

**PERCEPTION OF ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIANS
IN AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPERS: A CRITICAL
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF TWO NEWSPAPER
ARTICLES**

Rosanna Malinen
Bachelor's Thesis
English
Department of Language and
Communication Studies
University of Jyväskylä
Spring 2022

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

Tiedekunta - Faculty Humanistinen tiedekunta	Laitos – Department Kieli- ja viestintätieteiden laitos
Tekijä – Author Rosanna Malinen	
Työn nimi – Title Representation of Aboriginal Australians in Australian media: a critical discourse analysis of two newspaper articles	
Oppiaine – Subject Englannin kieli	Työn laji – Level Kandidaatintutkielma
Aika - Month and year January 2022	Sivumäärä - Number of pages 22
Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Australian alkuperäiskansalaiset, Aboriginaalit, saapuivat Australian mantereelle noin 40 000 – 50 000 vuotta sitten ja asuttivat sen. Ennen siirtolaisten saapumista, Aboriginaalit elivät useissa eri heimoissa, joilla oli jokaisella omanlaisensa ekonomiat, jotka siirtolaisten saapuminen onnistui tuhoamaan. Australian alkuperäiskansalaisten määrä väheni ankarasti väkivaltaisten hyökkäysten, joukkomurhien ja sairauksien vuoksi. Australialla kesti miltei puolitoista sataa vuotta päästä tasapainoon, jossa alkuperäiskansalaiset ja muut Australian asukkaat pystyivät elämään yhdessä.</p> <p>Tutkimukseni tarkoitus on analysoida yleisellä tasolla, miten Australian Aboriginaaleja kuvataan australialaisessa mediassa 2020 luvulla. Tutkimuskeinona käytin multimodaalista kriittistä diskurssianalyysiä sillä tutkimukseni aihe koskee voimasuhteita Australian Aboriginaalien ja muiden australialaisten välillä, ja tutkimuksessa analysoin multimodaalisia elementtejä. Viitekehystenä tutkimuksessa käytin Fairclough'n periaatteita kriittisestä diskurssianalyysistä. Tutkimus päättyi tulokseen, jossa Aboriginaalit kuvattiin samanarvoisina kuin muut Australian asukkaat, mistä saatiin pääteltyä, että diskurssi Aboriginaali Australialaisista on muuttumassa positiivisemmaksi ja tasa-arvoisemmaksi.</p> <p>Tutkimuksesta voisi olla hyötyä vähemmistödiskursseja, erityisesti alkuperäiskansoja käsittelevissä tutkimuksissa. Tutkimus on tehty melko yleisellä tasolla, joten se voisi tarjota pohjan laajemmalle ja yksityiskohtaisemmalle tutkimukselle Australian alkuperäiskansalaisista ja heidän kulttuuristaan. Tutkimuksella on myös mahdollista avartaa katsetta ja tuoda esille tietoa Australian alkuperäiskansalaisista ja heidän historiastaan, ja siitä miten se vaikuttaa siihen, miten heidät hahmotetaan mediassa.</p>	
Avainsanat – Keywords Indigenous, Aboriginal, critical discourse, media, newspaper, media power, Australia, colonization	
Depository University of Jyväskylä	
Additional information	

Sisällysluettelo

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2	THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.....	2
2.1	Aboriginal Australians and the colonization of Australia.....	2
2.2	Ethnicity and media.....	4
2.3	The influence of media on perception.....	6
3	THE PRESENT STUDY.....	8
3.1	Aim and research question.....	8
3.2	Data.....	9
3.3	Methods.....	10
4	ANALYSIS.....	12
4.1	Analysis 1.....	12
4.2	Analysis 2.....	16
4.3	The societal relation.....	19
5	FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	21
6	CONCLUSION.....	23
	REFERENCES	

1 INTRODUCTION

Of the population of 18 million people in Australia, Aboriginal Australians take up roughly one percent (Bullimore, 1999: 72). Due to this, there is a chance that non-indigenous people, whether it be Australians or people visiting the continent, might not come into contact with Aboriginal Australians or Torres Strait Islander people, other than coming across them through media consumption. Media is the primary way for information about issues surrounding the first nation and race issues to reach Australians, which is why it has a large impact on how Indigenous people of Australia are seen by others. In a study conducted by Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in 1991, the National Inquiry into Racist Violence reports of prevalence of "perpetuation and promotion of negative and racial stereotypes, a tendency towards conflictual and sensationalist reporting on race issues, and an insensitivity towards, and often ignorance of, minority cultures" in Australian media. (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1991: 355-356.)

