

Doukha & Mansouri, 2021

Volume 6 Issue 3, pp. 206-222

Date of Publication: 5th January 2021

DOI- <https://doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2021.63.206222>

This paper can be cited as: Doukha, F. & Mansouri, B. (2021). The European Union Referendum Campaign: Ideologies and Manipulative Features in the British Press Discourse. PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences, 6(3), 206-222.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

THE EUROPEAN UNION REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN: IDEOLOGIES AND MANIPULATIVE FEATURES IN THE BRITISH PRESS DISCOURSE

Fatima Doukha

*Traduction des Documents Historiques, Algiers 2 University, Department of English, Algiers,
Algeria*

fatima.doukha@univ-alger2.dz

Brahim Mansouri

*Traduction des Documents Historiques, Algiers 2 University, Department of English, Algiers,
Algeria*

brahim.mansouri@univ-alger2.dz

Abstract

Undeniably, Media plays a pivotal role in every aspect of peoples' daily lives and significantly during times of great events. For decades, Media generally and the press particularly have been harnessed by politicians and commentators to impart their messages to the general public to either control or legitimize their political attitudes and goals. The rise of online news and the systematic decline of newspaper circulation did not herald the end of the significance of the press to political debate. People's actions and opinions are deeply amenable and manipulated by the hidden ideologies adopted by the online press and embedded within the news texts. During the referendum campaign of 2016, the press was a primary source of political information and had a significant position in setting the agenda for the mainstream Media (Levy et al., 2016). This paper examines critically the way the online press has manipulated people's views in the referendum campaign of 2016 on the United Kingdom's membership in the European Union. It focuses mainly on the micro-level of

study to unveil the implicit ideologies which the newspaper discourse is laden with. Norman Fairclough's model of CDA is the appropriate approach for this study that is to analyze the linguistic characteristics of vocabulary and grammar which reflect power relations and the ideological persuasion in discourse (Fairclough, 2001, p.91). The result reveals the use of experiential, expressive, and relational values by both campaigners meant to influence and direct the individual's vote on the day of the referendum.

Keywords

Press, Referendum, Ideology, Value, Power, Influence

1. Introduction

The result of the European Union (EU) referendum of 2016 is a landmark in contemporary British history. Britain seceded from the EU after 43 years of membership and adherence. Many factors mainly political, economic, and social have culminated in that resolution. For decades, politicians and commentators have weaponized media and principally the press to diffuse their messages to the public and to legitimize their political attitude through the communicative means recommended by the newspaper. The rise of online news and the regression of newspaper circulation has not overshadowed the indispensability of the press to political debates. Particularly, the press in the referendum campaign has been both the pinnacle of political information and a key role in setting the agenda for the mainstream media (Levy et al., 2016). During the weeks of the campaign for the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU, there were two opposing sides: the Leave and the Remains camps. Campaigns have been conducted by activists from both political parties. They used the press as a means to propagate their ideas and exert their power to reach their objectives. A margin of 3.8 percent of the referendum's verdict made the divergence between two adversaries. This is reflected through the similarities in Media's strategies used by the two oppositions. This slight difference lies in the discourse and the linguistic patterns adopted in the competitor's publications. Accordingly, a close analysis of newspaper texts, in terms of structure and features in relation to the context, is crucial to understand the relation of power and the ideological processes in the discourse of News articles. Ideologies as a set of principles or beliefs are encrusted in the discourse. For Teun Van Dijk (2003) they are, "largely expressed and acquired by discourse, that is, by spoken or written communicative interaction" (Teun, 2003, p.121). This must happen as he claims through a number of discursive structures and strategies (Teun, 2003, p.124).

2. Review of Literature

As far as the EU referendum is concerned, the coverage of the mainstream media has been analyzed by many academics to assess the attention paid to the referendum. In the News reporting, the focus is on the articles released by the Broadsheet or the Tabloids newspapers. In terms of context, researches have shown that the pro-EU articles revolve around the economic negative effects of leaving the EU, while the pro-Brexit articles promulgated a better future after withdrawing from the union (Levy et al., 2016. P.33). Another research about the EU referendum stressed the role of the press in disseminating the Eurosceptic sentiment, particularly the populist message orchestrated by Tabloid newspapers the Sun. The researchers attempted to explain how the vote Leave won in the EU referendum. Acknowledging that newspaper opposition to European integration is a longstanding phenomenon (Wring, 2016, p.12). This claim is also confirmed by Steve Schifferes (2017), who states that “the tabloids had worked for 20 years to establish their anti-EU agenda which was fully deployed, relentlessly every day in the Brexit campaign” (Schifferes, 2017).

