

**A FACELESS THREAT OR VULNERABLE
INDIVIDUALS?**

**Representations of refugees in British newspapers
during the European refugee crisis**

Bachelor's thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Pakolaisuus on hyvin ajankohtainen ja vakava ilmiö, joka tuo mukanaan moraalisia velvollisuuksia, taloudellisia haasteita sekä kysymyksiä tasa-arvon ja ihmisoikeuksien toteutumisesta. Vuonna 2015 alkaneen Euroopan pakolaiskriisin vuoksi pakolaiset ovat olleet jatkuvasti uutisotsikoissa. Maahanmuuton räjähdysmäinen kasvu on saanut aikaan voimakkaita reaktioita aiheuttaen sekä solidaarisuutta että ennakkoluulojen siivittämää vastustusta.</p> <p>Median rooli ilmiössä on valtava, sillä se ilmaisee, muokkaa ja vahvistaa ihmisten asenteita ja mielikuvia. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selvittää miten pakolaisia representoidaan brittiläisissä sanomalehdissä, pyrkien paljastamaan mahdollista negatiivista kategoriointia, syrjintää sekä niiden taustalla olevia valtasuhteita ja ideologioita. Tämä kriittisen diskurssianalyysin menetelmiä ja periaatteita hyödyntävä tutkimus vertailee pakolaisten representaatioita <i>The Guardianissa</i> ja <i>The Sunissa</i> keskittyen artikkeleista löytyviin sanavalintoihin, teemoihin ja valtasuhteisiin.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat selkeitä eroja pakolaisten representaatioissa: <i>The Guardian</i> painottaa pakolaisten perspektiiviä, tasa-arvoa ja moraalista velvollisuutta tarjota apua, kun taas <i>The Sun</i> keskittyy Britannian näkökulmaan tuoden esille ennakkoluuloja ja huolia maahanmuuton negatiivisista vaikutuksista. Erot representaatioissa voivat mahdollisesti liittyä lehtien välisiin eroihin tyyllissä ja poliittisessa suuntautumisessa.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

The issue of refugees and asylum seekers is always socially and economically crucial, entailing moral responsibilities and practical challenges. Fleeing war and persecution, refugees are often in desperate need of shelter and support. However, the process of helping those in need does not always seem to be as straightforward as the situation would require, especially when the number of people seeking asylum is immense.

Due to the current European refugee crisis, which started to culminate in 2015 when an increasing number of refugees and migrants, mostly Syrian, Afghan and Iraqi, began to seek asylum in the EU, this issue has been prominently present in the media. Among other European countries, Britain's public and government have expressed a variety of strong reactions towards the crisis and its possible solutions, resulting in diverse media representations of refugees. Considering media's major role in both expressing, affecting and reinforcing the public understanding and attitudes, media representations, especially those of minorities, should be closely observed.

Previous research implies that there are some important similarities in how refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants are represented in British newspapers (KhosraviNik 2010) and that the language used about migrants and refugees has become more marginalising, increasingly dividing migrants into 'good' and 'bad' categories (Lamb 2014). However, as KhosraviNik (2010) states, world events can impact and change these representations significantly. Due to the constant growth of immigration, studies about majorities' attitudes towards migrant minorities should be revised. Thus, it is important to examine the ways in which refugees are being represented in media discourse today to reveal how the European refugee crisis has influenced them, since representations can indicate and enhance understanding about the attitudes of the public and shed light on the possible negative categorising of this minority. Moreover, comparative studies are needed to expose how such representations might vary e.g. between countries, areas, and political orientations. Comprehension of such issues might prove significant in terms of finding suitable solutions for them.

This study aims at discovering how refugees are represented in *The Guardian* and *The Sun*, which differ both in style and political orientation. Utilising critical discourse analysis, the study focuses on lexical choices, themes, and identifying power relations. Moreover, issues of negative categorising and negative effects of media, as well as individualisation and humanisation are disclosed, highlighting the relevance of comprehending and challenging media representations.

2 LANGUAGE IN THE MEDIA

This section will introduce the theories and previous research relevant to this study. I will discuss the basics of critical discourse analysis (CDA), describing its fundamental aspects and viewpoints, and then move on to discuss representations in the media, focusing on media discourse, power, and inequality. Lastly, I will present previous studies focusing on representations of refugees in British media, introducing the issues of negative categorising, negative effects of media, individualisation and humanisation.

2.1 Critical discourse analysis

The term ‘discourse’ can be defined as language-in-action, which indicates that discourse should not be considered as merely a system of linguistic forms people use, but rather as an activity-centred, dynamic and flexible entity (Blommaert 2005: 2). As Fairclough (1992: 64) states, discourse and social structure are deeply connected, meaning that social structure directly or indirectly shapes as well as constrains discourse; furthermore, one can both represent and signify the world through discourse. Thus, to discuss discourse is to discuss language as a social practice (Fairclough 1992: 63).

