



The Utilization of Rhetorical Devices for Iraqi's Image Construction in British Press After 2003: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

The present study aims at analysing the rhetorical devices to investigate the way Iraqi's image was constructed in the British news headlines after the US-led invasion of Iraq. Since such discourse comprises the gist of the whole news text. The number of samples for the current study is (15) news headlines. The corpora were extracted from two British broadsheet platforms, namely, The Independent and The Guardian. The study adopted van Dijk's (2000) socio-cognitive model for analysing and interpreting the data under investigation. The findings of the study reveal that the Iraqi's image is constructed through various rhetorical devices, viz. repetition, euphemism, dramatization, and metaphor. Repetition appears to be the most frequent rhetorical device; thereby, British journalists emphasized the impact of bribes and robbery on Iraq, confirming the normalization of corruption in Iraqi society. Furthermore, the study shows that the UK press depicted the suffering of children and violence against women in the aftermath of the U.S.-led invasion. Therefore, the results of the study show that the Iraqi's image is negatively constructed in readers' minds. Finally, the implications of the study show that the Iraqi's image is constructed negatively due to ignorance of historical, cultural, social, and religious knowledge.

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الادوات البلاغية لتشكيل صورة العراقي في الصحافة البريطانية بعد ٢٠٠٣: تحليل خطابي نقدي

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المستخلص

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى تحليل الأدوات البلاغية للتحقق من كيفية تشكيل صورة العراقي في عناوين الأخبار البريطانية بعد الغزو الذي قادتته الولايات المتحدة للعراق. وذلك لأن مثل هذا الخطاب يشتمل على جوهر النص الإخباري بأكمله. وبلغ عدد عينات الدراسة الحالية (15) عنواناً إخبارياً. تم جمع العينات من منصتين رسميتين للصحافة البريطانية وهما؛ المستقل والكرديان. اعتمدت الدراسة نموذج فان ديك (2000) الاجتماعي المعرفي للتحليل وتفسير العينات الاخبارية. وتشير نتائج الدراسة إلى أن تم تشكيل صورة العراقي من خلال أدوات بلاغية مختلفة، أي. التكرار؛ والتعبير الملطف؛ والدرامية؛ والاستعارة. التكرار ظهر الأداة البلاغية الأكثر

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شيوعاً. حيث من خلالها أكد الصحفيون البريطانيون على تأثير الرشوة والسرقة على العراق مما أكد تفشي و انتشار الفساد في المجتمع العراقي. بالإضافة الى ذلك، تظهر الدراسة أن الصحافة البريطانية صورت معاناة الأطفال والعنف ضد المرأة في أعقاب الغزو الذي قادته الولايات المتحدة. ولذلك أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن صورة العراقي تتبلور بشكل سلبي في ذهن القراء. وأخيراً أظهرت دلالات الدراسة أن الصور السلبية للشعب العراقي مبنية على الجهل بالمعرفة التاريخية والثقافية والاجتماعية والدينية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: عناوين الأخبار؛ الأيديولوجية الصورة الذهنية.

1. Introduction:

Media discourse is designed to construct positive, negative, or neutral mental images in the minds of the recipients. CDA of the media, in general, and the press, in particular, assumes that news is a representation of events endorsing values that are impeded in the structures of the linguistic choices that reporters make. Therefore, media greatly impact recipients' beliefs, attitudes, and viewpoints. As a result, the CDA of the press is especially significant in this research as it reveals how Iraqi's image is constructed in the readers' mind after the U.S.-led invasion.

2. Statement of the Problem

The construction of countries is not immune from modification in media discourse in general and the press in specific. The inconstancy of events and circumstances influences how people are represented in the media. This urges the researcher to investigate the way Iraqi people are discursively represented in the UK press after the U.S.-led invasion since this event brought changes to the world.

3. Aims of the Study

The study aims to investigate rhetorical devices used to construct the Iraqi image in the UK newspapers after the U.S.-led invasion by adopting a framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. In addition, it attempts to reveal the ideological implications of the implemented rhetorical devices.

4. Research Questions

The current study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the types of rhetorical devices implemented in the UK press to construct the Iraqi image after the U.S.-led invasion.?
2. How does the construction of the Iraqi image in the UK press influence global perceptions of the country?
3. Does the UK press construct Iraqi's people positively or negatively during this period?

5. Limits of the Study

The present research is limited to analyzing the prominent rhetorical devices in the discourse of the UK press. The data of the study are limited to two broadsheet platforms, namely, The Guardian and Independent. The study is limited to analyzing the headlines that appear after 2003. The study adopts van Dijk's (2000) model for interpreting and analyzing the selected news headlines to probe the constructed Iraqi image after the U.S.-led invasion.

