

تحليل خطابي أيديولوجي للتشهير في صحف انجليزية مختارة: دراسة نقدية للخطاب

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الملخص

شهدت الأونة الأخيرة صعوداً مستمراً في ظهور وسائل الإعلام بأشكالها المختلفة، المطبوعة، والمسموعة، والمرئية، مثل الصحف والتلفزيون والراديو، وصولاً إلى الانتشار الواسع للإعلام الرقمي في وقتنا الراهن. وتعد الصحف أحد أبرز هذه الوسائل التي تُستخدم بشكل مكثف كأداة للنيل من سمعة الآخرين، حيث يمثل الخطاب الإعلامي وسيلة فعالة في تشكيل صورة الآخر، سواء كان ذلك بطريقة إيجابية أو سلبية. تسعى هذه الورقة البحثية إلى إجراء تحليل خطابي نقدي (CDA) لمفهوم التشهير في عينة مختارة من الصحف الإنجليزية، حيث تتناول الخصائص النحوية والمعجمية التي توظفها الصحف في ممارسة التشهير، بالإضافة إلى الأيديولوجيات التي توصلها هذه الخصائص. يهدف الباحث من خلال هذا التحليل إلى الكشف عن الأيديولوجيات المخفية المضمنة في مفردات اللغة وبنيتها لتحقيق أهداف الدراسة، اعتمد الباحث نموذجاً انتقائياً يدمج بين نموذج فايركلاف ثلاثي الأبعاد واستراتيجيات فان دايك للخطاب الأيديولوجي. تم تطبيق الدراسة على حالتين مستمدتين من صحيفتين إنجليزيين مختلفتين. وقد استنتج الباحث إلى أن المقالات التي تتضمن تشهيراً تعتمد على استراتيجيات نحوية مثل الكيفية وترتيب الكلمات والتوسيم، واستراتيجيات معجمية مثل الصياغة المعجمية السلبية حيث تحمل كل استراتيجية منها أيديولوجية محددة، مثل: التجريم، الإسلامفوبيا والتمييز.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التشهير، تحليل الخطاب النقدي، الخصائص اللغوية، الأيديولوجيات، الصحف

An Ideological Discursive Analysis of Defamation in Selected English Newspapers

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Abstract

There has been a continuous rise in the emergence of media, including print, audio, and visual forms such as newspapers, television, and radio. One of the forms of media is newspapers, which is used in an extensive way as a tool for damaging the reputation of others. This research conducts a critical discourse analysis of defamation in selected English newspapers. The researcher examines the syntactic and lexical features used in newspapers in conducting the act of defamation, as well as the ideologies embedded in these linguistic features. The researcher aims to discover the hidden ideologies that are embedded in language words and structure by conducting a critical discourse study. To conduct such a study, the researcher adopts an eclectic model consisting of Fairclough's three-dimensional model and van Dijk's ideological discursive strategies. The data are two cases taken from two English newspapers. The researcher concludes that defamatory articles contain syntactic features such as modality, word order and nominalization. Each of these strategies contains a specific ideology, such as criminalization and discrimination.

Keywords: Defamation, Critical Discourse Analysis, Linguistic Features, Ideologies, Newspapers

1. Introduction

This research examines defamation in selected English newspapers from a critical discourse analysis perspective. The researcher attempts to answer the following questions:

1-What are the syntactic and lexical features used by newspapers to construct defamatory articles about others?

2- What are the ideologies embedded in the discourse of defamation?

In accordance with the previous two questions, the study aims to:

1- Identifying the syntactic and lexical features used by newspapers to construct defamatory articles about others.

2- Investigating the ideologies in the discourse of defamation.

In order to conduct the research, the researcher's procedures involve the following steps:

1-Presenting a brief overview of critical discourse analysis, defamation, ideology and newspapers.

2-Adopting an eclectic framework comprises the second and third stages of Fairclough's three-dimensional model and van Dijk's ideological discursive strategies (1998).

3- Analyzing two articles from two British newspapers.

4-Drawing a conclusion based on the analysis.

This study is limited to analyzing two cases selected from two English newspapers by using Fairclough's three-dimensional model and van Dijk's ideological discursive strategies. These two articles are:

a- The case of Galloway vs. The Daily Telegraph

b- The case of Musa vs. The Sunday

The researcher hopes that this study will enhance the linguistic awareness of students and readers by introducing them to the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This study seeks to clarify the role of CDA in exploring discourses, ideologies, and power relations that may be used to impose specific perspectives.

2. Literature Review

2.1 A Brief Overview of Critical Discourse Analysis

Paltridge (2006) suggests that any piece of language is not truly neutral. Every piece of discourse acts as a container for the creator's underlying values and hidden ideologies. Because these ideologies are not obvious to the usual reader, a critical approach must exist. Critical Linguistics and

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CDA aim to bring what is hidden into the light. While standard analysis might identify *what* a text says, CDA acts as a detective, investigating the *how* and *why*. Fairclough(2001) defines CDA as a combination of a theory and a method of doing a critical study of language. In CDA, the word *critique* is significant. According to Wodak and Meyer(2009), the word critique means that no social phenomenon should be taken as an absolute truth (taken for granted), rather, it is subject to interpretation and analysis.

Moreover, one of the main concepts of CDA is discourse. Pioneers like Fairclough(1989) define discourse as a form of social practice. This implies that language is both a part of society and a socially conditioned process where text production and interpretation are influenced by external structures. Fairclough (1995) defines language as a material form of ideology, which means that people's perception of reality is constructed through discourse. For instance, a flood is a physical reality, but whether it is interpreted as divine wrath or climate change depends entirely on the discursive framework applied to it.

