

Language ideology of two escapees of Auschwitz-Birkenau camp: A CDA and corpus linguistics in German media

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to analyze language ideology in the testimonies of two escapees from the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, oriented towards corpus-based Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The research data consist of the 26-page report of Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba, which serves as the corpus source. A contrastive analysis of the language used by two escapees was conducted. The word “camp” was selected as the keyword, based on its frequency and occurrences in the corpus. The corpus was analyzed using Fairclough's (1995) framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The findings are divided into three levels: words (key terms), collocations, and ideological language constructions. Firstly, the key terms in the corpus produced by Vrba and Wetzler were categorized into three groups: (1) words related to location, background, and origin; (2) words that introduce the purpose of the concentration camp; and (3) words implying the events that occurred within the camp. Secondly, collocations surrounding the keyword “camp” were identified, including adjectives, verbs, nouns, and adverbs. Thirdly, three ideological language constructions were found in the testimonies: (1) the language ideology of experiencing similar misery as Jewish prisoners; (2) the language ideology of rebellion against torture; and (3) the language ideology of struggling to survive. The implications of this research demonstrate how critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics can be integrated to uncover ideological patterns in media texts through the linguistic features.

Keywords: Auschwitz-Birkenau camp; corpus linguistics; critical discourse analysis; escapees; language ideology

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INTRODUCTION

The language of two escapees from the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp is assumed to possess certain characteristics that distinguish it from the language of those who did not experience life in the concentration camps. Auschwitz-Birkenau was a complex of concentration and extermination camps located near the city of Oświęcim, Poland, established and operated by Nazi Germany during World War II. According to Ganeri (2015), survivors of the Holocaust shared their stories and

recounted the atrocities they endured. They could not escape the burden of their suffering, even though their mental resilience was a gift. In this context, the complexity of the narrated experiences came into focus. This complexity can be examined in relation to the concept of secondary witnesses, as defined by Hartman (1998), namely individuals who actively provide testimony by articulating words that reflect the darkness of past events. The language of living witnesses requires the translator to function as a secondary witness, revealing past experiences that

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may be expansive or limited, transparent or opaque, complete or fragmented as they were originally conveyed by the survivors (Davis, 2011; Sulimovic et al., 2025).

The dialogic discourse that characterizes the relationship between the survivor-witness and the secondary witness-interviewer in recorded testimonies is often less enduring in the context of translation. Nevertheless, the translator remains present and plays a crucial role in carrying the testimony into another language, as well as across time and place. From this perspective, several reasons emerge for the necessity of studying the language used by the two escapees from the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp. The language used by the two escapees become more meaningful when transformed into their discourse. In this context, discourse is not understood in the narrow sense of linguistic terminology, referring only to parts of written or spoken texts that are interwoven or interconnected, but as a broader concept (Hall, 2001).

The preceding arguments highlight the necessity of further investigating the language used by two escapees from Auschwitz. These arguments also imply that their language should not be regarded as an abstract system in the Saussure's linguistic perspective, but rather as a living and concrete reality. The language of these two escapees constitutes a fundamentally social language, rooted in the struggles and ambiguities of daily life. Indeed, the study of language ideology has increasingly attracted the interest of discourse analysts, who recognize the diversity and vast scope of linguistic research, particularly the actual use of language in social context. According to Dijk (1985), the development of discourse analysis in the 1970s revealed two tendencies. On the one hand, the structural analysis of texts, and on the other, language studies that had previously been conducted within the confines of sentence grammar. Discourse, as manifested through language, is not viewed as something natural, but rather as a form of power struggle.

To reveal the language ideology of the two escapees from the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp, a critical linguistic approach such as critical discourse analysis (CDA) in combination with corpus linguistics is required. Santoso (2012) explains that discourse emphasizes issues of content, function, and the social meaning of language use. Dijk (2001) further argues that discourse research cannot rely solely on text analysis, as texts are merely the outcome of production practices that must also be examined. According to Weiss and Wodak (2003), CDA should not be viewed only as a result of conflict; rather, it is one component among several necessary approaches. Thus, discourse studies must address not only discursive practices but also a range of material and semiotic practices. CDA when

combined with corpus linguistics, relates to the study of large datasets, or corpora. Gravelss (2017) explains that the primary advantage of the corpus approach lies in its ability to uncover large-scale patterns of language use that may not be immediately visible to the human eye. In this way, quantitative analyses can offer new insights while also highlighting qualitative observations within recurring linguistic patterns. Similarly, corpora can serve as valuable tools in discourse analysis by demonstrating repetitions and systematic patterns of certain linguistic phenomena (Al-Fajri, 2017).

