bosnia and Herzegovina is being devalued, which is causing limitations for its people in various aspects. These notions are exemplified in sentences (31), (32), (33), and (34).

(31) *The International community is working intensively with its BiH partners* (VI: 3.4-09)

(32) *Our aim is to normalize this country's status* (VI: 5.12-09)

(33) *We will only get the country out of its present political and economic crisis and back onto the road to Europe* (VI: 6.11-10)

(34) *We can help the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina go beyond the limitations of the present political system* (VI: 19.1-11)

Considering the inability and ineptness of politicians from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Union has to reinforce its presence in the country and confirm its role as the key political actor who has the power to act and take steps, as can be seen in the examples (35) and (36).

(35) *The reinforced EU presence now being prepared represents an EU approach* (VI: 5.1-11)

(36) *We have it within our power to take steps* (VI: 6.12-11)

#### 4.1.1. Inferences

From the discussion above, the following conclusions as underlying ideologies could be drawn:

- the European Union representatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina assume the role of the Supervisor who monitors the situation and proposes a further course of action;
- the European Union is the political actor who assumes a dominant role in the process of implementing political policies;
- the relationship between the European Union and Bosnia and Herzegovina is a relationship of dependency. Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot set on the road of development unless it implements all measures proposed by the European Union;
- the European Union cherishes values of democracy, prosperity, and freedom for everyone to realise their potential, while Bosnia and Herzegovina is limiting its people by denying them such values, which are absent from the political discourse in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

#### 4.2. *The European Union representatives and Bosnia and Herzegovina*

This part of the analysis is marked by clauses loaded with modal verbs which make it possible for expressing judgments, attitudes, obligations, readiness, inclination, and ability (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Eggins, 1994).

The European Union perceives Bosnia and Herzegovina as a country that has a complex constitutional structure, and if it wants to improve, the country must move from such complexity. The European Union representatives state that the only positive future for the country lies within the European Union, which means that there is no future for Bosnia and Herzegovina outside the European Union. However, the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is complicated and not everyone wants to see Bosnia and Herzegovina in the European Union. The major issue is that Bosnia and Herzegovina does not follow the path of the European Union integration. Bosnia and Herzegovina is perceived as neither a dynamic nor responsible country, and being such is an irrelevant factor in the European Union arena, as can be observed in examples (37), (38), (39), (40), and (41).

- (37) *Bosnia and Herzegovina must move from the complex constitutional structure* (CSS: 24.4-06)
- (38) *Bosnia and Herzegovina is within reach of the goal of the vast majority of its citizens* (CSS: 1.7-06)
- (39) *Bosnia and Herzegovina should seek to follow the path taken by countries of the Western Balkans* (CSS: 17.11-06)
- (40) *But more dynamism and responsibility must come from this country* (CSS: 2.9-07)
- (41) *To move closer to the top, Bosnia and Herzegovina must make itself relevant* (CSS: 5.10-07)

Having so many problems, Bosnia and Herzegovina is not ready for European Union membership knowing that it has not met the needed requirements. Because of this, Bosnia and Herzegovina is far behind its neighbours in terms of European Union integration, as in examples (42) and (43).

- (42) [...] *will also be the day that it will be ready for EU membership* (CSS: 25.10-07)
- (43) *Bosnia and Herzegovina has still not met all requirements* (ML: 2.6-07)

Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to accede to the European Union because by doing so it can achieve peace and highly needed stability. For, there is no security for Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider region unless they all integrate into the European Union and NATO, as is exemplified in sentences (44) and (45).

(44) *The process of EU integration is the best means of ensuring lasting progress and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (ML: 1.8-07)

(45) *BiH and the wider region will not be secure until they are all integrated into the EU and NATO* (ML: 18.10-08)

To get on the path to European Union integration, Bosnia and Herzegovina must begin the process of constitutional reform and resolve the issue of state property. However, the problem is that both entities have to agree on the country's road to the European Union, which is not the case. Example sentences (46), (47), and (48).