2.2 Defamation

Defamation is understood as a violation of an individual's dignity and social standing. According to Igaab and Algburi (2021), defamation is classified as a crime against the sacredness of a person, targeting their honor, feelings, and social status. From a legal view, Duffy (1983) characterizes it as a tort, a civil wrong, centered on the transmission of false information that results in reputational harm. Garner (2016) describes the act of defamation as a direct assault on the public image of another individual.

Moreover, defamation is classified into two categories based on the medium of delivery (Shuy, 2010). The first one is called libel, which encompasses defamatory content in a fixed or written state, such as that found in books, newspapers, magazines, and digital correspondence. On the other hand, the second one is called slander, which refers to transitory, oral defamation, typically occurring in verbal contexts like public addresses, interviews, or religious sermons(ibid).

2.3 Newspapers

Newspapers, as defined by Danesi (2009), are print publications which provide people with news, features and information. The content of these newspapers is controlled by governments and powerful entities. That's why their content is used as a means of imposing the ideologies of the ruling class. The same fact is expressed by Reah (1998), who clarifies that it is rare for a publication to operate independently of its owner's influence. As a result of this domination, the public receive a curated version of the world rather than an objective reflection of reality. That's why, it is difficult for readers to create independent opinions and perceptions about the world(ibid).

2.4 Ideologies

In Critical Discourse Analysis, the concept of ideology vary across different scholarly perspectives. For example, van Dijk (2013) defines ideology as a system of beliefs and ideas shared by a specific

social group. This definition is supported by Wodak (2013), who defines ideologies as an organized set of beliefs, convictions and values.

Moreover, a different perspective is expressed by Fairclough(2003) who defines ideologies as specific representations of reality designed to shape and uphold hierarchies of power and social hegemony. Consequently, the analysis of discourse becomes a tool of analyzing the social reality because most communicative acts are fundamentally ideological. In this definition, Fairclough(2003) emphasizes the role of ideology in social structures.

3. Methodology

This section provides an overview of Fairclough's-three-dimensional model(1989) and the ideological discursive strategies of van Dijk(1998).

3.1 Fairclough Three-Dimensional Approach

CDA is defined by Fairclough (2001) as a combination of theory and method. It is a theory, since CDA offers a broad theoretical overview and definitions of many concepts in discourse analysis. For example, CDA provides a definition of language and a way to analyze it. Any student of linguistics mastering CDA is required to move beyond the mere description of text and embrace the broader conceptual framework that explains the relationship between language, power, and society.

Moreover, Fairclough's (1989) framework for the critical study of language is structured around three interconnected dimensions. These dimensions are:

A- Textual Description

The first stage focuses on the formal features of discourse. Fairclough(1989) clarifies that Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is the foundation of this stage. The researcher studies and examines vocabulary, grammar, and cohesive structures. However, in this study, the first stage is replaced by the ideological discursive strategies of van Dijk.

B- Interpretation (Discursive Practice)

After dealing with text description, the analysis of discourse must broaden to include the surrounding circumstances, conditions and environmental factors which shape the process of text description and interpretation because it is nearly impossible for any researcher to know the ideologies and power relations solely from the pure linguistic features. Such fact generates the second stage of analysis which is called interpretation (Fairclough,2015).

According to Fairclough (1989) interpretation is created through the process of combining the features of the text with the member resources (MR) of the interpreter since these features work as causes that activate the shared common sense of the listeners or readers. For example, the commands by a police officer upon his soldiers are taken as something normal, while the same commands in another situation, such as a casual conversation, are taken as impolite behavior. To bridge the gap between the text and its broader environment, researchers use situational context

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analysis, which considers participants, physical objects, and cultural norms (Lyons, 1981). Fairclough (2015) identifies four key dimensions of situational analysis:

1. What is Going On?

This dimension includes the nature of the event through three points:

- **Activity:** Identifying the specific social event (e.g., a police interrogation).
- **Topic:** Defining the core theme of the interaction (e.g., describing a suspect).
- **Purpose:** Establishing the ultimate objective (e.g., gathering criminal evidence).

2. Who is Involved?

This stage identifies the subject positions available within the discourse, the slots or roles that individuals occupy (Fairclough, 1989). Since discourse socially constructs our identities, participants are the creators and the producers of the language they use (ibid).