Another study compared the number of Remain to leave items, based on a quantitative analysis of 1.127 items. These items have been published in the national daily press between May 6th to June 8th, 2016. This study indicates that 41% of the items were pro-Remain where 59% were pro-Leave. Furthermore, when these findings are weighted with the newspapers' circulation, it is observed that the highest-circulating newspapers had tendencies to buttress the Brexit. Consequently, the gap between the two positions has been widened to a substantial difference of 18% pro-Remain and 82% pro-leave (Levy et al., 2016). Additionally, Levy et al. (2016), through their analysis pointed out that most of the newspapers which are aligned with the Leave campaign have significant 'C2DE' readership, i.e. working-class readers and those with casual or no employment. Moreover, they stated that this category of people has an important role in determining the result of the referendum (Levy et al., 2016).

For Ebtisam Saleh Aluthman (2018), in her Arab World English Journal, the debate over the language used in the EU referendum gave more attention to the issue of immigration. Mostly, from Brexit daily news, her semantic study of documents demonstrates the opposing attitudes toward immigration in the EU referendum debate (Saleh Aluthman, 2018). Furthermore, Julie Firmstone (2017), in her analysis of newspapers employed persuasive narratives and metaphors, combining language more familiar to descriptions of war with nationalistic concerns about sovereignty and immigration. Similarly, in *Mind, the Gap*, Paul Rowinski (2016) argues that argumentation, metaphors, and misinformation were prevalent in

mainstream newspaper discourse in the weeks before the EU referendum. For him, some newspapers were irresponsible for the fact that more serious issues were camouflaged including the reclamation of the country's economy, sovereignty, and control of immigration (Rowinski, 2016).

The discourse adopted in the referendum campaign is of prime importance. Despite the interest of researchers in the EU referendum, and their investigation into the press influence on people's opinions, a few studies have been conducted on textual content and feature, in terms of lexical and grammatical keys that have an ideological and manipulative function. Indeed, this leaves a gap in the understanding of the linguistics used during the referendum campaign and the ideological power to control people's actions.

3. The Aim and the Importance of the Study

This study is concerned with the discourses implemented in the UK's press during the EU membership referendum campaign that officially ran from 15th of April to 23rd of June, 2016, and to critically analyze the language used in online press articles during this frame of time. The results of this research will provide readers with a new perspective to visualize the outcome of the EU referendum. The consideration of the online press is motivated, in part, by the shift of readership from print to online, by resource availability, and by the contributing role of newspaper in setting the agenda for other media, especially in one of the most important events in Britain has witnessed in the 21st Century; the United Kingdom's referendum to European's membership. The outcome of this referendum was a turning point in British, European, and world history.

Thereby, news articles from the online press the Sun and the Guardian are the selected cases of this study. The preference of these two national dailies is twofold. They were among the widely-read newspaper both in print and online in 2016. According to the National Readership Survey, the Sun had an average of 26.2m readers a month while The Guardian had an average of 22.7m. These aforementioned newspapers took different stance during the referendum campaign; either of leaving and remaining respectively in the European Union. While the majority of the articles published in The Sun were pro-leave, The Guardian had the lion's share of pro-remain articles vis-à-vis other pro-remain newspapers (Levy et al., 2016). This evidence gives more accuracy to the textual analysis of the two conflicting camps with regard to the articles investigated. A total of 80 selected articles during the referendum campaign including, editorials, headlines, and news reports are subjects of scrutiny.

The core objective of this paper is to answer the following questions: How did the British online press portray the European Union to the Public during the referendum campaign of 2016? And what are the basic ideologies that described the text displayed during the referendum campaign? The aim of this investigation, therefore, is to analyze the structure of the language at the level of grammatical and lexical choices that implicitly influence the voters on the day of the referendum.

The representation of the EU by the main online newspapers has created an atmosphere of abhorrence and uncertainty, the contrasting feeling of fear from Remaining or Leaving the EU has been projected in most of the messages published in the newspapers by both camps. In a way, the online press was biased in covering the 2016 United Kingdom-European Union membership. This makes the process of interpretation too broad and requires deep scrutiny of these news reports. Therefore, the methodology outlined below helps to develop a better understanding of the manipulative features embedded within the texts, and it sheds light on some of the hidden devices used by the press to direct and impact the reader's view regarding the EU's referendum.

4. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The analysis of the online press discourses will be conducted within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that draws heavily on Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional models of analysis (text, processing, and social analysis). Fairclough uses the term discourse to refer to spoken or written language use; he views language as a form of social practice. This implies that language is part of society, and a socially conditioned process, conditioned by other (non-linguistic) parts of society (Fairclough, 2001, p.19).

