

## Discriminatory and Racist Discourse in American TV Channels: The Image of Arab Immigrants

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### Abstract

The present study examines critically the discursive representation of Arab immigrants in selected American news channels. To achieve the aim of this study, twenty news subtitles have been exacted from ABC and NBC channels. The selected news subtitles have been analyzed within van Dijk's (2000) critical discourse analysis framework. Ten discourse categories have been examined to uncover the image of Arab immigrants in the American news channels. The image of Arab immigrants has been examined in terms of five ideological assumptions including "us vs. them", "ingroup vs. outgroup", "victims vs. agents", "positive self-presentation vs. negative other-presentation", and "threat vs. non-threat". Analysis of data reveals that Arab immigrants are portrayed negatively in the American channels under investigation and the televised discourse is greatly loaded with racist ideologies and perceptions towards Arab immigrants reflecting the standpoint of their owners. Finally, a number of conclusions and implications are presented.

**Keywords:** Arab immigrants, CDA, racist ideology and American news channels.

### 1. Introduction

Since the terrorist attacks of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 in the United States of America and the consecutive attacks after that date in different European countries, immigration to Europe and other world's parts have been viewed through a security prism. Immigration "is perceived by many as a threat to the identity, safety, economic development and, ultimately, the quality of life of citizens, who have been alarmed by the recent arrival of third-country nationals in the European area or other areas" (Karyotis and Patrikios, 2010, p. 34).

The discourse of immigration news media is loaded with discriminatory and racist ideologies. The analysis of media discourse reports discriminatory practices and racist ideologies towards immigrants in producing the news stories. Van Dijk (2000) confirms the role of discourse as a social practice in the reproduction of everyday racism, and as a means of acquisition and reproduction of racist representations. He suggests a close connection between racism and immigration discourse in that dominant group members engage in outgroup derogation while interacting with the members of minority groups such as immigrants. In this way, intra-group discourse about new immigrants may represent 'others' in a negative way and that leads to the reproduction of ethnic prejudices or ideologies. Therefore, discourse may contribute both to interactional and cognitive forms of problematization, marginalization and exclusion (p.88).

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The immigration of Arabs, particularly Iraqis and Syrians, to Europe in 2015 is one of the most drastic phenomena that affects many parts of the world, especially Europe. Suddenly, thousands of Arabs decided to leave their home country and everything they own and go to Europe across Turkey, the Aegean and Greece. Definitely, many reasons are there for such tragic immigration including, among many, war, security and better living opportunities. Immigration has several repercussions which affect Iraq and Syria as the source land and Europe as the goal destination. Iraq and Syria have lost several thousands of their human capitals like scientists, scholars, professionals and laborers. Europe, on the other hand, has considered those immigrants as a "threat" that could affect its social, economic and political life. News stories of Arab immigrants have been widely covered and circulated in most world news channels and social media. And, the immigration discourse in the world news media has differently reproduced racist and ethnic perceptions of Arab immigrants.

The immigration news as a specific genre of political news stories always get a large media coverage in the world TV channels, and are considered very crucial and critical for people's life all over the world. A set of important questions are raised here such as "Why subtitles?" And "Why immigration news subtitles in particular?" To answer such questions, there are many reasons. News subtitles in general are almost short written texts which can be easily examined. They tend to be authentic texts which are richly loaded with "ideological assumptions" constituting ideologized discourses. In addition, their availability or access is a stimulating reason for their consideration to be examined and analyzed here. Up to date, there are several investigative studies that deal with political news such as headlines, bulletin news items, or even political talk shows, but a dearth of research on news subtitles as a specific genre of political news. Moreover, the immigration news is under-researched compared to other political news like presidential election campaigns, parliamentary actions and affairs, etc. which are all considered as media discourse (cf. Bayram, 2010; Haig, 2006; Sajjad, 2013; Sharififar and Rahimi, 2015).

The different representations and perceptions of Arab immigrants in the world news media have impelled the current study to examine critically the discursive representation of Arab immigrants in selected American news channels. Accordingly, the study sets out to address the following research questions:

1. How are Arab immigrants discursively represented in ABC and NBC American news channels?
2. To what extent are there racist ideologies and perceptions towards Arab immigrants in the discourse of ABC and NBC American news channels?

After a careful scrutiny of related research available, there is a scare of research on the discursive representation of Arab immigrants in American news media from a critical discourse perspective. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no previous research has ever tackled this topic. Hence, the present study devotes itself to close a lacuna in critical discourse analysis research.

## 2. The discourse of immigration news

Critical discourse analysis (henceforth, 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. Thus, critical discourse analysts take explicit position to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality (van Dijk, 2001, p. 352). According to CDA, language is never neutral and it always has some implications of the world that surrounds us or at least it is not neutral on a personal level. It is, then, a form of social practice that seeks to examine both the manner in which discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideology, and the manner in which discourse actively plays a role in shaping these relations

(Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 258). One of the most obvious properties of news discourse is that it constitutes a particular type of ideologies and perceptions. Such discourse can reflect the social relations, political and economic interests of the powerful groups, elites and institutions in society. According to Kress (1989), "a discourse provides a set of possible statements about a given area, and organizes and gives structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object, process is to be talked about. It provides descriptions, rules, permissions and prohibitions of social and individual actions" (p.7). News media broadcasted in radios, televisions, and different social media are of great impact on people's perceptions and beliefs. The study of news media genre has received much scholarly interest from mass communication researchers, semioticians, linguists, and discourse analysts. The research attention is attributed to the great importance of news in our everyday life. No one can deny that most of our social and political knowledge and beliefs about the world are derived from enormous number of news reports that we see and read every day (van Dijk, 1991, p. 110).