3. In What Relation?

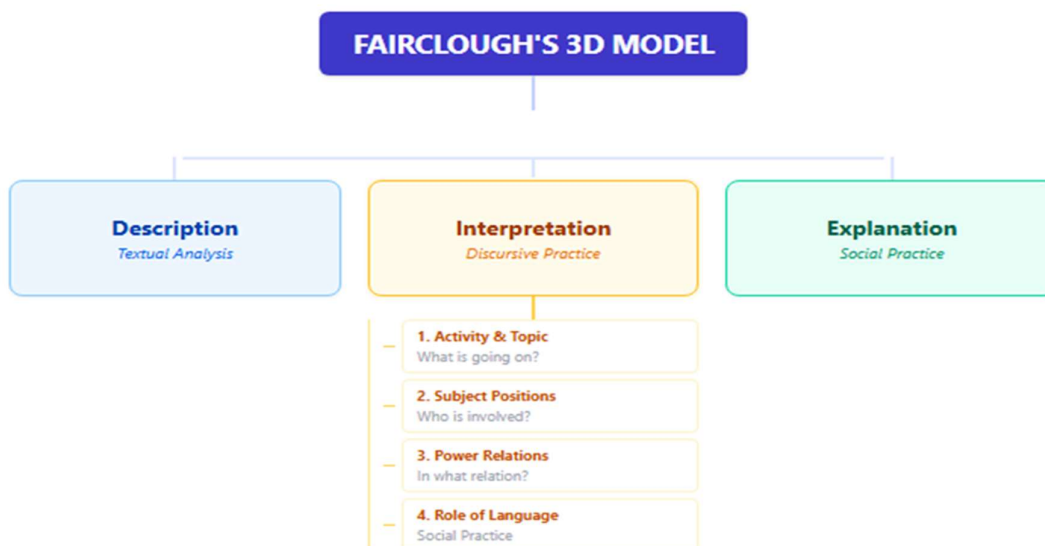
It seems that this question and the previous one are the same. However, the fact is that they are different. According to Fairclough (2015), in this stage, the analyst must search for the power relations or the social distance between the participants. For example, in a police investigation, the police officer is the controller and the one who is only allowed to ask, which means he has the power over the other party in the conversation.

4. What is the Role of Language?

In critical discourse analysis, language is used in a broader sense. According to Fairclough (1989), language is a form of social practice, which means that the linguistic phenomenon is a social one since language is a part of society and plays a significant role in shaping identities and ideological common sense. For example, language especially, media discourse has the power of shaping either a negative or positive identity of someone.

C-Explanation (Social Practice)

This is the final stage of Fairclough's Three-Dimensional model. This stage includes three levels of analysis, the first level examines the immediate context or the surrounding factors that shape discourse. The second one is the Institutional Level, which focuses on the organizational or broader context. The final stage focuses on macro-sociological factors such as the dominant economic system (e.g., capitalism) or major social conflicts (e.g., class struggle) (Fairclough, 1989).



Figure(1) Fairclough's-Three Dimensional Modal

3.2 van Dijk Ideological Discursive Strategies(1998)

CDA, as defined by van Dijk(2009), is a diverse collection of perspectives and critical positions within the field of discourse studies rather than a single method. According to van Dijk (2008), a critical analysis requires researchers to operate across two interconnected stages:

- a- The micro level, which focuses on the features of language and verbal interaction.
- b- The macro level, which combines broader structures of social power and systemic domination. This approach is integrated into a tripartite model consisting of text, cognition, and society.

Under this framework, van Dijk (2009) views discourse as a multifaceted social phenomenon that functions as a linguistic object, an intentional action, a mode of social interaction, and an established social practice. Within this complex dynamic, the text serves as the fundamental point of entry for exercising social control and influencing the perspectives of others.

Consequently, the process of analyzing discourse doesn't depend on one dimension or aspect. According to van Dijk(1998), each level or dimension has its own technique of conveying ideologies. That's why van Dijk(1998) develops several textual strategies which work on all levels of text. These strategies reveal how the text's producer uses language to emphasize our good things and their bad things. In other words, the emphasis of us vs. them. In this analysis , two of van Dijk's strategies are used. These strategies, as stated by van Dijk(1998), are:

1-Syntactic Strategies

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Syntactic strategies refer to the structural arrangement of a text and how these grammatical choices influence the reader's ideological perception by assigning or obscuring responsibility.

A. Modality: A linguistic category expressing the speaker's degree of commitment to the necessity or possibility of a proposition. Two types of modality are examined in this analysis:

- **Epistemic modality** evaluates the likelihood of a statement based on available evidence (e.g., She must be home).
- **Deontic modality** relates to social requirements, obligations, and permissions (e.g., You must follow the law).

B. Word Order: The sequential arrangement of constituents used to emphasize or marginalize specific actors and their actions. By placing a negative action directly after an actor, the agent is highlighted as the primary source of a shameful act.

C. Nominalization: A grammatical process that transforms a verb or an entire clause into a noun phrase, often to obscure agency. For instance, replacing *Soldiers killed civilians* with *The loss of life* removes the perpetrator from the focus of the sentence.

2-Lexical Strategies

Lexical strategies involve the intentional selection of specific vocabulary to frame arguments and trigger emotional or ideological responses in the audience.

A. Negative Lexicalization: The use of value-laden terminology to characterize individuals or groups based on the writer's ideological bias. A single individual may be labelled a freedom fighter or a terrorist, depending on the sociocultural context of the discourse.

B. Derogatory Words: Slurs or insulting terms targeting specific identities, such as race, nationality, or gender, to diminish the target's reputation. These are often used in media to portray out-groups as inferior or backward.