Fairclough's contributions to the field of CDA are very eminent; he pioneered the creation of the critical discourse analysis' model. The latter consists of three dimensions of discourse analysis; which are interrelated and connected processes. Yet, the nature of analysis differs. The first level focuses merely on a text as a visible object of analysis. The second stage is about the processes through which the text or the object is produced and received by people. Finally, the third dimension is about social events (interactions) that shape and are shaped by the events. In the last two stages, the investigation offers, in a broad sense, interpretations of complex and invisible relationships (Fairclough, 2001, pp. 21-22).

This research focuses on the first stage of text analysis "description" which deals with the texture, the organization, and the form of a text. Raising questions on the aspects of

vocabulary and grammar is merely one part of discourse analysis that contributes to the understanding of power relations and ideological processes in discourse. As argued by Fairclough in his book *Language and Power* “language is centrally involved in power, and struggles for power, and that it is so involved through its ideological properties” (Fairclough, 2001, p.14).

Fairclough distinguishes between three different values of a formal feature of the text, namely experiential, relational, and expressive. The implication of experiential values mirrors the knowledge and beliefs of the text’s producer. The particular lexis choices in some cases are associated with explicit ideological frameworks. For instance, the words *subversive* and *solidarity* are associated respectively with ‘right’ and ‘left’ ideological frameworks. The very particular sign of these ideologies in some cases is an over wording or an unusually high degree of wording, often involving many words which are near-synonyms, that designates preoccupation with certain aspects of reality and may expose a focus of ideological struggle. Another means where experiential values are contested is found in the metaphorical transfer of a word or expression from one domain of use to another (Fairclough, 2001, pp.93-96), or also in the grammatical forms of a language, for example, the choice to highlight or background agency may be consistent, automatic and commonsensical, and therefore ideological (Fairclough, 2001, p.102).

The relational value in the text reveals how a text’s choice of wordings depends on and generates social relationships between particular group members (Fairclough, 2001, 97). For instance, the use of racist vocabulary has experiential value in stipulations of a racist depiction of a particular ethnic grouping but its use may also have relational value, assuming that racist ideology is common ground for the speaker and other participants (Fairclough, 2001, p.97). In addition, the specific choice between the pronouns ‘we’ and ‘you’ is a sign of relational value power and solidarity tied between the text’s producer and the reader (Fairclough, 2001, p.106).

The producer evaluation of reality is related to the expressive values (Fairclough, 2001, p.93). Which, are interrelated with experiential values; the experiential values embody the text producer’s knowledge and ideas, whereas the expressive values signify the view of the text producer (Fairclough, 2001).

In this research, the online press text is analyzed through Critical Discourse analysis (CDA) as a central tool. Using Fairclough’s model for CDA helps us to understand specific elements of power relations and ideological processes in online press discourse. The investigation is engaged by distinguishing the values of the text’s features including

experiential, relational, and expressive values in terms of first, vocabulary, and then grammar, which are most appropriate for our transcript.

5. The Press Coverage of the EU Referendum Campaign

The official referendum campaign began on 15th April and lasted until 23rd June 2016. Two official campaigns were chosen by the electoral commission namely *The In Campaign* and *Vote to Leave* guided respectively by David Cameron and Boris Johnson. But within the leave camp there coexisted another campaigner for Brexit directed by the UKIP leader's Nigel Farage. The campaigners in this period drew heavily on media to disseminate their messages, opinions, beliefs, about the EU/UK relationship. Each camp presented the reasons for and against the European Union. The online news as part of the huge media was very selective in the choice of the topics and themes to be discussed.

The main topics covered during the referendum campaign were the economy and immigration. Throughout the campaign, the Leave campaign (the *Sun*) delivered substantial articles about immigration. They gave particular emphasis to the negative effects of migrants to exaggerate their threat to the UK's citizens. Accordingly, the content of the report's news centered around the population's growth, uncontrolled immigration which puts unsustainable pressure on public services, jobs, housing, and school places. Moreover, leave supporters linked immigration topics with asylum seekers. Given that, The *Sun* alarms its reader with an article entitled "330,000 asylum seekers protected by EU last year alone, as a scale of the migrant crisis is revealed" (20 April 2016). The report stressed the fact that these new migrants would gain the right to enter the UK under the protection of the EU. It also evoked the Greece turkey border; Turkey has become a key transit point for migrants aiming to cross into Europe to start new lives, especially those fleeing war and persecution.

