

# These women's verbs

A combined corpus and discourse analysis on  
reporting verbs about women and men in  
Czech media 1989–2015

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## Sammanfattning

This study aims at analyzing how women and men in five different professions are portrayed and represented through reporting verbs in Czech media over a period of 25 years (end of 1989 to the beginning of 2015). The empirical data consist of entire newspapers and magazines in the source material, a subcorpus from the Czech National Corpus. The theoretical basis is Critical discourse analysis and the methodical is a corpus-based statistical analysis. Binary categories from the Harvard Psychosociological Dictionary are used to classify the reporting verbs. After a quantitative study, the results are clear for some professions and less clear for others, and these results are analyzed.

This study could not (at least not without severe adjustments) have been performed in languages like English, where the distinction between the female and male professional concepts is less clear. One chapter therefore describes the Czech context, and explains this study's contribution to previous research in language, power and corpus studies.

### **Nyckelord**

Kritisk diskursanalys, korpuslingvistik, mediaspråk, tjeckiska, anföringsverb, könsdifferentiering

### **Keywords**

Critical discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, media language, Czech, reporting verbs, gender differentiation

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# 1. Introduction

Much previous research has been done about how women are represented in society. For this study, a modern language perspective on this issue is used. This paper provides a case study of how reporting verbs used in media about different professions may unveil social processes and, as Wodak mentions (1989, xiv), make otherwise unnoticed linguistic structures and systems visible. This is a theoretical framework called Critical discourse analysis, often abbreviated CDA. The professions chosen are members of parliament, bosses, clerks, teachers and singers, and the reporting verbs are the 50 most common reporting verbs for the members of parliament.

Language is the common tool for everyone working with CDA, but this case is analyzed through the linguistic structure of Czech, where the nouns for different professions are gender-specific. To this is added the corpus linguistic analysis made from the empirical data of the material. The combination of reporting verbs and professions thus form a linguistic structure that is analyzed through the filter of corpus-based CDA.

This analysis can be seen as a part of a continued discourse work on linguistic othering conducted since 2015, in which a corpus-based method is used, and where absolute and relative figures from searches in the Czech National Corpus are calculated to give ratios. These figures then lay the basis for a more qualitative discourse analysis of the research question at issue. All parts in this (Elmerot 2016; 2017 and the present study) are theoretically based on critical discourse analysis as well as previous research on language and power, and methodically based on corpus linguistics.

## 2. Aim and focus

The aim of this study is to see if there is any visible gender differentiation in the Czech language, with a focus on the kind of reporting verbs that are used about professional women and men in Czech media after 1989. To fulfil this aim, corpus linguistics will be used together with critical discourse analysis in order to get a statistically significant and systematic result.

## 3. Theories

This study is based on critical discourse theories on gender, language and power. They lead up to two main statements:

- Female politicians get a more negative media coverage than their male counterparts (Gidengil & Everitt 2003, 209)
- Men and women are very disproportionately pictured in news media (Caldas-Coulthard 1995, 239).

In this study, these two main theories will be analyzed for the case of the Czech republic, with the means of reporting verbs in Czech printed media about members of parliament, bosses, clerks, teachers and singers. The study is also using the following as a theoretical framework.

## 4. Previous research

The previous research considers the more theoretical critical discourse analysis (CDA) in general and the combination of gender, language and power in particular, as well as more method-based research on reporting verbs. Some corpus-based discourse analysis research is also included, but the combination of this and gender studies is still rather new (Baker 2014, 13).

## 4.1 Critical discourse analysis

In this paper a corpus analysis method is used with a critical discourse approach. Critical discourse analysis, or CDA, is based on theories explaining how certain language usage has come to be a matter of course (Stubbs 1997, 3), and especially how power is used and misused in discourse. One CDA aim is to reveal that which Norman Fairclough calls “hidden” (Fairclough 2015, 41) and Lazar calls “invisible” power (Lazar 2007, 148) – some discourse is not always obvious when browsing, but may turn into a matter of course if it is repeated often enough. When a certain phrase, or a whole discourse for that matter, starts to get repeated, the receivers (listeners, readers etc.) import that phrase and keep it close at hand. One English example is “illegal immigrant”, an alliterating phrase with two words that do not at all have to do with each other originally, but that we today see as a joint phrase, a matter of course, unless we think critically about it. Sunderland (2004, 11) also concludes that CDA is a good starting point for studies on gender in discourse, although the researcher “must” reflect on the results in the light of what is known from other sources about the researched area in question. In discourse studies related to power, it is hard to avoid the many works of Teun van Dijk, that also coined one extraordinary definition of CDA: it is “discourse analysis ‘with an attitude’” (van Dijk 2001, 96). In his book *Discourse and power* (van Dijk 2008: viii–ix) he states that it is important to study media as well as political, educational and scholarly discourse in order to be able to pin down the “socially shared” ideas and attitudes that discriminate in society. In this study, focus is on media language – that and educational material are probably the most widely spread material of the ones that van Dijk mentions.

