

A Socio-Cognitive Representation of Muslims in the British Quality Newspapers

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Abstract

The British newspapers frequently discuss Muslims, typically in regard to religion, even when the topic under discussion is one of social, political, or educational concern. This study examines how Muslims are represented by a socio-cognitive analysis to critically investigate the selected linguistic constructs and their consequences on social representation and the construal operations in the reader's mind. To that purpose, eight news articles from The Times, The Telegraph, The Guardian, and The Independent covering Muslim-related subjects are selected in order to be analysed using the adapted van Leeuwen's (2008) and Hart's (2010) multimodal framework. The qualitative-quantitative analysis explores how Muslims are portrayed socially in the chosen data, cognitively in the specified social practices, what role social and cognitive discursive strategies play in reinforcing or challenging ideology as a socio-cognitive phenomenon, and finally, how the representation varies in the specified newspapers to reflect political leaning and conflicts at the time. The data shows Muslim inclusion and activation rates that are statistically significant. In most cases, backgrounding of Muslims conjures up negative associations. The results demonstrate that the reports contain social and cognitive discursive construction patterns that portray Muslims unfavourably in comparison to other social groups, and that the patterns are a reflection of the ideologies of the producers. A key result is that political conflicts in which Muslims have little involvement affect the way Muslims are represented, like gender politics and election rivalry.

24

Keywords

Critical Discourse Analysis, Socio-cognitive analysis, Ideology, British Newspapers, Muslims.

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Introduction

The present study stems from the widespread misrepresentations and stereotypes of Muslims. In 2018, the Equality and Human Rights Commission stated that “70% of Muslims in UK reported that they experienced religion-based prejudice.” This type of racism has become normalised within many sections of Western societies (Hanif, p. 2). Such a social phenomenon reflects and is reflected by media discourses that filled under critical studies investigations. In the British context, the media has an important role in the immediate post-9/11 era that influences and shapes popular British perceptions. The catalytic impetus of the attacks deteriorated Muslim representation (henceforth MR) by being attached to a bad reputation and violence. Sardar (51) concludes that Muslims are classified as either terrorist waging war against the West or “apologetic” arguing that their faith is one of peace.

Regional newspapers have a key role in the UK’s views on Islam. For instance, Richardson’s 2004 book *Representing Islam: The Racism and Rhetoric of British Broadsheet Newspapers* has made a significant contribution to the debate on Muslims. By applying van Dijk’s notion of ideological square (2000), Richardson has analysed, by mixed methods approach, a bank of 2540 newspaper reports retrieved from *The Guardian*, *The Financial Times*, *The Independent*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, *The Independent on Sunday*, and *The Sunday Times* from 1997 to 1998. Richardson has hypothesised that the selected newspapers reproduce anti-Muslim racism under political and economic globalisation forces and the continuing and widespread influence of “orientalist scholarship in the West” (xvi-xviii). The researcher has concluded the crucial role of the British media and how it affects and is affected by the public opinion in Britain.

25

The *London Times*, 2001, published an article insisting that the West has legitimate fears towards Islam. The article entitled “This war is not about terror, it’s about Islam.” It presents reasons such as that “some three quarters of the world’s migrants in the last decade are said to have been Muslims,” and that these “escapees, victims, scapegoats, malefactors and ‘sleepers’ are awaiting their moment” (Allen, p. 17). Likewise, a 2006 article in the *Lancashire Evening Telegraph* by the then-leader of the House of Commons, Jack Straw, on Muslim women and the veil sparked a national debate on veiling (Baker et al., pp. 4-5).

In an analysis of MR in the British press between 2000 and 2009, Baker et al. (2013) have focused on the British press because of its significant influence on forming viewpoints and establishing agendas. The multidisciplinary investigation seeks to determine whether there are signs of discrimination against Muslims in the British press and whether they are overt or covert. The book has included a large corpus-linguistic-informed database with the qualitative accents of CDA. The analysis has shown that the words “Muslims” and “Islam” are mentioned 121125 times in the national British press (about 33 times per day on average). This indicates that the UK press considers Islam to be a topic deserving of great attention and that regional newspapers play an important role in how the UK views Islam.

In an extended and significant study undertaken by Abed (2016), a qualitative and quantitative in-depth analysis of anti-prophet Muhammad media has been conducted. He has concentrated on

coverage of the Danish Cartoons Controversy (2005), the US film *Innocence of Muslims* (2012), and the Charlie Hebdo Caricatures (2012) in *The Guardian*, *The Daily Mail*, *The New York Times*, and *USA Today*. The reproduction of linguistic and ideological aspects has been carried out by the researcher using CDA. Among a number of interesting findings is the deliberate negative depiction of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his household), while positive properties are reserved for Western secular authorities, who are shown as the most powerful actors.

In 2015, the refugee's crisis took Muslims' situation into another level. At first, "a wave of international sympathy and concern for the refugees triggered" by the media with the tragedy of the "3-year-old Syrian boy" found dead on a beach on the Mediterranean Sea. However, after the terrorist attacks in Paris, 2015 and the bombings of Brussels, 2016, different attitudes are taken towards refugees. Like it always is with crises of this nature, "the reports of news media organisations" have a crucial role in the representations of refugees in particular and Muslims in general by warning about "the risks being run by the refugees" that puts the lives of European citizens at stick (Tavassoli et al., p.65). The most extreme view is that of the right-leaning newspapers, like *The Telegraph*, who has "the assumption that terrorists were among the refugees arriving in Europe on open borders." This means that each new single refugee becomes suspected of an expected suicide project (Tavassoli et al., p.82).