In contrast to the leavers, the remains' leader the *Guardian* invoked more articles dealing with the economy. The high scale of coverage was devoted to institutions' reports such as treasury, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) which published reports about the danger the British family is going to face if the voters opt for Brexit, mainly the negative consequences on the British economy. Accordingly, the *Guardian* on 26 May 2016 publication confirmed the treasury claim about the impacts of the Brexit vote that would rattle stock markets and undermine the value of pensioners' homes. Also, a sell-off of the pound on the foreign exchanges could drive up inflation, eroding the value of pension savings. The key economy claims of the remains' camp were based upon

economic institutional figures of unanimity; leaving the EU would damage Britain's economy. Noticeably, each of these reports was criticized and rejected by the leave camp's leaders.

Besides, immigration and economy topics, the visit of the US President Barack Obama at the height of the referendum campaign and his claim that the UK outside the EU would be at the "back of the queue" for trade deals, kept the attention of the campaigners. Obama's statement received appreciation from the remainders and rejection from leavers. Furthermore, themes such as sovereignty and the EU as an organization project were covered but with moderation. Other reports concerning accusations of ambiguous, misleading, dishonest, and fake information on both sides were presented to readers. During long weeks of the campaign, both sides were engaged in reciprocal accusations. Both campaigners attempted to blame and suspect each other's information to influence the readers and gain their sympathy.

Broadly speaking, these are the main themes discussed during the 2016 EU referendum campaign. The Remain campaign focused on the damage and the negative consequences of Brexit on the British economy. Whereas the leave campaign focused on the centrality of the immigration issue, at the same time each camp attempted to demean each other either via the matter of economy or immigration by suspecting mutually their claims.

6. A Textual Analysis of the Online Press

To understand how the producer of the text makes use of particular terms to formulate the event and implicitly impart ideologies it is crucial to investigate the values of the text's features and distinguish between the experiential, relational, and expressive values in terms of vocabulary and grammar.

6.1 The Lexical Features of the Text

The scrutiny of the text invokes questions related to the experiential values of words to uncover how the text producer's experience of the social world is represented in the text. Such as: How do words reflect ideological tendencies? How are relations of power and dominance manifested through words? Is there rewording or over-wording of reality? Another question that should be raised as regards lexis is about ideology and how is it constructed through the rhetorical use of metaphors (Fairclough, 2001, p.92).

6.1.1 The Words' Value

The producer of text exploits the headlines to express his/her ideological view of the reported news, a special focus is given to the choice of the lexis employed in the headlines. The examination shows that the majority of the headlines advocate a negative representation of both immigration and Britain's economy; which are the most eminent themes during ten weeks of the referendum campaign. The expressive values that the words hold such as: Killed, Worse, Warn, Unsustainable, Storm, Ruin, wrong, austerity, huge, cost, dishonest, and destroy among many other terms were remarkably mentioned in the headlines of the reported news of both campaigners. Here are some examples:

- Britain will be 'killed' economically if it leaves EU, says French minister (the *Sun* 17 April 2016)
- George Osborne causes storm with controversial claim Brexit would mean Brit families being £4,300 poorer (the *Sun* 18 April 2016)
- Gove: EU immigrant influx will make NHS unsustainable by 2030 (the *Guardian* 20 May 2016)

The above-mentioned examples are some of the headlines that project fear and hostile environment for voters either for immigration or economy depending on the interest of the campaigner. This pessimistic view is widely promoted in the news headlines, and it is confirmed in the following figure. It represents the amount of expressive words in the headlines. The words are selected according to their connotation either to promote a positive or a negative insight about both the economy and immigration.