In this study, I aim to research on a general level whether the same can be said twenty years later, and when it comes to the representation of Indigenous people of Australia in the media. The purpose is to achieve a general consensus on how Australian Aboriginals are represented in the Australian media in 2021.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Aboriginal Australians and the colonization of Australia

For the readers to gain a better understanding of this study as a whole, I will briefly go over what I mean when referring to the Aboriginal Australians and discuss the history of the relationship between them and the settlers in Australia.

Aboriginal Australians arrived in Australia approximately 40000 – 50000 years ago. (Day, 2003: 1) The term Aboriginal is a modified word that stems from the 16th century term “Aborigine” that was a popular term when referring to the indigenous people of Australia. “Aborigine” is a modified term that derives from the Latin words “ab” (from) and “origine” (origin), meaning “original inhabitants”. There are other terms that are also used when referring to the indigenous people of Australia, such as First Nations, First Australians, Indigenous Australians, Aboriginals, and Torres Strait Islander People. All these terms vary in appropriateness. (Common ground). The term that is legally recognized and seems to be the most preferred when referring to the indigenous people of Australian mainland and surrounding islands, including Torres Strait Islander people, is Aboriginal Australians, which is the term I will also be using in this study.

Britain established a colony in New South Wales in 1788 due to an overabundance of convicts that could no longer be sent to Northern America which had

previously been the normal custom. (Australia: A cultural history, During an eighty year period, approximately 162 000 convicts had been shipped to Australia. Most of the convicts were male and females took up only one sixth of the British convict population. It was much later when other immigrants, who were not convicts and guards, arrived in Australia. Eventually Aboriginal Australians became suspicious of the settlers due to the way they monopolized their lands and the effect they had on Aboriginal Australians food supplies. Cattle and herds of sheep, originally brought from Europe, had a negative effect on the living areas of native animals that Aboriginal Australians hunted for food, therefore affecting their hunting traditions. (Rickard, 2017: 21-55) They regarded these new animals as food, and the punishment for killing and eating them was often death by gunshot, without trial (Jupp, 2018: 42) These factors led to retaliation by the Aboriginal people which transformed the frontier land into a “war-zone” (Rickard, 2017: 54) The black war that was waged in Tasmania from 1823 to 1834 resulted in the death of 878 Aboriginal Australians and 201 colonists. Aboriginal Tasmanians were reduced from approximately 10000 people to a few hundred people by 1840.

The aboriginal Australians suffered the destruction of their economy, resulting in them becoming dependent of the Europeans. (Rickard, 2017: 55) In addition to violent altercations, diseases brough by immigrants killed a large number of Aboriginal Australians. Furthermore, exploitation of Aboriginal women and the spread of venereal disease led into the decline of birthrate among Aboriginal Australians. (Rickard, 2017: 56) By 1900, Aboriginal Australian population was reduced to less than 100 000. Aboriginal Australians underwent dispossession of lands they considered their own, which was supported fully by the settlers as well as the politicians that had been elected, and it wasn't until the 1990's that unfarmed lands were regarded as belonging to Aboriginal Australians. (Jupp, 2018: 13-14)

The history between the First settlers and the Aboriginal Australians remains rather morbid all the way to the mid-20th century. Throughout the colonization period, Aboriginal Australians fell victim to massacres, in addition to the aforementioned violent conflicts and diseases. Data gathered from a massacre map established

by the University of Newcastle suggests that over 270 massacres at the Frontier were carried out during the 140 year period of colonization. (Allam & Evershed, 2019: 2) The last massacre occurred in 1928, resulting in the death of at least 100, perhaps even 200 Walpiri. The persons that were held accountable for the killing of thirty-one Aboriginal Australians in a town called Coniston, were all exonerated after a three-week inquiry on the events. (Bradley, 2020)