Considering the aforementioned, it is precisely accurate to say that previous literature pays a considerable attention to examine Muslims representation in the media by focusing on the text itself. However, the social actor representation (henceforth SAR) and the cognitive representation (the interpretive aspect of the reader's comprehension) are neglected. First, taking into consideration the collective nature of MR as a socially (re)constructed phenomenon, a socio-linguistic analysis would be a must. Second, "because the discursive legitimation of (discriminatory) social action necessarily involves cognitive dimensions" (Hart 108), a socio-cognitive approach will suffice to cover both the descriptive and interpretative levels of analysis. Therefore, the present study tries to fill the mentioned gap by following a socio-cognitive approach, in which both the producer and receiver's sides will be analysed to cover both descriptive and interpretative levels of analysis, and to contribute to the literature by verifying, refuting, or accumulating with its outcomes. Accordingly, the present study aims to explore MR in the selected British newspapers socially and cognitively to understand how the adopted linguistic choices are utilised to encapsulate ideologies that affect the reader's knowledge and perspectives.

The present study is expected to identify Muslim-related news reports taken from the British press. It studies the linguistic units and structures that perpetuate MR and those that provoke and anchor such representations cognitively in a given social practice. Then, the repeated usage of specific discursive strategies will be identified, assessed, and quantified to be applied within the adapted socio-cognitive framework. Moreover, the study will provide a descriptive and interpretative analysis of the linguistic choices that realise social representation and provoke specific cognitive constructions. Finally, it will explain how social and political changes influence MR in the media in light of the drawn findings that address the following research questions:

1. How are Muslims represented socially and cognitively in the selected British newspapers?
2. What role do social and cognitive discursive strategies have in expressing, reinforcing, and challenging ideology as a socio-cognitive phenomenon?

1. Cognitive Linguistic Critical Discourse Analysis

Cognitive Linguistic Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CoL-CDA) is a method of analysis based on cognitive linguistics (henceforth CoL) (see Hart 2011a, 2011b, 2013a, 2013b, 2017). Its main concern is the interpretation in the minds of the readers (Hart 21). Croft and Cruse (1-3) argue that as the natural successor of CoL, CoL-CDA inherits the following essential epistemological commitments about language:

Linguistic knowledge cannot be separated from the rest of the cognitive faculties since there is no specialised brain module devoted to language processing in an encapsulated manner. Both lexical and grammatical forms “are two backs of the same beast” (Hart 109). Language is a system of conventionalised units distinguished by the degree of abstractness in the conceptual structures they index. Words and constructions activate and enhance conceptual operations to sense and grasp the world around us.

Language provides alternative linguistic forms to describe the very same situation, event, entity, or relation. Such linguistic capacity allows the scene inside our mind to be conceptualised in different ways, leading to alternative conceptualisations (Hart 97). From this perspective, linguistic processes are conceptual in nature (see Langacker, 2002, 2008). This is the crucial outcome that has to do with CDA (Hart, pp. 109-110; Hart, pp. 98-88). From a critical standpoint, to legitimate discriminatory or difficult to justify social actions, particular conceptions motivated by specific ideologies are evoked by the producer, particularly in the context of political discourse and legitimation (Kowalski, p.118). CoL-CDA, then, delineates the conceptual parameters that enact the ideology in particular discursive contexts (Hart, p.101).

Conceptual Metaphor (henceforth CM) can be defined by certain features as presented by Koller (pp.78-81). CM is used in everyday language, because it structures thoughts. The mapping from the source to the target domain is unidirectional. CM is a comparison approach, since it sees metaphor as motivated by the similarity of the source to the target. The mapping between both domains is invariant: The target domain features override those of the source domain but not the other way around. CM has a systematic nature at the linguistic and conceptual levels, in Koller’s words, “the same underlying conceptual metaphor can give rise to a number of metaphoric expressions” (p.79). Mappings are selective by nature due to speakers and writers being free to decide which aspects of the source domain are suitable for mapping and which to be ignored. Finally, metaphor has a dual nature, since it is grounded both in a physical and socio-cultural experience. For instance, a close friend presents an emotional involvement as a physical proximity, and his point isn’t clear to me presents seeing as understanding. Conceptual Blend (henceforth CB) is a process of conceptualisation evoked by conceptual organisation (metaphor) during discourse (Hart, pp. 113-114). Conceptual blend theory is developed by Fauconnier and Turner (1993), who extensively elaborated on it more than a decade (Turner, p.377). The theory is originally developed to understand the process of meaning construction; thus, it accounts for

linguistic structure in the first place (Evans & Green, p. 401). Besides, Fauconnier and Turner (p.133) believe that “as a cognitive analogy-based process,” CB is activated while thinking. Elaborating on that, Chilton (p.25) asserts that CB “offers an account of what the mind is doing when it processes metaphor-mappings, or when it constructs new concepts that are not metaphorical.” This in turn proves that CB applications are extended beyond the analysis of specific grammatical constructions to cover other linguistic domains (see Birdsell, 2014). The ultimate goal of CM is referenced by Trim (p.78) who states that:

in any model entailing an A to B mapping from a source to target domain in metaphor creation, there appears to be a third point C in the triangle that is vital for comprehension of a given context. Indeed, the connection between A and B and its subsequent interpretation can often only be understood in terms of the reference C.

Discourse Space Theory (henceforth DST) claims that while speaking or listening, one opens up a mental space of “three intersecting axes” to conceptually represent the described world. The discourse world is built out by “positioning ideational elements in the text in ontological relations with one another as well as with the speaker inside this space.” The three axes are the socio-spatial axis (S), the temporal axis (T), and the evaluative axis, which involves both epistemic (Ee) and axiological (Ea) aspects. Proximation is an elaborated theory developed by Cap (2006, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2013) as part of DST. For Cap, proximation is a “rhetorical-pragmatic strategy.” Here, the speaker, in order to legitimate “immediate counter action,” presents an actor, situation, or an event, construed as a “threat to the self,” by “entering, along spatial, temporal, or axiological dimensions” of the conceptualiser’s ground, and therefore, being of “personal consequence” (2006, p. 6). It is a significant discursive strategy used in interventionist discourse (Hart, 2014, p. 167). The speaker/hearer’s point of view represents the deictic centre that determines “a scale of relative distance” from the mentioned axes. The ground deixis refers to “the zone” surrounding the deictic centre and “represents what the speaker/hearer takes as their socio-spatial, temporal, epistemic, and axiological” stance. It is essentially spatial and links to a “distance relative to the speaker,” e.g., the adverbs “here” and “there”; and the demonstratives like “this” and “that.” Other types of deixis are those related to time, e.g., “now” and “then”; and person, e.g., “us” and “them” (Hart 164).

