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Hate Speech in Online Health News: News about HIV/AIDS in Turkey[1]

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Abstract

Hate speech is a discursive practice that serves the benefits of the dominant ideology, which is endorsed through the discourse of media. Especially, news media plays an important role in the dissemination of hate speech because news is considered as the representation of real life. This study aims to analyze online health news in terms of hate speech against HIV/AIDS, and to understand how HIV positive people perceive the hate speech in these news. To examine the online news, critical discourse analysis method was adopted; and in-depth interviews were carried out with ten HIV positive people. According to the findings of both studies, HIV positive people claim that online news promotes and popularizes prejudices, stigmatization and discrimination against them, and that the content of online news involves misrepresentations, misinformation, and incorrect use of terminology. Even though hate speech encompasses all types of expressions that promote, popularize, defend, or justify discriminatory, intimidating, disapproving and prejudicial attitudes, HIV positive people do not describe this as hate speech, which points to the fact that hate speech is internalized and justified by its victims.

Keywords: Hate Speech, Online News, Critical Discourse Analysis, HIV, AIDS

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Çevrimiçi Sağlık Haberlerinde Nefret Söylemi: Türkiye'de HIV/AIDS ile ilgili Haberler

Öz

Nefret söylemi, medyanın söylemi aracılığıyla baskın ideolojinin çıkarlarına hizmet eden söylemsel bir pratiktir. Özellikle haber medyası nefret söyleminin yaygınlaştırılmasında önemli bir rol oynamaktadır çünkü haberler gerçek yaşamın temsili olarak düşünülmektedir. Bu çalışmamız çevrimiçi sağlık haberlerinde HIV/AIDS'e karşı nefret söylemini analiz etmeyi ve bu nefret söyleminin HIV pozitif bireyler tarafından nasıl algılandığını anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Çevrimiçi haberleri incelemek için eleştirel söylem analizi yönetimi benimsenmiş ve on HIV pozitif bireyle derinlemesine görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmamızdan elde ettiğimiz bulgulara göre; HIV pozitif bireyler çevrimiçi haberlerin kendilerine karşı önyargıları, damgalamayı ve ayrımcılığı teşvik etmenin yanı sıra yaygınlaştırdığını öne sürmüşlerdir. Ayrıca katılımcıların haber içeriklerinde yanlış temsil, bilgi ve terminoloji kullanımının olduğunu belirtmeleri, eleştirel söylem analizi ile derinlemesine görüşmelerin analizinden elde edilen bulguların tutarlı olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Nefret söyleminin ayrımcı, tehdit edici, kınayıcı ve önyargılı tutumları teşvik eden, yaygınlaştıran, savunan ya da meşrulaştıran her türlü ifadeyi kapsamasına rağmen HIV pozitif bireyler bunu nefret söylemi olarak tanımlamamaktadır. Bu nefret söyleminin, mağdurları tarafından içselleştirildiğine ve meşrulaştırıldığına işaret etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Nefret Söylemi, Çevrimiçi Haberler, Eleştirel Söylem Analizi, HIV, AIDS

Introduction

Hate speech in a society denies the rights of certain groups by aiming to injure, dehumanize, harass, intimidate, debase, degrade, and victimize these groups, and so encourages insensitivity and brutality against them. In other words, hate speech is based on exclusion and devaluation of certain groups in society, which represents a systematic hierarchy.

This systematic hierarchy is constructed on the basis of discourse that represents the dominant ideology, and media plays an important role in the dissemination of this discourse. In this sense, hate speech is a discursive practice that serves the benefits of the dominant ideology, which is endorsed through the discourse of media. Especially, news media plays an important role in the dissemination of hate speech, because news is considered as the representation of real life. Whether it is traditional or digital, news media promotes, popularizes and justifies hatred towards certain groups in society, whereas it should play a role in combating discrimination and in promoting intercultural understanding.

Binark and Çomu (2012) define six kinds of hate speech which include different contexts of this type of discourse: political hate speech, hate speech against women, against foreigners and immigrants, against disabled people and diverse diseases, hate speech based on sexual identity, and religious belief and sect. An overview of the literature on hate speech reveals that the least studied area is hate speech against disabled people and diverse diseases; that is why, this study focuses on hate speech in health news. Although hate speech based on diseases contains various health conditions such as obesity, Alzheimer's, and diseases that come with age, the one that stands out the most in terms of production and reproduction of hate speech is HIV/AIDS. It can be said that people who live with HIV suffer from discrimination, stigmatization and hate speech. The reasons for this can be listed as misinformation about the infection of the virus, biased attitudes towards individuals or groups that are most affected by HIV, use of intravenous drugs and sexual behavior that are thought as reasons for infection, and fears related to disease and death (Adak, 2010; Duyan, 2001; Zorlu and Çalım, 2012). Furthermore, stigmatization and hate speech about HIV/AIDS prevent the open declaration of the disease, and social fear promotes transmission (Oran and Şenuzun, 2008). A study about HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination in Turkey reveals that gossip, verbal abuse, threats and injury are the most common forms of stigma in addition to getting fired and being denied health care because of HIV/AIDS (Gökengin et.al.,2017). Overall, people living with HIV are "being the subject of hate speech because of a situation related to their bodies" and "bodies as a whole are perceived as a threat" (Alğan and Şensever, 2010, s.33-34).

Regarding media's role on hate speech, it can be said that the news about HIV/AIDS in media actually promote the discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS (Visser et.al., 2006). From a general point of view, media presents AIDS as an untreatable disease, and the patients as dangerous people; which cause an increase in substantial bias and fear in society. When the fact that media is the most used source of information on HIV/AIDS is taken into consideration (Yegen, 2014), the influence of hate speech in media becomes prominent. Due to the fact that discriminating statements appear to be mere talk, they are not considered as damaging expressions; however, they could be very effective in marginalization and exclusion of certain groups (van Dijk, 2000).