When it comes to assimilation and cohabitation, Aboriginal Australians were pushed to the margins of society and denied the right to vote by the franchise and naturalization act. From early 1800's, Aboriginal Australians were forcibly removed from their living areas and moved to supervised locations where their actions and lives were heavily controlled regarding to what they could do and where they could go. Authorities usually acclaimed any money the Aboriginal Australians made, and a large amount of the money could not be reclaimed by the Indigenous people. It was prohibited to leave the reserves the Aboriginal Australians were placed in, or to get married without permission. It was also usual for the use of Aboriginal languages and rituals to be forbidden. A part of the policy of assimilating Aboriginal Australians into colonist societies was to forcibly remove Aboriginal children from their families and place them in institutions and schools where they were taught English and the culture within the colonist societies. These children were known as the stolen generation. This relocation of Aboriginal children was a phenomenon that gave rise to protests that were also supported by non-indigenous Australians. (Jupp, 2018: 18-47)

2.2 Ethnicity and media

A large part of the representation of power relations within cultures as well as the inequality in social relations occurs via media, as it is one of the main places where it can be seen. (Cottle, 2000) The differentiation from us vs them as well as good vs bad is a common occurrence when the audience is invited to build their own sense of how certain things relate to others based on their representation in the

media, for example “who we are” and “who we are not”, who can be identified as a friend or a foe, what is normal and what is abnormal, who is an insider and who is an outsider. This act of differentiation of these social interest from each other can oftentimes render them susceptible to discrimination. On the other hand, it is also possible for media to ascertain diversity within social and cultural contexts, not to mention the ability to provide room, wherein or through it is achievable to modify, oppose and challenge imposed identities and varied interests of people. (Cottle, 2000)

Nowadays the pace of change in the media landscape is fast. The media environment is being transformed by developments in technologies, media markets and corporations, whether it be global or local. (Cottle, 2000) This can lead to new opportunities, not to mention to new ways in which representation of ethnic minorities are produced by professionals and circulated and consumed by members of the audience.

There are various ‘intermediate’ media organizations, such as self-reliant production companies of commercial television, cooperative enterprises focused on film that are based on community, the minority press and locally operative radio and cable tv stations, that stand between internationally functioning media conglomerates and daily mediated communications surrounding topics related to ethnic minorities. Ethnic minorities often face struggles with being able to have authentic representation of their community and their cultures and these organizations offer a space where this issue can be assessed, when ethnic minorities produce types of media about and to their own communities as well as to other target audiences. This offers a chance for pluralistic representation, where minorities can produce and consume media free of negative preconceptions. Regardless of this, the mainstream media very often ends up settling upon racist and even xenophobic characterization when producing content portraying ethnic minorities or their members. (Cottle, 2000) Unfortunately, this type of racism often gets disregarded by media in favor of being presented in a positive light as non-ambiguous force in society. (van Dijk, 1995: 17) This goes to show that racism as well as ethnic discrimination is still a persisting issue in today’s media.

2.3 The influence of media on perception

Due to the large number of media consumers and the number of different media outlets, it's clear that media has a big influence on how certain things are perceived. The way authors of news and other types of media pieces construct and form their works can have a serious effect on how the topic in them is perceived and thought of by the consumer. Teuk van Dijk (1995: 14) introduces the notion of a model, which is explained as a "mental representation of an experience that is, an event people witness, participate in, or read about". It is a very important tool in understanding news. Every news report read by the consumer about a certain topic or event causes the already existing model to be modified or a completely new model to form. The model developed by the consumer can also include their own views and attitudes regarding the topic. Therefore, the already existing attitudes and knowledge can have a large effect on how the consumer experiences the news report, ergo, determining the models that form and transform within the consumer.

Choosing what information to display more prominently and less prominently in a news report and the elements in it is an effective way to influence how a news event is understood by the public. (Van Dijk, 1995): 14) Authors of news reports can choose to make certain pieces of information less prominent or to completely elide them in the reports, if they want the consumers not to pay attention to particular aspects of the events discussed in the reports. (Van Dijk, 1995: 14) When readers of these media pieces consume them, the perceptions of the events forms from the information provided by the author, therefore influencing the way the event is seen by the reader. If a journalist chooses to not provide information of a certain aspect of the event and accentuates a certain aspect, the reader will only consume, and form or modify a model based on the consumed information. For example, a news report regarding Aboriginal Australians could downplay the discrimination that they often face and accentuate the possible downsides in Aboriginal society, therefore, prompting the reader to form a model based on those chosen pieces of information. Therefore, the media has the power to construct reality, in a sense.