6. Value of the Study

The current study is believed to contribute to the critical discourse analysis studies since it tackles how Iraqi's image is constructed via investigating the rhetorical strategies in the UK press after the U.S.-led invasion. Furthermore, the study is hoped to be significant to linguistics, critical studies, media scholars, and sociology scholars.

7. Theoretical Background

7.1. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) is defined differently by different scholars. To begin with, Fairclough (1995, pp.132-133) states that "CDA means discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes. Investigating how (1) such practices, events, and texts arise out of, (2) relations of power ideologically shape them and struggles over power,(3) the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society are explored are factors securing power and hegemony." Accordingly, CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse in which language is considered a social practice.

Wodak and Meyer (2001, p. 2) add that CDA is fundamentally concerned with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power, and control as manifested in language. For his part, Van Dijk (2000, p. 352) claims that "CDA is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context." To sum up, CDA is concerned with the explanation and interpretation of a text whether written or spoken. What CDA is really about, then, is not only the linguistic unit; rather, it is about the complex social phenomenon in which language exists. The pivotal objective of CDA is to account for how power and ideologies are produced, enacted, and legitimized by certain discourse structures.

7.2. Discourse, Power, and Ideology

Van Dijk (2004, p. 25) states that power is not only a way to control the act of other individuals, but also to control their minds, and such mind control is largely discursive. Therefore, discourse plays a fundamental role in the cycle of the production of social power. In the same vein, Fairclough (1995, p. 17) claims that power relation is that of asymmetrical, unequal, and empowering relation that belongs to a special group in the society. The dominant group is the group which has access to discourse and language in the society. Having this privilege, the powerful class will be able to control the content and genre of discourse in mass media, institutions, and other organizations. By so doing, the dominant group imposes its ideologies on the society. Accordingly, Wodak and Meyer (2001, p. 10) state that "For CDA, language is not powerful on its own – it gains power by the use powerful people make of it. As for ideology, Van Dijk (2004, pp. 27-28) defines it in terms of the fundamental cognitive beliefs that are at the basis of the social representations shared by the members of a group.

Individuals can have ideological racist or sexist beliefs (e.g., about inequality) that are based on racist and sexist prejudices shared by the members of their group, discourse, and other social practices. Besides, ideologies and discourse can be connected with the ways they are discursively reproduced, as well as with

the ways members of a group reproduce their social position and conditions in their social cognitions and discourses (Van Dijk, 2004, pp. 27-28) One can conclude that ideology can be constructed by controlling the mind of individuals. Through exploiting media and other platforms, powerful people can change or maintain the attitudes of their audience. Mind management would certainly be achieved by delivering effective and persuasive discourse. The pivotal note to be made here is that the ideologies are enacted and exercised through discourse. The main concern of CDA is to uncover these ideologies such as communism and anticommunism; socialism and liberalism; republic and democratic; feminism and sexism; racism and antiracism; all these are “more or less positive or negative depending on our point of view or group membership (cf. Van Dijk 1998, Fairclough 1989, Wodak & Meyer 2001 and Wodak, 2009).

7.3. The Media

The media are usually understood to refer to the press, radio, television broadcasting, and newspaper. They have become one of the most pervasive phenomena in our daily life. Thomas and Wareing, (2004, p. 56) state that it is important to shed light on how our beliefs, knowledge, and opinions about the world are mediated through press and broadcasting institutions, and to suggest ways in which the analysis of language can provide insights into how that mediation can affect the representation of people, places, and events. In a similar vein, Hultman (2003, p. 1) states that the mass media play a pivotal role in the processes of people’s image, identity, and the construction of the social world, that is the society is organized around a text-producing institution with all its discursive hegemony of defining phenomena. The role of media is global in society's independence of geographical location. By selecting what to report, the media source can influence the public. Furthermore, ideological construction in the media is naturalized, and the audience perceives the information as a part of their commonsense understanding (Fairclough, 1995, p. 67). For their part, Scheufle, (1999, p. 105) and Richardson (2006, p. 59) argue that journalism and pressmen are assumed to have a dialectical relationship with society in the sense that society influences journalism in a great number of ways and journalism has social effects. Through its power to shape agendas and public discourse, journalism can enhance and reinforce beliefs, shape people’s opinion not only of the world but also of their place and role in the world, and if it is not able to shape readers’ opinions about a particular matter, it can, in one way or another, influence what readers have an opinion on. It can, however, help shape social reality by shaping our views of social reality. News is also considered a particularly important example of the power of language or discourse in the construction of social reality (fowler, 1991, p. 8).