It is continually reported that the scope and the number of immigrations have increased dramatically, so becoming crucial fields of study across the humanities and social sciences. Discourse of immigration has a number of features. One of them is that immigration discourse involves examining how the members of host countries discursively construct the immigrants as "*other*". Usually, such constructions are analyzed as intrinsically connected to attitudes and beliefs, so they suggest important links between immigration discourse and ideology-informed constructs like *racism, nationalism, multiculturalism, or diversity* (Guillem, 2015, p. 1). Relatedly, van Dijk (1987) comments on that "...isolating a series of discursive strategies often deployed by speakers as a way to validate prejudiced claims. One of the most well-documented practices is the use of mitigation markers such as '*I'm not racist, but...*' or '*I have nothing against X group, but*'. This can be seen as contributing to an overall strategy of denial of racism, and have a negative attitude toward racial and ethnic others (p. 2). Another feature of immigration discourse is related to the media. The effective role of media in framing all kinds of issues for their audience makes them unavoidable object of study when it comes to immigration discourse. There is an incredibly huge number of outlets producing what has proven to be a consistently narrow range of representations of immigrants' identities and social positions.

For van Dijk (1991), racism is a complex system of social inequality, where some groups, for example, white and non-white, have more power than other groups. This power difference can be reflected in differential access to scarce social resources, such as having less of most material goods, yet having less access to or control over symbolic resources, such as education, knowledge, information and status. In this way, immigrants have less access to the country and have less residence rights; they may have worse neighborhoods, worse housing, and worse jobs, if any at all. Such system of social inequality is standing as the "micro-level" by a host of everyday discriminatory practices. According to this system, immigrants may have fewer jobs and their work tends to be less valued than other workers. The consequence of these forms of marginalization and exclusion at the micro-level is social inequality at the macro-level (p.39). As far as the relationship between racism and immigration discourse is concerned, it is propounded that discourse is one of the everyday social practices that may be discriminatory in its own right. Closely related, van Dijk (2000) reports a close relation between racism and immigration discourse. He gives an example where dominant group members engage in outgroup derogation while interacting with the members of minority groups. In this way, intra-group discourse about resident minorities or new immigrants may represent '*Others or Outgroup*' in a negative way and that leads to the reproduction of ethnic prejudices or ideologies. So discourse may contribute both to interactional and cognitive forms of problematization, marginalization and exclusion (p.88).

With regard to TV news discourse, immigration is mainly discussed within an overall framework of "*bad news*". Thus, immigration-related phenomena are often associated with terms carrying a negative connotation like *problem, crisis, health risk, etc.* Sometimes, news casts try to make a link between crime, for instance, and immigration. It is suggested that TV news channels

try to create unnecessary state of alarm that can fuel not only anti-immigrant public attitudes, but also discriminatory government actions, as well as racist and xenophobia criminal acts (ibid., p.5). One relatively recent research on the media discourse of immigration is van Leeuwen's (2000) study. He has found discriminatory messages against immigrants in the European visual media calling such tendency as a "*visual racism*".

A close connection between ideology and immigration discourse is set by van Dijk (2000) who maintains that in immigration discourse, racism plays a main role; there must be "*racist and discriminatory ideologies*". Each ideology must be shared by a social group, so racist ideologies are shared by a group of racists. Such group is not only ill-defined, but its identification includes a clear distinction between racists and non-racists. Such distinction is problematic because according to the ideological self-schema of racists, racists seldom identify themselves as such. Another important point in racist ideologies is that they control the shared social representations, especially racist attitudes, prejudices, etc. Such attitudes are negative opinions on the role of minorities in many social domains like immigration, housing, work and education (p. 98). The current study seeks to confirm or deny the existing assumption that the immigration discourse is racist and discriminatory in its nature.

### **3. Research methodology**

#### **3.1. Data collection and sampling**

The data of news subtitles are taken from two American TV channels, namely, the ABC and the NBC channels. Twenty news subtitles are selected for analysis, divided equally into ten subtitles from each channel to obtain a comparable sample of data. The justification for considering the aforementioned American channels is that they have greatly covered the news of Arabs immigration to Europe during the last quarter of 2015. A number of selection criteria are used to obtain a comparable and representative sample of news data from the two TV channels under investigation. First, the length of the news subtitles selected is relatively the same in terms of word counting. That is, the word counting of news subtitles ranges between (13-30) words. The average mean of word counting is (17) words long for the entire news data. Second, the immigration news covers a time span between September and November 2015 when the immigration crisis was at its peak. Third, the news channels selected can be said to be relatively trusted and highly viewed channels, that is, their audience are many and they have a wide viewing circulation. Finally, the subtitles are selected according to their thematic content (i.e., the immigration issue) and whether they show some ideological assumptions and tendencies toward this issue.