As Wodak (1997: 173) demonstrates, critical discourse analysis (CDA) examines authentic social interaction, emphasising the connection between language and society. According to Fairclough (1992: 12), in CDA, unlike in non-critical approaches, it is found crucial to examine aspects such as power relations, social relations as well as belief and knowledge systems and discover how discourse is shaped by them. The nature of discourse indeed often differs due to such elements, for

example, a discourse produced by a conservative might present the same issue differently than a discourse produced by a liberal. Hence, merely describing discursive practices is considered insufficient in CDA. Blommaert (2005: 27) also notes that a central aspect of CDA is its intrinsic connection to social theory, which is evident in CDA's interest in theories of power and ideology, such as theories of orders of discourse and power and knowledge by Foucault (1975, 1982), concept of ideological state apparatuses by Althusser (1971), and Gramsci's (1971) approach to hegemony. Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration, proposing a relation between structure and agency, is also utilised as a support for CDA's belief in linguistic events being formative of larger social processes (Blommaert 2005: 27). Furthermore, as Riggins (1997: 3) points out, one crucial factor to consider in CDA is the social effect that a text can have, since the ideologies conveyed in discourse can benefit certain people or groups in society. Gee (2010: 9) even argues that all discourse analysis should be critical because of the political nature of language. According to his view, practices of which language use is a part give meaning to language. These practices involve potential social goods and their distribution which is central to politics and thus, all comprehensive illustration of language use must deal with politics (Gee 2010: 9). Likewise, Fairclough (1992: 67) especially points out the importance of political and ideological aspects of discourse, since discourse as a political practice creates as well as maintains and changes power relations, whereas discourse as an ideological practice includes establishing, naturalising, maintaining, and changing meanings of the world. CDA is, hence, an exceptional tool in illustrating problematic issues, offering sufficiently profound means of examining discourse by analysing both hidden and exposed elements and the intentions behind them.

2.2 Representations in the media

When talking about representations in the media, the issues of ideology, bias, and manipulation are often present (Fairclough 1995b: 17). The vast selection of media content offers countless different perspectives and naturally, media representations are difficult to prove truthful or false. As Fairclough (1995b: 47) states, analysing representations in the media requires a thorough examination of multiple aspects. One should consider what is included and excluded, what is foregrounded, i.e. present and emphasised information, and backgrounded, i.e. explicit but de-emphasised information, and what has possibly affected the creation of such representations (Fairclough 1995b: 47, 106, Riggins 1997: 11).

Complicated processes, such as ideological processes, take place in media discourse (Fairclough 1995b: 47). Ideologies, simply explained as significations and constructions of reality (Fairclough 1992: 87), are typically implicit in media discourse, i.e. they are present as presuppositions but not actively disclosed or discussed (Fairclough 1995b: 108). Power relations are also often hidden, and the enormous scale of the mass media enables media discourse's strong influence in social reproduction (Fairclough 2001: 41, 45). Thus, media discourse does not only reflect reality, on the contrary, it constitutes versions of reality which benefit those who produce them (Fairclough 1995b: 104). For example, a newspaper with a certain political orientation might present an issue, such as immigration, in a way that highlights a negative perspective, foregrounding issues and events in which immigration has caused problems while backgrounding or even leaving out points about its advantages and necessity. This can benefit political parties with strongly normative ideologies about valuing nativeness and objecting immigration, since news constructed in this fashion can easily affect the public understanding of the issue, possibly causing this one-sided perspective to become the reality in the minds of the readers. Consequently, such parties might gain more support and therefore, more power in society.

Power, as van Dijk (1993: 254) explains, has to do with one group having control over others, and in their own interest, possibly influencing the minds of others and somehow limiting their freedom. In addition to social power being based on privileged access to e.g. wealth, status, education, position, or other resources of social value (van Dijk 1993: 254), power is strongly connected to access to discourse. Van Dijk (1993: 257) claims that when one has no active access to discourse, one lacks power. Furthermore, Fairclough (1995a: 2) demonstrates that the ones who have the ability to control discourse also have power to convey and maintain certain ideologies, while dominating others. This can lead to dominance of a certain group and certain ideologies, which in turn, as van Dijk (1993: 249-250) points out, results in social inequalities. Often, however, such dominance is silently accepted. Fairclough (1992: 10) explains that hegemonies, meaning general acceptance of dominance due to influence (van Dijk 1993: 255), are also easily produced and transformed in (media) discourse. Therefore, it seems that the voices of minorities are often not heard or of interest. This makes absent information and what is actually said in discourse equally important.

Blommaert (2005: 2) declares that the most profound effect of power, due to its differentiating and excluding nature, is the inequality it causes. However, because of the general norm of tolerance, discrimination is often quite well disguised (Riggins 1997: 7). That is why CDA should above all, as van Dijk (1993: 252) argues, deal with inequality, injustice and power abuse in discourse. Therefore, one crucial aspect to consider is the phenomenon of othering in discourse, meaning that a certain group is seen as ‘us’ and some other, or others, as the anonymous ‘them’ and ‘the others’. This is often seen in media discourse, and due to media’s scale and influence, it is a profoundly serious issue. Otherness can be feared, which enforces the dominance, hierarchy, and subordination found in discourse (O’Barr 1994, cited in Riggins 1997: 7). Moreover, as Riggins (1997: 9) explains, othering can dehumanise and diminish certain groups, while making it easier for the dominant group to exert control without guilt. This reflects underlying attitudes and is also a way of legitimising discriminating discourse (van Dijk 1997, cited in Riggins 1997: 40). Often ‘others’ are people from different cultures than the majority and thus, factors such as race, religion, and language can determine one’s otherness. Due to accelerating migration, countries’ cultural landscapes change and become increasingly multicultural, which can evoke strong reactions, especially among patriotic native citizens. Othering can thus be one of many systematic forms of discriminating minorities such as immigrants and refugees in the media, and therefore the nature of media discourse representing them should be precisely analysed.