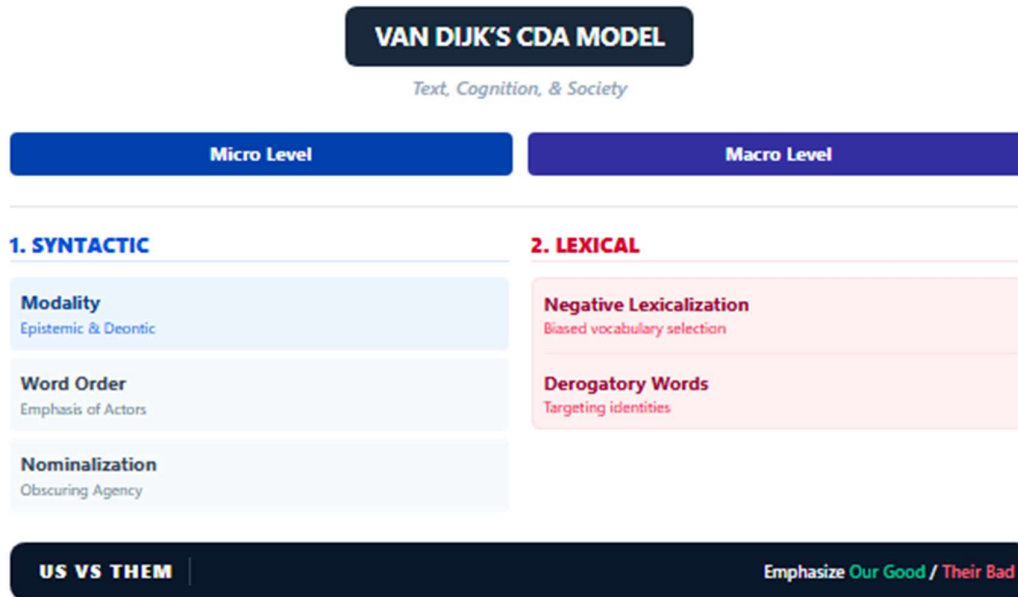


Figure (2) van Dijk's Model of Analysis

4. Data Collection and Data Analysis

This section applies the model of analysis to the selected data.

4.1 Data Collection

The data are two cases selected from the British and Irish Legal Information Institute (BAILII). The first case is the case of Mr. Galloway against The Daily Telegraph. The second one is an article published by The Sunday against Mr. Adam Musa.

4.2 Data Analysis

4.2.1 Case 1: Galloway vs. The Daily Telegraph

This analysis focuses on the defamation case brought by Mr. George Galloway, a Member of Parliament for the Labour Party, against *The Daily Telegraph*. The lawsuit follows the publication of eight accusatory articles in April 2003, though this study specifically examines the first and fourth articles from April 22 due to their highly defamatory nature and their timing just one month after the invasion of Iraq (*Galloway MP v. The Telegraph Group Ltd*, 2006).

The Text

The first article was on the front page of the newspaper under the headline "Galloway was in Saddam's pay, say secret Iraqi documents". The article contains several paragraphs which are considered harmful to the reputation of Mr. Galloway, these paragraphs are:

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"**GEORGE GALLOWAY**, the Labour backbencher, received money from Saddam Hussein's regime, taking a slice of oil earnings worth at least £375,000 a year, according to Iraqi intelligence documents found by The Daily Telegraph in Baghdad.

A confidential memorandum sent to Saddam by his spy chief said that Mr. **Galloway** asked an agent of the Mukhabarat secret service for a greater cut of Iraq's exports under the oil for food programme.

He also said that Mr. **Galloway** was profiting from food contracts and sought 'exceptional' business deals.

The fourth article is headed by "Saddam's little helper". The judge of the case identifies three paragraphs as the most defamatory :

- "It doesn't get much worse than this. **George Galloway** is Britain's most active and visible peace campaigner. The Labour MP for Glasgow Kelvin did not just oppose the recent campaign against Saddam Hussein; he lobbied equally aggressively against the first Gulf war, and - during the years in between – for an end to sanctions. Yesterday, The Daily Telegraph's correspondent in Baghdad, David Blair, unearthed papers detailing alleged payments from Saddam's intelligence service to Mr. **Galloway** through a Jordanian intermediary".
- "There is a word for taking money from enemy regimes: treason. What makes this allegation especially worrying, however, is that the documents suggest that the money has been coming out of Iraq's oil-for-food programme. In other words, the alleged payments did not come from some personal bank account of Saddam's, but out of the revenue intended to pay for food and medicines for Iraqi civilians: the very people whom Mr. **Galloway** has been so fond of invoking".
- "Speaking from abroad yesterday, Mr. **Galloway** was reduced to suggesting that the whole thing was a Daily Telegraph forgery, but the files could hardly be more specific. One memo comments: 'His projects and plans for the benefit of the country need financial support to become a motive for him to do more work, and because of the sensitivity of getting money directly from Iraq it is necessary to grant him oil contracts and special commercial opportunities to provide him with a financial income under commercial cover without being connected to him directly'".
- "It is hard to think of a graver setback to the British anti-war movement. How would you feel if you were one of the many well-meaning peace protesters which had followed Mr. Galloway's lead? What would your emotions be if you had given money to his Mariam Appeal, thinking that you were paying to treat a young Iraqi girl for leukaemia and wondering now how your money had been used? For months, anti-war campaigners have been imputing the basest of motives to their adversaries. The whole campaign, they argued, was really about money and oil".

A- Discursive Strategies

1- Syntactic Strategies

- Modality

Within the framework of CDA, modality is a significant concept that identifies the linguistic markers used by speakers or writers to convey their stance or level of commitment to a proposition. In this case, there is a deliberate absence of the use of modality. For example, in the sentences:

·"GEORGE GALLOWAY... **received** money..."

- "...Mr. Galloway **asked** an agent..."
- "...Mr. Galloway **was profiting**..."
- "...and **sought** 'exceptional' business deals."

The writer systematically excludes epistemic modals (such as *may*, *might*, or *could*) that would otherwise signal possibility.