#### **3.2. Theoretical framework and analytic procedures**

To examine the ideological assumptions underlying the discourse of immigration news of the two American TV channels, van Dijk's (2000) theoretical framework is adopted. This analytic model fits the kind of data analyzed here. In his study of immigration debating discourse, van Dijk (2000) identifies a set of semantic categories that play a significant role in the reproduction of racist ideologies at the discourse level. He believes that these semantic categories can be systematically examined to reveal the beliefs about immigrants and the various social and political acts involved in the reproduction of political racism in a particular discourse.

Van Dijk (2000) suggests that the semantic categories "are the core level for the expression of beliefs, such as personal and social knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, opinions, norms and values. They are crucial in such kind of discourse, and can be especially relevant in discursively representing ideological beliefs in the context of immigration discourse" (p.90). Ten semantic categories are adopted from van Dijk's (2000) work that tends to be relevant for uncovering the ideological beliefs and assumptions underlying the discourse of immigration news. To support this selective choice, van Dijk (2000: 90) confirms that in investigating a given discourse, researchers should pay attention to examine which discourse categories or structures are

especially relevant in reflecting the ideological beliefs underlying the type of discourse. The semantic/discourse categories selected include *topics*, *local coherence*, *implicitness*, *semantic moves disclaimers*, *specificity and completeness*, *propositional structures*, *comparison*, *perspective*, *lexicalization*, and *pronouns*. Each of these categories is defined briefly below.

First, *topic* is usually defined in terms of information that is already introduced in the previous part of the conversation or the discourse, already supposed by the speaker to be known to the hearer, or otherwise given or started from. For discourse about ethnic minorities/immigrants and racist ideologies, topics define what the speakers think or discursively display as the most important information or opinions about "Us vs. Them" (van Dijk, 1980, p.94). Second, *local coherence* shows that the discursive sequences of propositions are coherent if they refer to facts that are related according to the mental models of language users, or if propositions are related functionally. In this way, ethnic beliefs and racist ideologies may be relevant for the establishment of local coherence, so that conversely, coherence may show underlying ethnic or racist opinions. For example, immigration as a cause of unemployment which can be considered as a consequence of ethnic events, so as to influence the models of recipients as part of their understanding and explanation of ethnic events (ibid. 91). Third, *implicitness* in discourse means "incomplete" and "implicit" in the sense that much information is not expressed directly, but only understood to be implied or presupposed. In this way, implicit information is part of the mental model of an event, but not part of the semantic representation of a discourse about such an event. In this way, information may not be expressed for contextual reasons or irrelevance (ibid.). Fourth, *semantic moves/disclaimers* shows that the discourse of immigrants and minorities has special semantic moves that reveal the contradiction between positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. For example, ("I have nothing against X, but...") or ("They have a lot of difficulties in their country, but"), (blaming the victim), and ("I have no problem with X, but my clients...") and others (ibid. 92). Fifth, *specificity and completeness* identifies whether a given discourse is more or less general vs. specific, or to provide more or less details. With this category, it is possible to expect that our good actions and properties are expressed in a general way while the bad ones tend to be described in fairly specific terms and with more details; while their good actions are described with more details. In this way, a more detailed mental model of an event will be better stored (more links with other information), and hence better memorized. Completeness requires a detailed comparative analysis of both sides "Us vs. Them" in a given discourse to explore whether a given discourse is complete enough or not (ibid.).

Sixth, *propositional structures* is concerned with the analysis of the semantic structures of sequences of sentences that depends on intensional and extensional units which combine these interpretations at the level of whole clauses and sentences. In this way, intensional unit is the meaning of clause or sentence which is called "proposition" and the extensional unit is the fact. A fact is an event, action, state, or process in some possible world. Hence, a possible world is a set of facts. Conversely, a proposition or possible fact is a set of possible worlds; "the set of those worlds where the proposition has value is true" (ibid. 32). The propositional structure of news subtitles basically deals with ethnic and racist situations, actions or events. For instance, whether such participants (immigrants) are seen as responsible "Agents vs. Victims" of specific acts. Seventh, *lexicalization* basically deals with the choice of words that are utilized in racist discourses to describe participants, their properties and actions. For example, the use of words like "refugees", "illegal" or "undocumented" to describe immigrants in a given discourse (ibid. 95). Eighth, *pronouns* is a very relevant category in the study of political discourse. The opposition of "Us vs. Them" has become prototypical of the representation of "Ingroups vs. Outgroups" in racist discourses. In this way, the use of "we" by the speaker refers to the "Ingroup" and vice versa (ibid.). Ninth, *comparison* deals with "What they do vs. What we do", a comparison of which the implication is usually positive for Us and negative for Them. Such comparison provides insights into underlying social representations of "Ingroups vs. Outgroups" in racist discourses. Finally, with *perspective*, it is suggested that the "Ingroup vs. Outgroup" conflicts typically involve different perspectives based on different mental models of events as well as on different social representations.