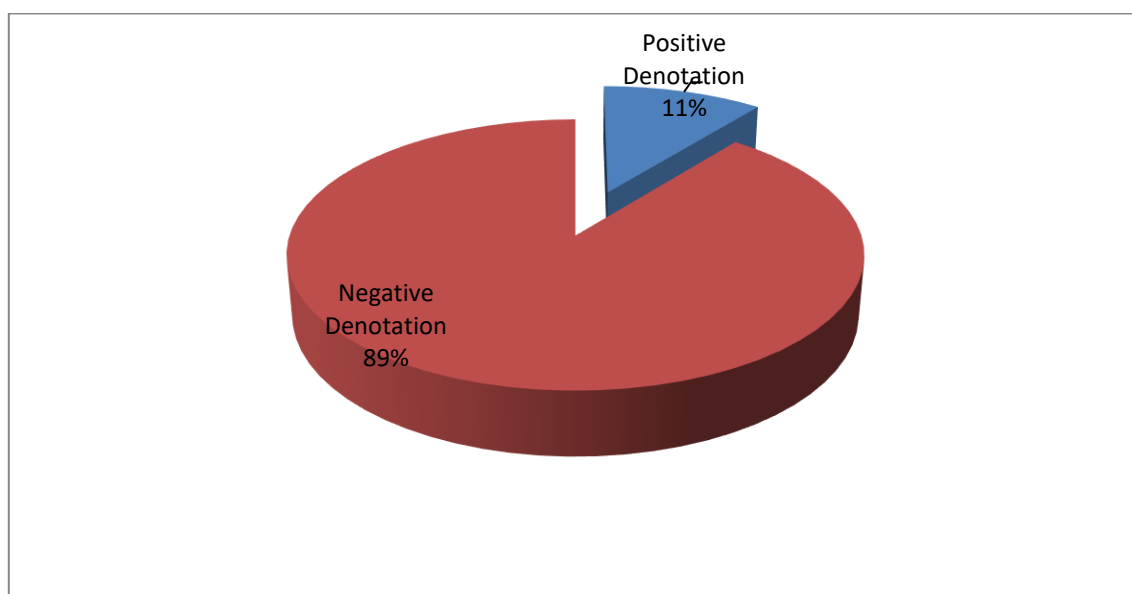


Figure 1: *Expressive Words in News' Headlines*

Very few words denoting a positive image and inspiring hope for a better future were found in the headlines of the treated articles selected in the present paper, such as stronger, better, safer, and win compared to the depressing words premeditatedly exploited by the text's producer in the headlines. This negative view headed the majority of news headlines, as the above figure demonstrated. On the one hand, it presents a pessimistic situation that aims at conveying a tragic view of Britain after the referendum, and on the other hand, it depicts Britons as rescuers of their country on the day of the referendum.

Furthermore, an over-lexicalization concept is noticed in the news articles of both campaigners. It is the overuse of certain words or their near-synonyms. Words such as warn, threat, or threaten are exceptionally pronounced in news reports essentially for immigration and migrants' concerns in the pro-Brexit's articles. This is to highlight the factual situation of the EU's freedom of movement rules that facilitated the access to newcomers in the UK, who are not welcomed due to the trouble they can generate namely, pressure on public services, on jobs, housing, and school places.

Hence, the terms 'warn' and 'warning' recurrently appears in almost the majority of the topics of the referendum discourse. Besides, the leaders of both camps alert British people about the danger and the risk they are going to undertake by their actions on polling day, either by voting to stay or to leave the EU, depending on the camp in question. The following example demonstrates the use of the terms 'warn' or 'threaten' and 'warning' in news reports:

Tony Blair and John Major warn Brexit would threaten the union. Tony Blair and Sir John Major have said that if Britain left the EU, border control would be introduced between Northern Ireland and the Republic, and the union with Scotland would be *threatened*. (The *Guardian* 9 June 2016)

The over-wording of 'warn' interestingly implies the relation of power between the addresser and his audience. The former orders the latter to follow his recommendation to avoid any eventuality (Fowler, 1991, p.107).

Moreover, in the leave articles; the description of migrants takes derogatory forms; they are portrayed as a source of violence and terror in Britain. The expressive words such as rapists, robbers, pedophiles, drug dealers, criminals, and killers are employed to show the real illustration of the foreigners by the pro-Brexit campaigner during the referendum campaign, who attempted to create a common view regarding migrants in general. The negative depiction of immigrants has been considerably high in scale as they were prone to the UK's political, social, and economic ills including school pressure, housing crisis, unemployment, and treasury strain, as illustrated in the following headlines.

One in six pupils in England miss out on first choice secondary places (the *Sun*, 15 June 2016)

EU Migration costs Britain £3m every day, shock report warns (the *Sun* 16 May 2016)

Power to the people: EU's open-door migration screwing British workers while the richest benefit, IDS declares (the *Sun*, 11 May 2016)

As far as immigration issues are concerned, the pro-EU campaigners adopted a more realistic view in their coverage to defend and protect their causes. Using a positive wording strategy to influence and manipulate the readers is also apparent. The lexicalization in the following passages from the *Guardian* editorial is an illustration that inspires hope and projects a positive view of the migrants.

Leaving the EU doesn't mean an end to immigration but it does mean that we will be able to decide who comes here and how they come. We must still welcome the dedicated medical professionals who help keep our NHS on track. We can still admit the entrepreneurial and highly qualified individuals who will help build prosperity. If immigration is controlled and people begin to have faith in the system again, I also hope we might be open to taking more refugees from the world's trouble spots. In other words, a post-EU immigration regime can support our public services, expand our economy and also deliver humanitarian objectives; but because it will be under our control there won't be unexpected and excessive pressures on our schools, hospitals, and public infrastructure. (14 June 2016)

The repetition of the words '*mean*' and '*come*' is to stress the importance of understanding the movement of immigration in the UK, urging a reader to have a deep vision on the issue of migrants is also the aim of this editorial, to notice how they were more giving than taking though the emphasis of the term '*help*', and the use of words that have rather an optimistic connotation such as support, expand, deliver, and humanitarian.