2.3 Representations of refugees in British media

The representation of refugees in British media seems to be a quite insufficiently studied issue, at least in terms of CDA. Although many researchers have studied media representations of minorities, few studies seem to focus on refugees as a distinct group. Moreover, most previous studies are limited to the past and the current state of such representations in British media is poorly investigated. There are a few noteworthy studies, however, which focus specifically on this issue, and their findings reveal some interesting observations and significant insights.

KhosraviNik (2010) uses CDA to uncover how refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants are represented in newspapers during world events between 1996 and 2006. Taking into account the newspapers’ ideological and political stands, he discovers important issues about how these groups

of people are represented through time. According to his findings, the liberal and conservative newspapers' views differ, for example, in the degree to which aggregation is used compared to humanisation and individualisation, liberal news being considerably more humanising. In addition, he states that liberal newspapers provide a wider variety of topics, whereas conservative newspapers tend to ignore topics which do not support the existing negative image of refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants. Furthermore, the results show that tabloids generally seem to convey a rather clear 'us' vs. 'them' categorisation, representing immigrants as outsiders. However, KhosraviNik (2010) demonstrates that clear similarities can be found in how articles concerning these minority groups are constructed. His findings suggest that all newspapers, regardless of the style and political orientation, provide more 'in-group' perspectives, leaving less space for the point of view of 'the others'.

Lamb (2014) also discusses how refugees and migrants are marginalised in the UK, and her research findings emphasise that they are often dehumanised in public discourse. In addition, the research reveals how immigrants are categorised, showing a clear division between 'good' and 'bad' categories. Lamb (2014) indicates that common 'good' categories include 'legal' and 'genuine' immigrants, whereas 'illegal' and 'criminal' immigrants are prominent 'bad' categories in discourse regarding immigration control in the UK. Moreover, the research reveals that issues of immigration control and issues about race and racism are often separated in discourse, which can result in denial of racism. According to Lamb (2014), one of the major issues regarding this phenomenon is the apparent difficulty of challenging the marginalising language use due to its present complexity. Similarly, Philo et al. (2013) reveal how media can impact the public understanding of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. By examining TV and press samples in 2006 and 2011, the authors uncover crucial issues about how refugees are talked about, showing what is told and what is left out of the media narratives. Their findings demonstrate the frequent association between refugees and negative themes such as criminality, burden on welfare and job market, and illegal immigration. Occasionally, positive themes such as cultural enrichment can also be found, but they are often conflated with negative issues or negative language, which dominate the contents (Philo et al. 2013). The study thus reveals the hostile nature of coverage dealing with refugees and the strong power relations due to which the voice of the refugees and asylum seekers themselves is not heard.

Overall, there seems to be some rather clear similarities in the findings of these previous studies, the most crucial of which is the apparent negativity connected to the representations. Considering the extensive use of unfavourable lexical choices, categorisation and themes concerning refugees and immigrants, one can easily detect a frequent pattern of othering. Since the issue of refugees can be seen as an issue of human rights and equality, these findings are alarming and require further investigation.

3 THE PRESENT STUDY

3.1 Research aim and questions

The aim of this study is to examine how refugees are represented in British newspapers during the current European refugee crisis. Two newspapers were chosen, which differ in style and political orientation: *The Guardian*, a liberal broadsheet, and *The Sun*, a conservative tabloid. In this study, articles found in these newspapers are compared with the aim to discover whether there are differences in the representations of refugees in them. The study focuses on the following questions:

1. How are refugees represented in the two newspapers?
2. Are there differences in the themes that refugees are associated with in these two newspapers?
3. Do the representations imply different power relations?

Based on my moderate familiarity with both *The Guardian* and *The Sun*, my assumptions about the outcome of this study were quite clear. Due to certain connotations related to broadsheets in general, such as a sense of quality and intellectual content, as well as *The Guardian*'s liberal orientation, I assumed that *The Guardian* would have a more neutral tone and the representations in it would be respectful and promote equality. Moreover, I expected that the representations of refugees in *The Guardian* would have more depth and individualisation, whereas *The Sun* could be more abrupt and, due to its conservative orientation, have a more biased tone, possibly containing some segregation.