(Couldry, 2001: 4) Each element in a media piece has a way of influencing how the readers perceive and believe information. This is especially true if the consumed information is constructed and displayed in a way that corresponds with the attitude and views the reader has of it already. That isn't to say that media power is plainly something that the media simply possesses, and the consumer imbibes. The power of media is created by aspects in acknowledged social actors. (Couldry, 2001: 4)

3 THE PRESENT STUDY

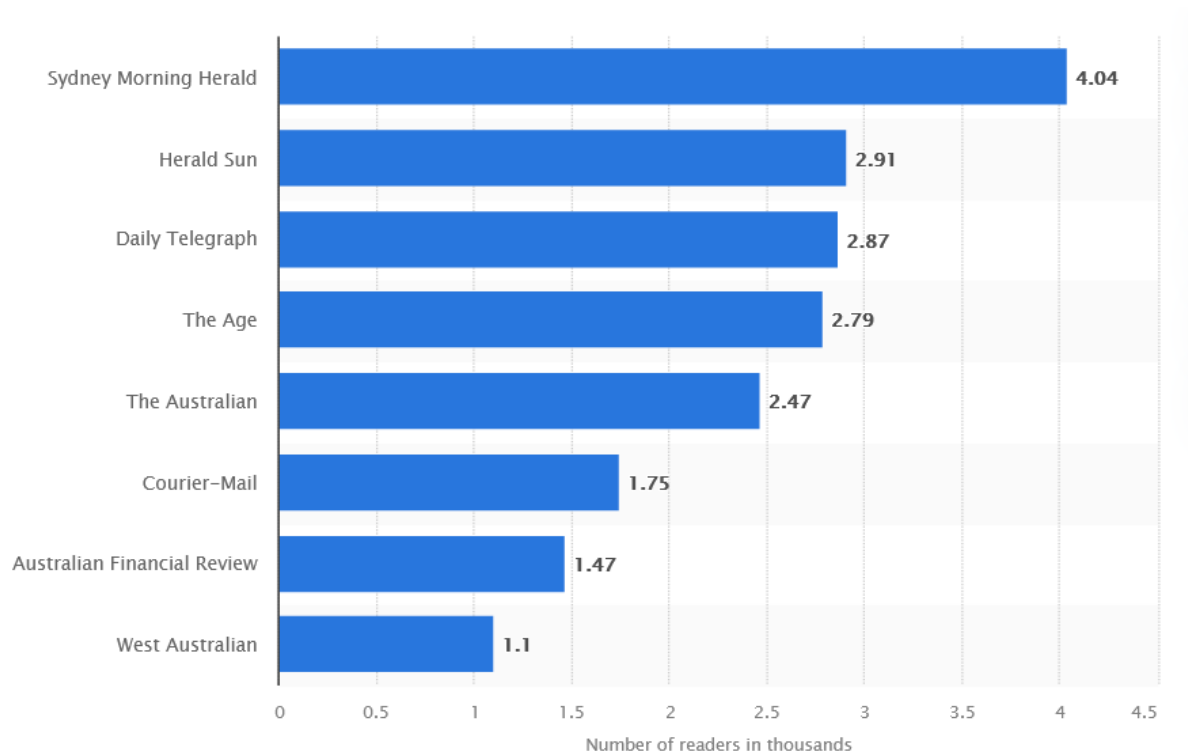
3.1 Aim and research question

The aim of my study is to find out how Australian Aboriginals are represented in Australian media and how it affects how they are perceived by others. There was not a lot of research that could be found on the topic and most of the articles and books I found were from the 2010's and therefore could be considered somewhat dated. The aim of the thesis is to find out how the Aboriginal Australians are portrayed by the media now. The purpose is not to get a very concise, all-inclusive result, but to get more of a general estimate, as it is not possible to include that much data in a study of this size. Since I will analyze two newspaper articles, the finalized research question is:

How are the Australian Aboriginals represented in Australian newspapers in the 21st century?

