

## The Representation of the Afghan Refugees in the Online Media News Reports of the US: A Critical Discourse Analysis

Mohammed Salih Sultan

Asst. Prof. Raith Zuhair Abid (Ph.D)

### Abstract

The current study is a critical discourse analysis of the representation of the Afghan Refugees in the Online Media News Reports of the US. The present study endeavors to answer the following questions: 1. What are the sociological categories that are used to represent the Afghan refugees? 2. What is the hidden ideology behind their use?

The objectives of this research are 1. To reveal the sociological categories that are utilized in the depiction of Afghans refugees 2. To reveal the ideology behind their use.

The researcher employs Van Leeuwen's Theory of the Social Actor Representation (2008) to analyze the data, using the AntConc software due to the large corpus. Based on the data analysis, the Afghan refugees are portrayed in a manner that highlights the positive characteristics of Americans. It demonstrates that Americans have sympathy for the Afghans. This relates to the view that the United States is responsible for the situation in Afghanistan that has pushed these people to seek asylum in other countries.

Keywords: Media, Critical Discourse Analysis, Social Actor

### المستخلص

تقدم هذه الدراسة ( تحليل خطاب نقدي (CDA) لتمثيل اللاجئين الافغان في التقارير الخبرية الامريكية على الانترنت). وتسعى إلى تحديد كيفية تمثيل الأقليات المختلفة في وسائل الإعلام الأمريكية .

وتحاول الدراسة في مجملها أن تجيب عن الاسئلة الآتية :

(أ) ما هي الستراتيجيات المستخدمة في تمثيل اللاجئين الافغانية ؟ (ب) ما الاديولوجية الخفية وراء استخدام هكذا ستراتيجيات؟

تهدف الدراسة لـ (أ) كشف الستراتيجيات المستخدمة في تمثيل اللاجئين الافغانية. و (ب) كشف الاديولوجية الخفية وراء الاستخدام هكذا ستراتيجيات.

استخدم الباحث نموذجًا من نظرية فان ليوين (Van Leeuwen 2008) عن تمثيل الممثل الاجتماعي لتحليل العينات الخبرية

وقد أظهرت النتائج أن وسائل الإعلام الأمريكية تصوّر الأقليات على أنها غير مرغوب فيها في مجتمعهم لأنها تشكل تهديدًا. ومع ذلك ، فقد حاولت تلك الوسائل استعمال مصطلحات إيجابية في وصف اللاجئين الأفغان لإثبات حسن نواياها. وهذا يرجع إلى حقيقة أن الأمريكيين يشعرون بالمسؤولية عن الوضع الحالي في أفغانستان.

## Introduction

Media refer to the interactions that take place through a broadcast platform, whether spoken or written, in which the discourse is oriented to a non-present reader, listener, or viewer (Flowerdew & Richardson 2018, p. 441).

Media discourse is interested in many enterprises such as cultural studies, critical discourse analysis, conversation analysis, linguistic anthropology, psychology, sociolinguistics, sociology, cognition, pragmatics, and tourism studies (Talbat, 2007, p.2). According to OKeeffe (2006, p.1), media is a broad term used to characterize how reality is printed or broadcast to a vast number of people through various mediums, ranging from television to newspapers. People get a lot of information about what is going on through the media (Baker, 2004).

The importance of media in today's world cannot be overstated. The majority of people on the planet have lately been impacted by media discourse (Talbot, 2007). During political unrest, it is clear that the media have a critical role in representing minority groups, such as refugees, and the construction of various ideological views (Becker, 2007, p.161). Because the number of refugees worldwide has increased around the turn of the twenty-first century as stated by the UN Refugees Agency, these groups have been a significant focus in media news stories.

Many of the opinions on refugees originate from information media that disseminate these displaced individuals. Studies on refugee portrayal show that this information shows that minority groups are mistreated by the media and portrayed as a threat to the public's security and economy. (Holmes & Castaeda, 2016; Rothberg & Gajjala, 2015; Shaheen, 2000).

This study examines the representation of Afghan refugees that came to America after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August 2021,. The study's data are retrieved from online news reports of US media to see whether the recent advancement of new media and various movements of political correctness altered the way these minority groups are represented in media discourse.

## Research Questions

1. What are the sociological categories that are used to represent the Afghan refugees?
2. What is the hidden ideology behind their use?

## Research Objectives

The objective of this research is to

1. To reveal the sociological categories that are utilized in the depiction of Afghans refugees.
2. To reveal the ideology behind their use.