As far as evaluation is concerned, the notion of deixis “is extended to cover the speaker/hearer’s conceptualisation of we, here, now, and acceptable” within the geopolitics arena. It includes ideas such as political systems, national identities, historical moments, collective memories, religious beliefs, and “epistemological truths.” On the one hand, the socio-spatial axis presents a mixture of place and person deixis with geo-political relations. On the other hand, the temporal axis signifies a timeline in which the middle is now and refers to the present situation, and both ends refer to the distant past and distant future. Therefore, the three axes reflect “the coronal, sagittal, and transversal axes of the body, respectively” (Hart, pp164-166).

2. Methodology

The current study engages in a mixed form of inquiry to obtain better insights and to support qualitative findings with quantitative results. (The Three Approaches to Research section, para.

4). It is of key importance here to accentuate why the integrated van Leeuwen (2008) and Hart (2014) is more workable to study the under-scope linguistic phenomenon. With regard to the vital role, it assigns to discourse as a basis for social representation, the key relevance of van Leeuwen’s SAR to the current study is the textual level. It delineates the linguistic parameters through which discourse is analysed as a recontextualisation of SAs engaging in different levels of action with different levels of access to power (van Leeuwen, 2008 vii).

Inspired by the leading name van Dijk, a socio-cognitive approach can provide more context-specific information that goes beyond the textual level (see van Dijk, 2009, 2010, 2011) (AbdulWahid 11). However, the adopted cognitive framework for this study is further different from van Dijk’s in so far as “it focuses on discourse processes of comprehension” (Hart 108-109). It is a CoL-CDA that emphasises how text and conceptualisation interact in the context of social and political discourse.

The data are categorised as generic and thematic. From a generic perspective, news reports are gathered from the inbuilt research of the online versions of The Times, The Telegraph, The Guardian, and The Independent. The news reports are retrieved backwards from 2019 forwards, by keying in *Muslim(s)*, *Islamist(s)*, *Islamic*, *Islamophobia*, and *Islam*, resulting in a repository of 286 reports on Muslim issues. The reports are then pre-reviewed to identify insightful ones and exclude those that made only passing references. From a thematic perspective, the collected items are categorised thematically. However, to determine the aboutness of these reports, the selected reports are judged while considering the thematic categorising, i.e., archives used by the newspapers to organise their news. As a result, four news reports on Birmingham protests against LGBT lessons, Britain, 2019 are chosen to be the final representative sample for the analysis.

29

The reports cover the protests held in 2019 by Muslim parents from Birmingham against the lack of consultation over the lessons on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender relationships (LGBT) for their children at Anderton Park and Parkfield Community Primary Schools in Birmingham. The expected dominant SAs are Muslims, children taught LGBT lessons, Christians and Jews, British Government, the “assistant head teacher at Parkfield Community School, Andrew Moffat,” and the “head teacher at Anderton Park Primary School, Sarah Hewitt-Clarkson.”

The analysis will be done by focusing on Muslims. The findings related to other SAs will be included when their representations contribute to that of Muslims. MR is investigated through two sets of binary language parameters: inclusion versus exclusion and activation versus passivation. The two main sets are approached mostly quantitatively, occasionally making use of qualitative data as needed. For the cognitive aspect, a qualitative approach will be followed to address the dominant framing and positioning strategies in each text. The cumulative evidence for the social linguistic parameter and cognitive construal operations will be presented separately for the sake of clarity. Coding the reports of the dataset is represented by *Tms* for The Times reports, *Tele* for The Telegraph’s, *Gurd* for The Guardian’s, and *Ind* for The Independent’s.

3. Analysis and Discussion of SAR Results

It has been found that patterns of representation and key semantic sites emerge as the final findings for the dataset. For more identifiable and digestible quantitative results and to specify significant frequencies, final rates are presented in figures based on instances in Table.1. To begin with, the dataset reveals noticeable patterns that represent Muslims as rejecting the established liberal values pertain to the “Equality Act 2010” and its nine protected characteristics to which the British communities must adapt. The results reveal that high rates of inclusion go to Muslims (see Figure.1). They are considerably included, often referred to generically and collectivised (e.g., “a community which is overwhelmingly Muslim,” “Islamists” to generalise activities, behaviours, or qualities that are negative in general. Muslims are relatively backgrounded to distance them from the readers, to draw the focus to their actions, or to provoke negative connotations and unpleasant stereotypes. Consider the example:

“Undoubtedly, some of the opposition to the programme lies in the fact that conservative Islam condemns homosexuality’. Yet, outside the school gates, every protesting parent I speak to tells me that they respect gay rights”

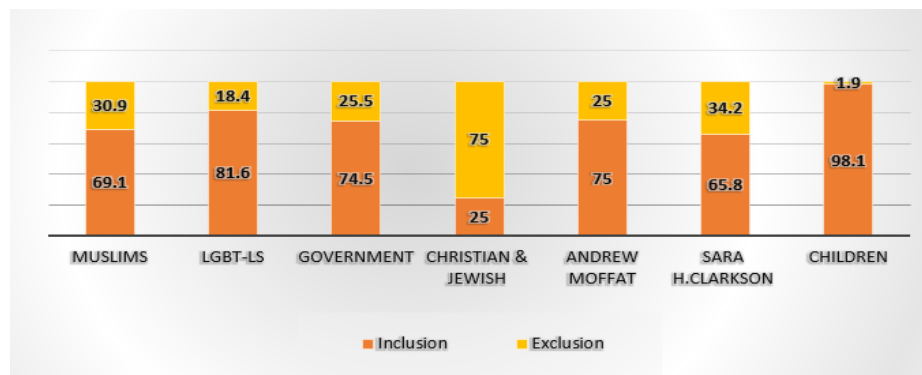
In contrast, other SAs are backgrounded to achieve a moderate representation. For instance, LGBT-LS are backgrounded to add formality, being engaged with authoritative power and education through references like “schools” and “the law.” Such representations arouse sympathy and legitimation for their utterances and actions.