Shi-xu (1998, p. 6) mentions that discourse is constitutive. Therefore, discourse is not a form of linguistic activity that is merely descriptive of the social or private worlds, but also as taking part or making up the socio-cultural experience (like actions and events around us) and the individual experience (like thoughts and feelings inside us). Accordingly, Fowler (1991, p. 8) states that in media discourse the social reality is constructed via language or discourse; language is the tool that is used to “interpret”, “organize” and “classify” this reality. To discover how the text constituents the social reality, one can unpack the ideology of the text from the linguistic patterns in which it is encoded, the activity of linguistics is called deconstructing a text, using linguistic analysis with the social context of the discourse very much in mind (Fowler, 1981, p. 22). Through linguistic analysis, however, one can discover more clearly how different points of view, or ideologies, are constructed linguistically. Therefore, the language used by the media to represent particular social and political groups, and to describe newsworthy events, tends to provide the dominant ways available for the rest of us to talk about those groups and events. From a linguistic point of

view, one of the most significant and interesting aspects of the potential power of the media is the way that people and events are reported and structured in the discourse (Thomas and Wareing, 2004, pp. 57- 58).

To conclude, media discourse is mostly designed to construct knowledge, opinion, and beliefs in the mind of the audience that goes along with the set of ideologies, conventions, and social representations of the socially powerful group or institution that controls how events and people are represented in media. This practice, in turn, influences what people perceive about the world and contributes to constructing their reality.

7.4. News Headlines

A news headline is a summary that conveys the gist of a news story. It is structured in a way to grasp the reader's attention and convey the essence of the events in a few words. Headlines are typically placed at the top of the news and play a critical role in engaging the audience. They are assumed to be clear, direct, and informative while encouraging the reader to continue reading the full story. The headline may be descriptive, summarizing the main event or key information, or it could be more intriguing, designed to provoke curiosity. Reis et al. (2015, p. 357) claim that since "people are only willing to spend a limited time-consuming news, news sites must have effective strategies to catch people's attention and attract their clicks." Because they are designed to stick out and attract the reader's attention, headlines are a litmus test for the underlying interests of news outlets. Bell (1991, p. 185) differentiates between the syntactic composition and the discourse structure and function of headlines, where the latter is the most important. The function of the discourse in news headlines is that it is the carrier of the ideology of the news media institution.

Althaus et al. (2001, p. 7) argue that the function of summarizing is not fully achieved because headlines represent a "loose, inadequate or misleading substitute for full-text news reports in several ways." They also direct the reader's attention to a single aspect of the story, resulting in the misrepresentation of its content. At the same time, they commonly oversimplify the content of the full text and conceal relevant information, while often highlighting second-order issues. Accordingly, Bednarek and Caple (2012, p. 44) identify several strategies to strengthen newsworthiness and to call the reader's attention, for example: the use of evaluative language; intensification and quantification; comparison, metaphor or simile; references to emotion; negative vocabulary; story structure; references to time and place, nations and communities, individuals; inclusive 'we' and role labels and quotes from 'ordinary' citizens. Moreover, Ifantidou (2009, p. 20) headlines typically contain semantically underdetermined information, ambiguity, and vagueness, while they also highly rely on presuppositions and shared knowledge.

8. Methodology

8.1. Data Collection

The data collection method of the current study is internet-based. The researcher has purposefully selected the corpora that best suit the objectives of the study. Maxwell (1997, p. 50) states that purposeful sampling is a type of sampling in which certain settings, persons, or events are purposefully chosen for the essential information they can supply that cannot be obtained as effectively from other options. Therefore, the procedure of data collection was carried out by surfing the most well-known British broadsheet platforms namely; The Independent and The Guardian. To elicit as many corpora as possible, a keyword

search was implemented, utilising the search engines on each of these websites. The keyword list included words such as "*Iraqi news after 2003*", "*news about Iraq after the 2003 events*" and so on. Then, the researcher read the corpora that best fit the objectives of the study. After that, the researcher retrieved corpora. Finally, the sources of the corpora were documented.

8.2 The Model of the Study

The present study implements Van Dijk's (2000) socio-cognitive approach in which discourse and society are mediated by cognition. Since discourse structures and social structures are different the only way of relating them to each other is through mental representations of language users as social members and as individuals. Therefore, social interaction, social situations, and social structures can only influence text and talk through people's interpretation of such social environments. Furthermore, discourse can only influence social interaction and social structures through the same cognitive interface of attitudes, ideologies, knowledge, and mental models.