In this sense, this study aims to demonstrate the existing hate speech in online news in addition to understand how hate speech in these news are perceived by its target group, namely people living with HIV. This study specifically focuses on hate speech in online news due to the fact that "hate speech on the Internet is special because [...] it is pure speech, and among degrees of racial discrimination, such as verbal rejection, avoidance, discrimination, physical attack and extermination, hate speech on the Internet falls into the least dangerous category of verbal activity" (Timofeeva, 2003, s.259).

1. Hate Speech and Media

Hate speech consists of statements that are grounded on bias and discrimination, and it is the use of discourse as a tool for attacking a person or a group on the basis of their group characteristics like race, gender, ethnicity, religion, color, national origin, sexual orientation or disability (Binark and Çomu, 2012; Cohen-Almagor, 2011; Smolla, 1990; Weber, 2009). In a broader meaning, hate speech is an ideology of outcasting and devaluation, which represents a systematic hierarchy among groups of a society; and it is revealed as the mental and ideological background of hate crime, which is the most violent way of discrimination (Göregenli, 2013). In this regard, hate speech is not only a discourse practice based on discrimination and intolerance, but also it is an important constituent of social hierarchy. It can be said that through hate speech, the groups that possess power in society constitute the idea of 'the others', and then use hate speech again to repress them.

The use of lingual practices and the milieu where such practices are popularized are very important for hate speech (Binark and Çomu, 2012). Accordingly, the role of media should be discussed in terms of dissemination of hate speech. Maigret (2011) mentions that media content that includes hate speech serves to suppress the variety of ideas in a society. Moreover, ideologies that are endorsed through the discourse of media influence social representations of attitudes, ideas and beliefs toward certain groups on an individual level. Moreover, media plays an important role in defining intergroup relations by providing an ideological context (Downing and Husband, 2005). It can be argued that news in media, in particular, mediates concepts and values of the dominant ideology by constructing discourse (Göregenli, 2013; Çınar, 2013); and it contributes to the production of intolerance, bias and even hatred towards groups that are 'marginalized' in society by being a reference point for "social representations" (Moscovici, 1988, s.222).

In addition, media has an important role in reinforcing already existing discrimination and hate speech in a society. Especially news plays this part, because they are considered as the representation of real life, and thus seen more reliable (Çelenk, 2010; Çınar, 2013; van Dijk, 1988). It is much more likely for stereotypes and prejudices about certain groups to turn into knowledge and judgment if they are represented in the news compared to any other media tool, because news is considered to reflect real life (Çınar, 2013).

Even though media representations do not directly cause physical or emotional damage on the basis of discrimination, they may actually lay the ground for them. Moreover, discrimination in media may reach large masses because of fast and extensive circulation. In general, discrimination on media is related to the lack of representation, under representation or misrepresentation, and stereotyping certain groups. As Çelenk (2010) indicates, media may discriminate disadvantaged groups by ignoring them, by providing limited representation, and by stereotyping them on the basis of prejudices. When it comes to online news, online hate speech is perceived to be more natural,

common, available, easier to be created and consequently more common (Binark, 2010; Gagliardone et al., 2015). Moreover, produced hate speech can spread faster and more easily due to the technological characteristics of online news, such as speed, space, multiplicity, polycentrality, interaction and participation (Fenton, 2010).

The opportunities that the Internet provides for online news turn the medium into a convenient place for hate propaganda, which is difficult to regulate due to mirror sites (Timofeeva, 2003) and offer extensive hate content (Cohen-Almagor, 2011). Moreover, online hate speech has its own structure different from other media because of its permanence, itinerancy, anonymity and cross-jurisdictional character (Gagliardone et al., 2015). In addition, compared to traditional media in terms of hate speech, what is most distinctive about online news is that it enables its readers or users to produce content, which carries the risk of the use of new media for producing and disseminating hate speech. (Çomu and Binark, 2013; Dirini, 2010; Djuric et al., 2015).

2. Methodology

This study aims to examine hate speech against HIV/AIDS in online news, and to understand how HIV positive people perceive this hate speech. In order to demonstrate hate speech in online news sites, van Dijk's approach to critical discourse analysis is adopted, because it is based on analyzing news primarily as a type of text or discourse (van Dijk, 1988). In this direction, news articles about HIV/AIDS that appeared in online news sites in Turkey are examined in terms of hate speech. The sample of the study is determined to include news articles that contain the words HIV or AIDS in 2016 in three online news sites, namely CNN Türk online, Mynet News and Hürriyet online, which are the most used online news sources according to Reuters Institute Digital News Reports (Newman et al., 2016; Newman et al., 2017). The news items are analyzed based on the model of van Dijk's approach to discourse analysis (see Table 1.).

Table 1. Model of van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis

A. Macro structure
1. Thematic structure
   a. Headline(s)
   b. Leads
   c. Photographs
2. Schematic structure
   a. Circumstances
      1. Main events
      2. Consequences
      3. Background
      4. Context

b. Evaluation

1. Verbal Reaction

2. Comment

B. Micro Structure

1. Syntactic analysis
   a. Passive or active sentence structure
   b. Simple or complex sentence structure
2. Local coherence
   a. Conditional coherence
   b. Functional coherence
   c. Referential coherence
3. Choice of words
4. Rhetoric
   a. Photograph
   b. Persuasive content
   c. Direct description and eye witness reports

Adopted from: Özer, Ö. (2015). "Teun Adrian van Dijk Örneğinde Eleştirel Söylem Çözümlemesi" in B. Yıldırım (Ed.) İletişim Araştırmalarında Yöntemler. Konya: Literatürk. 197-286.