To postulate the contrast in the preoccupation between the pro and the anti-EU, the following extract from the pro-EU newspaper *The Guardian*, published on 21 June 2016, shows how Prime Minister David Cameron criticizes the Brexit supporters because of the bad image they were projecting about Britain, and their too-much talking about the problem of immigration. He said Britain will be seen as a more "*narrow, insular and inward-looking*" country if it leaves the EU.

David Cameron makes use of rewording. It is a process through which some words or phrases are substituted and expressed by other lexical items. As mentioned in bold, in his claim above. The aim behind this re-lexicalization is to heavily reject the exaggeration made

by the competitor towards immigration on the one hand and on the other hand to emphasize the reflection that the leavers are echoed about their own country. The ideological significance of that is to divert the vision of readers towards a more serious problem than immigration; that is the image of their own country, the UK that they should take good care of. This idea can be justified by the fact that David Cameron in the same article news continues to describe the UK as “arguably the most successful multi-ethnic, multi-faith, opportunity democracy anywhere on earth” (the *Guardian* 21 June 2016).

6.1.2 The Use of Metaphor

The rhetoric of a metaphor is another technique that was greatly employed by both campaigners. According to Fairclough, it “is a means of representing one aspect of experience in terms of another” (Fairclough, 2001, p.99). The metaphor is used in news articles as a powerful rhetorical tool to impart some ideologies and manipulate the reader’s view about reality. For instance, the metaphor of “Pinocchio” was employed several times in the reports of both campaigners, as the following excerpt illustrates.

George Osborne 'like *Pinocchio*' for house prices claim, says Duncan Smith: Iain Duncan Smith has likened George Osborne to *Pinocchio* for claiming that house prices could fall by up to 18% if the UK votes to leave the EU. (The *Guardian* 21 May 2016)

George Osborne was compared to Pinocchio. The metaphor ‘Pinocchio’ has more than one account. First, the substitution of the meaning liar, second the political satire of making fun of Osborne to gain the sympathy of the audience. The third account of comparing Osborne to Pinocchio is an act of dehumanization that represents a direct attack on the remaining campaigners. This is one more reality about Pinocchio’s tale; the puppet wants to be human and the only condition was to stop lying.

The metaphorical means is more manifested in the press opposing the EU, particularly when it is a question of immigration. Accordingly, the leave supporters accuse their rivals of ignoring or even refusing to deal with the question of immigration. In this concern, the *Sun* stated in the headline and the lead article released on the 14th May that “Unwise monkeys: Sneering David Cameron, Gordon Brown and John Major branded bananas by Brexit-backing Priti Patel: Pro-EU allies see no *immigration*, hear no *immigration*, speak no *immigration* says the minister.”

The author of this article employs metaphorical expressions linking the pro-EU politicians namely: David Cameron, Gordon Brown, and John Major to monkeys. The lead article exemplifies the proverbial principle “see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil”. In this metaphorical representation, there is an exaggeration in comparing immigration to evil. It has

a significant ideology that tends to make immigration a dire matter to face. It is also another manner to say that power is only in the hand of British people who can clean a sin by voting to leave the EU.

A further topic that provoked a great debate within the press is related to the visit of the American president Barack Obama in the middle of the referendum campaign. Obama overtly sided with the remaining camp. So the scrutiny of *the Sun* article released in this respect manifested the use of metaphor to express the rejection of Obama's claim that Brexit would put the UK "back of the queue". The reporter of the *Sun* newspaper writes: "Leaping on Mr. Obama's use of the British word "queue" instead of the American phrase for it, "line", anti-EU Tory MP Stewart Jackson claimed it had been written by Downing Street". (*The Sun* 23 April 2016)

The reporter in the above quote relies on the metaphorical expression through the personification of Downing Street; the reporter portrays it as a person who can write. Downing Street is the official residence and the office of the British Prime Minister David Cameron. The same metaphor is employed by the EU's supporters the *Guardian* in an article published on the 23rd of April 2016 as it is written: "*Obama was being manipulated by Downing Street*" yet, in here Downing Street is a person skilled to manipulate the president Obama.

6.2 The Grammatical Features of the Text

Through investigating the grammatical features of the text, by raising questions related to experiential values such as the use of passive form to delete the agent and the ideological functions that are achieved through such deletion, the embedded ideologies can be brought to light. Another question is also examined which is of relational value. It is linked to the use of the pronouns 'we' and 'you' to see how authority and power relations are expressed through their use (Fairclough, 2001, p. 93).