(46) *BiH must begin the process of constitutional reform* (ML: 11.13-08)

(47) *BiH would need to resolve the issue of State Property* (ML: 6.16-08)

(48) *BiH can only join the EU and NATO as a State* (VI: 18.1-10)

According to examples (49) and (50), Bosnia and Herzegovina has ineffective politics and incompetent politicians at all levels. As a result, it lags behind its neighbouring countries in terms of European Union integration.

(49) *Bosnia and Herzegovina has a chance to return to serious and constructive politics* (VI: 1.3-11)

(50) *BiH needs functioning authorities at all levels* (VI: 4.11-11)

#### 4.2.1. Inferences

From the discussion above, the following conclusions as underlying ideologies could be drawn:

- Bosnia and Herzegovina is an inefficient country because of its complex constitutional structure;
- Bosnia and Herzegovina is a highly polarized country. One part of the country is oriented toward the European Union integration process, while the other part is against integration into the European Union;
- because of its complex constitutional organization and polarized attitudes towards the European Union integration, Bosnia and Herzegovina is perceived as an irrelevant political factor in the European Union arena;
- Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country that has achieved neither real peace nor stability;
- due to ineffective politics and polarized political leadership, Bosnia and Herzegovina is far from integration into the European Union.

### 4.3. *The European Union and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina*

The European Union representatives, in their communiqué, encourage citizens to take an active role and participate in the creation of efficient government. Civil society is passive and waits for politicians to do something for them, as is exemplified in sentences (51), (52), and (53).

- (51) *The creation of a more efficient government is in the citizens' interest* (CSS: 16.2-06)
- (52) *It is up to civil society to take full responsibility* (CSS: 24.2-06)
- (53) *The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina expect the political parties to move ahead rapidly* (CSS: 14.3-06)

Citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina are in an underprivileged position and they do not live like other citizens of Europe. The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina are too submissive and do not take on an active role in the process of the European Union integration. They should become active participants and insist on reforms. Citizens should take an active role in fighting corruption and urge politicians to create a positive economic climate. The general observation is that citizens are very dissatisfied with their political representatives, but are doing nothing to change that, as can be seen in examples (54), (55), (56), (57), (58), and (59).

- (54) *Citizens will be able to begin living in a way that is comparable to that enjoyed by citizens elsewhere on the continent* (CSS: 45.1-07)
- (55) *They have left responsibility for European integration entirely in the hands of political leadership* (ML: 9.5-08)
- (56) *You have to fight for the European Union every day, in every place, and in every way* (ML: 7.5-09)
- (57) *Citizens and NGOs are not being pushy enough to press for this improvement* (VI: 17.2-10)
- (58) *Citizens want more jobs and less corruption* (VI: 19.2-11)
- (59) *Citizens in every part of BiH are frustrated and angry with leaders* (VI: 9.3-11)

#### 4.3.1. *Inferences*

From the discussion above, the following conclusions as underlying ideologies could be drawn:

- it is often observed that the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina tend to be passive when it comes to participating in the electoral process and promoting social change;
- due to the complexity of the political situation, citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina do not enjoy the same rights as other European people;

- citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina should become agents of social change and elect political representatives who would work in the interest of citizens.

#### 4.4. *The European Union representatives and the integration process*

The European Union representatives, in their communiqué, insist on the importance of integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the European Union and, in due course, claim that it contributes to creating lasting peace and reducing disagreements. Since 2006, Euro-Atlantic integration has been the most important goal for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus, the integration has certain requirements as well. The political actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina are required to find a common ground and only in this way the road to the European Union and NATO is open. The European Union representatives promote the integration process and claim that it would enhance the reform of the administration system as well, as exemplified in sentences (60), (61), (62), and (63).

- (60) *The Euro-Atlantic enlargement policy has helped head off a plethora of problems and disputes* (CSS: 19.1-06)
- (61) *The Euro-Atlantic agenda is the driving force and the underlying premise* (CSS: 4.3-06)
- (62) *To find creative ways to reconcile different aspirations is the key to prosperity and security in the Western Balkans and full membership in the European Union and NATO* (CSS: 2.6-07)
- (63) *European integration is the best way to reform the country's system of administration and government* (ML: 10.7-07)

What prevents the implementation of the integration process is nationalist rhetoric, which is present in the political discourse of Bosnia and Herzegovina's political leadership, as stated in the example (64).