In order to understand the perspective of people living with HIV towards hate speech in online news, semi-structured in-depth interviews are carried out with ten HIV positive people, who read online news. The respondents are primarily asked about the content and sufficiency of online news about HIV, and participation of other users without displaying online news articles included in the sample. Following these questions, respondents are shown randomly selected news articles from the sample, and their opinions about hate speech towards people living with HIV in news are taken into consideration.

3. Findings

There are 46 news items included in the analysis. 32 of them are in Hürriyet online, 8 of them are in Mynet news, and 6 of them are in CNNTürk online. Regarding the dates of news, it can be seen that 15 of them are published between 30.11.2016 – 03.12.2016, which coincides with World AIDS Day on the 1st of December. There is no other clustering observed in terms of date. In terms of news sources, 22 of the news are taken from news agencies, including DHA, İHA and AA. A full list of news articles can be found in Appendix A.

When the news segments are analyzed, under which the news items are presented, the results vary. For Cnntürk Online, 4 news items fall under Health segment, 1 under World and 1 under Turkey. In Mynet News, 4 news items are presented in World segment, 2 in Life segment, 1 in Current Events and 1 in Health segment. As for Hürriyet online, 9 news items are presented as Local News; another 9 is presented in World segment; 1 in Technology segment; 4 in Current Events segment; and 9 news items take place under Health segment.

3.1. Hate Speech Against HIV Positive People in Online News

According to Visser et al. (2006), news about HIV/AIDS and their style contribute to socially constructed stigmatization and discrimination against people living with HIV. In other words, news content may reinforce social stigmas. When the representation of HIV positive people in news is evaluated (Yegen, 2014), it is seen that AIDS is described as an untreatable disease; HIV positive people are pictured as dangerous; and on the basis of this, they are marginalized. By creating stereotypes and images of 'dying people', news media promotes and reinforces already existing prejudices in society.

When online news about HIV and AIDS is examined, the situation does not seem to be different. In this regard, salient examples are given for each category of news structure proposed by van Dijk. In doing so, it should be remembered that hate speech can be concealed in expressions, which may seem rational and normal at first; and it "does not necessarily manifest itself through expressions of hatred and emotion" (Weber, 2009,s. 5).

According to van Dijk, (1988), thematic organization of news plays a crucial role, because it constitutes the theme or topic of text. Topics are usually expressed and signalled by headlines, and together with the lead, they provide a summary of the news text. For this reason, hate speech in headline or lead of news requires careful consideration.

News items examined reveal that there are certain headlines and leads that summarize the increase of HIV positive people. As mentioned above, people living with HIV already constitute a group, which is perceived by the society as dangerous and threatening. When news topics assert that "Number of AIDS patients increased in Turkey" (2016); "The danger of AIDS in Turkey is increasing" (2016); and "AIDS has officially exploded" (Aydın, 2016), the fear in society regarding HIV and AIDS is cultivated. In this regard, one of the headlines actually includes the word "daunting" ("Daunting numbers for AIDS in Turkey," 2016).

Moreover, some of the topics introduced by headline and lead are related to criminal acts. Examples of this sort of headlines include "Prostitution operation in Aydın: 2 people diagnosed with HIV virus" (2016); "Two prostitutes in Kuşadası have AIDS"

(2016); "Assertion "priest with AIDS who raped 30 children is found innocent" is denied in Mexico" (2016); and "Ran over her lover when found that he had AIDS" (2016). Establishing a relationship between HIV/AIDS and crimes describes people living with HIV as criminals, and in turn, creates disapproving and antagonistic attitudes.

Other salient examples include a direct relationship between AIDS and death. In one of the news, AIDS is framed as a 'murderer' by asking the question "Did AIDS kill Prince?" (2016). This approach reinforces the perception of AIDS as an untreatable and threatening disease. This type of relationship can also be found in news item titled "14 people die everyday in that country" (2016) and "Everyday in Kenya, 14 people die of AIDS" (2016). Making this description of 'dying people' may cause HIV positive people to be shunned in society. There is another ideological perspective in these news items. As Göregenli (2013) mentions, hate speech is based on an ideology of exclusion, which represents a systematic hierarchy among groups of society. News about Kenya is an example of this perspective. It can be said that establishing a connection between AIDS and Kenya reproduces prejudices both for HIV positive people and for the country Kenya, due to the fact that they both represent lower groups in social hierarchy. The same reasoning applies to news titled "Serious increase of HIV cases in Kenya" (2016), and "AIDS epidemic in Cambodia" (2016).

Overall, thematic structures of news are observed to promote and justify hate by describing them as an increasing threat; by making a connection with criminal acts; by creating an image of 'dying people' that needs to be shunned; and by reinforcing existing social hierarchies.

Schematic structure of news discourse refers to discourse categories of main event, consequences, background and context, which constitute the circumstance of news; and verbal reactions and comments, which constitute the evaluation of news. In general, news schema determines the overall ordering of topics in the text, and it is used to effectively express information in a news discourse.

According to van Dijk (1988, s. 41), "news events necessarily embody a point of view, and so does their description in a news discourse." This is why examination of schematic structures becomes important in terms of hate speech. The news article titled "Deaths caused by AIDS is decreasing in the world" (2016) provides an example of this. Although the headline asserts that deaths due to AIDS are lower in number, the main event presented in the news is different. The main event is actually the increase in number of people living with HIV in Turkey. In the text, it is emphasized that even though the world numbers are decreasing, the numbers for Turkey are on the rise. In this regard, it can be said that the context of news is presented in the headline instead of the main event. This contrast presented in the news can be interpreted as an intention to create awareness for the subject matter; however, it causes HIV/AIDS to be perceived as a threat in Turkey.