Table (1): SAR Analysis

Numbers of Representations

	<i>Instances</i>	<i>Inclusion</i>	<i>Exclusion</i>	<i>Instances</i>	<i>Activation</i>	<i>Passivation</i>
(T1) Muslims	24	17	7	23	23	0
(T1) LGBT-LS	7	5	2	9	7	2
(T1) Government	27	16	11	26	24	2
(T1) Christians & Jews	18	18	0	17	6	11
(T1) Andrew Moffat	3	3	0	4	2	2
(T1) Sara Hewitt-Clarkson	1	1	0	2	2	0
(T1) Children	18	18	0	17	3	14
(Te1) Muslims	61	47	14	57	51	6
(Te1) LGBT-LS	38	29	9	45	37	8
(Te1) Government	3	3	0	3	3	0
(Te1) Christians & Jews	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Te1) Andrew Moffat	18	18	0	25	18	7
(Te1) Sara Hewitt-Clarkson	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Te1) Children	45	44	1	47	22	19
(G1) Muslims	91	66	25	90	82	8
(G1) LGBT-LS	88	79	9	101	88	13
(G1) Government	27	24	3	27	19	8
(G1) Christians & Jews	0	0	0	0	0	0
(G1) Andrew Moffat	1	1	0	1	1	0
(G1) Sara Hewitt-Clarkson	52	46	6	56	45	11
(G1) Children	57	54	3	60	32	27
(I1) Muslims	32	18	14	30	26	4
(I1) LGBT-LS	47	42	5	52	41	11
(I1) Government	18	9	9	17	16	1
(I1) Christians & Jews	0	0	0	0	0	0
(I1) Andrew Moffat	0	0	0	0	0	0
(I1) Sara Hewitt-Clarkson	8	6	2	8	6	2
(I1) Children	7	7	0	10	4	6

Figure (1): *Rates of Inclusion and Exclusion*



Interestingly, Muslims are the most activated SAs in the reports (see Figures.2). Most of the time, their activation is associated with racist and threatening actions against children and LGBT-LS. For instance, in *Gurd*, staff and pupils are the sensor of the threat signified by “frontline” in relation to activated Muslims. Consider the following examples.

“Mr Moffat says he has received ‘nasty emails’ and threats, including one which warned he ‘wouldn’t last long’”

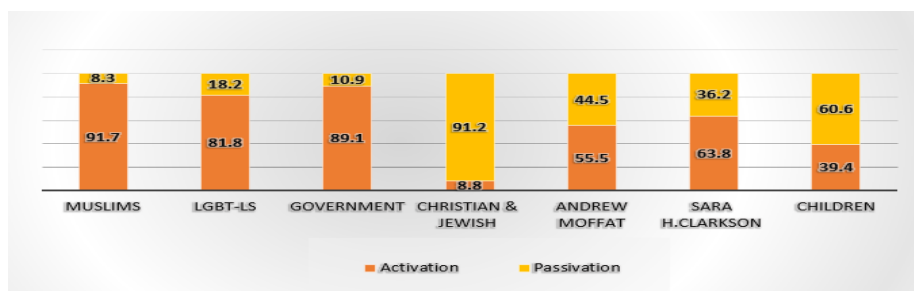
“The Birmingham school on the frontline of anti-LGBT protests”

“It’s very young pupils who are being caught up in the crossfire”

Conversely, when passivated, Muslims are acted upon with respect to both material and verbal processes by the most activated legitimate authoritative actor, that is, the government. “... will create an exclusion zone around the school, enabling police to arrest groups of protesters who cause a nuisance”

In light of the initial categorisation, the text allows the reader to interpret these hazy or missing representations. The most included SAs are children and LGBT-LS. They are more prominent than other SAs, treated more sympathetically, and less backgrounded. If they are activated, it is in relation to verbal processes or mental processes, such as “distressed” and “not understanding.” Last but not least, considering the four reports, one can notice that the reports turn a blind eye when making reference to LGBT rights in the Act, while there is no discussion on the other protected characteristics in the very same Act, including the general commitment to democracy and tolerance for religious beliefs. Despite the apparent meticulous position of neutrality (implied by the method in which the majority of the depiction is assigned to sources other than the newspapers), there are traces that reveal an active role of the media in the given social practices.

Figure (2): Rates of Activation and Passivation



4. Analysis and Discussion of Cognitive Operations

In this study, CB is introduced as a framing strategy and proximation as a positioning strategy. It has been found that both strategies play a crucial role in anchoring SAR. To start with, blends are realised through conceptualisations invoked in metaphor. The result is rich, imagined scenarios that create simple, digestible event models from complicated social phenomena, resulting in the following blends that carry particular ideological and legitimating functions:

- Hewitt-Clarkson’s battle in *Gurd*
- Birmingham Fire blend in *Ind*

The first blend draws on frames of war that evoke chaos, violence, good and bad fighters, victims, and cheaters. Interestingly, Muslims take on the role of bad fighters who start a war in the peaceful city of Birmingham. It serves as devices to delegitimize both Muslim protests and government policies. It also represents LGBT-LS in a defensive statue. The blends show that Muslims are the distant others who are protesting against agreed-upon British norms and those fighters who use their families as human shields. Hewitt-Clarkson’s war represents “Sara” as the

fighter who defends “her school” and Muslims as the hostile and non-negotiable segment in the British communities.