For van Dijk (2000, pp. 9-10) the broad label of the notion of 'Discourse' includes language use, talk, verbal interaction, and communication. The label cognitive relates to mind, memory, and especially to the cognitive processes and representations involved in the production and comprehension of discourse. Memory is of two types Long Term Memory (LTM) and Short-Term Memory (STM). LTM features remembrance of autobiographical experiences and knowledge stored in Episodic Memory (EM), on the one hand, and more general, socially shared attitudes, ideologies, and knowledge in Semantic Memory (SM). 'Cognition' covers the mental aspects of ideologies, such as their nature as beliefs or ideas, their relations with opinions and knowledge, and their status as socially shared representations. Such mental aspects are called mental models which are not only important for the representation of our personal experiences, but are also the basis of the production and comprehension of action and discourse (van Dijk, 2000, p. 24). Mental models are subjective and personal in the sense that it differs from one language user to another in viewing their experience and knowledge about the event and the situation in which the communicative event takes place.

Finally, the broad label of 'Society' includes political, cultural, social, and historical aspects of ideologies, their group-based nature, and especially their role in the reproduction of, or resistance against, dominance. In addition, he claims that there is no direct link between discourse structures and social structures and they need a cognitive and interactional interface: social representations, including attitudes and ideologies often mediated by mental models that are represented in episodic memory (Wodak and Meyer, 2001, p. 117). It is noteworthy to mention that the reason behind adopting this model is that it focuses on cognition or mental model which is the basic source of discourse production and comprehension. Moreover, this model is direct, explicit, and more practical in relating discourse to mental perception. Therefore, it has been selected for analyzing the data of the current study to probe the way the Iraqi image is drawn in the minds of the recipients.

8.3 Analytical Rhetorical Devices

In this section, definitions for each analytical rhetorical device will be provided focusing on those that happened to be realized in the UK news headlines after 2003.

8.3.1 Repetition

Al-Khafaji (2005, pp. 1-6) asserts that repetition is the process of overusing and repeating the same phrases words or ideas many times in the same form or with some changes to produce playful, emotional, and rhetorical functions. Similarly, Fairclough (1992, p. 193) defines this rhetorical device as using the expression “over-wording” to refer to the relative density of the number of words used to name the concepts from a particular domain, which may be “a sign of intense preoccupation, pointing to peculiarities in the ideology of the group responsible for it”. For his part, Fowler (1991, p. 69) uses the term “over lexicalization” to refer to repetition by defining it as “the availability of many words for one concept, and indicates the prominence of the concept in a community’s beliefs and intellectual interests.”

8.3.2 Euphemism

According to Allan and Burridge (1991, p. 11), euphemism is defined as “an alternative to a dispreferred expression, to avoid possible loss of face: either one’s face or, through offending, that of the audience, or some third party.” Similarly, Olmat (2018, as cited in Olmat, 2020, p. 271) defines euphemism as a metaphoric resource that enables language users to address sensitive or embarrassing issues. Moreover, he argues that euphemism is an intentional substitution of an offensive, unpleasant, or stylistically inappropriate expression with a more agreeable or inoffensive one for conveying a certain meaning implicitly. In a similar vein, Farghal (1995, p. 366) states that “the language user’s option for a euphemism often emanates from contextual factors such as the social relationship between speaker and addressee or the level of formality induced by the setting.” Therefore, the UK press may manage communication in challenging circumstances, such as news headlines after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, by using a variety of neutral, acceptable, direct, or less emotive expressions.

8.3.3 Dramatization

Dramatization refers to a discursive strategy through which facts are exaggerated in one's favor to influence perceptions and interpretations (Van Dijk, 2000, p. 68). This strategy often includes introducing events or issues in a way that emphasizes conflict, tension, or dramatic elements, thereby shaping how the audience understands and responds to the discourse (Van Dijk, 2000, p. 68).

8.3.4 Metaphor

A metaphor is a feature of language or discourse and a figure of speech that is used as a shift in the literal meaning of a word or a phrase, where they are used with a new meaning that differs from another more basic meaning that the original word or phrase has, i.e. associating two unrelated ideas to create a third one (Charteris-Black, 2011, p. 31). It is used to label an entity or a thing, a name that belongs to something else, or a name that has an implicit meaning that is contrary to the common or literal meaning. Beard (2000, p. 21) argues that metaphor is the way by which we construct the world and the way the world is constructed for us by others.

8.4 Procedure of Data Analysis

The analytical steps for data analysis are as follows:

- a. Careful reading the selected UK news headlines, focusing on The Independent and The Guardian agencies.

- b. Following Van Dijk's model (2000), the study addresses the projection of Iraqi's image construction through rhetorical devices to trace the major effective ones and their implications.
- c. Descriptive statistical analysis is to be made to calculate the percentage of each strategy. Thus, the percentage of each strategy is made by means of the frequency number of each strategy divided by the total frequency number of the strategies multiplied by 100.
- d. Finally, the findings of the critical analysis of the UK news headlines after the U.S.-led invasion will be discussed, focusing on various socio-cultural and socio-political implications.

