

News Media in the US: A Contrastive Study of Racial Representation in *CNN* And *Foxnews* Articles From 2020 And 2022

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Abstract

This study investigates a stylistic change in racial terms consisting of capitalizing race in racial phrases (Flood 2020, Effelson 2020), how racial terminology concerning the African American minority in the US was used in news articles by *CNN* and *Fox News*, and whether the change has persisted from 2020 until 2022. The theoretical framework of this thesis includes socio historical publications, such as books and articles about race in the US, racial injustice in the US, and Critical Race Theory (West 1996, Delgado & Stefancic 2001, Ford & Airhihenbuwa 2010). The framework also considered sociolinguistic studies regarding racial matters and the news media (Carter 2015, Brown & Harlow 2019, Drid 2019, Kumah-Abiwu 2020, Graver et al. 2020, Douglas et al. 2021). Some research that combined Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Corpus Linguistics (CL) in the study of the media (Romero-Trillo & Cheshire 2014, Romero-Trillo & Attia 2016) were also included as theoretical and methodological considerations that proved a useful combination.

This study analyzes in a longitudinal and mixed method approach a corpus of 120 articles in order to discover any tendencies in the representation of the African American minority in the news articles from two networks of opposing ideologies. The corpus was gathered through *Google* advanced search using keywords such as “Black man”, due to the stylistic change, and other Politically Correct racial terms (Kosla 2014). As analytical tools it used CL for the quantitative data, by feeding the corpus to the *AntConc* application (Anthony 2022), and CDA for the qualitative study, observing the contexts in which racial terminology was present. The quantitative findings showed the frequency of racial terms used in each year, which were contrasted among each network and the different periods. It also measured any other occasional racial term that did not concern African Americans, such as “White man”, for further contrast.

The quantitative results proved that racial terms such as “Black man” had much higher frequencies than other racial items, such as “White man”, even in articles that could admit both examples. The qualitative findings discovered plenty of violent contexts in which mostly racial

8th International Conference on Advanced Research in Social Sciences & Humanities

26 - 28 April 2024

Madrid, Spain



terms involving African Americans seem to be needlessly used and racial terms relating to others were avoided or not included. The results of this study demonstrate that there is an unnecessary overexposure and abundant use of racial terms involving African Americans in *CNN* and *Fox News* articles, which can have a detrimental impact on the public opinion and perception of this minority, agreeing with previous studies on race in the media (Carter 2015, Dobric 2018, Brown & Harlow 2019). The findings also show that the two networks of opposing ideologies have similar tendencies in the ways they represent the African American minority in their media.

Keywords: African Americans, *CNN*, *Fox News*, Critical Discourse Analysis, Critical Race Theory, Corpus Linguistics, race, racial terminology