Gurd contains a considerable number of metaphoric constructions realised by particular linguistic expressions, specifically those that include verbs of motion and force, such as “crush,” “give in,” “destroy,” “terrorize,” “target,” “rage,” “broke,” “clash,” “intimidate,” and “hijack,” as well as expressions like “frontline,” “caught in the crossfire,” “gates,” “battle,” “victims,” and “threat.” Together, these linguistic units motivate a number of mental spaces. In Ex.26, elements from the PROTEST frame have a specified counterpart in the BATTLE frame, and vice versa. Some other elements are not specified, but rather created by the blend. Through composition, *Gurd* utilises knowledge from both frames, i.e., information from the two input spaces is projected and fused to present the blend space and associate the protesters with threat and violation. “We” refers to LGBT-LS, specifically staff in the educational body. “The frontline” presents the protesters as a group of attackers who turn the vicinity of the school into a battle zone. When the demonstrators announce the war against “the law,” they find no one to attack but “the school head,” the defender whose weapon is “her desire to promote equality” among pupils. *Gurd* then refers to the protest as “the battle being fought on Hewitt-Clarkson’s school grounds” that “has nationwide implications.” Building on the aforementioned, Hewitt-Clarkson’s battle blend that emerged from the entrenched metaphor of both scenarios corresponds the protests with a battle broke out in Birmingham. Hewitt-Clarkson’s battle blend can be modelled in Figure (3) below.

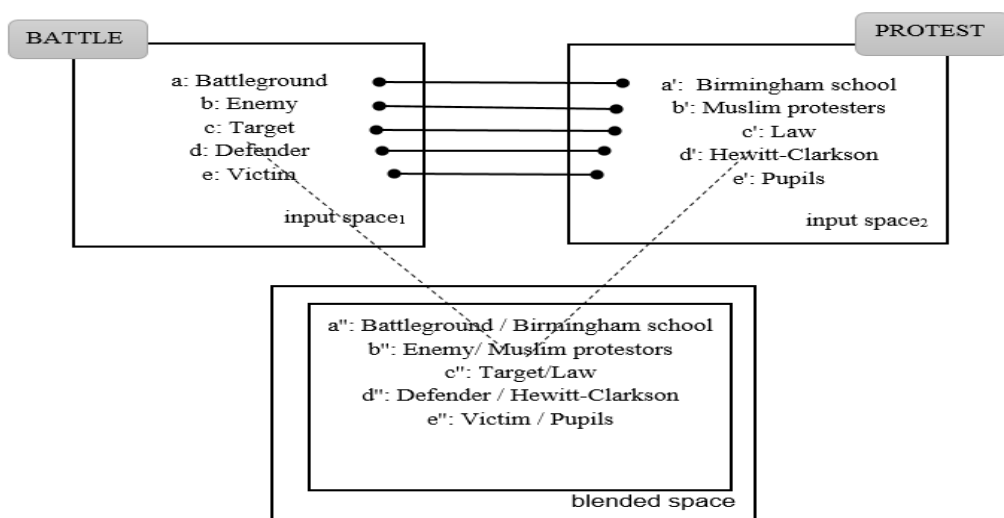
“‘We can’t give in’: The Birmingham school on the frontline of anti-LGBT protests. ... the school head caught in the crossfire between demonstrators and the law tells of the stress endured as a result of her desire to promote equality the battle being fought on Hewitt-Clarkson’s school grounds is one that has nationwide implications for all schools ... but this time, it’s very young pupils who are being caught up in the crossfire ... one teacher, who is Muslim. ‘The children are in the middle,’ says another. ‘They are the innocent victims in all this.’ ... even though the government has stressed that parents will not have a veto, her parents think ‘consult’ means they get to tell headteachers what to do. ‘So there’s another battle you have to fight’”

33

In this blend, part of the society (Muslims) is viewed as hostile and non-negotiable segment, thus society as a whole at risk of insecurity. It evokes the question of whether Muslims are able to adapt to the updated British values or whether they plot “to undermine schools” and to “influence policy ‘from outside the school gates’”. Therefore, the blend works as a warrant for the government to take measures to end the protest and to protect the schools in Birmingham with new policies. Of course, the serious consequences of the battle are portrayed by children, the “innocent victims” who “are being caught up in the crossfire.” Finally, the scene is accomplished by presenting “Sara” as the defender who get embroiled in this battle because of the government’s lame policy and the protestors’ arrogance, stands and fights alone behind the school’s gates to protect the pupils. Another element that triggers the war scene is the repetition of the expression “school gates” (five times). It foregrounds the protests as a threat besieging the school and creates barriers between opponents to simulate differences. Furthermore, G includes different labels, such as “conflict,” “outcry,” and “row,” that associate Muslim protestors with tension and chaos.

The blend serves as a device to delegitimize both protesting Muslims and government policy. It presents the government as the powerful actor who gives the antagonist (Muslims) the chance to start a battle, then stands by and watches them reject equality and violate peace. Muslims are presented as intrinsically aggressive rather than conditionally react to school policy that violates their won rights.

Figure (3): Hewitt-Clarkson’s Battle Blend in *Gurd*



Ind blend draws on frames of natural forces (fire). It dissocializes Muslims’ actions in Britain so that they are seen as serious and uncontrolled natural phenomena that have damaging impacts, and thus, need urgent response. *Ind* utilises its blend to delegitimize Muslims and legitimate interventions by both LGBT-LS and the government. *Ind* contains a group of linguistic structures to be conceptually organised to prompt the construction of a number of mental spaces that, in turn, arouse processes of conceptualisations.

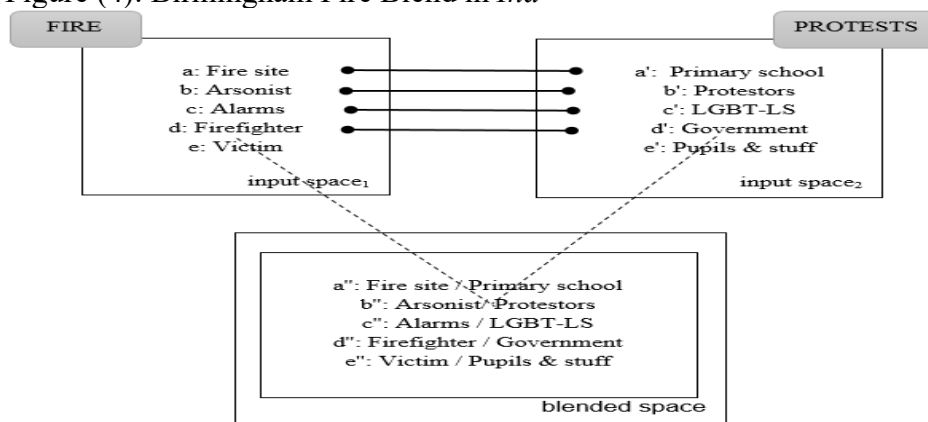
The following extract evokes spaces with elements belonging to protest and fire scenarios. *Ind* utilises knowledge from the FIRE frame enriched by actions like “pread,” “grow,” “ramp up,” “escalate,” “fight,” and “fuel” to corresponds the protests with a broken-out fire and present Birmingham and other British cities in a state of danger. Birmingham Fire blend can be modelled in Figure (4).