8.5 Data Analysis

In this section, the selected UK news headlines will be analyzed by implementing van Dijk's (2000) model. Accordingly, the ideological implications of the selected news headlines are to be interpreted.

8.5.1 Repetition

This rhetorical device is shown in the following corpora, which concentrates on certain socio-cultural and legal issues in constructing the Iraqi image in the readers' mind. The analysis depends on the recurrent issues during the period under investigation.

Barbaric 'honour killings' become the weapon to subjugate women in Iraq

(Source: Independent, Monday 28 April 2008 00:00 BST)

How picture phones have fuelled frenzy of honour killing in Iraq

(Source: Independent, Saturday 17 May 2008 00:00 BST)

Iraqi pair jailed for life for 'honour killing' of woman

(Source: Independent, Thursday 11 November 2010 01:00 GMT)

In the news headlines above, the term "honour killing" has been persistently repeated to provoke strong emotional reactions in readers' minds. This rhetorical strategy conveys the significant cultural weight and views the issue of 'honour killing' as a clear moral outrage by representing those who commit such acts outside the bounds of civilized behavior. This description could lead to a perception of "the other," where specific cultural practices are demonized, often reinforcing stereotypes about certain communities. Moreover, the repetition of this term reveals the victimization of women by framing 'honour killings' as a means of subjugation. It also sheds light on the idea of lacking agency that women have in these contexts by focusing on the oppressive nature of such acts. This discursive strategy shows that societal expectations of honour control women's social lives and choices and it reveals a patriarchal ideology that perpetuates violence against women.

The second news headline refers to "picture phones", suggesting a modern twist to traditional practices, which presupposes that technology can exacerbate cultural issues. This refers to an intersection of modernity and tradition, which reveals the idea that contemporary tools can facilitate violence-based practices. The third news headline invokes a sense of justice and accountability and acknowledges the legal system's role in addressing honour killings, which can be viewed as a step toward changing societal attitudes and norms.

Focusing on punishment, however, probably directs attention from the underlying cultural beliefs that sustain such practices. Therefore, repeated utilization of the term "honour killing" in media perpetuates a narrative that can oversimplify complex cultural dynamics and risks homogenizing diverse practices and experiences within specific cultures, enhancing a monolithic view of certain societies as inherently violent towards women. These news headlines may contribute to shaping the public mind of honour killings as a phenomenon uniquely tied to certain cultures, and this perception might lead to stigmatization and a lack of empathy towards individuals from those cultures. To sum up, the ideological function of repeating "honour killing" is reflected in its power to shape cultural narratives and influence public perceptions. It reflects deeper societal issues regarding power, gender, and morality as well.

Security firm in Iraq 'tried to bribe officials with \$1m'

(Source: Independent, Wednesday 11 November 2009 01:00 GMT)

How bribery became a way of life in Iraq

(Source: Independent, Sunday 28 June 2009 00:00 BST)

The repetition of bribery reveals that corruption is not only prevalent but also normalized within the society of Iraqi country. This implies that bribery has been viewed as an accepted and inevitable part of daily interactions in Iraqi country. The term 'bribe' has a negative connotation and refers to wrongdoing and ethical breaches. Thus, representing Iraqi society in this frame can influence the readers' mental model and create a negative attitude and opinion about Iraqi people that leads to a fatalistic view that perceives corruption as unchangeable. Moreover, the act of bribing indicates a hierarchical relationship where money can influence decisions and access to power. Thus, this enhances the idea that financial resources can override ethical considerations, thereby critiquing the structures that allow for such corruption. Furthermore, viewing bribery as a cultural norm in Iraq, the news headlines reinforce stereotypes about the country and its governance. Therefore, this may construct Iraqi society as inherently corrupted, which may overlook the complex historical, political, and economic factors that contribute to such practices.

This rhetorical device implicates a broader influence on society, indicating that the prevalence of bribery affects not just individuals but also the integrity of institutions. This, thus, raises questions about complicity, as it might suggest that Iraqi people are either victims of this system or are participants in it. Emphasizing the notion of bribery can serve to mobilize public discourse around anti-corruption reforms. By framing it as a pervasive issue, these news headlines can catalyze discussions about the need for systemic change and the implementation of stricter regulations. To conclude, the ideological function of repeating

"bribe" in these news headlines confirms the normalization of corruption, reflects power dynamics, and shapes negative public perceptions of Iraqi society.