Discourses about racist events show different, if not opposed points of view of majority speakers and minority speakers (ibid. 94). The immigration discourse of news subtitles are examined and analyzed in terms of a set of racists ideological categories and beliefs, namely, (*Us vs. Them*), (*Ingroup vs. Outgroup*), (*Agents vs. Victims*), (*Positive-self presentation vs. Negative-self presentation*), and (*Threat vs. Non-threat*). The selected labels of racist ideologies are adopted from previous research (cf. Dastjerdi, 2011; King, 2015; Koliba, 2016). It is worth noting that the ideological categories selected for analysis are not entirely applicable to every single subtitle in the present data. In addition, it is through van Dijk's (2000) ten discourse categories identified above, the ideological categories and assumptions underlying the discourse of immigration news subtitles can be exposed. The analysis of news sub-titles has undergone qualitative and quantitative content analyses. Content analysis has been recommended in critical discourse analysis research. In this concern, Krippendorf (2004) maintains that this technique can be used in making valid inferences for texts and discourses in relation to the context of their use. Likewise, Shoemaker and Reese (1996) recommend that content analysis is much more preferred when both qualitative and quantitative approaches are used. Hence, the present study adopts a mixed analytic methodology. Such methodology can well address the research questions set forth, and achieve the research objectives.

#### 4. Analysis and discussion

The analysis of the ABC and NBC news subtitles reveals considerable variation in the distribution of discourse and ideological categories. That is, there are relatively significant differences in the statistical distribution of both category types. Each of the two main categories is analyzed and interpreted separately in the forthcoming sub-sections.

##### 4.1. Analysis of discourse categories

To start with the discourse categories, Table 1 below demonstrates the distribution of discourse categories in the American news channels. The first category of *topic* occurs in the entire data of news sub-titles analyzed with a 100%. Its distribution reflects its obligatory status in the discourse organization of news sub-titles. It plays a significant role in attracting the audience's attention to the news story of immigrants and immigration issue as the focal point around which the whole news story is built. *Local coherence* constitutes a 100% of the entire data indicating the fact that news sub-titles should be coherently constructed to convey the intended message beyond the news story. As to the category of *implicitness*, it constitutes a 50% of the ABC channel's subtitles while a 40% of the NBC channel's. One can say that the discourse organization of American news sub-titles depends on implicitness as a technique to attract the news audience's attention. When much information is not explicitly expressed but only presupposed and understood, this will result in more cognitive processing efforts on the part of news audience forcing them to keep following these news stories. Conversely, if everything is explicitly expressed and stated in the news subtitles, news sub-titles tend to be boring and not interesting.

The category of *semantic moves* shows a scarce recurrence in the data. It constitutes only a 10% of the ABC channel's news and just a 30% of the NBC channel's. This category basically deals with the contradiction between positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. Obviously, there are not many instances of contradicted images in the data. The two American channels seem to present a few contradictory portrayals between positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation, and that means that this category has a little role in constructing the immigrants' image.

As for the category of *specificity and completeness*, it appears in a 40% of the ABC's subtitles and a 60% of the NBC's. The category is responsible for revealing the amount of details given in the subtitle, and whether these details are more or less general vs. specific. According to the statistical results identified, the NBC's subtitles have more details to be told in the news stories and

more of general vs. specific information. The NBC subtitles seem to be more complete and detailed because of offering a good amount of information and details in the news stories presented. Such details help greatly identify the kind of image constructed in the immigrants' news.

Concerning the category of *propositional structure* which is one of the canonical categories in the immigration discourse, it is found across the entire news stories with a 100%. It deals with the way of representing immigrants in a given incident; it shows whether immigrants are seen as "*responsible agents*" or "*victims*" of specific acts. In most news subtitles, immigrants are depicted as "*victims*". Thus, they are portrayed as helpless and unprotected people trying to reach a better place or destination for safe living. Since immigrants are mostly represented as "*victims*" and rarely represented as "*responsible agents*", so it is clear that this category constructs the immigrants' image as "*victims*" in the ABC and NBC channels.

As for *lexicalization*, it occurs in the entire news subtitles with a 100% for in the two American news channels. It identifies and describes immigrants along with their actions and properties. This category is an archetypal element of the discourse of immigrants and immigration, and has very close relevance to the present data. By means of which, the kind of immigrants' image can be uncovered for it is specifically responsible for describing immigrants and their actions. In the press and media war, this category is a "must" in constructing the immigrants' image or portrayal.

Closely connected to lexicalization is the category of *pronouns*. The pronouns category is also one of the most important discourse categories usually employed in immigration news stories. It discloses the "*Us vs. Them*" dichotomy which is skillfully intertwined within the discourse of immigration news stories. Its use is of paramount significance in revealing how the image of immigrants is represented and viewed, whether positively or negatively, by the other side. It has been found that the category of pronouns constitutes a 100% of both American channels' news stories. Bramley (2001) suggests that "the use of pronouns plays a key role in the construction of "*Self*" and "*Other*" in political discourses. They are not only a way of expressing persons and people, rather they must be thought of in the context of interaction and in terms of the "identity work" that they accomplish. Pronouns can be used to build images about both groups. He maintains that the use of "*Us*" in the political discourse is considered as the core meaning of the collective identity or group membership, while the use of "*Them*" refers to those who are not part of that group or not members (p. 76).