Language ideology can be understood as a system that shapes an individual's worldview in the process of living. Jorgensen and Phillips (2007) define language ideology as a system of representation that obscures actual relationships by constructing imaginary ones among people in society. However, it is a necessity or a potentially more ideological stance than others to attempt to avoid this pitfall. To uncover language ideology, it is essential to examine the context in which linguistic signs are situated, in relation to the culture of language users. This is because the meaning of a linguistic sign may shift depending on its context. Context functions as a conceptual framework for both speech production and the interpretation of speaker's intent. Such a framework exists in human cognition, shaped by mental processing, perception, and sensory experience (Saifudin, 2019). Furthermore, Rahardi (2020), states that context represents the background knowledge that informs the assumptions shared by speakers and their interlocutors. Thus, language ideology can ultimately be seen as a system of beliefs that underlies and shapes an individual's perspective on certain matters.

Critical discourse analysis on research related to the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp has previously been carried out by Gross (2009) and Stokowski (2018). Their studies examined Holocaust discourse and how its memory is understood, shaped, or contested through museums or Holocaust sites, which functions not only as historical places but also spaces to construct, interpret, or question collective memory. Tryuk (2011) investigated the role of interpreters in interactions at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. Interpreters, he argued, could be used as instruments of control and domination, or conversely, as tools of resistance and rescue. In the same vein, a historical discourse analysis was carried out by Brugioni and Poirier (1979) and Karwowska (2017), both of whom explored Auschwitz-Birkenau as the center of the Holocaust, with particular attention to the meanings and memories it generated. Research on testimonies and personal narratives was conducted by Wosińska and Zagórska (2023), who studied the personal

lived experiences of former Nazi concentration camp prisoners through oral histories and dream narratives. Their work demonstrates how camp experiences were inscribed in individual memory and expressed through narrative, with the aim of understanding memory, trauma, and the Holocaust from the victims' perspective. Gleoudi (2018), Lawson (2003), and Letsinger (2015) analyzed the language ideology in the context of the Nazi Auschwitz-Birkenau camp. Their studies reveal that language functioned not merely as a medium of communication but as a means of constructing, maintaining, and resisting ideologies surrounding the Holocaust. This is evident in the use of Nazi language as an ideological instrument to justify genocide.

From previous research, it can be seen that this study presents novelty in three aspects. First, it reveals the language ideology of two escapees from the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp. Second, it employs German media as the object of study, analyzed through a corpus-based Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach that encompasses three dimensions: textual, discursive practice, and sociocultural practice. Third, this study uses the Vrba-Wetzler Report as data, which contains information about Holocaust victims. In previous studies, the approaches used included historical discourse analysis, oral history, narrative analysis, and CDA. In contrast, this research combines CDA with corpus linguistics. The main difference from earlier research lies in the data: physical spaces and sites, interpreters, discourse texts, and historical archives, while this study analyzes a documentary report by two escapees who upheld and defended the language ideology of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp. This focus has similarities to the research of Wosińska and Zagórska (2023), which analyzed life testimonies.

To date, numerous works have examined the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp as the object of research from various aspects. However, studies focusing specifically on the documents of the two escapees are still rare, particularly those that analyze language ideology using critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics. Therefore, investigating the language ideology of the two escapees represents a significant and relevant research topic. In this way, the present study contributes to the field by combining CDA and corpus linguistics as tools to uncover the ideological attitudes reflected in the testimonies of the two Auschwitz-Birkenau escapees.

In general, this research aims to explore various constructions of language ideology

represented by the texts produced by Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba. Specifically, this study aims to (1) identify the key terms within the corpus, (2) analyze the lexical environments of these key terms, and (3) reveal the underlying ideologies embedded in the discourse. Thus, the analysis of language ideology provides insight into why the two escapees deliberately selected and emphasized certain linguistic forms to voice and represent specific ideological positions, while at the same time excluding or disregarding other linguistic forms.

METHOD

The method employed in this study is a descriptive approach, which represents a type of qualitative research oriented towards critical discourse analysis grounded in corpus linguistics (Baker, 2006; Baker et al., 2008; Fairclough, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). The subjects of this study are the reports of the two escapees, Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba, from Auschwitz Camp in late April 1944. The data selection criteria are based on the Vrba-Wetzler Report, a crucial document providing detailed information about the organization and function of Auschwitz. This report was also submitted as evidence at the Nuremberg Trials in 1945. The research data were obtained from the "Report by Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba, two Escapees from Auschwitz (late April 1944)" accessed on January 7, 2022, comprising 26 pages, used as the corpus source. The original report, written by Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba was transliterated from Slovak into German and then into English. The source data are available from this link: <https://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/pdf/eng/English45.pdf>.