In another example, "Two prostitutes in Kuşadası have AIDS" (2016) news is not

actually about two HIV positive sex workers, but a police operation for sex trafficking. In this sense, one of the consequences of the event presented in the news is portrayed as the main event in headline. This decision of the news producer can be explained by the influence of fundamental news values such as negativity, unusualness and unexpectedness (van Dijk, 1988). Using 'the most negative' consequence as the headline signals the point of view of the news discourse.

Verbal reactions category, which is used very often in analyzed news, is a category signaled by names and the roles of news participants and by direct or indirect quotes. According to van Dijk (1988, s.56), the use of verbal reactions "allows journalists to formulate opinions that are not necessarily their own, but which nevertheless are objective because they have been stated." However, the selection of speaker and quotations reflects journalists' and newspapers' decisions. Moreover, the category of comment involves opinions, expectations and evaluations of newsmakers, which can be found in the news in an indirect manner. Both categories of verbal reaction and comment are thought to represent the ideology of news discourse.

One salient finding in this regard is that all of the news that included verbal reaction category uses quotations of experts, NGO workers and mostly doctors. Furthermore, most of the factual information is given through verbal reactions. For example, the news "The biggest prejudice: "Don't touch him, he has AIDS" (2016) only consists of statements of Prof. Dr. Füsun Terzioğlu, the Dean of Health Sciences Faculty, Istinye University, where she shares information about ways of infection, treatment and stigmatization of people living with HIV. In a similar way, the news "AIDS is becoming chronic" (2016) presents all of the information on the basis of statements by Prof. Dr. Önder Ergönül, who is the Head of Turkish Clinical Microbiology and Infection Diseases Association.

When verbal reactions are used in news discourse, they formulate opinions, and increase the level of persuasiveness of the news. Because of this role of verbal reactions, using them as commentary is a sensitive issue. In order to elaborate, a statement can be examined from the news "The danger of AIDS in Turkey is increasing" (2016), which includes statements of the Head of HIV Infection Association Prof. Dr. Fehmi Tabak.

> Prof. Dr. Tabak, who points out that the number of people catching AIDS through homosexual relationships is increasing in Turkey, asserts "It seems that the decrease in disease's fatal characteristic and the threat to normal life expectancy weaken the prevention methods. Unfortunately, people are not as scared of AIDS as they used to be."

This assertion is clearly not a scientific statement. It involves the opinion of the speaker; however, due to the fact that it is given as a quotation and that it belongs to an expert, it may cause the formation of attitudes and beliefs about HIV and AIDS.

What is more prominent about verbal reactions and comments is that none of the news analyzed includes opinions or reactions of people living with HIV, which can be

interpreted as HIV positive people's exclusion and marginalization by news discourse. The idea that news discourse represents the dominant ideology is apparent in this regard. No matter what the topic is, whether a criminal act, medical developments or awareness campaigns, the main subject of the news - person living with HIV - is not included.

Regarding syntactic analysis, it is observed that while giving information about the increase or decrease in the number of HIV positive people, passive sentence structure is adopted. They are presented not as humans but only content of information. It can be said that speaking of people living with HIV in an indirect manner and reducing them to numbers and statistics is dehumanizing.

In addition, the sentences that have active structure either include quotation of experts, such as " Prof. Dr. Tabak says that there is 36 million people with HIV in the world" ("The aim at HIV is 90-90-90", 2016) or present the agent of the sentence as HIV or AIDS. Some distinct examples can be found in the same news item aforementioned: "Since it first emerged in 1980, HIV infected nearly 78 million people;" "HIV/AIDS is now a treatable disease;" and "As long as the medicine are taken, the disease stays chronic." In this sense, the agent or subject of these sentences is either the virus or the "disease", but not the people. Overall, by using passive sentence structures and not mentioning HIV positive people as the agent news actor, the news discourse reproduces their position as the "other", where they are pictured as a "threat," "danger" or "risk" for the constructed "us".

According to van Dijk (1988, s.81), "the use of active and passive sentences, and the agent or subject position of news actors in sentences reveals much about the newspaper's implicit stance towards these news actors." On this basis, it can be said that people living with HIV are treated as a mere content of information instead of news actors. They are not subjects themselves, but only the topics of news discourse. And just as it is argued in the category of verbal reactions, this can be interpreted as reinforcing the distinction between "us" and "them", marginalizing HIV positive people, and ignoring them as a constituent of the society.

Examining the local coherence of news discourse enables understanding the implicit assumptions and beliefs of the speaker. Moreover, local coherence between propositions makes sense only if they both match the topic of the news, and if they are consistent with the knowledge or belief of the listener. In other words, "local coherence is established relative to the current topic and knowledge or beliefs of the speech partners" (van Dijk, 1988, s.62). In this regard, every coherence strategy used in the analyzed news corresponds to existing beliefs, attitudes and knowledge in society.

For instance, in the news titled "14 people die everyday in that country" (2016) propositions and sentences cohere locally mostly in a referential way. After saying that three quarters of the population is under the age of 30, the news continues with UN 2015 AIDS report, which includes that there are 100 thousand children living with HIV

in the age group of 0-14. It can be said that these two sequential sentences locally cohere by completing each other and they are also coherent with the topic of the news, which involves the high rate of diagnosis and deaths in Kenya on the basis of HIV/AIDS. But, more importantly, these propositions are coherent based on the assumption that the reader already has a belief or knowledge about the situation of HIV or AIDS in Africa. In this way, the news item confirms the already existing prejudicial attitude in society that HIV/AIDS in Africa is common; and reproduces it as a kind of knowledge by presenting numbers and reports.

As for choice of words in news discourse, it may refer to the degree of formality, the group-based or institutional embedding of discourse, and the attitudes and hence ideologies of the speaker. Choice of words is often associated with the style of discourse, but it is also controlled by rhetorical strategies. Regarding the word choice in the analyzed news items, there are two important findings about hate speech and its constituents. First of all, there are words that promote and popularize certain prejudicial attitudes. Some examples include associating HIV/AIDS with death, emphasizing it as a threat or danger, underlining the increasing numbers, and describing HIV positive people as criminals.