“School protests against LGBT+ lessons could spread unless government intervenes education professionals and politicians fear protests will grow unless the government and local councils take action. Daily protests ... ramped up at Anderton Park Primary School in Birmingham ... headteachers and teachers in schools are calling for urgent support from the government to teach classes on equality and respect amid fears that the disruption could escalate further. ... ‘people do feel like they are fighting this on their own playground and their own pavement.’ ... these protestors are fuelling [things] and that is why it has spread. ... staff have been given a phone number for a counselling service in the school in the wake of the protests, which have left children in tears and staff feeling ‘incredibly intimidated’”

The last sentence anchors the given blend by representing the staff in need of a call for help while besieged by the fire, and the children who are “left ... in tears” are horrified by the scene around them. Ideological and social consequences are carried out by the Birmingham Fire blend. It serves as a device to delegitimize Muslims and, consequently, legitimate intervention by both LGBT-LS and the government. It presents Muslims as naturally aggressive (blazing fire is a natural force) rather than conditionally reacting; thus, society as a whole is at risk. It evokes the idea that the fire will grow to reach other cities, thus urging for serious and major defensive actions. Therefore, the blend works as a warrant for the British government and people to deal with arsonists severely rather than more sympathetically. Finally, through their quotes, LGBT-LS are presented as those who sound the alarm to control and put out the fire. In the blend, the composition process is realised by fusing the two input spaces: the protests have the analogy of fire, which then develops into a new blend (protests are a natural threatening phenomenon).

The completion operation includes background information, discourse context, and fundamental cognitive capacities that give the reader additional structure, such as the frames of the British government’s approach towards protests. Finally, elaboration runs the blend according to the unreal principles established to create the final emergent structure (blended space): the protests as a threatening phenomenon, the actions of the protests as the fuel, LGBT-LS as those who sound the alarm, pupils and staff as those who are besieged by the fire, and finally, the government as a firefighter.

35

Figure (4): Birmingham Fire Blend in *Ind*

With regard to proximation, the location of actors and events are determined within the deictic positioning, to be seen from a contextually particular point of view. Along with the above examined blends, the study highlights the following range of proximation strategies in which Muslims are conceptually placed onstage:

- Spatial and Temporal Proximation in *Tms*
- Axiological Proximation in *Tele*

In the spatial proximation, a force vector stands symbolically for Muslims’ movement. It compresses the magnitude along the S, T or Ee/a axes to construe Muslims’ physical threat as close to or capable of reaching Us (the conceptualiser). In the case of the temporal, epistemic, and

axiological proximation, a translation vector represents Muslims' movement through a metaphorical space and construes Muslims' threat to change British values. Both strategies aim at legitimating authorities' interventionist actions. However, the temporal proximation in *Tms* operates via intensification over the spatial and negative axiological proximation to construe Muslims' threats (physical harm or change in social values) as close or current.

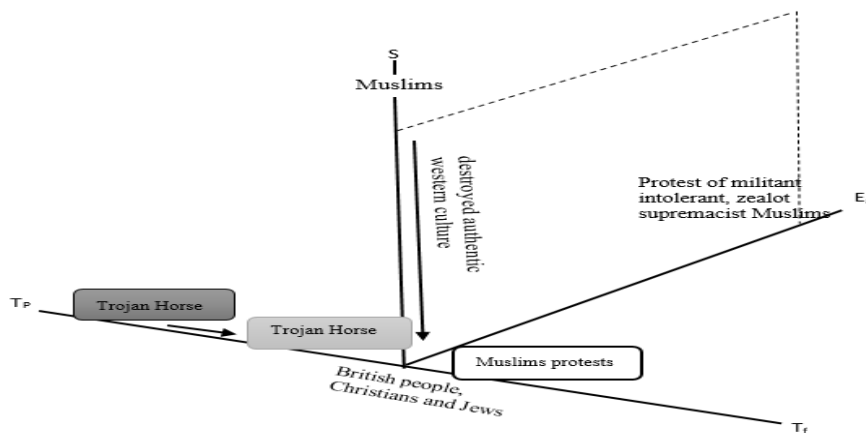
With regard to proximation in *Tms*, Phraseological Spatial Proximation (PSP) and Analogical Temporal Proximation (ATP) provoke a comparison that serves to construct an axiological evaluation between chaos values possessed by Muslims and peace values possessed by the West. On the other hand, PSP in *Tele* amounts to social transformation (adhering to LGBT lessons). It represents an interdiscursive discourse like those about war on terror and rely more heavily on the negative axiological proximation. This aims to represent Muslim protesters as a perceived threat to social and legal British identities.

Tms construes Muslims (the antagonist) as entering the territory (the spatial ground) of other British people (the protagonist) as if they do not belong to Britain. A PSP is realised in the following extract, in which an interaction involves corporeal harm to the protagonist. The proximation results in a "collision between two forms of intolerance," which can be inferred as denoting a physical impact. *Tms* ends up with a PSP, i.e., a dynamic simulation is realised by a full extent of a vector explicitly made within an utterance. By locating the discourse world in an idealised cognitive model (see Figure 3). The source of the threat (Muslims and Ofsted) appears at the remote end of S. The impact of that threat is felt by the conceptualiser (reader) at the deictic centre to represent *US vs. THEM* polarisation.