This study utilized the AntConc software to analyze the text corpus, carrying out tasks such as identifying word patterns, keywords, frequencies, collocations, and inter-word relationships within the text. Specifically, AntConc functions as a concordance tool, enabling researchers to search for words or phrases within the corpus and generate comprehensive lists of occurrences and contexts relevant to the research focus. Keywords were determined based on the central themes of the study. This process involved identifying primary keywords through terms or phrases that directly describe the research focus. The necessary keywords would depend on the structure of the research question itself. Common categories included subject-related keywords (e.g., Auschwitz) and location-related keywords (e.g., Poland). The next step was to use the collocation tool, which examined the combinations of words that frequently appeared

around them. In other words, collocation refers to word combinations that have specific expectations and mutually benefit each other. When the frequency of a collocation appears higher than what would occur by chance, it is considered a statistically significant collocation.

AntConc is the primary corpus linguistics software tools used to analyze texts based on the occurrence of specific words or phrases. Their primary functions include: (1) Keyword in Context (KWIC) searches: displaying words within their surrounding textual context; (2) Collocation analysis: identifying words that frequently appear together; (3) Word frequency analysis: calculating how often each word appears in the text; and (4) Word distribution analysis: examining the dispersion of words throughout the text. By utilizing these functions, researchers can uncover patterns of word usage and relationships between lexical items in the corpus. In corpus linguistics, the term *concordancer* refers more broadly to software tools that generate concordances, including KWIC lines, collocations, and word frequency lists. AntConc is itself a concordancer, but it is utilized in this study because of its practicality, free accessibility, and wide use in corpus-based linguistic research. This explanation is important for two reasons. First, it situates AntConc within a wider methodological context, showing that corpus studies typically employ concordancer tools. Second, it justifies the selection of AntConc by demonstrating awareness of alternative concordance software while highlighting the particular advantages of AntConc in handling corpus data effectively.

In this research, determining keywords is a crucial step to identifying the most relevant terms to the studied topic. This process involves several steps, including: (1) Identifying the main topic: clarifying the primary focus of the research; (2) Selecting primary keywords: choosing terms that directly describe the research focus; And (3) Considering synonyms or related terms: taking into various terms of account that might appear in the research. Software tools such as AntConc and Concordancer assist in determining keywords by analyzing the distribution and usage patterns of words within the text. For instance, AntConc offers a Concordancer tool that has been shown to be effective in facilitating the learning of vocabulary, collocations, grammar, and writing styles. Furthermore, keyword analysis in corpus linguistics often involves computing keyword priority by comparing word frequencies in a target corpus with those in a reference corpus. This comparison helps

to identify words that are statistically significant or particularly characteristic of the target corpus.

In the context of this research, which focuses on the testimonies of two escapees from Auschwitz-Birkenau, the relevant keywords can be grouped into several categories: (1) Individual names: Alfred Wetzler, Rudolf Vrba; (2) Locations: Auschwitz, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Oświęcim, Poland; (3) Events: Holocaust, genocide, concentration camps, deportation, massacres; and (4) Methods of Execution: poison gas, mass executions. These keywords encompass the primary elements associated with the research topic, including the identities of the escapees, the locations involved, pertinent historical events, and the execution methods employed during the Holocaust. The first step in the ideological analysis of the two escapees from Auschwitz is to count the keywords in the corpus, which is generated by Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba. This keyword count is not the final goal of the analysis; it is merely the initial step to identifying the tendencies in the usage of certain keywords that are selected by Wetzler and Vrba. In the next stage, the study observed collocations involving the word "camp" present in the corpus. After counting keywords and analyzing collocations, the researchers conducted an interpretative analysis of the ideological tendencies identified through the linguistic data in the corpus. This involves uncovering the implicit meanings, perspectives, or agendas present in the text as revealed by the keywords and their contexts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigates the language ideology of two escapees from the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp by employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in combination with corpus linguistics approaches. The findings presented here include analysis of keywords in the escapees' reports, linguistic realizations within these reports, and the language ideology of the escapees. The ideological analysis follows Fairclough's (1995) CDA framework, which encompasses three dimensions: textual analysis (microstructural), discourse practice analysis (mesostructural), sociocultural practice analysis (macrostructural). This multidimensional framework facilitates a comprehensive understanding of how language both reflects and constructs ideology within its broader social and historical contexts.

Analysis of Keywords in the Report of the Two Escapees

The keyword analysis of Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba's reports generated a ranked list of keywords, ordered by frequency of occurrence. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Keywords in the Corpus Data of Auschwitz-Birkenau Escapees Testimonies

Rank	Keyword	Frequency	Rank	Keyword	Frequency
1	Camp	113	16	French	25
2	Jews	97	17	Labor	23
3	Auschwitz	50	18	Time	23
4	Birkenau	48	19	Could	20
5	Prisoners	43	20	Died	20
6	Work	43	21	Girls	20
7	Men	36	22	Persons	19
8	Arrived	35	23	SS	19
9	Sent	35	24	Birchwood	18
10	Gassed	30	25	Jewish	18
11	Transports	30	26	Meters	18
12	Block	29	27	Belt	17
13	Slovak	29	28	Chamber	17
14	Number	28	29	Polish	17
15	Women	28	30	Political	16