3.2 Description of the data

The data consists of six news articles found in the online archives of *The Guardian* and *The Sun*, which date back to the current European refugee crisis (2015-2016). The articles were chosen by first searching with key words ‘refugees’ and ‘immigrants’ and then narrowing it down to articles from September 2016. I chose three comparable ‘pairs’ of articles based on their topics, i.e. three articles from each newspaper. The first pair of articles, “*BRITISH LIVES AT RISK ‘Only a matter of time’ before a driver dies at Calais because of refugee crisis, haulage boss claims*” (Hawkes 2016a) and “*Work begins on Calais wall to stop refugees trying to board lorries to UK*” (Ross 2016), focuses on the Calais refugee camp. The second ones, “*UK MIGRANT MAP SHOCK New map reveals where Europe’s migrants live...and shows Britain has more than ‘its share’*” (Downey and Lockett 2016) and “*UK not doing enough for refugees, say charities and aid agencies*” (Gentleman 2016a), deal with the number of refugees in Britain and Britain’s immigration policy. Finally, the third pair, “*CLASS WAR UK plan to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees ‘won’t happen because of chronic lack of school places’*” (Hawkes 2016b) and “*David Simmonds: who’s going to pay to help child refugees?*” (Gentleman 2016b), brings forward issues concerning the resettlement of Syrian child refugees. Based on their recurrent appearance in both *The Guardian* and *The Sun*’s archives, it seems that these topics are currently very relevant in Britain. I found it appropriate to compare articles from *The Guardian* and *The Sun* that focus on the same phenomena, since it can perhaps most efficiently provide a clear image of the possible differences between the representations in them.

3.3 Methods of analysis

The method of analysis in this study is critical discourse analysis (CDA), utilising the three-dimensional framework as presented by Fairclough (1992). As Fairclough (1992: 94) states, analysing text means analysing both the form of the text and questions of meaning. The benefit of the three-dimensional framework is that it allows one to examine textual features as well as discursive practices and social practices of a text. The first dimension, ‘text’, entails analysing language, e.g. lexical and grammatical choices found in discourse. The second dimension, ‘discursive practice’, includes examining the nature of the processes of text production, distribution

and consumption, and the process of interpretation of discourse. The third dimension, ‘social practice’, focuses on how the institutional and organisational settings affect the nature of discourse and its interpretation, i.e. the relationship between discourse and social structures (Fairclough 1992: 4, 72).

Due to limited time and thus, the narrow scope of my study, a thorough analysis of all aspects of the text is not possible. Therefore, I chose to focus on a few linguistic aspects that I find most relevant and which I think would best offer a clear image of the nature of representations found in the articles. The focus will be on lexical choices, mostly adjectives, verbs, and nouns. In addition, I will aim at identifying themes that emerge from the articles as well as discovering implicit, explicit, and possibly absent information and the possible ideological or power related motives behind them.

4 ANALYSIS

4.1 Calais refugee camp

The first pair of articles I analysed focuses on issues concerning the Calais refugee camp in France. Calais is a large camp with poor living conditions and it accommodates thousands of refugees, many of whom hope to gain asylum in the UK. Large numbers continually and desperately try to reach the UK, and many have died in the attempt.

The Sun article “*BRITISH LIVES AT RISK ‘Only a matter of time’ before a driver dies at Calais because of refugee crisis, haulage boss claims*” (Hawkes 2016a) brings forward concerns that British truckers have expressed about the consequences of the unrest in Calais for them. The ways in which refugees are *threatening* British truckers is being foregrounded. It is clearly suggested that refugees are out of control and causing possibly fatal danger to them. The refugees are described as causing *chaos*, and the dangers such as rape and death caused by refugees seem to be considered as inevitable events and worth being concerned and furious about. In addition, it is distinctly stated

that British truckers are forced to leave their jobs because of the perilous nature of the *migrant chaos* (Example 1).

(1) ‘Road Haulage Association chief Richard Burnett said it was a matter of time before someone dies at the port because of the migrant chaos. He told the Sun women drivers had already been threatened with rape – and truckers were leaving their jobs rather than put their life at risk by driving across the Channel.’ (The Sun 04/09/16)

The connection between *the Jungle* refugees and *escalating violence* is made very prominent and the seemingly dangerous refugees and their behaviour are described as something that needs to be *contained*. The desperate state of migrants is recognised, but here *desperation* is connected to extreme unrest and harmful behaviour, not to the vulnerability of refugees or sympathy towards them (Example 2).

(2) “With word leaking out that the Jungle could go in October, the desperation of the migrants is going to increase tenfold. We need far more gendarmes to contain the violence. I do fear it’s only a matter of time before we see the death of a driver. Look at the escalating violence – it’s not being contained.” (The Sun 04/09/16)

The article also brings forward concern about *migrant gangs* who are *targeting tourists*. The actions of refugees in general are given a dubious quality by using word choices such as *stowaway* and illustrating how refugees are *hiding* and *trying to sneak* onto lorries. Moreover, refugees are bluntly referred to as *ruthless*, leaving no space for other points of view. As van Dijk (1988b: 81) points out, choosing specific words often indicates the ideologies behind the text. This can strongly affect the readers’ opinions concerning refugees and enforce justification for anti-immigration views. In addition, the voice of British workers, such as the Road Haulage Association chief, is foregrounded, whereas the perspective of refugees is simply left out. Moreover, it is implied that the dangers described in this article are caused only by refugees and affecting only the British people. Thus, a concerned attitude towards immigration is quite explicitly being encouraged.