"Faced with threats by militant Muslims, the authorities often cave in. It's so much easier to pick on non-threatening Christians and Jews. That's why the Muslim 'Trojan Horse' school infiltration plots still haven't been properly dealt with, while some ultra-orthodox Jews are now thinking that Ofsted's intolerance towards them may force them to emigrate. Intolerance is about imposing a view on others. Both secular and Muslim zealots are displaying it from opposite viewpoints. There isn't one 'Trojan Horse' in British education but two. What's being destroyed is authentic western culture. That's now in the sights of both illiberal secularists and Islamic supremacists alike, shooting at it from opposite sides of the cultural barricades".

A connector is used to link "Muslims" to the attributions of "militant," "intolerant," "zealot," and "supremacist." Such an association inscribes then invokes a negative judgement located in the axiological gear at the remote end of E. Thus, being geo-politically distant, Muslims are construed as morally distant, since distance values of the socio-spatial and the axiological axes are corresponded (Hart, 2014, p. 170). To enhance legitimating effects, *Tms* also involves ATP; the scenario conceptualised on the spatial and axiological levels is construed as already part of the conceptualiser's temporal ground (see Figure .5). The ATP occurs when the producer retrieves cultural salient events on the *Tms* axis from the collective memory. Readers (the British people) are invited to phenomenologically experience the "Trojan Horse" plot that took place in the past as if it happened only yesterday by contracting time (closer to now).

Figure (5): Phraseological Spatial and Analogical Temporal Proximation in *Tms*



The vector here is a translation vector that displays an abstract movement through the discourse space. TROJAN HORSE frame with its conflict and negative stereotype of Islam is associated with a frame for the current protests as a possible new conspiracy by an analogical connector. This comparison serves to construct an axiological evaluation between the chaos values possessed by Muslims and the peace values possessed by the West. Again, through back projection to the war frame, an ideology of *US vs. THEM* is constructed to delegitimize Muslims' actions.

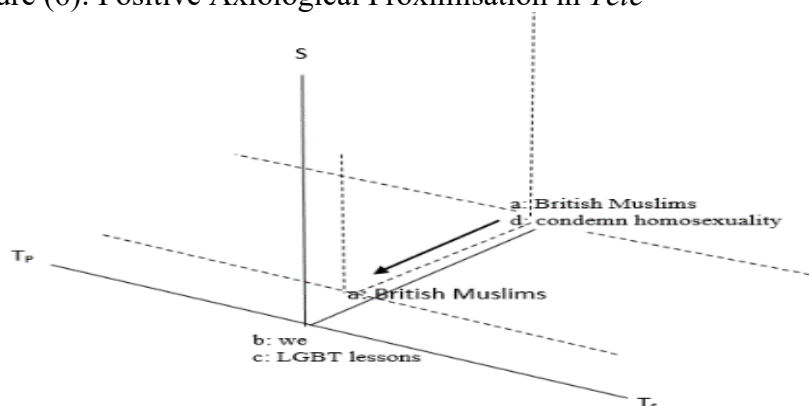
Based on DST in *Tele*, an axiological proximation is conceptualised by imagining an opposing axiological worldview based on a mirror image of one's deictic coordinates in socio-spatial, temporal, and, specifically, axiological space. That can be seen in the following two extracts. The first embodies Muslim parents' axiological worldview, while the second reflects LGBT-LS's axiological worldview. Consequently, the axiological opposition is typically between the values of Muslims and those of non-Muslims in Britain. In the first extract, the effect is invoked by the noun phrase that conceptualises the antagonist, "Islam," the noun phrase that conceptualises the protagonist, "homosexuality," and the verb phrase that conceptualises action of antagonist, "condemns." In the second one, it is to realise the reverse proximation, there is the noun phrase that conceptualises the antagonist, "No Outsiders," the noun phrase that conceptualises the protagonist, "homophobia," the verb phrase that conceptualises the action of antagonist, "challenge," the prepositional phrase that conceptualises the direction of action, "in primary schools," and finally the clause that conceptualises the impact of action on protagonists, "everyone is welcome". That can be modelled in Figure (6). Consider the following examples: "Conservative Islam condemns homosexuality. ... it's not ok to be gay in Islam. You're either Muslim, or you're gay. ... No Outsiders is 'a very dangerous, mind-altering programme which is designed to attack our beliefs'"

"'No Outsiders,' which teaches children that everyone is welcome. To that end, it also promotes LGBTQ equality and challenges homophobia in primary schools ... in modern Britain, their children are going to grow up learning about different kinds of relationships ... it was ok to be gay, and ok to switch gender ... I can wear my brother's clothes and he can wear mine. I can change my name to a boy's name ... there's two mummies and two daddies, so I've got another mummy somewhere ... Mr Moffat says he is 'pragmatic' about the dispute. 'We've got to find a way to engage parents on some issues that many find challenging'"

Figure (6) shows that a process of narrowing the gap between opposing ideologies is involved. The worldview of “Andrew” is represented by solid architecture as a base space. The dashed architecture is the second space that mirrors the worldview of Muslims since mental spaces can be nested. In both spaces, the evaluative axis engages in its axiological gear. The remote values (away from Britain) make up the axiological ground for Muslim parents, whereas the values that constitute the axiological ground for “Andrew” are situated at the remote end of Ea from Muslims. When the gap is closed, the two counterparts become more alike. Therefore, axiological proximation amounts to social transformation (adhering to LGBT lessons). It also warns about the threat of Muslims values (in the first extract) to the updated British values in case the protests continue. Consequently, the second extract involves a “shifting ground” in the axiological ground of Muslims towards that of Britain. Thus, it serves Positive Axiological Proximation (PAP), that is, a shift in Muslims’ axiological ground towards that of LGBT-LS’s and can be exemplified by speech acts such as promising, e.g., “their children are going to grow up learning about different kinds of relationships,” and offering, e.g., “We’ve got to find a way to engage parents on some issues that many find challenging.” Positive stable ground shifting is also seen in nominalised forms like “learning.”