As to the category of *comparison*, it is found in a 40% of the ABC and NBC's news subtitles respectively. Comparisons reveal the ideological distinctions between "*What they do?*" and "*What we do?*" or positive "*Us*" and negative "*Them*". Since there are not many comparisons of such category type in the American data, one can say that the American news channels might tend to hide their ideological tendencies and assumptions about immigrants and immigration in order not to fall into the racist entrapment.

As far as the category of *perspective* is concerned, it can be also regarded as one of the most salient and distinctive categories in the discourse of immigration news. It has a distribution of 100% in both American channels. It best reflects and portrays the racist ideology of "*Ingroup vs. Outgroup*" conflicts which is the cornerstone of immigration discourse. It shows how immigrants are portrayed as "*Ingroup*" or "*Outgroup*" by the other side. The American data considered for analysis indicate that immigrants are represented as "*Outgroup*" by the European or Western side. For Western people, the large groups of immigrating people may affect the political, social and economic life of their home countries.

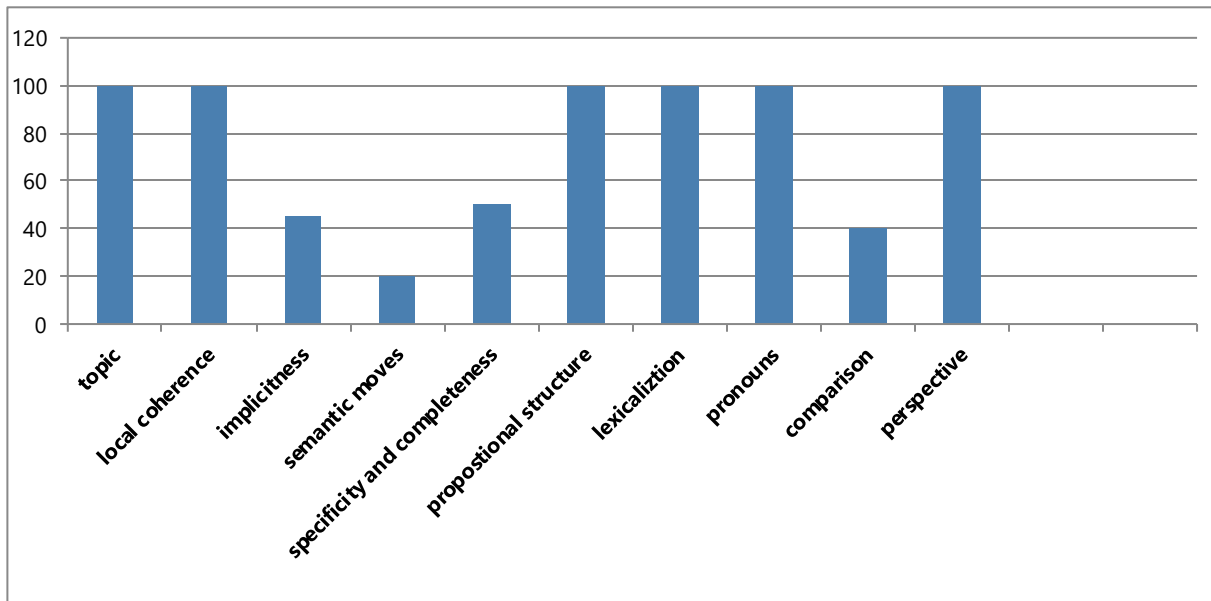
After all, differences in the distribution of discourse categories in the American data are due to the variation in the news content and news stories through which ideological assumptions towards immigrants can be uncovered and explored. That is,

some news subtitles have certain categories more than others due to their news content. Table 1 and Figure 1 below show the distribution of discourse categories in the American news channels.

**Table 1: The statistical distribution of discourse categories in American data.**

Discourse Categories	ABC Channel	NBC Channel
	No. & %	No. & %
<b>Topic</b>	<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>
<b>Local coherence</b>	<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>
<b>Implicitness</b>	<b>5</b> <b>50%</b>	<b>4</b> <b>40%</b>
<b>Semantic move</b>	<b>1</b> <b>10%</b>	<b>3</b> <b>30%</b>
<b>Specificity and completeness</b>	<b>4</b> <b>40%</b>	<b>6</b> <b>60%</b>
<b>Propositional structure</b>	<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>
<b>Lexicalization</b>	<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>
<b>Pronoun</b>	<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Comparison</b>	<b>4</b> <b>40%</b>	<b>4</b> <b>40%</b>
<b>Perspective</b>	<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>