### 4.1.1 CDA on gender, language and power

Gender scholars have researched different power structures through the decades, and for a linguist, the CDA approach seems to fit very well when the aim is to see how gender is represented through the language usage in society. Lazar states (2007:144) that gender studies should and could often overlap with CDA, since that may give a stable theoretic basis for gender issues. Wodak concludes (2007, 93) that gender differentiation often is subtle, and we

may believe that with women holding the same positions as men, the differentiation is eradicated. A discourse analysis of a large source material is then a suitable way of making such subtleness clearly visible. Stubbs (1997, 1) claims that there is no discourse analysis theory that clearly states how language usage might affect what reoccurs in our mind, but that "language and thought can only be related, if one has data and theory pertinent to both" (idem 1997, 6). This is why corpus analysis based on a very large corpus has been used to test the theories in this study. This large corpus is the source material, and statistical corpus analysis is used as a method. This is, in turn, a method to "examine frequencies, or, at least, provide strong indicators of the frequency, of specific phenomena recognized in CDA" (Baker et al. 2008, 296).

## 4.2 Research on reporting verbs

Already more than 20 years ago, in a study on reporting verbs in Swedish fiction, Martin Gellerstam concluded that when men talked, they were reported to do so "briefly" and "calmly", whereas women talked "smiling" or with "trembling lips" (Gellerstam 1996, 23). A similarly detailed study for non-fiction would be a welcome future study.

The most frequent reporting verb in Germanic languages is "say". According to the most recent large monolingual dictionary *Svensk Ordbok* (2009, 66), and Gellerstam (1996, 21), for Swedish it is *säga* ("say") and *fråga* ("ask"). For English, the recently published COBUILD English grammar states the same (Collins 2017, 870). In newspaper text, however, Allén (1971, 146–147) as well as Caldas-Coulthard (1995, 234) state that verbs like "tell" are more common than "ask". This would then be similar to the case in Czech in general: According to *A Frequency Dictionary of contemporary Czech* (Čermák & Křen 2011), both aspects of the standard translation of "say", *říct* and *říkat* as well as the perfective form of "ask", *zeptat se*, come before the other reporting verbs like "claim", *tvrdit*. This Czech dictionary is based on spoken and written language, and fiction as well as non-fiction and newspaper texts. In the more recent Encyclopaedic dictionary of Czech, the reporting verbs are explained as semantic variations of the verb "speak", *mluvit* (Hirschová 2017). In Hirschová's chapter, the reporting

verbs are also divided into different categories based on the character of the report, whether it is for example a means of communication (like *telefonovat* or the newer *mejlovat*, *chatovat*, *textovat*), a sound character (like *šeptat* [whisper], *volat* [call] or *křičet* [scream, shout] or it explains the purpose of the communication function (*určení komunikační funkce projevu*, like *říct* [say], *oznámit* [announce, report] or *zakázat* [forbid]). For this study, no such distinction has been made, since the purpose is to search for other differences.

## **4.3 Corpus-based discourse studies**

The combination of critical discourse analysis and corpus analysis is gaining ground, based on the more and more frequent articles and books using both. It has now been established enough as a research field (whether it is otherwise called corpus-based or corpus-assisted) to get its own acronym, CADS (corpus-assisted discourse studies, Törnberg & Törnberg 2016, 404). The reason given is often that it creates a non-biased, methodical, systematic result out of something that could otherwise have been very vague (Franklin 2017). In his book on using corpora for gender studies in particular, Baker states (2014, 13) that few researchers still seem to combine a CDA analysis on gender with quantitative corpus analysis. Such a method does, however, give a broader view to the subject and the researched, and makes it easier to make a more general scientific statement about the language in use in the (in this case) Czech media. Baker also notes (idem 2014, 90) that gender representation from a large corpus is a way around some issues on interpreting the results – the analysis instead gives a cumulated picture of “how gendered categories are understood in the society where the corpus came from”.

### **4.3.1 Corpus-based discourse studies including reporting verbs**

There are but a few previous studies on the combination of gender, corpus analysis and reporting verbs. For the first half of the 1990s, Caldas-Coulthard (1995) does an analysis of who is “given voice” and how this is reported in three newspapers from the United Kingdom. Her source material consists of 200 news “narratives” from ten days in 1992, excluding such topics as sports, debates and interviews. Her study is qualitative and carefully chosen with regard to

the material not being written for any specific sex. This may, however, be a methodological problem, since the risk of writing on and for your own peers is imminent. It may not give an overview of the whole discourse in the same way as a larger or broader source material would give. Naturally, this was harder to do in the beginning of the 1990s, but since the study combines this news with a concordance list of reporting verbs from media archives (idem 1995, 228), a wider view might have been possible. Caldas-Coulthard does have a good point in the fact that utterances are interpreted and re-interpreted until they eventually end up in a newspaper article (idem 1995, 230), but what the readers see in print (on paper or digitally) is what reflects structures and systems and they may incorporate this into their own discourse. Caldas-Coulthard's study, although it is not qualitative, also concludes that men are quoted eight times more often than women (idem 1995, 235). It would have been interesting to also see her conclusions about the differences in reporting verbs backed up by figures.