3.2 Data

When deciding on what kind of data to use in this study, a choice had to be made on where I would gather the data. This study is about how Aboriginal Australians are portrayed in the media, so I decided to analyze newspaper articles from Australian newspapers. I searched for the most read newspapers in the country, and following the statistics available on [statista.com](https://www.statista.com), I settled on The Age and Sydney Morning Herald. Here is an image of the statistics.



From the image one can see that The Age is the fourth most read newspaper. The reason for choosing The Age was that in order to read the second most popular one on the list, Herald Sun, one has to have subscribed to the newspaper. Daily Telegraph, in turn, was not quite as convenient for me to use as The Age. To broaden the data more, I decided to analyze a smaller newspaper as well and ended up choosing Canberra Times, since it's the most read newspaper in the capital of

Australia. I searched “Aboriginal Australian” and “indigenous” on the search bars when looking for articles and chose one article per newspaper. I searched for articles published in December 2020 in January 2021 and settled upon two articles that had the most mentions of Aboriginal Australians.

3.3 Methods

Since the topic of my thesis is the influence of media on how Aboriginal Australians are perceived, therefore dealing with power relations between Aboriginal Australians and Australian media, the method of analysis I’m going to be using is critical discourse analysis (CDA). The data in this study contains images which I will also analyze, so I will be combining CDA with multimodal discourse analysis as a tool in analyzing my data. Multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA) focuses on how the author utilizes semiotic choices to create meaning in relation to the text, and the part that they play in regard to how power relations are being communicated. (Mach & Mayr, 2012:10) This is also what I aim to analyze in this study.

I will follow the guidelines of Fairclough’s framework (Blommaert, 2005: 30) as well as Machin and Mayr’s work, to help me make a more well-rounded analysis, as there is not one set way of conducting a critical discourse analysis. According to the aforementioned works, CDA has three dimensions through which the analysis is conducted. I will also do my analysis according to these three dimensions, while also incorporating the multimodal elements in my data. First, I will analyze the text, the discourses used in it, word choices and sentence structure, as well as analyzing the images embedded in the text and the ways they are used to create meaning. Then I will analyze how the text and images are interrelated with the context of the articles. Lastly, I will analyze how the text, the images and the context are interrelated with the societal issues concerning Aboriginal Australians.

4 ANALYSIS

4.1 Analysis 1

As my first excerpt to analyze, I've chosen an article that is written by Simone Fox Koob, who works for The Age as a crime reporter. The article presents and discusses the statistics declared in a Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services of criminal injustice that youth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent must face in Victoria.

The language of the text seems to be written in a neutral and an objective manner. Most of the word choices are formal and the sentences, excluding the included quotes, do not portray strong emotions that would make the text seem subjective or personal. However, there are a few more expressive word choices among the text that manage to hinder the transparency and add a feel that portrays the hidden emotion behind them. Firstly, at the beginning of the article, the non-indigenous children that are being compared to the indigenous ones are called "their non-indigenous peers" which adds a feeling of social cohesion and makes the reader think of the indigenous and non-indigenous children as equals. Considering it is an article where the custody rates between the two are compared to each other, the choice to call them each other's peers is a meaningful one. Secondly, in the seventh passage the word choices "successive", "decades" and "troubling" portray a feeling akin to

distress, making the reader feel the severity of the issue. “Decade” can sound like a long time which adds to the feeling of seriousness. The word choices “successive” and “troubling” awaken a sense of worry in the severity and longevity of the situation and together the decision to use these expressions can make it seem like the problem discussed in the article might never end. In the ninth passage, the first sentence starts with “Aboriginal-led justice coalition”, and it has the effect of making the fact that the person in question is Aboriginal, and the fact that the coalition is led by an Aboriginal person seem important. As discussed by Machin and Mayr (2012) in their critical discourse analysis guidebook, oftentimes writers want to include the most important feature of a person or an aspect in the article first. The factors of a person that society usually deems important and necessary to know, such as a name, are only mentioned after that. Lastly, in the eleventh passage, detention is described as “a long period of isolation”, which can be seen as a rather strong expression. The word choice has the effect of adding a sense of drama in the text, making the problem seem more serious to the reader. The way the text is structured as well as what quotes and from who are used also have an underlying effect.