Children of war: the generation traumatised by violence in Iraq

(Source: The Guardian, Tue 6 Feb 2007 09.25 GMT)

Iraq air raids hit mostly women and children

(Source: Independent, Thursday 16 April 2009 00:00 BST)

The repetition of "children" in the news headlines above evokes sympathy in the readers' side and emphasizes the innocence of those affected by conflict. Moreover, it reinforces the idea of the vulnerability of children in war, representing them as key victims who bear the brunt of violence. The utilization of this discursive strategy ultimately shapes public perception, draws attention to the long-term consequences of war on future generations and urges a humanitarian response. Therefore, the readers

view Iraqi children as victims of the ongoing conflict and construct an emphatic mental model about Iraqi people in general. Generally speaking, this rhetorical device functions as a tool to represent Iraqi people as victims of conflict in the Iraqi country.

8.5.2 Euphemism

This rhetorical device is shown in the following corpora which concentrates on certain socio-economic issues in representing the Iraqi image in the readers' mind.

Blood and oil: How the West will profit from Iraq's most precious commodity

(Source: Independent, Sunday 07 January 2007 01:00 GMT)

The euphemistic expression "the West will profit from Iraq's most precious commodity" is employed to downplay and mitigate the negative impact of Western intervention. Moreover, it functions as a critical perspective on Western involvement in Iraq, that is, in relation to the exploitation of Iraq's resources, particularly "oil", at the expense of Iraqi lives "Blood". The underlined semantic meaning of the euphemistic expression indicates the cruel intervention of the West to illegally exploit the resources of Iraq, that is, blood and oil. Therefore, readers create an emphatic mental model about Iraqi people as being victims of Western exploitation, with their suffering and struggles marginalized or overlooked in favor of Western interests. Furthermore, Iraqi people might be constructed as fundamentally different from Westerners, reinforcing an "Us vs. Them" mentality that justifies Western dominance and exploitation. Therefore, this rhetorical device represents Iraqis as powerless and voiceless. It refers to the fact that Iraqi people are subjected to the whims of Western powers who determine their fate and control their resources.

Opium fields spread across Iraq as farmers try to make ends meet

(Source: Independent, Thursday 17 January 2008 01:00 GMT)

The implementation of the euphemistic expression "try to make ends meet" softens the reality of opium cultivation which views it as a legitimate attempt by farmers to survive rather than as a criminal activity. Moreover, it is utilized to reflect the suffering of the farmers in Iraq. The underlined semantic meaning of this expression may indicate the concept when an individual has only enough money to buy the things the individual needs. It is by implication that this euphemistic expression reveals economic desperation, limited access to resources, the breakdown of traditional agricultural systems, and financial hardships among farmers. Because Iraq encountered crucial economic challenges, including high unemployment rates and widespread poverty. Therefore, through this rhetorical device, Iraqi people, in general, are represented as victims of economic hardship and structural inequalities. Furthermore, this representation provokes sympathy in the readers' mental model and highlights the human cost of poverty and instability in Iraq.

Forcing asylum-seekers to return to Iraq is 'inhumane'

(Source: Independent, Wednesday 14 October 2009 00:00 BST)

In the above-mentioned euphemistic expression, "asylum-seekers" is utilized to refer to the individuals' need for safety, viewing them as vulnerable victims rather than as migrants or refugees, which could carry more negative connotations. Moreover, it concentrates on the individual's quest for refuge, revealing their vulnerability and need for protection. This rhetorical device mitigates empathy and moral outrage from

the readers since it aligns with humanitarian concerns. However, it can also obscure the complexities of their situation, such as the reasons for fleeing and the challenges they face. It constructs Iraqi people as vulnerable individuals deserving sympathy and protection while also emphasizing the injustice and inhumanity of deporting them back to a dangerous and unstable environment.

8.5.3 Dramatization

This rhetorical device is shown in the following corpora which concentrate on violence and the effect of the U.S.-led war in constructing the Iraqi image in the readers' mind.

Deadly explosion hits Baghdad school.

(Source: The Guardian, Mon 7 Dec 2009 15.47 GMT)

The macrostructure of the above-mentioned headline presupposes a straightforward account of a tragedy. The implementation of the term "deadly" reinforces the severity of the explosion and its influences on the school community. Moreover, it is situated within the broader social practice of media coverage of violence and instability in Iraq. The utilization of the word "school" highlights the vulnerability of children and educational institutions, which reflects ignorance and violence. This, thus, dramatizes the impact on a community that typically represents hope and future. The headline conveys suddenness and violence, creating a sense of urgency. It implies that the event is both shocking and disruptive, indicating broader implications for safety in public spaces. The overall underlined semantic meaning of the macro-proposition

of the headline employs dramatization to highlight the tragic consequences of violence, engaging the readers emotionally while highlighting the vulnerability of children and the instability of the Iraqi country. Furthermore, it functions as a powerful reminder of the ongoing humanitarian crisis and the urgent need for attention and action. The meaning of the headline represents Iraqi people, particularly the victims of the explosion and the broader community affected by violence, as vulnerable to the consequences of conflict and instability. Therefore, the readers construct a negative and emphatic mental image of Iraqi people, viewing them as victims and ignorance.