Table(1) An Analysis of Modality in Galloway vs. The Daily Telegraph Case

NO	Sentence / Clause	Modality Strategy	Ideological Analysis
1-	"It doesn't get much worse than this."	Absence of modality, use of a declarative sentence in a tone of high certainty.	Presented as an absolute fact, not a personal opinion.
2-	"He lobbied..."	Absence of modality, use of the simple past tense to document the action.	Presented as a finished fact, not an allegation or possibility.
3-	"David Blair... unearthed papers..."	Absence of modality, use of the simple past tense to document the action.	Presented as a finished past action, not an allegation or possibility.
4-	"There is a word for... treason."	Absence of modality, use of "There is" to assert the definite existence of the definition.	Presented as a definitive moral definition, not an interpretation or point of view.
5-	"...the alleged payments did not come from... but out of the revenue intended to pay for food..."	Absence of modality (like <i>may not have</i>), use of the firm negation "did not" to present this as an investigated fact.	The source of the money is stated as a fact rather than as a possibility (e.g., <i>may not have come from...</i>).

· Word Order

Within the framework of syntactic strategies, word order and sentence structure are strategically manipulated to foreground Mr. Galloway as the primary agent of the illicit act.

- Structure [Actor] + [Negative Action]: The articles frequently place Mr. Galloway at the beginning of the sentence to directly link his identity with negative conduct. For example, in sentences such as "...received money from Saddam Hussein's regime" or "...asked an agent [for a greater cut]," this word order depicts him as the mainactor of corruption. This arrangement serves to solidify a narrative of guilt in the reader's mind.

- Structure [Object] + [Passive Verb]: The use of the passive voice in the sentence "...Mr. Galloway was reduced to suggesting that..." serves a specific ideological function. By using the phrase "was reduced" and deleting the agent, the writer depicts Mr. Galloway as weak and pathetic. This syntactic choice frames his claim not as a strong defense, but as a desperate, passive reaction to the weight of the evidence against him.

• Nominalization

The write uses nominalization to harm the reputation of Mr. Galloway. This type of syntactic processes is noticed several sentences. First, in the sentence "...*detailing alleged payments...*" ,there is a use of nominalization, "*Payments*" is a nominalization of the verb to pay . By choosing the noun "*payments*", the writer shifts focus from the *action* of paying (which involves a payer and receiver) to the *existence* of the money. This transforms *payments* into static, tangible items of evidence that the documents are said to contain.

Second, in the sentence "...*what makes this allegation especially worrying...*" . By saying "*the allegation*", the writer distances himself from the *act* of alleging , such sentence frames the article's claim not as a subjective opinion or a sourced fact, but rather as an objective, general truth.

2- Lexical Strategies

• Negative Lexicalization

Mr. Galloway's reputation is harmed in the first article by framing him as an individual who exploited humanitarian food contracts for personal needs. This is achieved through the use of the word "profiting" in the assertion that "Mr. Galloway was profiting from food contracts and sought exceptional business deals. As defined by Cambridge University Press(n.d), profit refers to the financial gain earned in trade after all costs of production and sales are settled. By selecting this specific term, the writer depicts Mr. Galloway as a greedy figure who prioritized his own financial interests over the survival of a besieged and starving population, thereby creating a stark ideological conflict with his professional duty as a Member of Parliament representing the British people.

Moreover, the writer increases this linguistic assault by moving beyond accusations of financial exploitation to suggest that Mr. Galloway's alleged actions constitute an act of state betrayal. This is clearly seen in the definitive statement, "There is a word for taking money from enemy regimes: treason." According to Black's Law Dictionary(1968), treason is defined as the offence of attempting to overthrow one's government or betraying the state into the hands of a foreign power. By using this heavy lexical item, the writer conveys to the reader that Mr. Galloway was not merely a corrupt official, but a complicit collaborator with Saddam Hussein's regime who actively worked against the interests of Western governments.

Table(2) An Analysis of Negative Lexical Choices in Galloway vs. The Daily Telegraph Case

NO	Negative Lexical Item	Ideological Functions
1-	Profiting	Demoralization: Depicting Mr. Galloway as an opportunistic figure who exploits the humanitarian tragedy in Iraq to serve his narrow financial interests
2-	Treason	Criminalization :Raising the allegation to the level of a high crime against the security of the state.

B-Interpretation Stage

• Situational Context

• What Is Going On

In this section, the researcher analyzes the political defamation case between Member of Parliament George Galloway and *The Daily Telegraph*. Mr. Galloway raised his case in the High Court of Justice, Queen's Bench Division, in response to defamatory articles published by the newspaper on 22 and 23 April 2003.

The reason for this case is the publication of two articles, which carry accusations of betrayal and corruption by a prominent British politician. The articles allege that George Galloway, while serving as an MP, was a secret employee of Saddam Hussein's regime, claiming he received payments of at least £375,000 a year.

Moreover, the goal of the articles is to inform the public about the loyalty and corruption of an elected official based on "*secret Iraqi documents*". However, the ideological purpose is to delegitimize a prominent anti-war voice and damage the reputation of the anti-war movement he represented by deliberately identifying Mr. Galloway as "*Britain's most active and visible peace campaigner*", not to praise him, but to define the scale of the strategic target. By branding him as a traitor and a hypocrite (alleging he stole from the Iraqi people he claimed to help), *The Telegraph* aims to destroy his personal credibility and, by extension, strike at the credibility of the anti-war movement he leads.