The article begins with an alarming statistic that sets the mood for the rest of the article. The start is halting and has an effect of drama. Instantly after this the text continues with a statistic about younger children. Mentioning children so early on in the article adds a sense of seriousness since it’s only the second statistic the reader comes across. It is especially effective due to the history surrounding Australian Aboriginals and other Australians when Aboriginal children were taken from their homes and placed in institutions. (An Immigrant nation seeks cohesion) All the statistics included in the article show vast differences when it comes to criminal repercussions or other types of consequences faced by indigenous and non-indigenous youth. It adds to the effectiveness of the article. The people quoted in the article are shown to be professional by including their professions and titles, giving them credibility, and therefore adding to the credibility of their quotes as well as the article as a whole. The chosen quotes are emotionally effective, including strong expressions, and add an effect of drama in the article due to the word choices used in them.

Pronouns “us”, “our”, “we”, “them” are used on several occasions and it can cause the “us vs. them” effect. The chosen quotes also place the blame of such high incarceration rates on the government, therefore making the reader see the youth in question as the underdogs and even innocent.

There are also two images in the article, that both add their own effect to the text. The first picture is taken from a protest against Indigenous deaths in custody, as it's said in the article.



The picture is taken by Christopher Hopkins. In the top right corner of the image, there's a person standing in front of a statue holding a “Black Lives Matter” sign, making it look like the sign is held by the statue, which ties the article more strongly to the issue of racism. It advocates for the assumption that the difference between the incarceration rates of Indigenous youth and non-indigenous youth is because of racial inequality. The image also has what looks like two cardboards painted as the indigenous flag in the center of it, drawing the eye of the reader to them. The “flags” are carried by what look like non-indigenous people giving it the feeling that this is a

cause that people from varied backgrounds should be fighting for. It is also important to note that since the picture is taken during a pandemic, all the people clearly visible in the shot are wearing surgical masks. It makes the protesters look responsible. Lastly, on the bottom left corner there is a dark-skinned young man looking straight at the camera. His expression looks neutral and it makes the picture seem more personal to the reader.

The other picture in the article shows a woman who is of Aboriginal descent, smiling at the camera.



The text beneath the picture lets the reader know the person in it is the co-chair of Aboriginal-led justice coalition Change the Record, Cheryl Axleby. She is a Naringga woman. She is looking straight at the camera with a small smile, giving the feeling that she is interacting directly with the reader. The benevolent demeanor makes Axleby seem approachable and adds warmth to the article. The background looks like a canvas of Aboriginal tribal paintings, and it could symbol her own Aboriginal background.

4.2 Analysis 2

The second article I chose to include in my thesis is written by Peter Brewer who works as a reporter for The Canberra Times. The article talks about an Aboriginal elder, who has been named as the 2021 senior Australian of the year.

The text in the article is formal and the style of writing is mostly objective. The tone of the article portrays a little bit more emotion than the first article, and it can be seen in the word choices. The very first thing that sets the tone of the article is the headline, particularly the words “Born in the bush at Daly River” that are then followed by “has been named Senior Australian of the Year”. The reader gets informed that the woman that the article is about is now in a powerful position but according to the first part of the headline, things were different. It portrays the woman as an underdog who then managed to reach this position, despite the odds against her. Underdogs are commonly liked around different communities, so this headline makes it easier for the reader to relate to the woman. In the first passage the elder Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr Baumann is firstly introduced as an artist and then as an activist and a teacher, giving it the effect that artist is the most valued profession out of the three. The word order gains even more meaning when in the third passage, where Ungunmerr Bauman is said to be an advocate for arts in education. She is also addressed as Dr. Ungunmerr Bauman, which adds a sense of credibility to her character. When describing her background, strong expressions are used to increase the effectiveness of the description. Word choices such as “bridge the divide”, “long-serving campaigner” and “Dr Ungunmerr Baumann called for non-Indigenous Australians” have an effect of making her seem more powerful in the eyes of the reader. Stating that she called for non-indigenous Australians gives an impression of her having the ability to be heard by all non-indigenous Australians, therefore adding to the power of her character. The tenth passage “Through her professional and creative life, Dr Ungunmerr Baumann has remained dedicated to maintaining the cultural independence of her people and being a spokesperson for the Aboriginal worldview.” gives the reader an impression of her being a good and a respectable

leader. The word choice of describing the Aboriginal people as “her people” makes Ungunmerr Baumann seem like some sort of a mother character to the Aboriginal community.