As shown in Table 1, the top keywords were identified using the German History in Documents and Images corpus. In total, these 30 keywords can be classified into three major categories. The first category relates to on location, background, and origin. In the text corpus, locations include Auschwitz, Birkenau, Poland, subcamps, extermination camps, transit camps, women's camps, the camp in Sered in southern Slovakia, forced labor camps in Austria, Lublin camp, and Czech camps. In the text corpus, backgrounds include political prisoners, Jews, civilians, and deportees. The origins of the victims are also highlighted, referring to their countries of origin, that is Polish Jews (sent by truck), Poles (sent by train), Dutch, Greeks, French, Belgians, Germans, Yugoslavs, Italians, Norwegians, Lithuanians, Bohemians, Moravians, Austrians, Slovaks, and various foreign Jewish camps in Poland.

The second group of keywords includes job, men, gasses, number, women, labor, girls, persons, and death, which highlights the fundamental purpose of the concentration camp. These terms reflect the identification and treatment of detainees (men, women, children) and the harsh conditions they faced, including forced labor, gassing, and death. The purpose of the camp was to identify the detainees (men, women, and children) by assigning to each of them a number. The third group of keywords consists of arrived, sent, transports, block, time, could, chamber, belt, meters, and political. These words refer to the movement of prisoners, the structures within the camp, and the cruel conditions they faced. There are other words such as SS (Schutzstaffel) established in 1925 as Hitler's personal bodyguard unit. The Schutzstaffel (SS) evolved into one of the most powerful organizations within the Nazi regime, exerting significant influence over both governmental and military

affairs, prisoner, and Jewish which indicate that the actions taking place at the camp involved the powerful SS (Schutzstaffel), a major security and military organization of the Nazi Party, and the prisoners, predominantly Jewish, who were subjected to these inhumane conditions.

Linguistic Realization in the Escapees' Report

Corpus linguistics has been particularly successful in supporting research in areas such as lexicography, grammar description, and variation of enrollment. In the present study, corpus linguistics provides empirical data in the form of the reports written by the two Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp escapees (the corpus), meanwhile, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) aids in interpreting how discourse reflects power, language ideology, and social dominance. Gabrielatos and Duguid (2014) explain several key similarities between CDA and corpus linguistics. In the late 1970s or early 1980s, both of these fields were relatively well-developed, whereby corpus linguistics tools, such as keyword analysis, concordance, and collocation facilitate CDA research by helping to identify the objects of interest.

This finding implies that the perspectives and attitudes of the escapees, Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba, are reflected in the way they evaluate the words surrounding them. Consequently, an analysis of these evaluations can begin by examining the critical meaning of the surrounding lexical items. To better understand the attitudes expressed by the escapees, it is necessary to use corpus data to examine the collocations around the keyword "camp," including its association with adjectives, verbs, nouns, and adverbs. Table 2 presents the collocations of "camp" in the corpus derived from the two escapees' reports.

Tabel 2

Collocates of "Camp" in the Reports of Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba

1	The majority of these have <i>secured</i>	Camp	administration jobs for themselves.
2	We <i>reached</i> the Auschwitz	Camp	after 20 minutes' march, carrying our heavy luggage – we had left Slovakia well equipped.
3	I <i>sneaked</i> to the Czech	Camp	again before dawn and heard that Fredy Hirsch was dying
4	Upon completion, it was to be <i>incorporated</i> in the	Camp	already functioning.
5	There are several factories and workshops in the <i>vicinity</i> of the Auschwitz	Camp	among others a DAW2 , one Krupp, one Siemens plant, and a complex called "Buna,"
6	About 1000 women of this transport went to the	Camp	and 3000 persons were <i>gassed</i> in the birchwood.
7	A few women were sent to the women's	Camp	and all others went to the <i>birchwood</i>
8	c. 43,800 – 44,200 400 <i>Slovak Jews</i> from the Lublin	Camp	including Matyas Klein and Meilech Laufer, both from Eastern Slovakia.
9	About 70 women <i>went</i> to the	Camp	and the remainder of the transport of 650 persons were sent to the birchwood
10	The Slovak Jewish girls are the <i>oldest inmates</i> of the women's	Camp	and thus have a somewhat privileged position
11	Organization and Population of the <i>Birkenau</i>	Camp	April 1944.
12	which is <i>outside</i> the	Camp	area proper.
13	The Birkenau <i>labor</i>	Camp	as well as the agricultural settlement at Harmansee, are subordinate to the Auschwitz camp command
14	<i>Internment</i> at Maidanek	Camp	at Lublin, June 1942.
15	Wetzler had been <i>transferred</i> there from the	Camp	at Sered in southern Slovakia on April 13, 1942, and Vrba had arrived at the end of June 1942, after being held for two weeks at the Majdanek concentration camp near Lublin in Poland.