•Who Is Involved

In this section, the researcher identifies the parties involved in the defamation case, beginning with the claimant, Mr. George Galloway. Born into poverty in Dundee, Scotland. Galloway's political journey began in 1954 and was marked by significant activism, such as his 1980 participation in raising the Palestinian flag at the Dundee Council offices. By 1983, he had expanded his influence as the general secretary of the charity War on Want (Rhoden-Paul & Wells, 2024). During the 2003 conflict, while serving as a member of the Labour Party, Galloway rejected the invasion of Iraq and became an uncompromising opponent of the Iraq War. His controversial assertion that British troops should disobey commands because they originated from an illegal invasion led to his

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expulsion from the party by the Prime Minister at that time, Tony Blair (Soussi, 2024). Moreover, Galloway's political identity is further defined by his commitment to the Palestinian and Arab cases.

Conversely, the other party in this case is *The Daily Telegraph*, the United Kingdom's second most popular newspaper. Frequently nicknamed the Torygraph because of its strong alignment with the Conservative Party (The Daily Telegraph, 2025)

· In What Relation

In this section, the researcher examines the power relations and struggles between the participants, noting that they occupy unequal positions. *The Daily Telegraph* acts as the dominant party. It controls both the production of discourse and its mass distribution. Throughout the two articles, the newspaper occupies the role of an investigator or judge rather than engaging in a balanced debate. Several accusations are evident in its use of assertive speech acts, such as the claim that "Galloway was in Saddam's pay," and directive speech acts, exemplified by the demand for "questions Galloway must answer."

Furthermore, the article creates social distance by framing a divide between the in-group, presented by the newspaper, the British public, and the troops on one hand and Mr. Galloway as the out-group on the other hand. By labelling him "Saddam's little helper" and levelling accusations of "treason," the newspaper isolates him from the in-group.

· What Is the Role of Language

Drawing on Fairclough's (2015) framework of language as a social practice, the *Galloway v. Telegraph* case illustrates how media discourse functions as an ideological weapon rather than a neutral reporting tool. By characterizing George Galloway as "Saddam's little helper" and a "traitor," the *Telegraph* actively constructs a negative identity for him, framing him as a corrupt subordinate and an enemy of the West. This narrative was reinforced through assertive framing and dismissive language, such as labelling his defense as "bluster", to manipulate the reader's "common sense" into accepting his guilt and rejecting his anti-war stance. Ultimately, the articles performed a trial-by-media, where the strategic use of assertive and expressive speech acts did not merely describe a scandal but actively manufactured one, transforming language into a primary instrument of public condemnation.

C-Explanation Stage

After the interpretation stage, the researcher conducts a broad-level analysis, which covers three stages: the social determination of power relations, the underlying ideologies, and the social impact of discourse on political struggle. The discourse in this case is shaped by *The Daily Telegraph*, its institutional affiliation with the Conservative Party provides a clear motive for targeting Mr. Galloway, a Labour Member of Parliament.

According to Turner and Doyle (2023), the vast majority of Conservative members voted in favor of the Iraq War. As a prominent anti-war voice, Galloway became a natural target for pro-war media

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outlets. Moreover, Galloway's support for the Palestinian cause and his rejection of the Israeli government further made him a target of the Conservative media. This tension is rooted in a history of cooperation between the Conservative Party and Israel, exemplified by Margaret Thatcher's pro-Israel leadership and more recent evidence of deep ties (Kennard & Curtis, 2025).

At the societal level, the discourse of this case is shaped by a dominant international ideology. The ideology of war. Reports of a 2002 memo from Colin Powell to George W. Bush suggest that Prime Minister Tony Blair had committed to military action a year before the invasion of Iraq (Dearden, 2015). This early commitment created a political environment that did not accept anti-war movement. Consequently, the attack on Galloway functioned as part of an attack designed to delegitimize internal opposition and solidify the ideology of necessity required to wage war.

4.2.2 Case 2: Musa vs. The Sunday

This section examines the defamation case of Mr. Adam Musa against *The Sunday Telegraph*. This case shows how media functions as a tool of marginalization against Muslim minorities in post-2001 Britain. Following the rise of extremist Islamic terrorism discourse, The Sunday published two articles in 2002, the second one explicitly linked Musa to Osama bin Laden and FBI terror probes. While the first article omitted his name, the High Court of Justice ruled the second article defamatory, acknowledging the severe reputational harm caused by such accusations and awarding Musa financial compensation. This case serves as a critical example of how media entities can use labels such as terrorist to harm individuals due to their religious affiliations (*King v. Telegraph Group Ltd*, 2004).

The Text

" *The FBI wants to question a white British Muslim computer expert, who lobbies for the Libyan government, about his alleged links to Osama bin Laden's terror network. Louis Szondy, who also calls himself Adam Moussa, is on the list of 24 people sent to the British police by the FBI. He is the second white Briton to appear on the list.... Mr. Szondy, who is married and has an address in Harlesden, North London, runs a computer firm called Unitel which has offices in Burton-on-Trent and the Sudan. He also supports Colonel Gaddafi and the Libyan regime. Two years ago he changed his name by deed poll to Adam Moussa, apparently calling himself after a senior figure within the Libyan intelligence service. The Special Branch has established that Mr. Szondy developed a website for Sakina Security, the London-based organization which is suspected of providing military training for young Muslims. The website includes enhanced security features which allow Sakina to keep some of its activities secret.... Mr. Szondy has close links with Sakina Security and allegedly still holds the registration of the internet domain name Sakinasecurity.com. Through the website, Sakina offered what it described as 'the Ultimate Jihad challenge' – a two-week course in shooting and 'bone breaking'....An official said, 'Mr. Szondy has been allowing Sakina to use his facilities here. That has been going on for some time. It is only recently that we have been told Adam Moussa and he are one and the same'. Patricia Szondy, Mr. Szondy's mother, confirmed last night that her son had changed his name by deed poll and set up the Sakina website. She added that police had now*