**Figure 1:** The distribution means of the discourse categories in American data.

#### 4.2. Analysis of ideological categories

Tables 2 and 3 below reveal the distribution of ideological categories in the news subtitles of the two American TV channels. Generally speaking, the discourse of American news sub-titles is found to be significantly loaded with racist ideologies and tendencies against immigrants. To start with the first ideological assumption of "Us vs. Them" opposition, it seems to be exemplary reflective of racist and discriminatory ideologies which are deeply ingrained in the discourse of immigration news. The category is normally employed in such kind of discourse reflecting how immigrants are represented as "Us" or "Them" by the other side. It appears through the entire news data of both channels with a 100%. The news channels try to show the positive side of "Us" which is reflected in their own action and the description of these actions, and show the negative side of "Them" which is all about representing immigrants negatively or to show the negative side of their actions. One can say that the two American channels show biased, discriminatory and prejudiced discourses against those immigrants via delineating their image as exclusive "Them". The statistical results assert the prevalence of negative "Them" over "Us" in the entire American news data with a 100%. In this regard, Koliba (2016) confirms that "in almost every political activity, there is the opposition between "Us" and "Them", which depends on the speaker's intentions in the discourse. Such opposition is concerned with the struggle for power and dominance. The "Us" and "Them" opposition is indispensable for the concept of power and dominance to exist: one having power entails another person's lack of it. She suggests that politicians tend to emphasize positive aspects about "Us" and emphasize negative aspects about "Them", and the reason for such a conceptual structuring is that political discourse is primarily concerned with the struggle for dominance and power, which leads to inequality"(p.23-29).

The statistical distribution of the ideological category of "Ingroup vs. Outgroup" opposition constitutes a 100% of the American data in favor of the negative implication of "Outgroup". This means that the two American channels have negatively depicted the portrayal of immigrants identifying them as "Outgroup" people or outsiders rather than insiders. This finding tends

to run contrary to the European ideological beliefs and views that all human beings are equal and free to choose the destination they decide to go under threat. In the discourse of immigration, these Utopian beliefs and principles seem to be unworkable and unrealistic.

The distribution of the third category of "*Agents vs. Victims*" opposition shows that it appears in a 100% of the American subtitles. The category explicates how immigrants are seen as responsible agents or victims in specific acts or incidents by the other side. Due to their statistical distribution, immigrants are portrayed as victims (80%) rather than responsible agents (20%) in most news stories. In fact, immigrants are mostly "victims" in the political discourse of immigration; they are escaping from their bad circumstances and seeking a better place for living. In their way to Europe, they have passed through many impediments and rejections till they reached Europe, after all that, they are definitely victims. In some incidents, wherein immigrants' actions affect the other side like: asylum seeking (they voluntarily did so) or some clashing acts with the authorities, immigrants are considered as "agents". One can argue that although immigrants are represented positively as victims, it does not mean that they have a free will and absolute rights to act or do whatever they want in reality like the native people of the host country. Even if they are accepted as refugees or immigrants, they will hold the second position after the native people. In this regard, King (2015), in her study of the discourse of victims in the international criminal court, adds that "we cannot be sure of whether victims may or may not be allowed to present their views and observations before the court. It seems that their discourse is marginalized, and their position is minimized within the court proceedings. They need fair treatment and justice" (p. 134). And it seems the same case for immigrants as well.

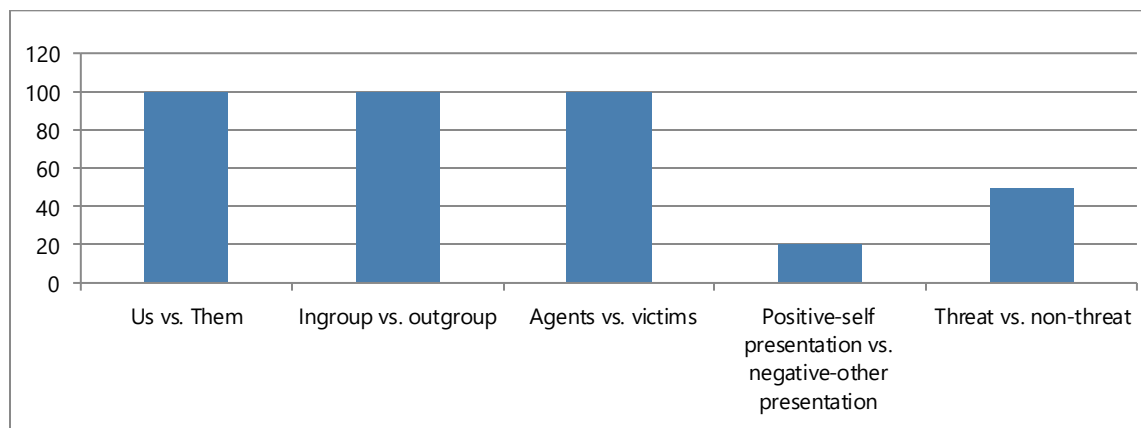
As to the fourth category of "*Positive self-presentation vs. Negative other-presentation*" dichotomy, it appears in a 10% of the ABC news and a 30% of the NBC news. The positive and negative presentations account equally for a 20% of the news subtitles, that is, both presentations are neutralized in the discourse of the news stories under analysis. The use of such category is justified by Koliba (2016) who remarks that political discourses frequently employ positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation categories to their advantage (politicians) so as to gain support and win elections, carry out successful propaganda, etc. In political campaigns, for instance, the speakers emphasize their positive traits or actions in order to create a trustworthy image of themselves. And respectively, the speakers will emphasize negative things about their opponents in order to diminish their rivals' chances of victory (p.29). In the data under analysis, the contradiction between the two categories is even. Here, one cannot strongly maintain that the discourse of news sub-titles is interwoven with discriminatory and prejudiced beliefs towards immigrants since both presentations do exist equally. The result can be different if larger corpus or amount of news sub-titles is considered for analysis, and this is one limitation of the present research.