Based on Table 2, in German History in Documents and Images collection, the report of the two escapees, Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba, make frequent use of words with negative lexical connotations, including: (1) Gassed: Refers to mass murder using poisonous gas, which consists of a highly negative connotation in the context of the Holocaust;. (2) Internment: Indicates forced detention under inhumane conditions; (3) Sneaked: In the context of concentration camps, this could imply actions that are dangerous or carried out stealthily due to threats; and (4) Transfer: While neutral in isolation, within the Holocaust context, it often means forced relocation to another camp, frequently for forced labor or execution. On the other hand, terms such as secured, reached, incorporated, vicinity, birchwood, Slovak Jews, went, Birkenau, outside, and labor are more lexically neutral. However, their meanings can shift toward negative connotations depending on their contextual usage in the text. Bluhm (1948) and Michael and Doerr (2002) note that words carrying negative connotations as in Holocaust narratives function as linguistic expressions of emotions, perceptions, and judgments associated with Nazi atrocities. Such words often evoke violence, oppression, cruelty, fear, and suffering. The reports of Wetzler and Vrba provide multiple examples illustrating how they represent a negative stance toward the Auschwitz camp within the German

History in Documents and Images corpus. Specific examples are presented in this excerpt: "The Slovak Jewish girls are the oldest inmates of the women's camp and thus have a somewhat privileged position" (Vrba & Wetzler, 1994, p. 26). The phrase "oldest inmates" indicates that the two escapees perceived the camp as housing more than just Jewish women. In reality, Jews represented only a minority of the overall concentration camp population, particularly among female prisoners (Helm, 2015; Sofsky, 1997). The women detained in the camp came from various ethnic, religious, and social backgrounds. Many had been accused of engaging in illegal political activities, such as being members of communist or other illegal political parties, providing intelligence or aid to the regime's enemies, or being involved in illegal resistance movements. Büchler (1996) and Plachá (2023) examined the experiences of Slovak Jewish women during the Holocaust, particularly in Nazi concentration camps. Within these camps, they were considered to hold a special or privileged status among political prisoners, whereas in Ravensbrück, the focus was more on the general experiences of Jewish women without emphasizing any particularly privileged status. Among these political prisoners, the Slovak Jewish women were considered a privileged group of inmates, or more precisely, a group that could be regarded as having a special status within the camp.

Another example can be observed in this excerpt: "The Birkenau labor camp, as well as the agricultural settlement at Harmansee, were under the command of Auschwitz Camps" (Vrba & Wetzler, 1994, p. 2). The word "labor" indicates that the two Auschwitz Camps functioned as sites of forced labor involving Jewish prisoners. This is reinforced by Wachsmann (2021), who states that the word labor was used to denote forced labor as a form of concealed murder. As mentioned earlier, after Jewish prisoners were sent to Auschwitz, they were forced to work. From this perspective, it is clear that these prisoners were detained and forced into labor only because of their Jewish identity.

From this explanation, it can be seen that the collocation of camp in the escape report of Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba in Documents and Images of German History shows that the words used carry negative connotations, reflecting violence, cruelty, oppression, and suffering in the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp. This is reinforced by the study of Altman (2023), which indicates that the results of word collocations with negative connotations reveal experiences of violence, suffering, and trauma reflected in the language of survivors. For example, death often appears together with concentration camp, affirming the direct connection between camp experiences and death. The collocation analysis demonstrates that these words frequently occur alongside the term Auschwitz-Birkenau, thereby strengthening the impression of cruelty and the brutal conditions in the camp.

The Ideology in the Language of the Two Escapees

From the results of collocation analysis, the author then proceeded to conduct a qualitative examination of the data using Fairclough (1995) Critical Discourse Analysis framework. This model involves three interrelated dimensions: textual dimension analysis (microstructural), discourse practice analysis (mesostructural), and sociocultural practice analysis (macrostructural).

Textual Dimension Analysis

According to the language analysis of the two escapees from the Auschwitz Camp, it was found that there is a tendency for negative contexts to emerge as a representation of the ideologies they held and fought for. These ideologies include: (1) a language ideology of shared suffering, which emphasizes the collective experiences of pain and oppression endured by the prisoners; (2) a language ideology of resistance against torment, reflecting the prisoners' rejection of the cruelty and violence inflicted upon them; and (3) a language ideology of fighting for survival – the willingness to survive despite of the conditions in the camp. Together, these ideologies reflect the broader resistance and

survival narratives within the context of the Holocaust, showing how the escapees' experiences were shaped by their need to resist and endure in an oppressive and violent system.