The sentence "every year, 2 million people catches HIV virus, 1,1 million people loses their lives because of AIDS" ("Number of AIDS patients increased in Turkey," 2016), is both associating HIV with death and emphasizing increasing numbers. Other examples of word choice include different variations of dangerous, scary, daunting, risky and alarming. It can be seen that the analyzed news items usually feel the need to "warn" the society about HIV or AIDS. It may be interpreted as an intention to raise awareness about the subject matter; however all it does is contributing to the stigmatization of people living with HIV.

As the second important finding about word choice, the use of wrong terminology shows the negligence of journalists and newspapers; which in turn explains that the issues related to HIV/AIDS are not considered to be very important. In this regard, one paragraph from "AIDS is no longer fatal" (2016) can be given as an example:

> By emphasizing that not every patient who catches HIV microbe will become an AIDS patient, Specialist Dr. Sema Karaoğlu mentions "AIDS is a disease which completely blocks our immune system. When a person catches this disease, even a tiny microbe may make him/her face consequences that can end in death. That is to say if a person infected with HIV virus becomes AIDS, the disease may come to a fatal state because his/her immune system will not work. A very simple fungal infection, influenza or urinary system infection may drag the person to death.

Besides the many words and phrases in the paragraph that may cause panic in society such as "completely blocks our immune system," "consequences that can end in death," "a fatal state" and "drag the person to death;" the improper use of

terminology stands out, as well[4]. To begin with, HIV is not a microbe but a virus. Calling it a microbe is medically wrong. Another improper phrase is "catching HIV or AIDS." HIV is not something to be caught; it is an infection. Referring to it as catching a cold may be diminishing for people living with HIV. Also, referring to AIDS as a disease is complicated, because AIDS describes a clinical syndrome of opportunistic infections and diseases that can develop as immunosuppression deepens along the continuum of HIV infection. In this direction, AIDS is also not something that people become, but develop. It is an epidemiological definition based on clinical signs and symptoms. And finally, although AIDS remains a serious health condition, labeling it as deadly and incurable may create fear, and increase stigmatization and discrimination.

From a general perspective, the effectiveness of news is based on persuasiveness. In this sense, rhetoric is used in news discourse in order to persuade readers of its factuality. The strategies of rhetoric in news discourse are derived from the goals and intended effects of communication; and they partly depend on the inherent news value system that underlies news production, which include attention for the negative, the sensational, sex, and violence (van Dijk, 1988). Overall, rhetorical strategies used in news items analyzed include emphasizing the factual nature of events through descriptions, eyewitness reports, reliable sources, exact numbers and direct quotes; building a strong relational structure for facts through using background, context and consequences; and provide information with attitudinal and emotional dimensions.

Overall, it should be remembered that language shapes beliefs, and may influence behaviors. As Binark and Çomu (2012) mentions, "stigmas, stereotypes, prejudices and discriminatory practices against those who are different from the identities constructed as 'us/someone like us' all play a role in the formation of hate speech." Rhetorical features strengthen the existing beliefs and attitudes about HIV/AIDS, which are mostly based on misconceptions and incorrect information. In addition, this becomes the most prominent reason for stigmatizing people living with HIV. Stigmatization is basically linking a person to undesirable characteristics on the basis of certain attributes. Stigma can be defined as "an attribute that is deeply discrediting" which reduces "a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one" (Goffman, 1963, s.3). Regarding stigmatization of people living with HIV, there are certain constituents: it is a life threatening disease; people are afraid of AIDS; AIDS is thought to be related to homosexual relationships, relationship with sex workers, relationship with multiple partners, and intravenous drug use; and people living with HIV are perceived to be facing the consequences of their moral choices (Singh et al., 2002 cited in Oran and Şenuzun, 2008). Not all of these constituents can explicitly be found in the analyzed news; however, they are mediated through news discourse.

In a conceptualization of the term, it can be asserted that stigma exists when five interrelated components converge. The first one is distinguishing and labeling human differences. For people living with HIV, it can be said that they are labeled because of their health condition. The second is linking labeled people to negative stereotypes

4 For a full list of preferred terminology, see UNAIDS (2015). UNAIDS Terminology Guidelines.

by dominant cultural beliefs. These negative stereotypes involve misconceptions and incorrect information about HIV/AIDS, which describe HIV positive people as a threat. The third component is the separation of 'us' from 'them' by placing labeled people in distinct categories. This distinction is constructed through the implicit meaning that "they" are threatening for "us." In the fourth component, labeled people experience discrimination and status loss. This can be observed in the news analyzed where HIV positive people are not taken as agents but mere topics. In addition, the last component is about access to social, economic and political power, which allows all the other components to unfold. This last component is explored in the second stage of analysis, where the perspectives of HIV positive people about online hate speech are examined.

3.2. Perspective of HIV Positive People

When it comes to hate speech directed at people living HIV, respondents provide various opinions; however, most of them claim that there is no direct hate speech in online news about HIV positive people. In other words, online news does not generate hate speech on purpose but they present statements that support hate and promote prejudices. One of the responses in this regard is as follows:

> I think there are news that support hate speech. I've never read anything that directly involves hate like "let's kill all of them". But I think there are news that trigger prejudices. They always say, "HIV does not kill but prejudices do". I see statements in news not generating hate but supporting prejudices. I think there is hate speech towards minorities, gays and sex workers but not about HIV (Respondent 3).