- (64) *The key challenge is to ensure that European integration does not become collateral damage to nationalism* (ML: 20.1-08)

The integration process has two significant advantages: a secure country governed by the rule of law and a boosted economy. Despite these benefits being apparent, political leaders have not been working hard enough to bring the country closer to Euro-Atlantic integration, as mentioned in examples (65) and (66).

- (65) *EU membership will consolidate BiH security and democracy* (ML: 24.5-08)
- (66) *European integration has a direct and dynamic impact on job creation* (ML: 1.11-08)

#### 4.4.1. *Inferences*

From the discussion above, the following conclusions as underlying ideologies could be drawn:

- the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the European Union will bring up a democratic society and lasting stability;
- the major obstacle, which blocks the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the European Union, is the nationalist rhetoric used by the political leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### 5. Discussion

This section of the paper aims to explain the communication model that defines how participating entities interact with each other. The model shows that the lexical choices of the European Union representatives enable them to interact with other participating entities from the position of power. Other participating entities are also able to assume different language functions but their realization positions them in the subordinate position compared to the entity identified as the European Union representatives.

While the former get involved in the processes of doing and happening, creation of the narrative, identification of their qualities and identities, and the expression of personal standpoints, the latter assumes language functions that are realized through process types marked by modality. Thus, instead of doing and happening they are being suggested or ordered to get involved in a process; they are never given any possibility to create a narrative; their qualities and identities are being identified and evaluated by others; and lastly, their perception is marked by their inclination to be up to the task that they are required to complete.

The model, which is presented in Figure 7, confirms the claims of Gelabert (2004) who argues that language can be used to maintain structures of domination and resistance as well as structures of power imbalance and empowerment.

The model highlights the role of the context which affects the semiotic process of the meaning-making. It can be observed that there are two types of participants involved in the process of mutual interaction. The group identified as the European Union representatives and the other group identified as other participating entities. The European Union representatives in the model assume the functions of Actor, Sayer, Senser, and Carrier, which correspond to the respective process types. Each of these functions enables participants to interact with other participating entities in line with the context and intended meaning.

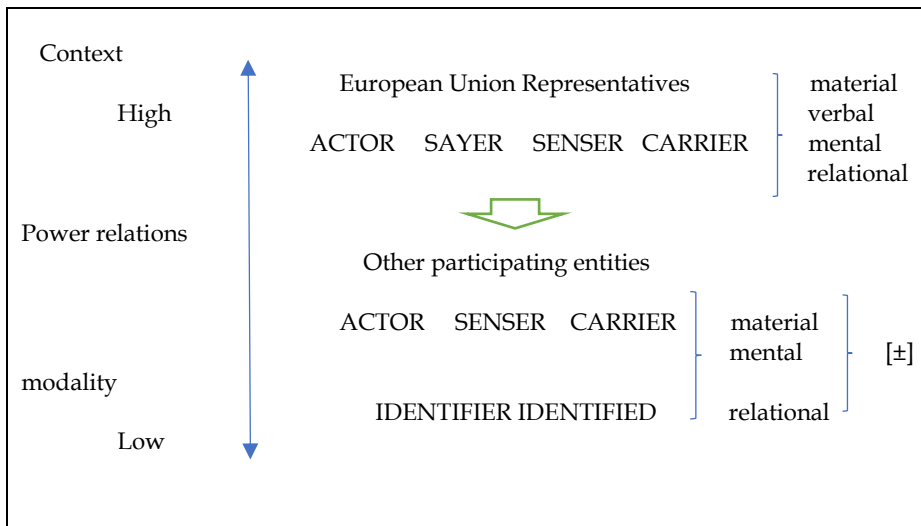


Figure 7: The relationship between social context and language use in the meaning-making process

The analysis of the text contributes to the identification of the nature of the relationship between the European Union representatives and other actors that are involved in the process of negotiation. In line with the ideas developed by Roberts (2011), it is possible here to talk about power relations in terms of power and asymmetry, goal-oriented encounters (Drew & Heritage, 1992), and the politics of representations (Mehan, 1993).