The Guardian article, headlining “*Work begins on Calais wall to stop refugees trying to board lorries to UK*” (Ross 2016), discusses the attempt to prevent refugees from entering the UK by building a four metres tall and one kilometre long concrete wall, and its consequences. In this article, refugees are portrayed as *vulnerable* and *ordinary*. They are often talked about as *people* instead of *migrants*, which could be an attempt to represent them as more relatable. Their dangerous living conditions and desperation are foregrounded and concerns are raised about the risks they are *forced to take*, which enforces the idea of refugees being defenceless (Example 3).

(3) Steve Symonds, Amnesty International UK’s refugee and migrant rights programme director, said: “This wall will simply push desperate people further into the hands of smugglers and into taking far greater risks to get to the UK, and more will die in the attempt.” (*The Guardian* 20/09/16)

Despite the clear foregrounding of refugees’ perspective, problems connected to their behaviour is also recognised. The number of refugees *caught trying to illegally enter the UK* is mentioned as well as the immigration minister’s plan to prevent refugees *stowing away*. The issue of migrants putting obstacles on the road in order to stop trucks is also pointed out, describing the phenomenon as *repeated assaults*. However, this aspect is backgrounded and mentioned quite briefly, in a rather neutral tone.

Mostly, focus is given to the refugees’ crucial need for help. Child refugees are thematised and the need to *prioritise the safety of children over the fear of immigration* is stated. Individualising is also used, which highlights the importance of the issue. The description of an innocent child gives a face to refugees, enforcing sympathy towards them. This can create more supporting attitudes towards immigration. (Example 4)

(4) Last week, a 14-year-old Afghan boy became the latest fatality, dying in a hit-and-run after he fell off a lorry. The boy, who has not been named, was understood to have a legal right to travel to the UK as he had relatives there, but had become frustrated with delays in processing his case. (*The Guardian* 20/09/16)

4.2 The number of refugees and Britain's immigration policy

The second pair of articles presents issues concerning the UK's immigration policy and the number of refugees in the UK, which have lately been significantly apparent topics in the British media. Due to the European refugee crisis, the number of asylum seekers has increased rapidly, causing new and difficult challenges to many European countries.

The Sun article “UK MIGRANT MAP SHOCK New map reveals where Europe's migrants live...and shows Britain has more than 'its share'” (Downey and Lockett 2016) presents statistics about the number of refugees, comparing them to other European countries, while also discussing necessary changes needed in the UK's immigration policy. In this article, migrants, including refugees, are seen as a unified, statistically addressed group. This *group* is represented by using terms such as *immigration figure* and *population* or *flood* of immigrants which needs to be stopped, and thus, it conveys a rather clinical stance towards them (Example 5).

(5) BRITAIN is still proving a magnet for many of the world's migrants despite pledges to stem the floods heading here to start a new life, a new population map reveals. (*The Sun* 25/09/16)

The UK is described as being *among worst hit* by these *floods*. It is clearly stated that the UK has *more than its share*, suggesting that Britain's role in offering asylum is enormous and needs to be reduced significantly. The need for tightening restrictions is explicitly expressed while presenting calculations of *target figures*, which, according to Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May, must be *fewer than 100,000* refugees living in the UK. Concerns about the ineffectiveness of barriers and the *sprawling* state of Calais refugee camp are also implicitly conveyed. The fact that Theresa May, and Chuka Umunna, a Labour parliament member, both emphasise the importance of the UK and have the most prominent voices, leads one to interpret that British dominance and normativity are present in this article. The idea of *forcing* immigrants to integrate also seems to imply such ideologies (Example 6). As O'Barr (1994, cited in Riggins 1997: 7) demonstrates, the use of subordination and dominance are examples of strategies which are often found in situations where otherness is seen as a threat.

(6) --- immigrants should be forced to integrate into British life to stop them leading “parallel lives”. The Government had to make it clear to foreigners working and living in the UK that “not getting involved in the community is not an option,” the Labour MP for Streatham said. (The Sun 25/09/16)

One can argue that vaguely warning or implying that fear of immigration is legitimate is also used in this article as a strategy to influence the readers’ view of the issue and increase their concerns. By avoiding naming the assumed *fears* explicitly, a troubling image is created while keeping the tone somewhat neutral. As van Dijk (1988a, 1988c, cited in Riggins 1997: 14) explains, vagueness can be used as a way to discriminate a certain group, especially when it is generally considered inappropriate to convey such discrimination publicly (Example 7).

(7) --- Labour was mistaken in assuming that those who raised fears about immigration only did so through a “lack of understanding”. (The Sun 25/09/16)

The Guardian article, with a headline “*UK not doing enough for refugees, say charities and aid agencies*” (Gentleman 2016a) discusses the insufficient role of the UK in resettling refugees, criticising David Cameron’s commitment to take in 23,000 refugees by 2020 as not being nearly enough. Concerns about the lives and fates of the *millions fleeing in crisis* are vigorously raised. In this article, refugees are represented as *vulnerable people in desperate need*, who are trying to *reunite with their families and rebuild their lives*, and should hence be welcomed in the UK (Example 8). Thus, refugees’ point of view is clearly disclosed, in the seemingly explicit attempt to increase apprehension of the issue and possibly influence the readers. By presenting the crisis as a humanitarian issue, and emphasising the voices of charities and aid agencies, a firm message promoting a stronger response to the crisis is conveyed.