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seized his computers. She insisted,....The police have taken things from his home including a computer. They haven't given us a full list of things taken.' Mr. Szondy also (sic) the owner of Mathaba, an internet site for **Islamic extremists**. According to documents on Mr. Szondy's own website, he is a self-proclaimed 'white Muslim' and **a supporter** of Colonel Gaddafi. **He distributes copies of the Libyan leader's 'Green Book', which advocates the overthrow of Western democracy.** Special branch officers are probing his work for a fanatically pro-Libyan organization called Green Charter International. The London-based organization, which has its own internet site, campaigns for the establishment of Libyan-style regimes throughout the world. The organization says: 'Human rights cannot be guaranteed in a world where there exist governors and governed, masters and slaves, rich and poor.' M15 and the Metropolitan Police's Special Branch were looking into Mr. Szondy even before September 11, because he had posted classified documents on his website. They were copies of M15 files obtained by David Shayler, the former agent. A spokesman for the Jewish Community Security Trust, said: 'We have believed for sometimes (sic) that Adam Moussa and Louis Szondy are one and the same person'. No one at Unitel was available for comment".

A-Discursive Strategies

1-Syntactic Strategies

• Modality

The researcher examines the writer's strategic use of modality, noting a calculated shift between high certainty, low certainty, and the complete absence of modal markers. For instance, in the phrase "alleged links to Osama bin Laden's terror network," the use of "alleged" provides the newspaper with a layer of legal protection, as it avoids the burden of proving the claim's absolute truth. Moreover, the writer uses high-certainty markers to ensure the audience perceives the situation as a credible threat. For example, "The FBI wants to question..." and "on the list of 24 people".

Furthermore, the researcher highlights the total omission of modality in certain descriptions, such as the statement that "Mr. Szondy also (sic) the owner of Mathaba." By avoiding modal verbs or qualifiers, the writer presents these assertions as absolute realities or truths rather than mere suspicions or opinions. This linguistic technique masks the subjective nature of the reporting, leading the reader to accept the newspaper's narrative as an authoritative account of the truth.

Table(3) An Analysis of Modality and Its Ideological Functions

No	Sentence / Clause	Modality Strategy	Ideological Function
1-	"The FBI wants to question a white British Muslim..."	High Epistemic Modality Certainty	Framing Mr. Musa as a target of state security
2-	"...about his alleged links to Osama bin Laden's terror network."	Low Modality (Doubt/Hedge)	Enables defamation by repeating the charge, avoiding the burden of proof
3-	"Louis Szondy... is on the list of 24 people..."	Zero Modality	Framing Mr. Musa's status as a criminal suspect.
4-	"Mr. Szondy... the owner of Mathaba, an internet site for Islamic extremists."	Zero Modality	Criminalizes Mr. Musa identity by using the word "extremist "

•Word Order

Word order is used to foreground suspicion and associate Mr. Musa's identity with extremist activities. By opening with "The FBI wants to question...", the writer places a powerful institutional agent at the thematic start of the sentence, which frames discourse around criminal investigation rather than neutral reporting. Throughout the text, the [Actor] + [Negative Action] structure is repeatedly used, such as in "He also supports Colonel Gaddafi" or "Mr. Szondy has close links with...", to directly attach the subject's name to controversial regimes and security threats. Furthermore, by placing his name change in immediate syntactic proximity to his presence on an FBI list, the writer creates a causal link that suggests adopting an Islamic name is a deceptive act inherently tied to terrorism.

2- Lexical Strategies

• Negative Lexicalization

In this case, the writer uses several negative words. These words are not inherently negative, but they gain their negativity from their association with other words. For example, the word "lobby", which refers to a group of individuals, businesses, trade unions and charities which try to get a government to change its policies, in other words, it means political persuasion (Chen,2024). The above allegation is repeated with greater confidence by saying, "He also supports Colonel Gaddafi and the Libyan regime". The word "support" in a political context refers to providing aid to political parties, candidates, networks, or influencers, either financially or through other means (Law Insider, n.d.).

Moreover, Mr. Musa is accused of having links and associations with extremist groups. This accusation is obvious in the sentence " Mr. Szondy has close links with Sakina Security and ... ". The same accusation is repeated in the sentence " " Mr. Szondy also (sic) the owner of Mathaba, an internet site for Islamic extremists ". The word " Islamic extremist" is a movement that divides society into an *us versus them* framework, where the *us* refers to those considered true Muslims

who are expected to create and live under an Islamic state, while *them* includes non-Muslims and Muslims labeled as wrong, who are dehumanized for rejecting what is portrayed as true Islam (Wilkinson & Quraishi, 2023). Portraying Mr. Musa as an Islamic extremist, especially after his conversion from Christianity to Islam, causes severe damage to his reputation and leads him to be rejected by society.