According to Roberts (2011), any institutional discourse is interwoven with relations of power and assumes different stratification of knowledge and status which causes unbalanced positions. In the context of this investigation, after examination of the argumentation line of the European Union representatives, it is clear that there is a power imbalance between them on the one hand and other actors on the other. Fairclough and Fairclough (2012: 23) define argumentation as “a verbal, social activity [...] whose intended perlocutionary effect is convincing an interlocutor to accept a standpoint”.

The investigation in this paper shows that the European Union representatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina assume the role of the supervisor who monitors the situation and proposes a further course of action. The relationship between the European Union and Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of power asymmetry. If Bosnia and Herzegovina wants to set off on the road of development it has to implement all measures proposed by the European Union. On the other hand, the European Union values democracy and freedom whereas Bosnia and Herzegovina is perceived as a country that is limiting its people by denying them such values.



The European Union representatives are trying to implement the concept known as 'deliberative democracy' (Cohen, 1998) by involving Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens in the process of decision-making to get to 'deliberative disagreements' (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996). However, they know that Bosnian society is highly pluralized in many different aspects and to expect to reach a common framework of discussion is a bit of a challenge. The European Union offers a common framework for discussion in terms of Euro-Atlantic integration but political actors coming from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the entity Republika Srpska seem to have opposing views on this matter which makes it difficult to come to a mutual agreement. The High Representative Inzko recognizes such opposing views and notices that political actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina are involved in power games whose end product is a dysfunctional state.

Regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina and its accession into the European Union, it could be observed that the European Union representatives combine both, practical and theoretical reasoning (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012). In terms of practical reasoning, the European Union representatives offer a course of action to reach the desired goal, which is the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the European Union, but at the same time, they point out what is appropriate and what is not, especially to things concerning civil society and political actors.

In the context of practical reasoning Audi (2006: 96) offers a very simple schema that involves desires and instrumental beliefs as follows:

Major premise – the motivational premise: (I want),

Minor premise – the cognitive (instrumental) premise: my doing A would contribute to realising...,

Conclusion – the practical judgment: I should do A.

The European Union is aware of the overall situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and they want to help the country overcome the current problems. The motivational premise is that the European Union wants Bosnia and Herzegovina to become integrated into the European Union. However, the cognitive premise is that Bosnia and Herzegovina is inefficient due to its complex constitutional structure, ineffective politics, and polarized political leadership. The conclusion would be that Bosnia and Herzegovina will not become a member of the European Union unless it resolves problems concerning constitutional reform and necessary changes at the level of political actors.

The goal of the European Union representatives is to create a positive atmosphere in the country regarding its accession to the European Union. The idea is to present the process of accession as something natural and acceptable to all parties involved in the process of negotiation. To do this, the



European Union representatives use one technique which is known as ‘imaginarities’ (Jessop, 2008). This concept comes from social theorists and it stands for the twofold representation of social reality: the actual world and a future possible world (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012). The analysis has shown that the European Union representatives criticize the current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina but at the same time, they argue for the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the European Union, which would bring up a democratic society and lasting stability in the country.

Finally, it could be observed that the European Union representatives through the politics of representation intend to legitimize their efforts in achieving their goals. The idea of the politics of representation, as coined by Mehan (1993), enables European Union officials to portray themselves and their policies as superior to those of other parties involved in the negotiation process. From the analysis, it is observed that the European Union officials are epitomised as supervisors, help providers, a capable force in Bosnia and Herzegovina, decision-makers, supporters, and power agents, as can be seen in the examples (67), (68), (69), (70), (71), and (72) respectively.

(67) *Mr. Schwarz-Schilling provided an update on the political situation* (CSS: 2.14-06)

(68) *The international community is to help the BiH authorities* (CSS: 30.2-06)

(69) *The International community would retain a capable force in BiH* (CSS: 19.5-06)

(70) *Olli Rehn’s decision puts BiH back on the road to European integrations* (ML: 1.1-07)

(71) *Commissioner Rehn supported the efforts of HR/EUSR* (ML: 8.3-07)

(72) *We have it within our power to take steps* (VI: 6.12-11)

Conversely, the linguistic choices enable the European Union representatives to portray political actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina as reform obstructionists, demotivated politicians who demonstrate wilful blindness, a threat to stability, aggressive speakers, immature, irresponsible, and similar, as is mentioned in examples (73), (74), (75), (76), (77), and (78) correspondingly.