Finally, the ideological category of "*Threat vs. Non-threat*" distinction appears in a 60% of the ABC news and a 40% of the NBC news. More precisely, the statistical distribution of threat and non-threat categories is alike (50% for each category) in the entire data. These ideological assumptions reveal to what extent Arab immigrants and their acts represent a threat to Europeans since they are large groups of people who seek to settle in Europe. The racist voice of threat is not clear here since both poles of threat are neutralized in the discourse of news sub-titles under investigation. In reality, immigrants in general are considered social, economic, political and religious threats to their host countries.

It is worth noting that though there are no statistical differences between the ideological categories of positive and negative representations of Arab immigrants on the one hand, and the categories of threat and non-threat of Arab immigrants on the other hand, there seems to be a sense of hidden fear of immigrants and their acts in the host European countries, and news writers tend sometimes not to express this kind of feelings but oblige to do so in other occasions.

**Table 2:** The statistical distribution of ideological categories in American data.

Ideological Categories	ABC Channel	NBC Channel
	No. & %	No. & %
<b>Us vs. Them</b>	<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>
<b>Ingroup vs. Outgroup</b>	<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>
<b>Agents vs. Victims</b>	<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>10</b> <b>100%</b>
<b>Positive self-presentation vs. Negative other-presentation</b>	<b>1</b> <b>10%</b>	<b>3</b> <b>30%</b>
<b>Threat vs. Non-threat</b>	<b>6</b> <b>60%</b>	<b>4</b> <b>40%</b>



**Figure 2:** The distribution means of the ideological assumptions in American data.

Table 3 below displays the distribution of the positive vs. negative ideological categories across the entire news data. It is evident that the negative representation of immigrants significantly surpasses the positive representation with a 65.90% for the former and a 34.10% for the latter. This finding confirms that the discourse of the news sub-titles of the two American channels is biased, subjective, discriminatory and racist towards Arab immigrants. The finding can be interpreted as that Arab immigrants are not welcomed by Europeans though there is a general theoretical belief that Europeans respect human rights and equality, and it seems that this belief does not work in reality. The discourse of both American news channels tends to consider those immigrating people as a threat to their host countries. As a result, Arab immigrants did not receive enough help there, and this was what had happened in the real world.

**Table 3:** The statistical distribution of positive vs. negative ideological categories in the American data.

Ideological Categories		ABC		NBC		ABC & NBC	ABC & NBC	
Positive vs. Negative		No. & (%)		No. & (%)		Positive	Negative	
Positive (P)	Negative (N)	P.	N.	P.	N.	P.	N.	
1	Us	Them	0 0%	10 100%	0 0%	10 100%	0 0%	20 100%
2	Ingroup	Outgroup	0 0%	10 100%	0 0%	10 100%	0 0%	20 100%
3	Victims	Agents	9 90%	1 10%	7 70%	3 30%	16 80%	4 20%
4	Positive self-presentation	Negative other-presentation	1 10%	1 10%	3 30%	3 30%	4 20%	4 20%
5	Non-threat	Threat	4 40%	6 60%	6 60%	4 40%	10 50%	10 50%
<b>Total</b>			14 33.34%	18 66.66%	16 34.79%	30 65.21%	30 34.10%	58 65.90%

### 5. Conclusions and implications

The present study has critically examined how the image of Arab immigrants is discursively represented in two American news channels. The critical discourse analysis of the immigration news in American ABC and NBC channels has revealed that their discourse is discriminatory and racist in its nature. It is loaded with negative racist ideologies and perceptions towards Arab immigrants. The overall statistical results have shown that Arab immigrants are portrayed negatively in the discourse of these news channels in that the negative representation of immigrants significantly exceeds the positive representation. More precisely, Arab immigrants are negatively represented as "Them", "Outgroup", "Threat", and "Negative other-representation". This runs contrary to our expectation that Europeans or Westerners respect human rights and equality, and it seems that this belief is a fallacy. The discourses of the ABS and NBC news channels consider Arab immigrants as a source of threat to the economic, political and social life of the host countries. The negative representation of Arab immigrants lends support to the conclusion that immigrants are generally supposed to be negatively represented or portrayed in the political discourse of TV news channels, and it is not peculiar to the immigration discourse of the two American news channels under investigations. Such an argument needs to be further investigated in other news contexts of different immigrants' backgrounds.