The included quotes by Ungunmerr Baumann have a poetic tone that increases the emotional effectiveness of the text. Pronouns “you” and “we” are prominent throughout the article, and it has an effect of separating the Indigenous Australians from the non-Indigenous Australians. It is especially evident in the quotes where Ungunmerr Baumann refers to the English language as “your English” and calls the Aboriginal culture and Australian culture “two worlds”. One of the quotes; “This is the gift that Australia is thirsting for. It is something like what you call 'contemplation'.” from her has an increased font size, most likely to catch the reader's eye, which already implies that it's important. Without context the quote holds little meaning to the reader, but at the end of the article when context is added, the quote offers an impression of social cohesion. Including the quotes about “dadirri” at the end expresses interest in the Aboriginal culture.

There are also two images included in the article that add meaning to the text and the topic. The first picture shows Ungunmerr Baumann at a stand, possibly in front of a crowd.



The picture implies that she has an audience, giving the reader an impression of her having a higher status compared to the listeners, which subsequently has the effect of making her seem more powerful in the reader's eye. The picture's background is very neutral and simple, making her stand out in it. Her expression registers as serious which adds to the credibility of her character, making the reader regard her with a sense of wisdom. The choice to use this picture was conscious and the fact that the picture was taken in a random part of the speech she was giving adds a lot of meaning to the picture. The reader sees the woman as the person that she is and not through a staged photograph. The second image is very different from the first one.



Instead of it being an "in the moment" picture, it is a staged close up of Ungunmerr Baumann's face. She emanates very different energy, and her easy demeanor adds a contrast to the first image. The close up shot adds a personal feel to the article and her friendly expression makes her seem approachable. The smile and the slightly tilted head give the image and her character a soft tone. The last image of this article

and the last image of the first article are very similar and are used to deliver almost same meaning, whereas the two images in this article differ in a way that paints a complex picture of Ungunmerr Baumann. The images together compliment the article, offering a sort of a visual aid for the person the author is describing.

4.3 The societal relation

Both of these articles, but especially the first one deal heavily with the Black Lives Matter phenomenon, which gained traction again after the death of George Floyd, an African American man who was killed by a Caucasian police officer on May 25th, 2020. (Swannell, 2020: 202). This highlighted the death rates of indigenous convicts in Australia. (Mason, 2020) During BLM protest across Australia, a story of an Aboriginal Australian man being killed in prison rose to the surface and was reported extensively. (Mason, 2020) Based on the analysis made of these two articles, the phenomenon along with the protests has raised awareness on race issues against indigenous people in Australia, which could be speculated to be the reason for the increase of positive toned news articles about Aboriginal Australians. The articles take into consideration the injustice faced by the indigenous people of Australia.

The discourse in the articles suggest that the position of Aboriginal Australians is changing to a more equal one, and the attitude towards them is turning into a more positive one. The BLM movement has raised awareness on the systemic racism that the Aboriginal Australians still face, which has highlighted the injustice that they continue to suffer off. (Swannell, 2020: 202) It can be suggested that this increased reporting of systemic racism regarding Aboriginal Australians, that was sparked from the movement, has been an important factor in Aboriginal discourse gaining a more positive undertone. Due to the short time frame regarding the new

wave of the BLM movement and the publication of these articles, it can be noted that this positive tone in Aboriginal discourse has been constructing for a while now.

5 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Due to this analysis, it becomes clear that the articles are rather similar in their views of Aboriginal Australians and Aboriginality. Both texts contain similar themes of pride, and a sense of approachability when it comes to the persons that are being discussed more closely. The effect of differentiation between “you” and “me” is also a central theme in both texts, and it goes to show the affiliation Aboriginal Australians are still seen to have with non-indigenous Australians. This isn’t to say that one side is clearly perceived worse or better than the other. Surprisingly enough, the analysis suggests that Aboriginal Australians are the ones that are seen more positively than nonindigenous Australians, as well as the ones that are on the right. There are also some contradictory themes in the first article in reference to the “them” versus “me” effect, as in the picture of the BLM march, there is an effect of togetherness where nonindigenous Australian citizens march for and together with Aboriginal Australians. This in turn ties in the element of “building bridges” which is present in the second article. It is also important to note role of the writers of both of these articles. The factor of how they want to be perceived by the audience plays a key part in how the articles turn out, especially now with the rise of issues having to do with social inequality and political correctness.