Ideologically, and with an appeal to “an acceptance of others” scenario, this type of proximation presents a moral justification for LGBT lessons that emerges from the new Western norms. In contrast, Negative Axiological Proximation (NAP) is based on a shift in the protagonist’s axiological ground (LGBT-LS towards that of Muslims) and is realised by warning, e.g., “No Outsiders is ‘a very dangerous, mind-altering programme.’” Negative ground shifting appears in “Conservative Islam condemns homosexuality.”

Figure (6): Positive Axiological Proximation in *Tele*



Conclusions

A number of tentative conclusions can be drawn from the above detailed discussion. It is better to group them under subheadings with reference to the research questions highlighted previously. The analysis of SAR demonstrates that a considerable part of the British press still favours voices

that repeat stereotypes from the colonial era that portrays Muslims as dangerous extremists, terrorists, and racists. This is done while giving preference to voices that rehash these stereotypes. It is evident that Muslims' presence is predominant in the eight reports. Given the nature of the topics being examined, this should come as no surprise. Even though, Muslims are semantically misrepresented. Not only has this been the case when examining quantitative findings of inclusion, exclusion, activation, and passivation, but also when examining qualitative ones. This is mostly in line with how they are included by impersonalisation, personalisation, and specification. Frequent patterns show the insufficiency of Muslims' nominations. The use of the word “Islam” and its derivations in such representations promotes generalisation and reveals a hidden ideology that Islam as a religion is questioned. It has been established in the literature review that discourse and context are associated by a reciprocal relation anchored by the cognitive mediation. Starting with framing strategy, CB depends heavily on frames related to the encyclopedic knowledge that represents the cultural experience. The same lexical items utilised for inclusion as a discursive strategy in MR are employed as access for CB to further shape the reader's understanding and evaluation of Muslims. In other words, Muslims are observed through the refracting lens of the blend. The distorting effects of metaphor direct the reader to see Muslims in a particular way, and to focus on certain characteristics of them at the expense of others.

As for positioning strategy, in the course of discourse, the proximation cognitive model is populated by conceptual elements (actors, actions, times, and places) that are represented explicitly or implicitly in the text. They are mapped out within the three-dimensional space by connectors and vectors. The connector represents Muslim attributions and possessions, which are realised through ways of inclusion and backgrounding. However, the vector represents material processes between elements, including the conceptualiser at the deictic centre. They are in turn realised by ways of activation and passivation of the SAs. Crucially, the mapping out of elements inside the discourse space reflects the intended MR as a construed reality. To sum up, the overall SAR in the dataset supports the negative representation of Muslims and emphasises the association between linguistic patterns embedded in discourse, the social realisation, and the reader's construed cognitive conceptualisation. The SAR findings are consistent with the qualitative findings of the conceptual operations. It is also evident that there are no examples of positive representation for Muslims in the recruited metaphorical clusters and proximisations.

For the second research question, it has been established in that the negotiation of ideology supporting mental representations through communication may cumulatively lead to ideology enforcement within socially shared ones. Though some parts in the reports reflect a slight opposition and resistance to extreme perspective towards Muslims. However, these changes are resisted by the use of terminologies adapted to legitimate and enforce authoritative policies. The ethical power of the given newspapers is not parallel with the political power they represent. They fail to carry out a new ideological change. Concluding this, one can argue that the socio-cognitive analysis reveals ways of representation that emphasise the division derived from taking extreme stands. That is a representation of ideological polarisation. Thus, one can refer to the presented ideology (apparent) and the aimed ideology (hidden). The represented ideology can be seen by ways of representations of ideologies of both opposite parties. It is utilised to bring the aimed ideology to provoke *US vs. THEM* polarisation. The aimed hidden ideology clearly

signifies that it is difficult to bridge the distance between opposite parties and that the created gap significantly affects a decision-making process. In addition to the frequent conceptualisation of *US vs. THEM* polarisation appeared within the cognitive analysis, quantitative evidence is also provided by the SAR results. This means that the created polarisation is rooted deep in the major policy disagreement. The reports present and conceptualise the binary framing. Namely, the liberal values of the West against Muslim religious extremists. Muslims are close-minded groups within British and French societies. For them, education is not a priority. They express intolerance towards the LGBT community and free expression. Muslim community is holding double-standard beliefs, and those Muslims who support authoritative policies are threatened by their own community. However, when discussing the circumstances in which Muslims utilise their civic rights, there is still a tendency to portray their behaviour in the news as a conflict of cultures or worldviews, which has the effect of otherising Muslims.

Based on the discussed findings of the reports, a pro-/anti-Muslim continuum can be imagined to understand the different stances of the four British newspapers. The Times is at one end of the spectrum as a supporter of conservative Christians and Jews. That is evidenced by their prominent presence in its reports. The Telegraph is next. The two newspapers reflect a right-leaning ideological and political outlook. The used linguistic constructions support the negative representation of Muslims in their news reporting, let alone the intended patterns of narration by cherry-picking those few Muslim voices (such as Muslims who express extreme views or those that support our interests). That can be used as propaganda against the majority of Muslims by inciting additional hostility towards traditional Muslim beliefs or practices. On the other hand, The Independent is the most secularist newspaper that is openly critical of religion, but the less to represent Muslims negatively. It occupies the opposite end of the continuum, preceded by The Guardian, who takes up some point between The Independent and the middle of the continuum. As left-leaning newspapers, The Independent and The Guardian tend to be less critical of topics that matter to the majority of Muslims. There can occasionally be a bias against the religion that can be unreasonably hostile to Muslims who choose to adhere to conservative moral standards or who disagree with the liberal orthodoxy on both public and private issues. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, in the British press, controversial Muslim-related issues are the fuel of political skirmishes. On the one hand, the parents in Birmingham were lured into a contentious gender politics. This is represented by media as bigots and extremists despite the fact that they shared their ideas with people, whose opinions are often given significant weight in the media. On the other hand, Muslim situation in France is utilised by media to fuel the election war between Macron and his rivals. Drawing on these reached conclusions, the current study gives some insights on how quality British newspapers employ linguistic strategies to represent Muslims in a way that reflects their perspectives and goals.

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