Baghdad: behind enemy lines in most dangerous city on earth

(Source: The Guardian, Thu 30 Jul 2009 21.54 BST)

The phrase "behind enemy lines" in the headline under investigation arouses a sense of danger and conflict, indicating a narrative of espionage or military engagement. This dramatic perception reinforces the threat and intrigue surrounding Baghdad. Depicting Baghdad as "the most dangerous city on earth" provokes fear and explicitly reflects the urgency and severity of the situation. Moreover, it constructs a clear conflict scenario, portraying Baghdad as a battleground. It also presupposes a sense of helplessness among civilians and emphasizes the ongoing instability and violence in the region. The dramatic nature of the headline makes the readers engage with the content more deeply, potentially mobilizing interest in the sociopolitical issues at stake and the human experiences behind the headline. The underlined semantic macro-level meaning of the headline suggests dramatization to create a vivid and alarming portrayal of the city, reinforcing themes of danger and conflict. It shapes the public mind by drawing Baghdad as a site of extreme violence and instability in the mental model of the readers. Through this rhetorical device, Iraqi people are constructed as victims of their environment, living in a city characterized by chaos, violence, and danger.

Iraq's universities are in meltdown

(Source: Independent, Thursday 07 December 2006 01:00 GMT)

The above-mentioned headline dramatizes the state of Iraq's universities, creating images of chaos, collapse, and disintegration in the readers' minds. It also views Iraqi universities as experiencing a state of crisis or collapse, suggesting a breakdown in their functioning and infrastructure. Moreover, the headline portrays a catastrophic event rather than a gradual decline in the mental model of the audience. The underlined semantic meaning of the headline reveals that Iraq's education system faced numerous challenges during this time, including security threats, lack of resources, and brain drain due to the conflict. Therefore, the portrayal of Iraqi universities in meltdown reflects that Iraqi people are victims of the broader socio-political conflict in the country.

It reveals the fact that Iraqi people suffer from the collapse of essential institutions which affects their access to education and opportunities for advancement. The headline views education as a crucial element in rebuilding and stabilizing the country. However, this rhetorical device highlights the critical state of the educational system in Iraq. It arouses the audience's feelings and implies the urgent need for intervention and support in the face of systemic failure. The meaning of macrostructure of the news headline under investigation represents Iraqi people as victims of the broader crisis influencing their universities,

reinforcing vulnerability and underdevelopment within the discourse of post-war reconstruction and development.

8.5.4 Metaphor

This rhetorical device is shown in the following UK news headlines which concentrate on certain socio-cultural issues indirectly. Thereby they represent Iraqi image in the readers' mind.

A blind eye on women

(Source: The Guardian, Thu 20 Mar 2008 10.30 GMT)

In the headline above, the metaphorical expression "blind eye" is utilized to refer to a critical assessment of the treatment of women in Iraq, revealing that their plight is being overlooked or ignored. The semantic meaning of this expression indicates a medical problem whereby one loses vision. Therefore, the metaphorical expression "A blind eye on women" implies a deliberate neglect or indifference towards the issues faced by women, highlighting a lack of action or attention. In addition, it reflects a common discursive practice in media reporting on gender issues, where attention is directed to injustices and inequalities faced by women. Through implementing the metaphor "blind eye", the language attempts to provoke a sense of moral outrage or urgency among readers. The overall implied meaning of this figurative use of language represents Iraqi women as victims of neglect or indifference and emphasizes the challenges they face in achieving equality and recognition of their rights.

Reporters face violence as Iraq cracks down on media dissent

(Source: The Guardian, Thu 5 Nov 2009 19.40 GMT)

The metaphorical expression "cracks down" is employed in the above-mentioned headline to refer to an authoritarian and forceful response by Iraqi authorities, emphasizing the suppression of dissent and the disintegration of press freedom. Moreover, the implied meaning of this emotive language arouses strong emotional responses from readers and emphasizes the severity of the situation. This linguistic strategy reveals broader social attitudes toward press freedom, censorship, and the role of media in a democratic society. Thus, it reflects discursive practice in media reporting on press freedom violations and human rights abuses, where attention is drawn to

attacks on journalists and restrictions on media freedoms. The overall meaning of this headline constructs Iraqi journalists as victims of violence and repression.