Language Ideology of "Shared Suffering"

The two escapees, Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba, also "felt the same suffering as the Jewish prisoners." This can be observed in the following quote (1):

Here we detained and were counted. The transport was taken over by SS men, who expressed loudly their indignation at the fact that we were traveling without any water. "Those Slovak barbarians would not even provide water," they said. We continued our journey and arrived in Lublin in two days. As soon as the train stopped, another command was given. "Those between 15-50 years old who are fit for work will leave the train; children and old people will stay in the cars." We got out. The station was surrounded by Lithuanian SS men armed with machine pistols. (Vrba & Wetzler, 1994, p. 20)

In quote (1), several phrases indicate the text producer's evaluation of the surrounding reality, particularly regarding the domination of the Schultztaffel, commonly known as the SS. The SS's task was to kill civilians, especially Jews, in the countries occupied by Germany during World War II. The SS was also responsible for concentration camps that resulted in countless casualties. Phrases like "we traveled without water," "barbaric Slovaks," "refused to provide water," "those between 15-50 years old who are healthy for work," "children and the elderly will stay in the cattle car," and "armed Lithuanian SS" give the impression that the text producer is recounting events they witnessed, as shown in the following quote:

According to our experience up to that time, the quarantine never lasted longer than three weeks. We became suspicious as the end of the six months' quarantine period approached, and were convinced that these Jews would also end up in the gas chamber. (Vrba & Wetzler, 1994, p. 16)

In the quotation, expressions such as "*never lasted more than three weeks*," "*suspicious*," "*these Jews will also end up in the gas chamber*," "*group leaders*," "*their situation*," and "*their fate*" illustrate the text producer's evaluation of the oppressed condition of the prisoners. The expressions of the events in the Nazi concentration camps, particularly Auschwitz-Birkenau, which claimed many victims due to the cruelty and actions of the SS soldiers, are supported by the study of Wetzler (2020), which recounted the experiences of prisoners who were forced to work, the brutality of the SS, and survival

strategies under extreme conditions. Through the escape report of Vrba and Wetzler, it was hoped that the international community would become aware of the Nazi atrocities against the Jewish community. This argument also aligns with Baron (2000), who emphasized that Vrba and Wetzler's escape aimed to inform the world about the horrific realities of the camp, including forced labor and mass killings in the gas chambers.

Language Ideology of "Resistance Against Torment"

There is an interesting perspective in the testimony of the two escapees, Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba, regarding the 'rebellion of Jewish prisoners in the camp'. Despite being outnumbered and poorly armed, some Jewish prisoners in the camp fought back against the Germany SS soldiers with violence. This can be seen in the following quote:

If a prisoner is not caught after three days, the outer belt guards leave their posts assuming that the prisoner was successful in breaking through both guard belts. If the escaped prisoner is caught alive, he is hanged in the presence of the entire camp. If he is found dead, his body is exposed at the gates of the camp. In his hands were written a sign which reads: "Hier bin ich. During our two years imprisonment many prisoners attempted to escape, but with the exception of two or three all were brought back dead or alive. We do not know if those not brought back succeeded in escaping, but we do know that we are the only Jews brought from Slovakia to Auschwitz or Birkenau who did escape. (Vrba & Wetzler, 1994, p. 4)

In this quote, there are several phrases that indicate the text producer's evaluation of the surrounding reality, particularly the domination of the SS soldiers, which had been ongoing since 1940, resulting in the creation of several concentration and extermination camps in the Auschwitz area. Phrases such as "captured alive," "he will be hanged," "sign Hier bin ich," "life or death," and "we are the only Jews who managed to escape" suggest that the text producer criticizes other Jewish prisoners, who mostly did not resist or attempt to escape from the Auschwitz Camp. However, the two escapees stopped short of directly blaming the barrack leaders, who often appeared to accept their fate passively. A closer reading reveals an implicit sense of dependence on the possibility of resistance led by certain groups, as illustrated in this quote: "Men of the Sonderkommandos promised that they would join immediately if the Czech Jews put up active resistance. Many prisoners hoped that a general uprising could be instigated in the camp" (Vrba & Wetzler, 1994, p. 16)." This quote contains expressions such as "promised," "will soon join,"

"Czech Jews are actively resisting," and "general rebellion." From this, it can be inferred that the prisoners had high hopes for the Czech Jewish prisoners, who had promised to initiate a direct rebellion. However, these hopes were shattered when the two escapees heard the news that the group that was supposed to lead the rebellion had been executed. If the Czech Jewish group was caught rebelling in the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp, they would be executed immediately by the SS soldiers. This finding is consistent with Małczyński (2020), who notes that prisoners attempting to rebel risked being captured and killed, which forced them to act covertly or adaptively rather than confrontationally. Similarly, Wachsmann (2021) underscores that direct resistance was rare because of the fear of execution, leading prisoners to focus instead on observing the SS system to avoid danger. This made Jewish prisoners more cautious in their resistance. As Siegel (2021) adds, prisoners who occupied functionary positions could assist others by manipulating the system, but if groups of prisoners openly rebelled, the SS would immediately execute them as a warning to the entire inmate population.