From this analysis it can be suggested that Australian media is moving towards a more accepting and neutral place where Aboriginal Australians are viewed in a more positive light. The texts present the issue of Aboriginality in a way

that makes it the norm to be accepting of it and the people that have a membership in that community. These newspaper excerpts operate in a type of environment where the audience is encouraged to perhaps even take action in helping improve the status of indigenous Australians in Australia. Of course, such small amount of data cannot give a clear all-rounded estimate of the situation, but it surely suggests the possibility of a more positive media discourse when it comes to the Aboriginal Australians and affairs that have to do with this ethnic minority group.

6 CONCLUSION

This study aimed to achieve a general view on how Aboriginal Australians are presented in the Australian media. By analyzing the data, it can be concluded that the view is quite neutral. It can be speculated that this is due to the ever changing discussion relating to ethnic affairs and the growing awareness of discrimination. Although this is not a completely comprehensive study, it could possibly benefit researchers or other types of writers who specialize in the perception of ethnic minorities, or issues having to do with ethnic minorities. It could act as a base for a more detailed and extensive research into indigenous culture in Australia or other concepts having to do with Aboriginal Australians. The study could also provoke a reader to ponder about their own views and attitudes towards ethnic minorities, therefore helping shape more positive opinions when it comes to the topic of ethnicity.

REFERENCES

(2019). The Killing Times: The massacres of Aboriginal people Australia must confront; Special report: Shootings, poisonings and children driven off cliffs -- this is a record of state-sanctioned slaughter. *The Guardian* (London). By Lorena Allam and Nick Evershed

Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511610295>

Bradley, M. (2020). *Coniston*. UWA Publishing.

Brewer, P. (2021). Born in the bush at Daly River, Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr Baumann has been named Senior Australian of the Year. *The Canberra Times*. 25 January 2021. <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7099520/indigenous-artist-activist-and-teacher-named-senior-australian-of-the-year/>

Bullimore, K. (1999) Media dreaming: Representation of Aboriginality in modern Australian media. *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 6(1), 72-81.

Cottle, S. (2000). *Ethnic minorities and the media: Changing cultural boundaries*. Buckingham. Open University Press.

Couldry, N. (2001). *The Place of Media Power: Pilgrims and Witnesses of the Media Age*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203007624>

Fox Koob, S. (2021). Indigenous kids nine times more likely to be in custody than non-Indigenous children in Victoria. *The Age*. 20 January 2021. <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/indigenous-kids-nine-times-more-like-to-be-in-custody-than-non-indigenous-children-in-victoria-20210120-p56vlt.html>

Day, A. E. (2003). *Historical dictionary of the discovery and exploration of Australia*. The United States. Scarecrow Press.

Hughes, C. (2019). Total number of readers of leading newspapers in Australia as of March 2019. Statista. May 2020. New Zealand. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1007738/australia-newspaper-readership-of-leading-mastheads/>

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. (1991). Report of the National Inquiry into Racist Violence in Australia. Australian Government Publishing Service Canberra: Alken Press Pty Ltd. Smithfield New South Wales.

Jupp, J. (2018). *An Immigrant Nation Seeks Cohesion: Australia from 1788* (Anthem Studies in Australian Politics, Economics and Society). London & New York. Anthem Press.

Machin, D. & Mayr, A. (2012). *How to Do Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multimodal Introduction*. SAGE Publications.

Mason, B. (2020). Reporting Black Lives Matters: Deaths in custody journalism in Australia. *Pacific journalism review: PJR*, 26(2), 202-220.
<https://doi.org/10.24135/pjr.v26i2.1129>

Rickard, J. (2017). *Australia: A Cultural History*. Clayton, Australia. Monash University Press.

Swannell, C. (2020). COVID - 19, Black Lives Matter and making a difference. *Medical journal of Australia*, 213(4), C1. <https://doi.org/10.5694/mja2.50723>

Van Dijk, T.A. (1995). *Power and the News Media*. Political Communication and Action.