6.2.1 The Agency's Value

The grammatical structure is exploited in the aforementioned passages about Obama's intervention. The *Sun*'s author combines the metaphorical expression with the passive form of the sentence that emphasizes the subject 'it' which refers to queue "it had been written by Downing Street". By the same token, *the Guardian* in his article on 23rd April, the metaphorical expression about Obama's involvement is operated with the passive form of the sentence where the subject, in this case, is different: "*Obama was being manipulated by Downing Street*". In these two passive sentences, the agency is blurred. The responsible for

the action (to write and to manipulate) is unnamed; who wrote the word *queue* to Obama, and who manipulated the US president Obama. This manoeuvre is ideologically contested to hide the responsibility of the auction process.

Moreover, a clear contrast of passive and active form is shown in the comparison of the headlines articles dealing with Obama's claim about Brexit. The articles in question are published the same day, 23 April 2016, in the newspapers the *Sun* (pro-Brexit) and The *Guardian* (pro-EU) as mentioned here respectively: "Obama accused of 'blackmailing' British people over Brexit". "Eurosceptics pour scorn on Obama's warning against Brexit." The passive construction of the *Sun*'s headline conceals the responsible for the accusation and puts stress on the receiver of the blame (Obama). Even in the opening of the same article one notices the use of passivization highlighting the accuser and not the one who is accused; "Barack Obama was last night accused of voter blackmail by threatening to put Britain at the back of the queue for a trade deal if we Brexit". Whereas, the active structure form of the *Guardian*'s headline emphasizes the responsibility of the claim (Eurosceptics). Hence, a clear responsibility is taken through the use of the active form in the lead article, as mentioned in the news report "Senior Tories condemn 'lame duck' US president after he said the independent UK would be at the back of trade deal queue".

Furthermore, the inanimate subject is another tool to leave the agency unclear. Observing the headlines of newspapers that deal with the topic of the treasury's statistic, from both sides of the campaign, simple sentence structure is manifested; yet an inanimate subject that leaves the agent vague is employed in the headlines of the remainders. Here an example from the *Guardian* headline: "Brexit could cost pensioners £32,000, chancellor says" (the *Guardian* 26 May 2016). The value of the agentless is ideologically motivated to conceal the responsibility of the auction process. On the opposite side of the campaign, the Brexiteer, the *Sun* contests a clear presence of the agency: "George Osborne sets out the economic case for Remain with boffins' baffling equations" (the *Sun* 18th April 2016). Thus, Chancellor George Osborne holds responsibility for the course of action.

6.2.2 The Use of the Pronouns 'We' and 'You'

The genuine usage of pronouns such as 'we' and 'you' in text resides in their close association with the dimensions of power and solidarity between the addresser and the addressee (Fowler, 1991, p.35). In this regard, it is worth looking at these two pronouns in the texts of both campaigners in the referendum to see how power and solidarity are expressed through their use.

The personnel pronoun ‘we’ is more used in the editorial of newspaper, in its inclusive form, to include the text producer and the reader as opposed to the exclusive ‘we’ form which refers to the writer plus one or more others but does not include the reader or the addressee (Fairclough, 2001, p.106). The usage of the inclusive ‘we’ is much contested in the editorial for the reason that the editor speaks on behalf of himself, his readers, and all British citizens. For instance, hereafter follows the *Guardian* editorial passage:

Leaving the EU doesn’t mean an end to immigration but it does mean that *we* will be able to decide who comes here and how they come. *We* must still welcome the dedicated medical professionals who help keep *our* NHS on track. We can still admit the entrepreneurial and highly qualified individuals who will help build prosperity. If immigration is controlled and people begin to have faith in the system again, I also hope we might be open to taking more refugees from the world’s trouble spots. In other words, a post-EU immigration regime can support *our* public services, expand *our* economy and also deliver humanitarian objectives; but because it will be under *our* control there won’t be unexpected and excessive pressures on *our* schools, hospitals, and public infrastructure. (The *Guardian* 14 June 2016)

In this excerpt the inclusive ‘we’ and the possessive ‘our’ are used similarly to include the editor with the entire British citizen. It is also noticeable that the inclusive ‘we’ in all the sentences of this quote is used with the modal auxiliary, as one can read: ‘we will’, ‘we must’, ‘we can’, and ‘we might’. This is due to the nature of an editorial text that exhibits a comment or opinion of the newspaper about a given issue. Yet, in combining the inclusive ‘we’ with the modality of obligation, aptitude, and opportunity the newspaper gives a sense of shared community values among British people, which is also strengthened by the excessive use of the possessive ‘our’. Moreover, the inclusive ‘we’ and the possessive ‘our’ in this editorial help to construct a power claimed by the editor over his reader (Fairclough, 2001, p.106) as the newspaper have the authority to speak for others. Concerning the pronoun ‘you’ as an indefinite pronoun according to Fairclough, it implies people in general. The use of this pronoun in the editorial of the newspaper is less pronounced compared to inclusive ‘we’.