(73) *Their success will depend on the willingness of the BiH authorities to implement the required reforms* (CSS: 5.6-06)

(74) *Party leaders are behaving as though there are no pressing problems* (CSS: 25.10-06)

(75) *Politicians do not stop using inflammatory rhetoric* (CSS: 28.12-06)

(76) *Key political leaders reverted to the aggressive yet arid rhetoric of the 1990s* (CSS: 21.1-07)

- (77) *Acceptance or rejection of the argument will be a clear signal of maturity of leading Politicians (ML: 20.2-07)*
- (78) *The politicians in BiH have to focus their attention on the obligations of the EU partnership (ML: 19.4-08)*

In this fashion, the legitimisation of efforts done by the European Union officials is achieved because they have the right authority to do so, what they want for Bosnia and Herzegovina is the right thing to do, and their efforts have been rationalized (Leeuwen, 2007).

## 6. Conclusion

The paper aims to evaluate power dynamics by highlighting various syntactic-semantic structures. It also intends to illustrate the linguistic models that guide the communication of desired concepts during the negotiation process. The linguistic investigation incorporates three levels: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Understanding of the environment or the ideational level is achieved by the analysis of the transitivity system which organizes the experience into a set of process types. Each of the process types provides “its own model or schema for construing a particular domain of experience” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 170). The models of communication rely on lexico-grammatical choices made by the participating entities in the communicative process.

Through analysis, it has been discovered that the European Union representatives primarily hold positions of power as Actors or Sayers in material processes. This allows them to actively engage in political processes and shape the political narrative. On the other hand, those from Bosnia and Herzegovina mainly hold positions as Carriers, Identifiers, and Sensors in relational and mental processes. While their decision-making abilities may be less significant, they are still aware of and participate in political processes.

At the interpersonal level or the level of the exchange of information, the focus of investigation is on how speakers use language to interact with others. According to Fontaine (2013), the subject and the finite verbal element decide on the interactional nature of the clause. The data unequivocally demonstrate that subject positions are largely monopolized by European Union representatives, accounting for a substantial 63%, while only 12% is allocated to political actors from Bosnia and Herzegovina. This undeniably underscores the preeminent role that the European Union assumes in the negotiation process.

The textual investigation extends beyond clause borders and provides meanings that exceed the meanings of the experiential or interpersonal strands. Identification of the initial position (Theme) is significant because it

introduces the topic, points out the relevance of the message to the situation, directs the message to the desired goal, and marks a transition of the text (Fontaine, 2013).

The second part of the investigation is dedicated to critical discourse analysis, which takes a critical approach toward language. For that matter, an approach proposed by Fairclough (1995) is used. The investigation is carried out through three stages: description, interpretation, and explanation. The goal of the final stage i.e. the explanation stage, is to deconstruct and reveal the ideological properties of the text. The investigation here focuses on how the European Union representatives perceive other participating entities. In a nutshell, the results show the following:

- the European Union is a political actor who assumes a dominant role in the process of the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the European Union;
- Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country that is in a political crisis, with political actors who are involved in power games whose end product is a dysfunctional state;
- Bosnia and Herzegovina is an inefficient country due to its complex constitutional structure and as such is far from integration into the European Union;
- citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina are submissive voters afraid of taking on an active role in bringing about social change;
- the major obstacle to the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the European Union is the nationalist rhetoric used by the political leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- political interference and influence on the judiciary system accompanied by the use of negative rhetoric are the major impediments that prevent both the reform process and the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the European Union.

The investigation presented in this paper provides a communication model that highlights the relationship between context and the language choices made by involved parties during negotiations to convey intended meanings. The strategic selection of language and grammar can significantly influence the distribution of power in negotiations. Such choices can confer a distinct advantage to one party over the other, making it a crucial factor to consider for successful negotiation outcomes.

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Received: February 21, 2023

Accepted for publication: April 29, 2023



## Appendix

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