This perspective is common among respondents. Even though the news, as they consider, promote prejudice, stigmatization and discrimination, the respondents do not think there is hate speech directed at them in online news. Some of the respondents claim that there is wrong representation of people living with HIV, which causes fear among society, but this is not done intentionally, and it is due to the ignorance about the subject matter. The mutual idea appears to be that instead of hate speech, news content involves invalid information, incorrect data, and misappropriate use of language. One respondent explains this as follows:

> There used to be hate speech, but I don't believe there is direct hate speech anymore. I believe that because of ignorance, there are stigmatization and discrimination, and use of statements that would promote hate, but I believe this is done indirectly and unconsciously. There is, however, use of wrong information, wrong data, wrong tone or language, and violation of privacy (Respondent 4).

In this direction, it can be said that respondents do not consider hate speech to be a problem in terms of issues related to HIV/AIDS. Nevertheless, there are other areas, where they find online news to be problematic. One respondent mentions that although there is no hate speech in news content, comments in online news sites contain this type of discourse. Others underline that news might violate certain rights of people living with HIV. This violation that respondents mention usually involves violation of

privacy. Accordingly, news items expose the identities of HIV positive people or do not respect their privacy. Finally, associations and connotations to certain notions are considered to be an important issue related to hate speech. These associations include sex trafficking, homosexuality and immorality.

When asked about hate speech towards HIV positive people, only one of the respondents asserts that they think they experience hate speech because of their health status:

> I think there is hate speech. This bothered me for a long time and I suppose this was the reason for me to move away and isolate myself: the reaction and perspective of society... But now I'm passed it mostly because I'm much healthier than before I was diagnosed. I don't see it as a problem anymore (Respondent 9).

Even the respondent, who claims that there is hate speech towards HIV positive people, appears to accept that it is not a problem. This is the general perspective of respondents, who do not consider problems in choice of words, language, connotations and other issues as hate speech. Rather, they appear to find it normal and common. Overall, there are problematic issues in news items including promoting prejudice, stigmatization, incorrect use of language, misrepresentations, and misinformation. Although respondents mention these problems with news, they do not define this as hate speech. However, hate speech refers to all types of expression that popularizes, promotes, defends, or justifies hate. It results from intolerance and it is fed by prejudices (Binark and Çomu, 2012). It also involves discriminatory, intimidating, disapproving and prejudicial attitudes (Cohen-Almagor, 2011). Hate speech in news reproduces and strengthens stereotypes, and mediates the increase of discrimination in society with its provocative and discriminatory language. Moreover, it promotes prejudice against vulnerable groups.

So, when one speaks of discriminatory language, prejudiced attitudes and misrepresentations, they are actually referring to hate speech. The fact that respondents do not use the word hate speech for these matters may be related to the idea that it is considered to be normal and common in society. One response in this regard is prominent:

> Even some of the doctors have prejudices. All in all, it's not just in media; it's everywhere and this reflects on media. We can't separate the behavior of society and the behavior of media; media tries to meet the expectations of society. In order to sell, they make news according to people's expectations and value judgments. If you don't speak up, they hold you down; if you do speak up, they don't hear you (Respondent 3).

As it can be seen in the findings, hate speech towards HIV positive people is considered to be mundane, and people living with HIV are used to it. Hate speech and its prerequisites, such as prejudices and stereotypes, are thought to be embedded in social values; therefore, their existence is justified by respondents.

When hate speech in media becomes ordinary, it may serve to suppress the variety of ideas in a society (Maigret, 2011). This can be considered to cause certain views and groups to feel unwanted and silent their own voices. In this way, hate speech used in media becomes a tool to suppress different life styles, ideas and views which monotype the society. It is not evident in the findings of this study that hate speech directly suppresses people living with HIV; however, it has this effect to a certain degree. Some of the respondents find it meaningless to participate in online news sites and to create content. Moreover, others claim that participation may be exhausting for that they do not want to deal with the consequences of participation. Although this is not the case for all of the respondents, it is evident that they abstain from participation for different reasons. These reasons involve social concerns such as discrimination, stigmatization, being targeted, becoming a disadvantaged person, exclusion, and being exposed. Because of these reasons, HIV positive people may prefer to be silent and not use their right to participate.

Another important issue concerns the idea that news provides a reference point for social representations, which enables getting familiarized with strangeness (Moscovici, 1988). Ideologies that are endorsed through the discourse of media influence social representations of attitudes, ideas and beliefs toward certain groups (van Dijk, 1988). In this way, news serves to mediate concepts and values of the dominant ideology by constructing discourse; and it contributes to the production of intolerance, bias, and even hatred towards groups that are marginalized in society. Although the findings of this study are not representative, it can be observed that respondents are aware of the fact that people's knowledge on HIV/AIDS is shaped by news media. In this regard, one respondent claims;

> I think there is misleading news rather than hate speech. Because news doesn't present proper information, society doesn't get informed about HIV. That's where the problem appears. Aren't all of the prejudices against us based on ignorance? News should tell the truth (Respondent 10).

Media provides an ideological context, which creates a specific representation of 'others' (Downing and Husband, 2005). Most of unfamiliar concepts are constructed through social representations that take place in news media. News provides a source for the world outside of most people experience by themselves. Moreover, what people see in the news is considered as the representation of real life (Çelenk, 2010; Çınar, 2013; van Dijk, 1988). According to the findings of this study, news about HIV/AIDS present numbers of patients, doctor statements, events, and crimes. Respondents evaluate this as insufficient news content.

In this regard, it can be said that news about HIV/AIDS falls short of informing people. When it comes to social representations that news media construct, respondents claim that HIV/AIDS is associated with notions that are considered to be problematic in society such as sex trafficking and homosexuality. Moreover, respondents explain that HIV is described in the news as a fatal, contagious, sexually transmitted disease that threatens social morality. Keeping in mind that news is a source of knowledge for people, misrepresentation of people living with HIV in news contributes to the systemic

social hierarchy among groups of society. One of the respondents' expressions is prominent in this sense for that they reproach about this social hierarchy:

> [People] don't know anything about this subject and they don't make an effort to learn. This needs to be fixed. For example, cancer patients can share their disease with others and continue with their lives; it should be like this for HIV, as well. Frankly, I wouldn't want to get cancer. If I had a choice, I wouldn't choose cancer because if you're conscious, HIV is easier to cope with. But, unfortunately, we don't get society's support (Respondent 9).