A more recent combination of critical discourse analysis and reporting verbs analysis is made in Gidengil & Everitt (2003). They conduct a qualitative study on the Canadian case of female politicians depicted in TV and newspapers through 885 instances of reporting verbs (idem 2003, 217). The examples they discuss are all active and strong narratives, something that is considered typical for masculine politicians (idem 2003, 210). The authors differ between reported speech and report on speech (idem 2003, 216), something that is not considered in this current analysis, since the representation of the professional woman or man is gendered either way. Their categorization was studied manually, by letting 242 students evaluate their verbs according to a positive/negative scale of five. In addition, they measured how aggressive the students found the reported speaker without the students knowing if the speaker was female or male. This is also what their tables show: how the students reacted to the reporting verbs categorized as aggressive. Gidengil & Everitt conclude *inter alia* that the female students took the female party leaders' speech as more aggressive than the male party leaders (idem 2003, 225). Their more general conclusions are, however, that the Canadian journalists did an interpretation of female party leaders' speech more than they did of male leaders' by using other

verbs than the standard “say”, “tell” and “talk about”. In their study, several “aggressive” verbs were only used for women – and these were not in any way standard reporting verbs: *blast*, *bash*, *slam* and *rebuff* to name a few (idem 2003, 227).

## 5. The Czech context

### 5.1 Gender discourse in the Czech Republic

Gender theories have not been developed only in the Western part of the world, of course.

Before the 20th century, several female authors (like Božena Němcová, Eliška Krásnohorská and Karolina Světlá) were the avantgarde of the emancipatory idea that women should take their well-deserved part in society. During the First republic (when the Czechoslovak nation was founded after the fall of the Habsburg Empire) 1918–1948 there were both translated works of fiction and nationally produced magazines that discussed the role of women in Czechoslovak society (Oates-Indruchová 2016: 923) and put forward capable women as a contrast to still prevalent ideas about the two standard sexes. This is not to say that the period was extremely liberal; women writing about homosexuality still mostly used pseudonyms (Seidl & Lishaugen 2011: 222; 234). Then the Nazi occupation of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1939 pushed women back out of politics and back into their homes. During the Communist era of 1948–1989, women were officially back in politics, but in practice, women's emancipation was often fought back, and the word “feminism” even disappeared from the official, public discourse (Oates-Indruchová 2016: 924–925). Oates-Indruchová therefore aims (2016: 936) at clarifying the presumption that feminism as a concept and ideology was imported to the Czech(oslovak) Republic after 1990. It is claimed (Oates-Indruchová 2016, 938) that there was then (or is still) a hostile feeling against questions on feminism and gender in the Czech media. Of interest here is the conclusion (idem 2016: 939) that the popular books and media from the early 1990s quickly turned sexist, with the examples of both re-published novels and one of the daily newspapers

(*Blesk*) that is included also in the source material for this study<sup>1</sup>. Rebecca Nash (2002) reports on three prominent Czech gender theorists from the first decade after the Velvet revolution, and states (Nash 2002, 293) that the issue of having an employment, something debated among gender scholars in the West at the time, was not an issue for these women, and that Czech women of the times were not supposed to “value political involvement” (idem 2002, 294). Havelková & Oates-Indruchová (2014) give a good overview of the general gender research, regarding discourse or not, in the Czech and Czechoslovak republics. None of the articles in that book look more closely to the language usage as a whole, however. The editors also conclude that further discourse research needs to be done in order to complete the picture of “the gender culture in the Czech lands” (idem 2004, 13).

## 5.2 The research benefits of the Czech language

This study would not (without severe problems or alterations) be feasible in English, nor other languages where there is no distinction in the noun for professional concepts like singer or teacher. For other languages, like Arabic, French, Polish or Russian, the professions would have to be limited by the ones where there is an accepted and widely used distinction. Czech is, however, a language where the gender distinction is still the standard written usage for most professional concepts, and a language that also has a large enough corpus available for a study like this.

## 6. Question and hypotheses

The question to be answered is:

- Are negative reporting verbs more frequent for women than for men in the Czech media after 1989?

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<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately Oates-Indruchová here, amongst other sources, quotes an unpublished article that seems impossible to get hold of today.

From this question and the theories presented above, either of the following two hypotheses should be verified together with a null hypothesis:

- Hypothesis 1: Women get a significantly more negative media coverage than their male counterparts.
- Hypothesis 2: Women get a significantly more positive media coverage than their male counterparts.
- Null hypothesis: No significant gender differentiation is visible in the source material.

These are mutually exclusive hypotheses. From this is derived that if the negative reporting verbs will have a different frequency when used in statements referring to women and men, respectively, then there is visible gender differentiation. The hypotheses can be tested and falsified either for individual professions or for a weighted average of all five chosen professions. In this study, both options will be tested.

## 7. Material

The source material is the latest (at the time of writing) version of SYN, version 5. This is empirical data collected in the Czech National Corpus, abbreviated ČNK (Křen et al. 2017).