In the same way of authority and solidarity, the pronouns ‘you, our and we’ are manifested in the speech of politician leaders of the campaign reported in the news articles. For instance in the interview with the *Guardian* on 21 June 2016, David Cameron says: “Clearly if *you* look at *our* creative industries, if *you* look at our hi-tech, if *you* look at all of *our* internet-based industries, *we* are succeeding based on bringing people together and creating a real hub of technology here in Britain”. David Cameron makes use of the pronoun

‘you’ to attract the audience’s attention; he consistently merges ‘you’ with ‘our’ to create a relationship of solidarity between him and his audience. Solidarity is maintained by the inclusive ‘we’ employed instead of Britain in the last sentence of the passage which also claims the authority of the speaker over his audience.

6. Conclusion

The discourse of the newspaper is far to be neutral. It has the power to influence and direct its readers according to the political viewpoints of the newspaper. Principally in one of the most important events that Britain witnessed in the 21st century; in the United Kingdom’s referendum on European membership. The outcome of this referendum was indeed a turning point in Britain, Europe, and the wider world’s history. The press in this referendum has been the primary source of political information and has taken an important position in setting the agenda for the mainstream media. Thereby, this study is an attempt to give a deep insight into the newspapers’ coverage of the referendum campaign that officially ran from the 15th of April to the 23rd of June 2016. It is an eminent step in examining and addressing the newspaper discourse. It investigates the linguistic devices used in some news articles’ text of two of the widely-read newspaper in Britain: the *Guardian* and the *Sun* that have both a contrasting official stance on Brexit.

The study relies on Norman Fairclough’s Modal of *Critical Discourse Analysis* that helps to investigate the underlying ideologies in newspaper discourse. Through the examination of the values expressed in the news articles, the findings reveal the use of experiential, expressive, and relational values engaged as manoeuvres by both campaigners to indoctrinate ideas and beliefs to influence and direct the individual’s vote on the day of the referendum. This result provides readers with a new perspective to visualize the outcome of the EU referendum of 2016. However, this paper focuses merely on one dimension of Fairclough’s Modal that needs to be completed by a social context’s investigation to wholly expose a clear account of the referendum campaign discourse of 2016, which is open to future research.

This research work has some limitations; for the fact that the focus is drawn only to two British newspapers the *Guardian* and the *Sun*, others well-circulated newspapers such as the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily telegraph* which have considerable audiences are not taken into concern in this research.

REFERENCES

- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power*. New York: Routledge.
- Firmstone, J. (2017) Newspapers' editorial opinions during the referendum campaign. *EU Referendum Analysis 2016*, CSJCC. Retrieved from <http://www.referendumanalysis.eu>
- Fowler, R. (1991). *Language in the News: Discourse and ideology in the press*. New York: Routledge.
- Levy, D., Aslan, B. & Bironzo, D. (2016). The press and the Referendum Campaign. *EU Referendum Analysis 2016: Media, Voters, and the Campaign*. Oxford: Reuters Institute.
- Rowinski, P. (2016) Mind the gap: the language of prejudice and the press omissions that led a people to the precipice. *EU Referendum Analysis 2016*, CSJCC. Retrieved from <http://www.referendumanalysis.eu>
- Saleh, A. E. (2018). A Corpus-assisted Critical Discourse Analysis of the Discursive Representation of Immigration in the EU Referendum Debate. *Arab World English Journal*, 9, 19- 38. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol9no4.2>
- Schifferes, S. (2017). From Brexit to Corbyn: agenda-setting, framing and the UK media research agenda. Retrieved from <http://www.electionanalysis.uk/uk-election-analysis-2017/section-3-news-and-journalism/from-Brexit-to-corbyn-agenda-setting-framing-and-the-uk-media-a-research-agenda/>
- Teun, A. V. D. (2003). *Ideology and discourse: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*. Barcelona: Pompeu Fabra University.
- Wring, D. (2016). From Super-Market to Orwellian Super-State: the origins and growth of newspaper scepticism. Ed. Daniel Jackson, Einar Thorsen, and Dominic Wring. *EU Referendum Analysis 2016: Media, Voters, and the Campaign*. England: Bournemouth University.