As it is evident in this statement, HIV positive people face certain problems regarding their social lives. Moreover, news media reinforces these problems instead of trying to solve them. All in all, people living with HIV become victims of hate speech in news, whether it is traditional or online.

Concluding Remarks

On the basis of the findings of the research, certain concluding remarks can be made. First of all, it is important to mention that hate speech is not found in an explicit manner in analyzed news items, which means that news do not contain direct expressions of the emotion of hate. However, this does not entail that news items do not promote, defend or justify intolerance and prejudices. All in all, hate speech can be concealed in expressions, which may appear to be rational and normal at first. As a matter of fact, this is exactly what news about HIV/AIDS does. It presents an ideology that influences attitudes, ideas and beliefs about HIV positive people. In this sense, news analyzed both creates prejudicial attitudes, and reinforces already existing discrimination and hate speech against people living with HIV.

Overall, it is important to underline that discourse shapes beliefs, and influences behaviors. Rhetorical features strengthen the existing beliefs and attitudes about HIV/AIDS, which are mostly based on misconceptions and incorrect information. In addition, this lays the ground for discrimination against people living with HIV. HIV/AIDS is described as a threat for society, which reinforces the distinction of "us" and "them", because it implies that "they" (HIV positive people) are a threat for "us" (the society). This distinction becomes apparent also in the use of agent news actors, where people living with HIV are not treated as subjects of the news, but as mere contents of information. In this sense, it can be said that news items present facts and information about "others" for "us". This approach of the news both creates and promotes stigmas, stereotypes and prejudices against HIV positive people, which justifies their marginalization and stigmatization in society, and causes the formation of hate speech.

The interviewees also share this idea that news promotes and popularizes prejudices against them. Accordingly, online news does not generate hate speech on purpose, but they present statements that support hate and promote prejudices. In this sense, findings of the analysis of in-depth interviews with HIV positive people are in accordance

with the findings of critical discourse analysis. The main findings about how people living with HIV perceive hate speech in online news can be listed as follows:

- Hate speech is not generated on purpose in online news; however, its content supports hate and promotes prejudices, stigmatization, and discrimination.
- HIV/AIDS is associated with sex trafficking, homosexuality and immorality.
- There is an incorrect use of terminology, misrepresentations, and misinformation in online news.

It is interesting that even though online news about HIV/AIDS is described as promoting prejudices and stigmas, and its content includes an incorrect use of terminology, misrepresentations and misinformation, its language is not considered to involve hate speech. As a matter of fact, hate speech encompasses all types of expressions that promote, popularize, defend or justify discriminatory, intimidating, disapproving and prejudicial attitudes. In this sense, what HIV positive people describe as incorrect use of language actually refers to the process, where hate speech is shaped. In this sense, when HIV positive people claim that there is no hate speech towards them, but only promoting expressions, they may be adopting the idea that these prejudices and attitudes about HIV/AIDS represent social values, and that this is just the way society thinks, which results in the normalization of hate speech.

Whether traditional or online, hate speech in media stands as a problem for democratic ideals. In this regard, it is fruitful to remember certain guidelines for journalists. Regarding the increase of hate speech in news, Ethical Journalism Network (2014) suggests a five-point test for journalists, which requires careful consideration in the gathering, preparation and dissemination of news and information, and placing what is said and who is saying it in an ethical context by questioning the speaker, the audience, purpose and content of the speech, context and public atmosphere at the time of speech, and how the speech is disseminated.

As a general guideline, Camden Principles, which is outlined by ARTICLE 19 (2009), suggest that media should report in a factual manner, and bring acts of discrimination to the attention of public; be careful about building negative stereotypes; avoid unnecessary references to group characteristics; raise awareness of negative outcomes of discrimination; and report on a variety of groups and communities in order to give them a voice. Overall, media should foster a better understanding of different communities and their issues.

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Appendices

Appendix A. List of Online News Articles

Headline	Original Headline in Turkish	Website	Date	Access Date
Organ transplantation will take place between HIV carriers in USA	ABD'de HIV taşıyıcıları arasında organ nakli yapılacak	Hürriyet	11.02.16	12.11.17
AIDS epidemic in Cambodia	Kamboçya'daki AIDS salgını	Mynet	22.02.16	01.12.2017
Cuba accomplished to prevent HIV virus's transmission from mother to baby	Küba HIV virüsünün anneden bebeğe geçişini engellemeyi başardı	Hürriyet	3.03.16	12.11.17
AIDS is almost a chronic disease	AIDS kronik bir hastalık olma noktasına geldi	Hürriyet	11.03.16	12.11.17
AIDS is becoming chronic	AIDS gittikçe kronikleşiyor	CNNTürk	11.03.16	19.12.2017
We are very close to the treatment of AIDS	AIDS'in tedavisine çok yakınız	Hürriyet	2.04.16	12.11.17
What are the symptoms of AIDS?	AIDS belirtileri nelerdir?	Hürriyet	8.04.16	12.11.17
Shocking assertion about Prince: He was AIDS and rejected treatment	Prince hakkında flaş iddia: AIDS'ti ve tedaviyi reddetti	Hürriyet	28.04.16	12.11.17
Monkey protected from HIV with vaccine	Maymun aşı ile HIV'den korundu	Hürriyet	29.04.16	12.11.17
Did AIDS kill Prince?	Prince'i öldüren AIDS mi?	Hürriyet	29.04.16	12.11.17
"Take precaution live long" seminar in Burhaniye	Burhaniye'de 'Önlem al uzun yaşa' semineri	Hürriyet	4.05.16	12.11.17
Red Ribbon Istanbul against AIDS	HIV'e karşı Kırmızı Kurdele İstanbul	Hürriyet	11.05.16	12.11.17
Man who transmitted AIDS to lover on purpose is sentenced for 4 years	Sevgilisine bilerek AIDS bulaştıran adam 4 yıl ceza aldı	Hürriyet	6.06.16	12.11.17
Ran over her lover when found that he had AIDS	Sevgilisinin AIDS'li olduğunu öğrenince arabayla çarptı	Hürriyet	16.06.16	12.11.17
Ran over her lover when found that he had AIDS	AIDS'li olduğunu öğrendiği sevgilisini ezdi	CNNTürk	16.06.16	19.12.2017