This version 5 consists of 4 599 643 984 tokens, which makes 7 770 263 lemmata (words in their basic form, like nominative or infinitive). The material used is the journalistic part of the SYN version 5, 176 titles from 1989 to 2015 including several national daily newspapers (*Mladá fronta DNES*, *Lidové noviny*, *Právo*, *Hospodářské noviny*, *Blesk*, and *Sport*), regional daily newspapers (mostly from *Deníky Bohemia* and *Moravia*) and weekly or monthly magazines (*Reflex*, *Respekt*, and *Týden*), the latter from the years 1998–2014.<sup>2</sup> The journalistic part is by far the largest in the SYN series version 5<sup>3</sup>. The corpus is hence not considered representative, since it does not cover all kinds of empirical data, but no document is to be found twice in it. It is traditionally tagged with standard metadata (Hnátková et al. 2014, 160). The searches were conducted mainly during September and October 2017. For all searches, only material with Czech as source language is used. All the SYN series are monitor corpora

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<sup>2</sup> <http://wiki.korpus.cz/doku.php/en:cnk:syn:verze5>

<sup>3</sup> A table of the amount of words from the respective areas is found here:  
[https://wiki.korpus.cz/lib/exe/detail.php/cnk:slozeni\\_syn\\_v5.png?id=en%3Acnk%3Asyn%3Averze5](https://wiki.korpus.cz/lib/exe/detail.php/cnk:slozeni_syn_v5.png?id=en%3Acnk%3Asyn%3Averze5)

(McEnery & Hardie 2012, 6), which means that they are well-made for searching large text volumes applying a statistical method to get an overview of the everyday usage of expressions.

## 8. Method

To methodically reach conclusions drawn from the material and make a systematic, quantitative study – in order to get a statistically significant overview – a large enough source material (text corpus) should be used (Baker 2014, 18; Törnberg & Törnberg 2016, 404; Stubbs, 1997, 110).

The material, the latest version of the SYN series of the Czech National Corpus, consists of empirical data from 1989 to the beginning of 2015, and is presented in more detail below.

Previous research on discourse analysis, gender research and reporting verbs will form the background that will eventually lead to a result focused on gender differentiation. This is the reason why a combination of critical discourse analysis is here combined with corpus analysis as a method. Something that Baker (2014, 21) mentions as a method that makes sense for an easier comparison, is to put the concordance hits into a table as both raw numbers and percentage frequencies. This is therefore done in this study for ratio calculation.

The empirical data will be systematically researched through an analysis of reporting verbs found in the source material. To classify the reporting verbs, the Harvard Psychosociological Dictionary (Kelly & Stone 1975, 10; 12–13) will be of help. Since that dictionary is a work based on English words, two or three synonyms of each chosen verb will be studied to get a more complete meaning. This dictionary is still such a valid research work, that its importance should not be overlooked. The focus is then on the Charles Osgood's semantic differentials (Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum 1971), noting whether or not the Czech words' English translations in the largest Lingea Czech–English dictionary (Lingea s.r.o. 2008) are categorized in the dictionary as Positive/Negative, Strong/Weak or Active/Passive (cf. idem 1971, 25, 66 & 120).

In the calculations, only reporting verbs in a position of +/-3 from the keyword noun are included. This was chosen because the Czech word order allows the predicative verb to be placed both before and after its subject noun, which may in turn consist of more than one word. To choose a larger number, like 4 or 5, would create too much information noise. Two examples from the concordance for the most frequent of the chosen reporting verbs is shown in Pictures 1 and 2.

**Picture 1: Example of the positioning of verbs in Czech, from the search for *poslankyně* + *tvrdit* (“claim”, “assert”, “contend”).**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mladá fronta DNES	v úterý	Nejprve pořádek , pak možná platby pacientů	Západočeská	poslankyně	Milada Emmerová	tvrdí	že žádné nemocnice není třeba rušit
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mladá fronta DNES		Z tohoto pohledu tam pan Herold patří ,		poslankyně	ODS Kateřina Dostálová .	Vladimír Mlynář z Unie svobody se	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mladá fronta DNES		dostal geniální nápad vyrábět plenkové kalhotky ,	náchodská	poslankyně	Zdeňka Horníková .	Vydělal na plenkách	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lidové noviny		propagaci buržoazní kultury a západního stylu života .	Slečna	poslankyně	tvrdí	že o zvláštní komunistického režimu nemá dostatek objektivních	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mladá fronta DNES		Myslím , že už není návratu ,		Poslankyně	tvrdí	že chtěla kandidaturou za Zemanovce posílit levici v	

**Picture 2: An example of the combination female MP and *protestovat* (“protest”).**

	Návrh nebere v úvahu jedinečnost manželství ,	lidovecká	poslankyně	Michaela Šojdrová .	Svatba jen na matrice ?	Největší spory
	Proti těmto závěrům České školní inspekce	pardubická	poslankyně	Ladislava Zelenková ( ČSSD )	Česká školní inspekce ve své	
	že byly zveřejněny části nahrávky osobního charakteru ,		poslankyně		Hodlá proto žalovat tvůrce divadelní hry .	„ Svá
	mít i církevní školy , proti čemuž marně	komunistická	poslankyně	Marta Semelová .	Doma až později	Ze školních automatů by

The corpus lemma search does not differ between participles of the verbs and their indicative form, but when browsing through the search hits manually, this only turned out to be evident in the case of one verb, *přesvědčit* (in the sense “convince”). Since this then meant that the person with the researched occupation was convinced, it was kept as a Positive category.