(8) --- requesting that the UK should take a leading role in “developing a humane, coordinated international response to the millions fleeing crisis”, offer safe passage to more refugees, in part by removing obstacles to family reunification, and commit to providing better support for those refugees who reach the UK so they can rebuild their lives here. (The Guardian 14/09/16)

On multiple occasions, the urgency of providing safety and legal routes for refugees *fleeing violence and persecution* is expressed (Example 9). Refugees are also briefly represented in terms of numbers and as *an unprecedented level of human mobility*, however, it is connected to acknowledging the *desperate ordeals* the refugees are facing and thus, the numbers seemingly support the overall humane stance. The suffering of *forcibly displaced* people is foregrounded, whereas the concerns about Britain's ability to cope with the population growth are absent.

(9) "We are determined to save lives" and "combat with all the means at our disposal the abuses and exploitation suffered by countless refugees and migrants in vulnerable situations ---" (The Guardian 14/09/16)

Foregrounding an individual refugee can be understood, again, as a significant sign of promoting tolerance instead of othering. It is possible that the decision to disclose the suffering of refugee children is often the most effective way to increase public sympathy and pro-immigration ideologies, since people generally have an internal instinct to protect innocent children. Moreover, presenting a Syrian boy who drowned individualises refugees and thus makes them more relatable. Like Riggins (1997: 8) explains, giving specific information, such as people's names, decreases the feeling of distance towards them. In addition, as Fairclough (1992: 27, 179) points out, using nominalisation, presenting a process as a nominal or noun, can background the process and participants by omitting the agent of the clause. Using nominalisation can thus be a strategy to represent refugees in a less humane way. The choice to say, for example, 'the Syrian boy who drowned' instead of 'death of refugees' can be interpreted as a choice to deliberately signify the individuality and humanity of refugees (Example 10).

(10) --- the death of Alan Kurdi, the three-year-old Syrian boy who drowned as his family fled to safety, "sending a clear message that this country must not stand by while children drown in Europe's seas". (The Guardian 14/09/16)

4.3 Resettlement of Syrian child refugees

The third, and final, pair of articles discusses the question of Syrian child refugees and the poorly fulfilled promises to resettle them. One of the most startling aspects of the refugee crisis is the number of children, many of them unaccompanied, who are in a desperate need of shelter, custody, and education.

The Sun article, “*CLASS WAR UK plan to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees ‘won’t happen because of chronic lack of school places’*” (Hawkes 2016b) presents the problem concerning school places and funding, focusing on the perspective of Britain’s schools and locals. In this article, strong doubts about the actualisation of the resettlement plan are foregrounded. The child refugees are mostly talked about in connection to *pressures on classrooms, huge pressure in finding space, existing pressure on schools, and funding pressures*, making the point of view rather clear. The description of *sky-high* immigration and *explosion* in Britain’s population convey somewhat dramatic suggestions, creating an image of a threatening force. Moreover, one could interpret that the UK is deliberately chosen to be presented as the distressed party and thus, sympathy seems to be directed towards British locals (Example 11).

(11) But the NAO warns that one in five schools in the UK are full or over-capacity because of funding pressures, sky-high immigration and the explosion in Britain’s population. It added there were also fears in parts of the UK about finding enough available homes. (*The Sun* 13/09/16)

The pressure caused by the number of refugee children coming to the UK is described as *unsustainable*, and this seems to be used as a justification to withdraw from the resettling commitment. The article gives the impression that the existing *fight* over school places can no longer be coped with and the local attempts to *keep class sizes down* is a crucial matter threatened by immigration and thus, needs to be prioritised (Example 12).

(12) Brexit campaigners argued EU free movement was undermining efforts by local councils to keep class sizes down. Meg Hillier, chair of the Commons Public Accounts Committee said: “We

need to be convinced that the Government is committed to supporting local authorities in their efforts.” (The Sun 13/09/16)

However, the representation of underaged refugees as *kids* and *children* or *Syrian refugees* instead of merely *migrants* creates somewhat more humanisation. This wording could possibly be due to the fact that children in general, as mentioned before, evoke more sympathy and, thus, their representations tend to be more considerate. On the contrary, a brief mention of *bat-wielding Calais migrants* restores the tone of othering by representing refugees as an intimidating, outer threat. At the very end, however, the horrors refugee children have to face are acknowledged, but this perspective is significantly compressed and backgrounded, mentioning in passing Syria being *war torn* and reticently pointing out the 55 per cent who have *survived torture and violence*. As van Dijk (1988b: 43-44) clarifies, a top-down organization is often used in news articles, hence, the most important information is at the top and the less relevant dimensions are at the bottom. Due to both the seemingly indifferent tone and the physical placement of these statements at the end of the article, interpretations about the presence of subordination and normativity are plausible.