Language Ideology of "Fighting to Survive"

The two escapees, Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba, also embraced the worldview of 'fighting to survive.' Consider the following quote:

On April 7, 1944, the Slovak inmates Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba managed to escape from Auschwitz, the largest concentration camp complex of Nazi regime. Located in southern Poland, Auschwitz was made up of three main camps and 39 auxiliary camps in which tens of thousands of inmates were worked to death. More than one million people died in what was called Auschwitz II (Auschwitz-Birkenau), the camp's official annihilation center. (Vrba & Wetzler, 1994, p. 1)

In this quote, several expressions highlight the struggle of the two escapees. This struggle was based on the belief that Wetzler and Vrba shared a deep connection, stemming from their common hometown in Trnava, Slovakia. According to the data, on April 7, 1944, they successfully escaped from Auschwitz. During their time in the concentration camp, they meticulously observed the weaknesses of Auschwitz and devised an escape plan that had to be executed with great care. The repeated use of the words "escape" underscores that their struggle was achieved through their own efforts, without any assistance from the Nazis or international committees. The terms "prisoners" and "death" can also be seen as part of the escape effort. Because if they had not taken this action, their fate would have been the same as the prisoners who

were executed. All efforts to survive were framed within the context of escaping. As individuals who successfully escaped from Auschwitz, one way they could help other prisoners was by telling the outside world about their experiences, as reflected in the following quote:

After their escape, Wetzler and Vrba made contact with representatives of the Jewish council in Zilina, Slovakia, and presented the following report, which included a great deal of detailed information on the organization and function of Auschwitz. Initially drafted in both Slovak and German, the report was translated into numerous languages so that the international community would know what was happening at Auschwitz (Vrba & Wetzler, 1994, p. 1)

The above quote (6) can be understood as follows. The power relationship between the Jewish community (the oppressed) and the international community (the powerful) is formed by a representative language ideology based on a conspiracy by the international community, which allowed the Jewish people to remain oppressed under the actions of the Nazi soldiers (SS). The Jews remained submissive to this power because they could neither read nor hear what they were truly experiencing in the Auschwitz Camp. In contrast, the two escapees regarded their detailed reports on Auschwitz, initially compiled in Slovak and German, and later transliterated into various languages, as a form of fighting to survive, either for themselves or for the Jewish community who were still trapped in Auschwitz. Thus, defending the oppressed community can be seen as a struggle to achieve freedom of life from coercion and torment. This effort represents not only survival, but also an act of resistance and defiance against the inhumane forces which tried to strip them from their dignity and identity. Zezza (2025) argued that language in the context of the Holocaust was not merely a tool of communication but also an essential element of the survivors' experiences, identities, and testimonies. Understanding the issue of language in survivors' testimonies can provide deeper insights into the impact of the Holocaust and the ways in which they endured and preserved their identities.

The language ideology of struggle reflected in the excerpts underscores the multifaceted effort to survive physically, maintain mental resilience, and preserve identity through various means. As Bluhm (1948) stated, the language ideology of survival emphasized concrete action to evade death through adaptation, covert resistance, or negotiation with the SS. Jewish prisoners helped one another in planning resistance to survive while waiting for the right moment to escape the Nazi camps, building cooperation among fellow inmates, and managing stress and trauma caused by the camp's brutal

environment. This analysis is further supported by Young (2008), who finds that survival strategies were more mental and social in nature, for instance through solidarity among prisoners and the preservation of religious practices that reaffirmed their identity.

Discourse Practice Analysis

The production of this report consists of historical accounts and the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, namely Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba, during their time in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp. Initially written in Slovak and German, the report was later translated into various languages, including English, with the explicit purpose of informing the international community about what had happened in Auschwitz. This text was produced during World War II, a period when the Nazis systematically exterminated Jewish people in Auschwitz and other concentration camps. The language used in the report imitates documentaries and descriptive style, as evidenced by its presentation of fact-based reports, numerical data, and survivor testimonies to provide concrete evidence of the events that occurred.

The creation of the report by the two escapees from the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp was initially intended to warn the Hungarian Jewish community, but it was later consumed by the international public. Pataricza and Czibalmos (2025) stated that the Jewish community in Hungary was largely deported to Nazi camps, primarily Auschwitz-Birkenau, especially in 1944 after Germany occupied Hungary. These deportations involved being sent to extermination camps, while others were used as forced labor. When the report was first published, it faced skepticism and disbelief from the Jewish community. However, once it appeared in the Swiss press, it gained broader recognition and provoked strong reactions of condemnation, outrage, and international pressure on the Hungarian government to halt the deportations. The testimonies report of the two escapees from Auschwitz-Birkenau contains dark and brutal stories, set against the background of Holocaust history, as evidence that the main perpetrators of these atrocities were the Germany Nazi Force.