## 8.1 Analyses and work steps

With this combined method of CDA and corpus linguistics, it is sometimes difficult to differ between the qualitative and the quantitative analysis – they are intertwined in the progress.

The searches start with the nominative form of a term for a professional occupation. A so-called basic search is performed, as opposed to a lemma search, which includes all cases of the word in question. First the search is made within a context, with a so-called PoS (part of speech) filter,

of any verb within 1 position to the right of the professional term. A frequency list is then created of the verb lemmata within 1 position to the right, to show which verbs are used at all with this keyword and how frequent they are (after the most frequent verbs *být* and *mít*, “be” and “have”). The reason for doing one position at the time is due to the current limitations of the corpus engine, that cannot create a frequency list like this for positions higher than 1.

### 8.1.1 The verbs

The next step is to check manually which verbs of the ones in the frequency list that are reporting verbs and chose the ones that are the 50 most frequent (since the searches returned a few hundred reporting verbs). Here, the categorization from the Harvard Psychosocial Dictionary comes in, and a qualitative analysis is made. This dictionary was created to be of assistance for psychologists who wanted to assess meaning in text content, to do content analysis (Kelly & Stone 1975, 1). The dictionary is today only published online, where the categories are also explained in more detail<sup>4</sup>. It has been expanded over time, but for this study, only three of the original value pairs have been used. The three binary semantic categories Positive/Negative, Strong/Weak or Active/Passive were used for categorisation, and the 50 most frequent reporting verbs for members of parliament were noted with the categories that their English equivalents have in the dictionary. If there are more than one or two English synonyms for the Czech verb, the three most common are chosen. Some categorization examples:

<i>obviňovat</i>	accuse, blame	(accuse & blame) Negative, Hostile.
<i>potvrdit</i>	confirm, affirm, verify	(affirm) Positive, Strong. (confirm) Strong. (verify) Positive, Active.
<i>mluvit</i>	speak, talk, say	(say) Active. (speak) Active. (talk) Active.

Of the three binary categories that were deemed relevant for the aim of this study, only one was chosen: 25 of the verbs were only either Positive or Negative. Both Strong and Weak were used

<sup>4</sup> The Harvard Psychosociological Dictionary's categories are explained briefly here:

<http://www.wjh.harvard.edu/~inquirer/homecat.htm>

for some English synonyms, but none of the categorized reporting verbs were classified as Passive. A few verbs were not found in the dictionary, and these were then disregarded. That left 12 verbs that were Negative and 13 that were Positive, which made a comparable binary category for this study. The 25 Positive or Negative verbs were therefore divided into separate groups and analysed with the nouns (see Appendix 1).

**Table 1: The final reporting verbs with their English translations and categorizations according to the Harvard Psychosociological Dictionary**

Czech	English	Strong	Weak	Active	Passive	Positive	Negative
kritizovat	criticize, attack, denounce	X		X			X
obviňovat	accuse, blame						X
odmítnout	refuse, decline, pass		X				X
pohrozit	threaten	X					X
pomluvit	slander, defame, libel			X			X
přiznávat	confess		X				X
protestovat	protest, remonstrate, object			X			X
prozradit	reveal, disclose, leak						X
tvrdit	claim, assert, contend	X	X	X			X
vyhrožovat	threaten, menace, intimidate	X		X			X
vyplsnit	reproach, chastise, reprimand			X			X
zdůraznit	stress, emphasize, point out	X		X			X
hovořit	talk, discuss; address in a speech			X		X	
informovat	inform, notify, instruct	X		X		X	
poradit	advise, counsel, recommend	X				X	
potvrdit	confirm, affirm, verify	X		X		X	
považovat	consider, believe					X	
přesvědčit	convince, persuade, reason	X		X		X	
připouštět	admit, concede, acknowledge		X			X	
připustit	admit, concede, allow		X			X	
přislíbit	promise, vow, agree					X	
prohlásit	declare, state, affirm	X		X		X	
sdělit	communicate, inform, announce			X		X	
slíbit	promise, assure, vow to	X				X	
vysvětlit	explain, clarify, clear up			X		X	

Source for classification: Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum (1971).

Now the corpus is searched again, this time for professional noun term + each of these 25 reporting verbs. As mentioned, the search is filtered to contain the respective verb within three steps from the keyword (+/-3), to get a more representative picture. The number of hits for each combination is noted, see Appendix 2. In the Appendix, there are formulas for calculating the following, for each verb and for each female and male profession:

- relative figures to all verbs
  - ratio for the figures that regard women
  - ratio for the figures that regard men
- relative figures to the searched reporting verbs
  - ratio for the figures that regard women
  - ratio for the figures that regard men
- total figures for each verb, for women and men

With these tables, it will be possible to falsify either hypothesis (H), and answer the question. If there are patterns to support H1, the H0 and H2 can be falsified, and in the result there will be a conclusion emerging from H1. Since perfective and imperfective aspect of every verb is reported separately in the corpus, as well as in the most recent Frequency dictionary (Čermák & Křen 2011), they are taken as separate verbs here as well. In some cases, there are also semantic differences, as shown in Table 1 (*tvrdit* and *potvrdit*; *připouštět* and *připustit*).