9. Findings

Through a detailed analysis of the selected UK news headlines, the study arrives at specific

Rhetorical Devices	Frequency	Percentage
Repetition	7	46.66
Euphemism	3	20
Dramatization	3	20
Metaphor	2	13.33
Total	15	100%

findings which are shown in the Table above. The findings are supported with qualitative statistics to minimize the subjectivity of the study. Therefore, this section demonstrates the way the Iraqi image is systematically constructed in the selected UK news headlines by showing the frequency and percentage of the implemented rhetorical devices and their implications.

The table above shows that the percentage of repetition is (46.66%) within the total percentage of rhetorical devices. Repetition appears as the most dominant rhetorical device, which implies that the UK press exploits this discursive strategy to reinforce patriarchal ideology that perpetuates violence against women. Thereby, women's socio-cultural behaviors are associated with societal expectations of honour. Furthermore, repetition is employed to highlight the impact of bribes on Iraqi society. Therefore, it confirms the normalization of corruption in Iraqi society. It is utilized to emphasize the suffering of children in the aftermath of the U.S.-led invasion as well. Euphemism and dramatization come second in percentage, with (20%) for each rhetorical device. Euphemism is implemented to mitigate the negative impact of Western intervention in Iraq, that is, in relation to the exploitation of Iraq's resources. It shows limited access to resources and financial hardships among farmers. Moreover, it softly reveals the injustice and inhumanity of deporting asylum-seekers back to a dangerous and unstable environment. Dramatization is utilized to depict the image of the destruction of essential institutions in Iraq. Therefore, this affects their access to education and opportunities for advancement and development. Finally, metaphor appears last in the percentage with (13.33%) in the total percentage of rhetorical devices. This implies that metaphor is implemented to reveal sensitive social problems indirectly. It is used to reflect discursive practice in media reporting on gender issues; where attention is directed to injustices and inequalities faced by women. Moreover, it expresses discursive practice in media reporting on press freedom, violations, and human rights abuses, where attention is drawn to attacks on journalists and restrictions on media freedom.

10.Results and Discussion

Based on the findings obtained, the results of the study answer the first and second research questions in that various rhetorical devices are indeed implemented to construct the Iraqi image and that these devices have tremendous impact on the perception of Iraqi people in the recipients' mind. Moreover, the results of the study answer the last research question in that the Iraqi image was constructed negatively

in the UK press after the U.S-led invasion. The results of the study show that the elite Iraqi people are depicted as being corrupted, exploited, and human rights violators. Normal Iraqi people are mainly viewed as having been victimized and abused. The implications of the study show that the negative images of Iraqi people are constructed by ignorance of historical, cultural, social, and religious knowledge. Therefore, the present study is significant for the policymakers, professors, teachers, and other influential people in Iraq to contribute to the promotion of Iraq's image in the minds of other people. They must provide the new generations with the historical and cultural achievements of Iraq. The new generations must be aware of Iraq's rich heritage and they should work to improve it. Finally, by applying the above-mentioned instructions in Iraqi communities, the policymakers can help to reshape, reconstruct, and promote a more positive and respectful image of the Iraqi people, not just in the media, but within society at large.

11. Conclusion

Based on the results obtained, the study concludes that the UK press deployed four major rhetorical devices, viz. repetition, euphemism, dramatization, and metaphor. Journalists and reporters exploited these devices to different degrees in constructing a negative Iraqi image in the minds of the recipients. Moreover, the study concludes that the UK press succeeded in constructing this version of Iraqi's image in the recipients' minds and that it influenced their preconceptions, attitudes, and opinions. In addition, the results of the study show that the most frequent rhetorical device is repetition, which is implemented to emphasize socio-economic and socio-political problems in Iraq that evoke different reactions from the audience. As a result, the study concludes that the focus on media texts can present meaning positioning the recipients to create emotional, psychological, or physical responses.

Finally, the current study suggests further studies in language and media studies. The researcher encourages studies to investigate the characteristics of newspaper headlines. Linguistically, the headlines can be studied textually by investigating the linguistic devices, e.g. the choice of words, rhetorical devices, etc. Discursively, the news headlines can be studied to reveal their influence on the readers' ideology, which includes beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, etc. Therefore, the construction of the Iraqi image in the US press and the UK press can be investigated in subsequent studies focusing on certain periods and certain discursive strategies. Moreover, the researcher suggests that language practitioners have a profound investigation into how the headlines can be exploited, either in telling the truth or in manipulating facts for certain agendas imposed by certain institutions.

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