In the light of the findings arrived here, a number of recommendations and implications are suggested. It is necessary to increase the journalist, columnists, reporters, news writer's consciousness towards the issue of treating and looking at language as a social practice and how it is used as a means that contributes to the spread of different ideological beliefs and tendencies.

The consciousness-raising is an important issue since it is the first step to emancipation as maintained by Fairclough (1989, p.1). Accordingly, news channels need to make the discourse of their news stories neutral and non-ideologically biased. Also, critical discourse analysis can have some pedagogical implications in that it helps teachers and students explain critically the underlying features of the text types. Teaching critical discourse analysis in the classroom goes beyond raising students' awareness of purely linguistic issues. It necessitates highlighting the effect of ideology and racism on text composition accordingly. Competence in critical discourse analysis deepens students' understanding of the topics they read and promotes an ability to investigate the maneuvering many writers often employ in composing texts.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **American data**

#### **I. ABC news subtitles**

1. Thousands of migrants stranded in the Balkan on their new route toward Western Europe.
2. Turkey and the European Union have made progress on a plan that aims to stem the mass movement of migrants across Europe's borders.
3. Hundreds of refugees traveling across the Mediterranean Sea towards Western Europe.
4. A group of (50) Kurdish migrants arrived in Erbil on Saturday from Germany where they had voluntarily asked authorities to depart them back to Iraqi Kurdistan.
5. Finland (AFD): migrants who lack proper travel documents are unable to take the ferries that run between Helsinki and Stockholm.
6. Hungary closed its border with Croatia to stop migrants flow.
7. The United Nations refugee agency has called for the emergency evacuation of (17000) refugees crammed on the Greek island of Lesbos.
8. Slovenia refused to accept thousands of migrants, and that will cause a further backlog in people trying to reach Germany.
9. Thousands of people, including many women, children and elderly, waited in long lines at the Croatian and Slovenian borders.
10. Croatia's Prime Minister (Zoran Milanovic) says that his country will force Hungary to accept the migrants by sending the migrants back to the Hungarian borders.

**II. NBC news subtitles**

1. Rome: (70) Afghan and Iraqi migrants were rescued from a packed boat off the southeastern coast of Italy and brought to shore on Sunday.
2. Austrian police said that (71) people found dead in a truck last week on Austrian highway including Syrian and Iraqi refugees.
3. (17) Iraqi migrants died early on Wednesday when their overloaded boat capsized off as it was towed to port by the authorities in Caicos Island.
4. Hundreds of furious migrants tore down the wire meshing separating them from Hungarian territory, and police clashed for hours with migrants.
5. Hungary is to seek support for its efforts to try to block the number of migrants on its southern borders with Croatia.
6. Stephen Harper said that the government is looking to improve the refugee resettlement process, but it will not airlift thousands of refugees from countries such as Syria and Iraq (where extremist organizations operate) without conducting a proper security screening.
7. A large number of Iraqis have applied for asylum in Finland this year but Finland is taking small steps to stem the flow.
8. Finland has accepted more asylum-seekers from Iraq than any other country according to the Finnish immigration service.
9. Japanese prime minister announced that his government has promised (810 \$) million in aid to help the Syrian and Iraqi refugee crisis.
10. Hundreds of migrants had been camped out in Italy hoping to travel onward via France since June, but French border police would not permit their passage.

**Appendix 2**

The distribution of discourse and ideological categories

Table 4: The distribution of discourse categories in American news subtitles.

Channel	Topic	Local coherence	Implicitness	Semantic moves	Specificity and completeness	Propositional structure	Lexicalization	Pronoun	Comparison	Perspective
ABC										
Sub. 1	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Sub. 2	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sub. 3	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Sub. 4	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sub. 5	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sub. 6	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Sub. 7	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Sub. 8	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Sub. 9	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Sub. 10	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NBC										
Sub. 1	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Sub. 2	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Sub. 3	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Sub. 4	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sub. 5	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Sub. 6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sub. 7	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sub. 8	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Sub. 9	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Sub. 10	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



Table 5: The distribution of ideological categories in American news subtitles.

Channel	Us vs. Them	Ingroup vs. Outgroup	Agents vs. Victims	Self-presentation vs. Other presentation	Threat vs. Non-threat
<b>ABC Channel</b>					
Sub. 1	√	√	√	X	X
Sub. 2	√	√	√	X	√
Sub. 3	√	√	√	X	X
Sub. 4	√	√	√	X	X
Sub. 5	√	√	√	X	√
Sub. 6	√	√	√	X	√
Sub. 7	√	√	√	X	√
Sub. 8	√	√	√	X	√
Sub. 9	√	√	√	X	X
Sub. 10	√	√	√	√	√
<b>NBC Channel</b>					
Sub. 1	√	√	√	X	X
Sub. 2	√	√	√	X	X
Sub. 3	√	√	√	X	X
Sub. 4	√	√	√	√	√
Sub. 5	√	√	√	X	√
Sub. 6	√	√	√	√	√
Sub. 7	√	√	√	X	X
Sub. 8	√	√	√	X	X
Sub. 9	√	√	√	X	X
Sub. 10	√	√	√	√	√