For each reporting verb classified as Negative or Positive, a search was finally made for all five professions.

### **8.1.2 The professional nouns**

To begin with, the study needed a professional noun that would be well represented in the media. Inspired by Gidengil & Everitt (2013), the starting point is members of parliament, in Czech *poslankyně* and *poslanec* for female and male respectively. The other four professions were chosen partly based on previous research and partly on what professions that are often cited in media in general, as well as representing both public officials and popular culture. They were also chosen because they come from slightly different social groups, but they also had to

have a strong enough representation in the source material. In news media, low-wage profession employees are rarely represented by themselves through reporting verbs (for a British study, see Owen 2012), which is why no cleaners (11 search hits for *uklízečka* + *tvrdit* compared to 180 for *uřednice* + *tvrdit* which was the lowest of the chosen professions), bartenders (29 hits for *barmanka* + *tvrdit*) or similar professions could be chosen for this study. They have not been chosen based on statistical criteria of the most common professions, since the empirical data cover more than 20 years and also include foreign-based professionals, like the Members of the European Parliament.

The profession key words was searched in their nominative form singular, i.e. with the search called “word form”, with the reporting verb in question as a lemma in position 1–3 to both the right and the left of the word. Then the boxes for “journalism” and “source language: Czech” were ticked to get the relevant figures.

Finally, a few notes on what did not end up in the final result:

Reporting verbs that may be stereotypes for women, like *pomluvit* (“slander, libel”) were not found for the male occupations at all (almost: one single entry for a boss that slandered), which may be seen as an example of the reinforcement of ideas that women do not belong in politics (Gidengil & Everitt 2003, 211). On the other hand, *rafat*, (“bark, yap”) was actually found for both female and male occupations.

When choosing the word to use for some kind of leader, the word *předačka* (“female political leader”) got 2 (!) hits, the form *šéfová* (“female boss”, treated as a noun despite its adjectival form) got 26 and “vůdkyně” (female leader) 75 hits. There is also a discussion in the Czech republic (Anonymous 2006) on which form to use for a female leader using the loanword *lidr*; in this study, the form *lidrka* got 0 hits with any verb at position 1R, whereas the form *lidryně* got 23 hits, the first one from as late as in 2004. I therefore decided not to use any of these.

## 9. Results

In this section, the quantitative results are intertwined with the qualitative, since the corpus-based (critical) discourse analysis, or CADS, method is a combination of the two.

The results show that the profession with the most unsteady income, the singers, are also the most negatively represented, but this might have more to do with the fact that in this source material, they are most frequently reported in tabloids “driven more by sleaze than by substance” (Ross 2017, 162) – in this source material the likes of *Aha!* and *Blesk* – that prefer to write about the more negative sides of society.

In Table 2 we see the 25 reporting verbs that were eventually chosen, because they were clearly either negative (Neg) or positive (Pos). The rows then show the figures for the first analysed noun, which is Member of Parliament, MP (*poslankyně* is female and *poslanec* is male). The first two columns show how many occurrences of each verb there were, as well as for all verbs and reporting verbs. The relative figures and fifth column (“Ratio female/male” for any verb) are then calculated based on the figures for any verb and any reporting verb, respectively. The relative figures for any verbs are important to give a standardized view of the verbs’ relative importance, since they are so many more for men in this study. The ratio thus gives an easier comparison.

The most interesting is probably the last column, “Ratio female to male” for the reporting verbs, where all numbers above 1 mean that this verb is used more often to portray women. There are more ratio figures above 1 in the top half of the table, which means that there are more negative verbs used to portray women here. There are two instances where the verb was not used at all for the male MP, which creates a mathematical problem of division by zero, noted in the ratio

columns. This is not important for the final result. When the positive/negative ratio is above 1 in the last row, it here means that the positive verbs are more common than negative verbs.

The first twelve verbs are negative and the last thirteen (from *sdělit*) are positive. In the first two columns, the absolute figures are presented, and the first row has the absolute figures for all verbs found with the noun in question, 19 387 verbs for female MP and 87 584 for male MP. The next row has the total number of reporting verbs in the table, 1 675 for women and 8 160 for men. The negative table includes the verb for “claim”, *tvrdit*, which is a very common reporting verb, here as well as in the frequency dictionary (Čermák & Křen 2011, 22). Since the ratios are calculated on relative numbers, it does not matter that this and a few other verbs have so many hits, the important thing is how often they are used about women compared to men, which we can see in the rightmost ratio column.