Table (4) An Analysis of Lexical Choices and Ideological Functions in Mr. Musa vs. The Sunday

No	Negative Lexical Item	Ideological Function
1-	Lobby	Association with Dictatorship
2-	Supports	Implication of Corruption
3-	Close links	Guilt by Association
4-	Islamic extremists	Terrorism

B- Interpretation Stage

1- Situational Context

• What Is Going On

In this section, the researcher examines the defamation case raised by Mr. Adam Musa against the Telegraph Group and its Sunday edition. The case is raised because of two articles published on 21 October and 9 December 2002. These articles cause Mr. Musa of several accusations. The claim was filed in the High Court of Justice, Queen's Bench Division, on 9 June 2003. While the articles are framed as reports on an FBI investigation into a suspect, their underlying theme is a direct accusation of links between Mr. Musa and Osama bin Laden, carrying clear overtones of terrorism and collaboration with foreign entities.

Moreover, the writer attempts to characterize Mr. Musa as a terrorist linked to bin Laden's network, a strategy evidenced by the statement that the FBI sought to question a "white British Muslim computer expert" regarding these alleged connections. Furthermore, the discourse of this case seeks to frame Mr. Musa as an agent for foreign dictatorships intent on subverting Western authority. This is illustrated by the claim that he distributes the Libyan leader's "Green Book," a publication the article asserts "advocates the overthrow of Western democracy."

•Who Is Involved

In this stage, the researcher attempts to identify the parties involved in this case, beginning with the claimant, Mr. Adam Musa. A British-Australian Muslim who is known as Louis István Szondy, Musa converted from Christianity to Islam in 1991, a detail noted in the second of the two *Telegraph* articles. As a computer expert and web developer, he established several platforms, including the website Mathaba. In the context of this case, he was accused of using these digital platforms to create and reinforce terrorist ideologies as well as to subvert Western political structures and governments (King v. Telegraph Group Ltd, 2004).

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The defendant is The Telegraph, a prominent British publication under the Telegraph Media Group (TMG). Since 2004, the group has been owned by Sir David and Sir Frederick Barclay. The newspaper is recognized for its firm right-wing editorial stance and its consistent support for the Conservative Party. This political alignment was clearly demonstrated during the 2017 general election, when the publication endorsed then-Prime Minister Theresa May and actively encouraged its readership to vote for the Conservative leadership (ibid).

• In What Relation

According to Fairclough (1989), *The Telegraph* exercises a one-sided power dynamic over its audience by acting as an ideological gatekeeper that dictates the content, timing, and framing of information. This asymmetric relationship prevents the audience from challenging or discussing the narrative, leading to a form of subconscious conditioning that quietly shapes their worldviews and decision-making processes over time. By operationalizing the idea that "much of our common sense is ideological," Fairclough (1989) suggests that the media has the power to construct the very reality the public perceives, thereby creating a profound inequality where the institution's chosen ideologies are eventually internalized as natural, unquestioned truths.

•What Is the Role of Language

Language is used to construct two distinct extremist identities for Mr. Adam Musa. The first is an extremist political identity, established through specific lexical choices that frame his associations. For example, the term "lobby" is used to suggest that Mr. Musa belongs to a coordinated group working on behalf of the Libyan government to influence or subvert Western political systems. This political branding is reinforced by labelling him a "supporter of Colonel Gaddafi" and claiming he distributes the "Green Book," a text described by the newspaper as a manual for the "overthrow of Western democracy."

The second identity created for Mr. Musa is that of a religious extremist. This is achieved by emphasizing his status as a "Muslim" and linking his faith to violent, weapon-related activities.

C-Explanation Stage

The British newspaper *The Telegraph* adopts a Conservative, right-wing discourse. A survey conducted by Opinium on 521 Conservative Party members revealed a high level of hostility, with 58% of them declaring that Islam poses a threat to the country (Syal, 2024). This ideology is shown in discourses that aim to criminalise identities considered divergent from the Conservative Party's adopted narrative, such as the discourse surrounding Mr. Musa's case. At the societal level, the text shows a deep impact from the global context following the 2001 events, where the concept of *radical Islamic terrorism* was used as a mechanism to abuse Muslims and justify discrimination against them without concrete evidences. According to a study conducted on 222 British Muslims by Sheridan (2006), 82.6% of Muslims in the UK were exposed to implicit (indirect) discrimination, while 76.3% were exposed to overt (direct) discrimination after the events of 11 September. On the ideological level, the discourse of this case attempts to create the identity of extremist Muslims, this

ideology can be seen through systematic repetition of terms such as "Muslim" and "Islamic" in negative news contexts.

5. Conclusion

This section tackles the conclusions that are drawn from the analysis of the selected data to answer the questions of the study.

1) There are a number of syntactic features used in the defamatory articles published by English newspapers. These syntactic features are divided into modality, word order and nominalization. The newspapers use specific syntactic strategies, such as the deliberate omission of modality and the use of nominalization to transform subjective accusations into objective facts. Another type of strategy noticed in the text is lexical features, which are divided into negative lexicalization and derogatory words. Through negative lexicalization, the articles did not just report news, they manufactured identities. Galloway was framed as a "traitor" and a "corrupt agent," while Musa was branded as a "religious extremist" and a "foreign operative." These labels served to isolate the individuals from the national in-group.

In the two articles, there is an extensive use of modality and word order strategy. Nominalization is used in one article. There is a use of negative lexicalization in the two articles and a total absence of derogatory word strategy. This means that newspapers often employ implicit defamation rather than direct one.

2) In both cases, the dominant ideology is the Us vs. Them binary, where the media aligns itself with the state (the In-group) while casting the subjects as the Other (the Out-group). The ideologies of criminalization and the exclusion of others. These ideologies are obvious in the case of Mr. Galloway. Moreover, the ideology of Islamophobia is presented in the case of Mr. Musa.

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