Australia has beaten AIDS	Avustralya AIDS'i yendi	Mynet	10.07.16	01.12.2017
Number of AIDS patients increased in Turkey	Türkiye'de AIDS hastası sayısı arttı	Hürriyet	12.07.16	12.11.17
Serious increase of HIV cases in Kenya	Kenya'da HIV vakalarında ciddi artış	Hürriyet	20.07.16	12.11.17
Imam emphasized AIDS by shaking a condom	İmam, kondom sallayarak AIDS'e dikkat çekti	Hürriyet	27.07.16	12.11.17
14 people die everyday in that country	O ülkede her gün 14 kişi ölüyor	Hürriyet	11.08.16	12.11.17
Everyday in Kenya, 14 people die because of AIDS	Kenya'da her gün 14 kişi AIDS'den ölüyor	Mynet	11.08.16	01.12.2017
Good news for HIV carriers	HIV'lilere müjdeli haber	Hürriyet	23.08.16	12.11.17
AIDS has officially exploded	AIDS resmen patlamış	Hürriyet	29.09.16	12.11.17
One out of 10 children is resistant to AIDS	Her 10 çocuktan biri AIDS'e dirençli	Hürriyet	29.09.16	12.11.17
AIDS has officially exploded	AIDS resmen patlamış	Mynet	30.09.16	01.12.2017
Assertion "priest with AIDS who raped 30 children is found innocent" is denied in Mexico	Meksika'da "30 çocuğa tecavüz eden AIDS'li rahip suçsuz bulundu" iddiasına yalanlama	Hürriyet	2.10.16	12.11.17
Two prostitutes in Kuşadası have AIDS	Kuşadası'nda iki hayat kadınında AIDS çıktı	Mynet	12.10.16	01.12.2017
Prostitution operation in Aydın: 2 people diagnosed with HIV virus	Aydın'da fuhuş operasyonu: 2 kişide HIV virüsü tespit edildi	Hürriyet	13.10.16	12.11.17
Assertion of "AIDS in imported banana" increased local banana sales	İthal muzda AIDS" iddiası yerli muz satışlarını arttırdı	Hürriyet	31.10.16	12.11.17
The aim at HIV is 90-90-90	HIV'de hedef 90-90-90	Hürriyet	30.11.16	12.11.17
The Head of HATAM Prof. Dr. Serhat Ünal: "A big progress is made in medicine regarding HIV disease; however discrimination continues"	İstanbul Haberleri: HATAM Başkanı Prof. Dr. Serhat Ünal: "HIV hastalığında tıpta büyük aşama kaydedildi ancak ayrımcılık devam ediyor"	Hürriyet	30.11.16	12.11.17

Daunting numbers for AIDS in Turkey	AIDS'te Türkiye için ürküten rakam	CNNTürk	30.11.16	19.12.2017
Awareness increased, AIDS's increase slowed down	Farkındalık arttı, AIDS'in artış hızı kesildi	CNNTürk	30.11.16	19.12.2017
Distributed preservatives on World AIDS Day	Dünya AIDS Günü'nde prezervatif dağıttılar	Hürriyet	1.12.16	12.11.17
Galatasaray uniform to child with AIDS from Minister Kılıç	Bakan Kılıç'tan, AIDS'li çocuğa Galatasaray forması	Hürriyet	1.12.16	12.11.17
Apple applications turn red	Apple uygulamaları kırmızı renge büründü	Hürriyet	1.12.16	12.11.17
Distributed preservatives in Izmir, those ashamed did not accept	İzmir'de prezervatif dağıttılar, utananlar almadı!	CNNTürk	1.12.16	19.12.2017
Today is World AIDS Day	Bugün Dünya AIDS Günü	Mynet	1.12.16	01.12.2017
The danger of AIDS in Turkey is increasing	Türkiye'de AIDS tehlikesi artıyor	Mynet	1.12.16	01.12.2017
AIDS is no longer fatal	AIDS artık ölümcül değil	Mynet	1.12.16	01.12.2017
"Deaths caused by AIDS is decreasing in the world"	"Dünya'da AIDS'ten ölümler azalıyor"	Hürriyet	2.12.16	12.11.17
AIDS is emphasized in Balcalı	Balcalı'da AIDS'e dikkat çekildi	Hürriyet	2.12.16	12.11.17
AIDS test from Rihanna and prince of England	Rihanna ve İngiltere prensinden AIDS testi	CNNTürk	2.12.16	19.12.2017
They had a test for HIV	HIV testi yaptırdılar	Hürriyet	3.12.16	12.11.17
AIDS education for university students	Üniversite öğrencilerine, AİDS eğitimi	Hürriyet	9.12.16	DHA
The biggest prejudice: "Don't touch him, he has AIDS"	En büyük önyargı: "Ona sakın dokunma, onda AIDS var"	Hürriyet	15.12.16	DHA