**Table 2: The numbers and performed calculations, here with the example calculations for poslankyně/poslanec (Member of parliament)**

		Absolute figures		Relative figures to any verb		Ratio (female to male)	Relative figures to reporting verbs		Ratio female to male
		poslankyně	poslanec	poslankyně	poslanec		female	male	
	Any verb	19 387	87 584						
	Any reporting verb	1 675	8 160						
Neg	tvrdit	410	2049	2.11%	2.34%	0.90	17%	19%	0.97
Neg	odmítnout	85	325	0.44%	0.37%	1.18	4%	3%	1.27
Neg	přiznávat	38	141	0.20%	0.16%	1.22	4%	2%	1.31
Neg	prozradit	34	106	0.18%	0.12%	1.45	12%	4%	1.56
Neg	obviňovat	5	24	0.03%	0.03%	0.94	0%	0%	1.01
Neg	kritizovat	117	334	0.60%	0.38%	1.58	2%	2%	1.71
Neg	pohrozit	13	19	0.07%	0.02%	3.09	0%	0%	3.33
Neg	zdůraznit	57	330	0.29%	0.38%	0.78	2%	3%	0.84
Neg	protestovat	16	72	0.08%	0.08%	1.00	0%	0%	1.08
Neg	pomluvit	4	0	0.02%	0.00%	DIVI-SION/0	0%	0%	DIVI-SION/0
Neg	vyplísnit	3	2	0.02%	0.00%	6.78	0%	0%	7.31
Neg	vyhrožovat	8	11	0.04%	0.01%	3.28	0%	0%	3.54
Pos	sdělit	127	616	0.66%	0.70%	0.93	11%	10%	1.00
Pos	prohlásit	262	1499	1.35%	1.71%	0.79	8%	19%	0.85

Pos	slíbit	37	129	0.19%	0.15%	1.30	1%	1%	1.40
Pos	považovat	56	303	0.29%	0.35%	0.83	2%	2%	0.90
Pos	příslibit	27	80	0.14%	0.09%	1.52	1%	0%	1.64
Pos	hovořit	39	213	0.20%	0.24%	0.83	1%	2%	0.89
Pos	vysvětlit	108	476	0.56%	0.54%	1.02	16%	10%	1.10
Pos	potvrdit	94	582	0.48%	0.66%	0.73	9%	12%	0.79
Pos	přesvědčit	46	220	0.24%	0.25%	0.94	2%	2%	1.02
Pos	informovat	36	254	0.19%	0.29%	0.64	5%	5%	0.69
Pos	poradit	3	21	0.02%	0.02%	0.64	1%	0%	0.69
Pos	připustit	30	226	0.15%	0.26%	0.60	1%	2%	0.65
Pos	připouštět	20	128	0.10%	0.15%	0.70	1%	1%	0.76
	<b>Positive/ negative ratio</b>	<b>1.12</b>	<b>1.39</b>						

In these results, there are more positive reporting verbs than negative in the material used, but the positive ratio is higher for men, and thus negative verbs are more often used about women. The negative verbs with the highest ratio are *vyplísnit*, reprove or reproach with a ratio of 7,31 for female MPs, followed by *vyhrožovat*, threaten, intimidate or menace, with a ratio of 3.54, and *pohrozit*, threaten, which has a ratio of 3,33. However, none of these are among the most frequent, but it is still clear that Czech readers get to read that female members of parliament more often threaten others than men do. A manual check of the search hits has been performed to see that it was not the women who were reproached or threatened, and they were not. With the positive verb *přesvědčit*, “convince” or “persuade”, many of the results consisted of the participle, so that the professional person was convinced or persuaded. These verb forms were included in the calculations. More relevant for the final result is that a verb like *kritizovat*, “criticize” has a relative ratio of 1.71, and is the second most frequent of these negative reporting verbs. Gidengil & Everitt (2003, 211) noticed that in the Canadian tv debates they studied, the female party leaders were more often depicted as “attacking” than the men, something that is thus reflected here, where the only verb that may include the concept of attack is *kritizovat*.

The results of a search in the Czech National Corpus are displayed as a concordance, where the surrounding context is shown as well as the hits themselves. That makes it possible to perform manual controls of the context. This was also made here especially in some cases, like in the

case of “threaten” above. A few hits were removed before performing any calculations: in the case of *poradit si*, which with this dative reflexive particle included means “handle” instead of “advise” or “recommend”, and in the case of negated occurrences of *protestovat*, “protest” before the words for boss, since that would give a different meaning not relevant for this study.

In Table 2, only one occupation was chosen as an example of the calculations leading up to the result, and we will now look at the results for all five. Here, the figures in the ratio columns mean that the higher the number, the more positive reporting verbs

**Table 3: The total result for each profession**

	Number of occurrences		Positive/negative verb ratio	
	female	male	female	male
<i>poslankyně/poslanec</i> (member of parliament)	1 675	8 160	1.12	1.39
<i>šéfka/šéf</i> (boss)	2 251	45 973	2.11	2.18
<i>úřednice/úředník</i> (clerk)	1 177	1 313	1.81	1.79
<i>učitelka/učitel</i> (teacher)	3 996	1 871	2.23	1.90
<i>zpěvačka/zpěvák</i> (singer)	3 080	3 331	0.65	0.85
<b>All occupations (weighted average)</b>	<b>12 179</b>	<b>60 648</b>	<b>1.42</b>	<b>1.92</b>

It seems clear from the results, shown in Table 3, that there is a gender differentiation for these professions in the Czech printed media included in the National Corpus. As shown in Table 3, the positive verbs are in most cases prevalent in general, but they are more prevalent for men (a total of 1.92) than for women (a total of 1.42). Since these ratios are relative to the number of reporting verbs occurrences, it does not matter for the result that men are mentioned five times more often than women – but that is another clear result of gender differentiation in general.