The Guardian article “*David Simmonds: who’s going to pay to help child refugees?*” (Gentleman 2016b) discusses the issues concerning the need to accommodate more refugees, consulting David Simmonds, a Conservative councillor and the chair of the Local Government Association’s asylum, refugee and migration task group. The crucial need for funding and turning the resettling commitment practical are brought forward, while conveying determination and willingness to help but also the challenges that come with it. Thus, different sides of the issue are disclosed, but the need to make practical, long-term plans for the resettled children is foregrounded.

The underaged refugees are talked about as *asylum-seeking children* who are *vulnerable* and *lone*. It is described how they are *travelling* and *arriving* to the UK due to them having to *flee the war*. However, on multiple occasions, they are connected to *huge costs* with which some councils *struggle to cope*. Despite the prominently conveyed concern about the children’s welfare, continually connecting them to issues of money, displaying numbers, such as prices, or talking about the *share of these children* gives the article a rather calculating quality. Although pointing out the *polarising* nature of immigration and the UK being *divided*, funding and supporting refugees is still represented as a *moral* responsibility. The issue of accommodating refugee children is

described as something one should be *cautious* about and which requires a *genuine commitment* from the government (Example 13).

(13) Until there is similar clarity, indicating that the “government is genuinely committed to funding and supporting the children”, councils will remain cautious about agreeing to accommodate more refugee children who have travelled across Europe alone, says Simmonds. “It is no good saying sentimentally: ‘Yes, we want to help,’ unless you are also willing to say what this means in practice.” (The Guardian 14/09/16)

The inclusion of a section focusing on Alan Kurdi, a Syrian child who drowned fleeing the war and whose faith has generated international concern and sympathy, evokes individualisation of refugees. Moreover, despite the mention of the National Audit Office’s concerns about the lack of school places, optimism about refugees being a *force for good for local communities* is explicitly stated. It is pointed out that some places could actually need more residents and the *arrival of refugees* would *help the local economy* (Example 14). This combination of perspectives is, as van Dijk (1988b: 84) points out, often perceived as a sign of credibility, which could contribute in making the readers internalise the information.

(14) “It may be that for the first couple of years, they may need councils to find them somewhere to live and they may be claiming benefits, but once they are settled they can be an important part of the UK economy. These people are not always going to be a burden,” he says. “It is not a simple cost equation.” (The Guardian 14/09/16)

4.4 Discussion

In *The Guardian* articles, refugees are described to be *seeking to be heard* and *searching for a better life*. This creates a more humanised portrait of the refugees, whereas *The Sun* articles seem to define them as merely a unified faceless threat. In *The Guardian* articles, it is also clearly suggested that not enough is being done to help refugees and moreover, the blame is put on UK for lack of support. Unlike in *The Sun*, in *The Guardian*, the perspective of refugees is clearly expressed, and even sympathised with. The suffering of refugees and the dangers they have to face, for example, in the Calais camp are clearly acknowledged. *The Guardian* contains a notably supportive stance

toward refugees, concentrating on bringing forward the crucial issues of *removing obstacles* and the need for humanitarian aid, whereas *The Sun* describes issues such as the *unreasonable pressure* that immigration causes to the UK, using statistics to support such arguments. As van Dijk (1988b: 84) indicates, using precision, such as exact numbers of people, can work as a strategy to draw readers' attention and convince them to believe what is said. In addition, *The Sun* seems to convey a need for barriers, whereas *The Guardian's* view promotes discarding them. One could also detect a rather hostile tone, for example, in the wording *forced integration* used in *The Sun* when describing refugees entering the UK. This is highlighted even more when compared to *family unification*, which was one of the main concerns about refugees coming to the UK in *The Guardian's* approach.

The Sun, thus, mostly foregrounds the discomfort and concerns of the UK, emphasising the pressure UK is under due to this crisis. Moreover, the concern over British economy, workers and children seems to outweigh the distress of refugees. For example, in *The Sun* article about Syrian child refugees, it is explicitly described how EU free movement is *undermining efforts by local councils to keep class sizes down*. Thus, despite the implicit presence of compassion towards children in need in this article, British people are clearly prioritised. Overall, the voice of refugees is evidently absent in *The Sun*, which one could interpret as an indication of promoting British hegemony.

On the contrary, the fact that charities and, for example, the executive director of Doctors of the World were chosen to be foregrounded and used as the professional, convincing voice in *The Guardian* articles, a more positive attitude towards immigration is seemingly encouraged. *The Guardian*, thus, promotes helping those in need who undoubtedly, according to its approach, are the refugees. *The Guardian's* approach conveys individualisation and exclusive acknowledgement of the refugees' perspective of the crisis while criticising the UK and therefore, creates a humane tone and feeling of social cohesion. For example, the moral need to help is evoked by individualising the Syrian boy, Alan Kurdi. Although backgrounded, including a quote defending Britain's government's accomplishments regarding the crisis contributes in constructing credibility, which could have a desired effect on the readers. In addition, consulting the Conservative Simmonds in one article, and thus offering a rather different, evaluative perspective towards refugees, *The Guardian* seems to prove its professional neutrality. As van Dijk (1988b: 85) points out, the truthfulness is enhanced by providing different opinions. *The Sun*, on the other hand, seems to attempt to gain such credibility by using evidence from eyewitnesses, such as British workers,

which can also be a useful strategy (van Dijk 1998b: 84). However, it is immediately and clearly announced in *The Guardian* article that Simmonds' views *are not always shared by fellow Conservative party members*, which one could interpret as *The Guardian* wanting to distribute more liberal views. In addition, the article includes and sympathises with the refugees' perspective, referring to them as vulnerable victims of war. The desperation of the Syrian child refugees is recognised and implicit concern for the children is conveyed through discussing the crucial nature of the issue.