Sociocultural Practice Analysis

There is a complex institutional process present in the discourse/language of the two escapees. The choices and meanings attributed to the language ideology of the two escapees are heavily shaped by the assumptions constructed by Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba. These assumptions are, in turn, influenced by the institutions behind them. The two escapees, Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba, did not get any benefit from the strict rule systems of the Nazi SS soldiers, making their discourse a form of resistance against the institutionalized power and

control they experienced. The choices of words, ideological positioning, and narrative strategies reflect the broader institutional context, which was a battlefield for power, survival, and the assertion of truth. Their escape was not only a physical act but also a discourse of resistance, seeking to challenge the institutional power of the Nazis and expose the suffering they witnessed. Thus, their testimonies should be understood as more than mere communication; they were instruments of resistance that amplified the silenced voices of Jewish prisoners, ensuring that their suffering would be acknowledged by international hegemonic powers (Boukala, 2024; Boukala, 2025).

The sociocultural process in the language of the two escapees is highly complex. It highlights the SS soldiers as a hyper-organized institution, composed of individuals with shared sociocultural and psychological backgrounds, operating from the same primordial motivations. Moyer (2007) states that the best military history of the 21st century shows that military history today goes far beyond traditional lessons, integrating social, cultural, and political history. The SS was not only a military force but also an ideological institution. This language ideology was embedded in discourse, symbols, rituals, and everyday practices. This finding aligns with Malešević's (2025) findings that the nationalist ideology of soldiers developed and was produced through civil institutions such as schools, media, and organizations, rather than directly on the front lines of war. Similarly, Nguyen (2025) argues that language ideology as a social practice is not merely an official doctrine but is manifested through everyday actions. On the other hand, for the Jews, this sociocultural system applied in the concentration camps in Poland included religious celebrations, national customs, and various organized events. The escapees, Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba, likely viewed the broader sociocultural context of the camp, including these practices, as part of their strategy to understand the system they faced and to mobilize support, whether internally within the camps or externally through their escape and subsequent reporting.

CONCLUSION

The language ideology embedded within media discourse subtly shapes the thoughts and perceptions of society. Due to its hidden nature, traditional methods find it difficult to conduct large-scale empirical research. The combination of critical discourse analysis and corpus addresses the limitations of traditional media discourse analysis. This study adopts a corpus-based method to analyze the discourse of two escapees from the Auschwitz Camp in Germany History in Documents and Images from the perspective of critical discourse analysis. With the help of relevant concepts and

theories, this study analyzes the testimonies of Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba regarding to the concentration camp that involved Jewish people. The individual research on the "language of the two escapees" can be divided into corpus-based keyword analysis and linguistic realization. Furthermore, the language ideology of the escapees' language has also been discussed.

From the previous exposition, the findings of this study can be summarized as follows; First, the corpus generated from the testimonies of Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba reveals several keywords: (1) the first group referring to information about the background and the origin countries of the prisoners; (2) the second group introducing the purpose of the concentration camp; and (3) the third group used to imply the events that occurred in the camp. Second, there are collocations around the keywords related to the camp in the form of adjectives, verbs, nouns, and adverbs. Third, the analysis reveals three ideological constructions in the language of the two escapees: (1) a language ideology of sharing the same suffering as the Jewish prisoners; (2) a language ideology of rebellion against torture; and (3) a language ideology of fighting for survival. Fourth, there are two explanations for why the two escapees chose certain forms of language over others: (1) institutional processes, and (2) sociocultural processes. The institutional process refers to the struggle or competition across institutions between the groups benefiting from the system and those controlled by it. The sociocultural process refers to the struggle between the SS soldiers, as a highly organized and hyper-functional institution, and the Jewish prisoners, as a form of political resistance, social opposition, and cultural activity within the concentration camp.

This research has several limitations stemming from its methodological choices. The corpus-based critical discourse analysis prioritizes keyword patterns and linguistic features, hence it may overlook nuanced context, emotional subtext, or cultural variation embedded in the testimonies. Subjectivity in selecting analytical frameworks and interpreting findings can also influence results, and the reliance on written, digitized texts restricts the study's scope, potentially excluding relevant discourses from oral or informal contexts.

Despite the limitations, this research demonstrates the potential of combining Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Corpus Linguistics to uncover ideological patterns in media texts through linguistic features. It provides recommendations for researchers in the field of discourse studies to further develop CDA in an academic context by identifying patterns of language use that reflect language ideology in specific texts. This research is expected to also highlight the importance of integrating corpus

linguistics approaches into CDA to produce more objective and data-driven analyses. Other researchers are encouraged to apply Critical Discourse Analysis using quantitative or qualitative methods to identify linguistic features that reflect language ideology and power in discourse.

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