The weighted average in the last row still points to a generally more negative picture of women for all five occupations in this study. A Chi2 test is performed, to test the probability (P) value

of the figures, where the probability should be 0 to show it to be statistically significant. The difference for all professions together is statistically significant at the conventional levels (P value = 0.000). However, we see a difference between the professions: The female MPs and singers are clearly more negatively depicted (P value = 0.000 for both occupations respectively). For the bosses (P value = 0.524) and clerks (P value = 0.887), however, the results show no statistically significant difference in the language usage. The female teachers, finally, even have a statistically significant overrepresentation of positive reporting, relative to their male colleagues (P value = 0.007).

Since none of the categorized reporting verbs were classified as passive (see Appendix 1), which makes it clear that female members of the Czech parliament – since they were the starting point – are at least not considered less active than their male counterparts. Only eight out of fifty reporting verbs were classified as weak. However, fourteen of them were classified as negative, and fifteen were classified as positive. Of these, two had synonyms that were the opposite, which leaves twelve negative and thirteen positive in the basis of this study.

Men are in focus more often, with the extreme example of 45 973 male and 2 251 female bosses in Table 3, but that may be representative of the number of actual bosses, MPs etc., which means that the gender differentiation exists on a different level in society, not necessarily in the language usage here. Since this is a study over time, over 25 years, it is rather difficult to find the statistical numbers for how many people of each gender that has all of these professions. In the corpus searches there are also results from other countries, which makes such statistical figures for the Czech Republic rather biased. Singers may be particularly hard to pinpoint, since many are most likely not registered in any statistical records. It is equally striking that reporting verbs on singers are very negative (a positive/negative ratio below 1 for both genders) and on bosses are very positive (a ratio not only above 1, but above 2 for both). Since the paper with the largest number of articles in the SYN series corpus is *Mladá Fronta Dnes*, a general newspaper not specializing in any business reports, the opposite could perhaps have been

expected. Female teachers also stand out, since they get so much positive reporting (2.23 versus 1.90 for male teachers), a result that points to possibilities for future, more in-depth, studies.

# 10 Conclusions

This study aimed at answering the question:

- Are negative reporting verbs more frequent for women than for men in the Czech media after 1989?

There were also two hypotheses and a null hypothesis:

- Hypothesis 1: Women get a significantly more negative media coverage than their male counterparts.
- Hypothesis 2: Women get a significantly more positive media coverage than their male counterparts.
- Null hypothesis: No significant gender differentiation is visible in the source material.

The findings in this study indicate that in general, women are more negatively portrayed, according to the binary distinction used. For two of the five occupations, member or parliament and singer, hypothesis 2 has been falsified. For another two of them bosses and clerks, the null hypothesis cannot be falsified, since the P value is too high. For the fifth, the teachers, hypothesis 1 is falsified.

“There is one important way in which gender is not equivalent to categories like class or ethnicity.” says Eckert (1989, 253), and Lazar (2007, 143) elaborates on that. Minority groups, like the ones that have been in focus in the previous studies (Elmerot 2016; 2017), are more obviously “others”, whereas the gender differentiation often is more complex, something that is also visible from this study, where the numbers differ from occupation to occupation. There is a clearer gender bias for certain professions, without a doubt, but not for all. The number of articles on men and women seems to be in the men’s favour, but men are likely also more often bosses and women are more often teachers in the Czech Republic, although the exact figures for these professions are not included in the present study. It is thus perhaps not surprising that men

are reported in the media five times more often than women, but still a clear indication that women are under-represented in a society where there is no big difference in the total number of women and men (Czech Statistical Office 2016). The professions in this study (members of parliament, singers, bosses, clerks and teachers) are represented by hundreds of thousands of sentences in the source material, and are by no means neither obscure nor irrelevant for society as a whole.

There are several facts in this study that may inspire future studies, quantitative as well as qualitative. First of all, other verbs than reporting verbs could be analysed with the same qualitative method, to verify the results in this study. Such far-fetched verbs as *blast*, *bash*, *slam* and *rebuff* have not been considered in the current study, but that is not to say that it could not be done in the future. It could also be widened in time. Rebecca Nash (2002, 296–299), for example, looks back on gender research made on the First Czechoslovak Republic, making it even more interesting to conduct a combined critical discourse and corpus analysis study on material from that time, if and when the Czech National Corpus gets useable material for the years 1918–1938. From the current study, however, it seems that female members of parliament were hardly even portrayed in the Czech news media before the mid-1990s, since many of the keywords do not even appear until about 1994 for the female members of parliament, when their male counterparts return search hits from 1990 and 1991 (a few from 1989 as well). A larger study, and perhaps wider in time, could tell if it is a general fact that men are five times more often reported than women in the Czech printed news media, as the result here suggest. Future corpus-based research may also examine changes over time, since the ČNK is planned to cover similar material from 1850 onwards.

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