Like Fairclough (1995b: 104) points out, what is thematised and what is not can often reveal ideologies, since it is a way to constitute versions of reality which somehow benefit those who produce them. In *The Sun*, refugees are openly associated with chaos, crime, rape, and death. The articles convey ideas about refugees complicating the lives of locals due to funding pressures and causing British workers to lose their jobs. In addition, *stopping* migrants, reducing *figures* and tightening restrictions are thematised. On the contrary, prominent themes found in *The Guardian* articles include the search of a better life, the need to help refugees and humanitarian catastrophe - meaning the unheard desperation of the vulnerable refugees. Furthermore, welcoming refugees, family reunification as well as rebuilding and saving lives are thematised in *The Guardian*.

As Fairclough (1992: 76) describes, the same event can be signified and constructed differently depending on the ideological investments behind the source. *The Sun* focuses on the British perspective and is prone to aggregation, attaching virtually no humane qualities to refugees, which could unveil prejudiced and somewhat normative ideologies, valuing native Britishness on others' expense, even discriminating 'the others'. Like Riggins (1997: 8) states, 'others' are often referred to anonymously, focusing on their social status, while the group which is seen as the norm are identified individually. In *The Guardian*, othering or other forms of possible discrimination are not evident, on the contrary, the articles seem to clearly promote a more humanitarian ideology. However, *The Guardian* also voices the concerns of the UK, since one of the articles connects the refugees to phenomena such as the *need for more funding* and *geographical division* and hence, one could also detect some degree of aggregation. Nevertheless, such focus is practical, not ideological, and only present in one of *The Guardian* articles. Overall, the responsibility to help those in need as well as refugees' future importance to Britain's economy are clearly promoted. Therefore, despite the presence of calculating aspects, *The Guardian's* approach is rather sympathetic, providing

optimistic representations of the refugees. Thus, important, fundamental distinctions can be found between the representations of refugees in *The Guardian* and *The Sun*, supporting KhosraviNik's (2010) findings, suggesting that political orientation behind the discourse affects its form and content.

5 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine how refugees are represented in two British newspapers, *The Guardian* and *The Sun*. The focus was on lexical choices, themes, and power relations found in the articles. By comparing *The Sun* and *The Guardian* articles, clear differences in the representations of refugees were discovered. *The Sun*, a conservative tabloid, represents refugees mostly as the 'others', foregrounding the perspective of native British people, while backgrounding or leaving out the point of view of refugees, often using aggregation in their representations. An exception was the representation of Syrian child refugees, which is somewhat more considerate. However, the concern was still primarily on British children and workers and Britain's economy. On the contrary, *The Guardian* generally emphasised the perspective of the refugees, providing a sense of humanisation, individualisation and equality, while keeping a rather neutral tone.

The themes associated with refugees in *The Sun* included criminal activities, funding pressures, and dangers to British citizens. In *The Guardian*, saving lives, the need and responsibility to help, and family reunification were prominently thematised. Furthermore, the lexical choices in *The Sun* were often more negative and dramatic than in *The Guardian*. Due to these differences, one could argue that *The Sun* seems to promote rather normative ideologies, enforcing British hegemony and marginalising the refugees, whereas *The Guardian* clearly encourages a positive attitude towards refugees, promoting humane ideologies and equality.

The results of this study support KhosraviNik's (2010) findings about liberal newspapers containing more individualisation and humanisation, whereas conservative newspapers being prone to aggregation. In addition, this study demonstrated the existence of negative themes, many of which, e.g. criminality and economic burden, were also pointed out by Lamb (2014) and Philo et al (2013).

KhosraviNik (2010) indicates that regardless of the style and political orientation of the newspapers, they all tend to give more space to 'in group', i.e. native, perspectives, which leads to othering. In this study, on the other hand, no clear evidence of othering was found in *The Guardian* articles. This could be explained by the narrowness of the data. Nevertheless, it is also possible that the representations have changed due to current world events.

The findings of this study could be relevant and helpful in understanding the media representations of refugees during the current European refugee crisis. This could be important, since one must first understand the problems in the phenomenon before they can be solved. However, due to the narrow scope of this study, the results cannot be generalised and they must be interpreted with caution. In order to gain a sufficiently thorough comprehension of the issue, more studies with a variety of perspectives are needed. For example, one could examine how the representations of refugees and the possibly power related reasons behind them vary between countries and geographic locations. It would also be important to study the phenomenon in other forms of media, especially in different forms of social media, since it is undoubtedly one of the most used channels through which current issues are discussed and could thus provide a vast amount of valuable information.

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