## Review of Literature

### 2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

CDA, according to Wodak (2001), emerged out of a conference held in Amsterdam in January 1991. Norman Fairclough, Teun Van Dijk, Theo Van Leeuwen, Gunther Kress, and Ruth Wodak are among the researchers who have shaped CDA. These scholars' various approaches expose CDA's lack of conceptual and analytical cohesion in critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA has its roots in critical linguistics, a relatively recent branch of linguistics. An investigation into the ideological content of written discourse is a goal of critical linguistics, which seeks to expose the ideological content of grammatical and semantic structures in written speech (Simpson & Mayr, 2009). Critical linguistics has many limitations, despite its widespread popularity and effectiveness.

Fairclough (1992, p.28-29) argues that critical linguistics ignores the processes of interpretation in favor of focusing solely on the final result, the text. It is a further weakness of critical language studies that it focuses solely on the "reproduction" of existing social structures and relationships, ignoring both "discourse as an area of conflict and change" and "discourse as a field wherein social battles happen." On the other hand, critical linguistics focuses on vocabulary and grammar while overlooking components of discourse, such as the broader narrative and argumentative structures of a text.

Written discourse is the exclusive emphasis of critical linguistics, which overlooks oral communication entirely. Also, critical linguistics is concerned with uncovering the ideologies that are expressed in a piece of writing. Due to linguistics' lack of attention to interpretation processes and this constraint, the concept of "sense" has been excluded from critical linguistics, which refers to discourse interpreters' assumptions that are not present in the text and maybe ideological (Fairclough, 1992, p.29).

### 2.2 Aims of CDA

CDA aims to reveal and explain specific social activities, to make discriminatory systems, demagoguery, and propaganda clear and apparent. CDA is aimed at helping individuals analyze and comprehend why reality is constructed in this manner (Wodak, 1989). When it comes to uncovering hidden ideologies in texts, Widdoson (2000) illustrates that CDA aims to expose ideological leanings and thus exercising power in texts.

Using interdisciplinary theories and methods, Richardson (2007,p.1) believes that CDA examines how language is used by individuals and institutions to conceal their ideology and goals, whereas Wodak (2001, p.32) asserts that CDA analyzes the relationship between language, power, and ideology by focusing on the context of language usage as a crucial feature. CDA emphasizes the social, cultural, and economic factors that contribute to the development and maintenance of ideological power structures and representations. CDA is "A form of social practice" that

demonstrates the language of discourse's influence on others, forcing them to change their views, beliefs, or positions (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p.258).

CDA, according to Wodak (2001, p.32), focuses on the link between language, power, and ideology as a core dimension. Because of this, CDA contends that social, cultural, and economic factors play an essential role in shaping and maintaining ideological power relations. "Sociological practice" is used to describe discourse language, which impacts others and forces them to change their beliefs. Specifically, CDA is interested in how texts and activities that affect their development, reception, and distribution affect how power relations in discourse are perpetuated and/or challenged.

Ultimately, analysts regard language as a social activity, implying it is utilized within a larger setting or framework, which is social, psychological, and cultural. Analysts should examine such social situations in order to recognize the disparities in power relations and representations established and sustained by individuals, institutions, and countries.

### 2.3 Principles of CDA

Scholars who utilize CDA approaches to increase societal awareness of linguistic knowledge have attempted to define the field's central beliefs, which have sparked fierce debate. Mayr (2004, p. 9) states that CDA tries to tackle broader social issues and concerns like ideology, dominance, inequity, and portrayal by preparing a list of social theory premises and outcomes that aid in identifying and interpreting spoken and written texts. This is founded on the belief that "language and discussion are critical in perpetuating and legitimizing inequity, injustice, and oppression in society" (VanLeeuwen, 2004, p.169). According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997, pp. 80-271), CDA principles can be described as follows:

- CDA addresses social problems.

- Relations of power are discursive
- Discourse is the foundation of culture and society.
- Discourse is historically based.
- There is a mediated link between society and text.
- Discourse analysis is interpretative as well as explanatory in nature.
- Discourse is a type of social behavior.
- Discourse carries out ideological work.

### 2.4 Van Leeuwen's (2008) Representation of Social Actors Approach

According to this approach, discourses not only describe "what is going," but also evaluate it, attach meanings to it, justify it., and so on" (Van Leeuwen, 2008,

p.6). Representational aspects are crucial because they can be more prominent than actual social activity. As a central tenet of Van Leeuwen's philosophy, examining how social actors are portrayed in English is important. Van Leeuwen underlines the importance of analyzing the socio-semantic inventory of possible representations of social actors and establishing the sociological and critical relevance of the many categories that will next be studied in terms of their linguistic representation (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.23).

The lack of bi-uniqueness of language and the fact that meaning is culturally based are the two main grounds for this approach to CDA analysis. The first can be seen in the sociological concept of agency. CDA relies heavily on the idea of agency as a sociological tool. Aside from linguistics, prepositional phrases and possessive pronouns can also express sociological agency. Because of this, sociological and linguistic categories are not systematically linked, which in the case of an agency, "if critical discourse analysis ... ties itself too closely to specific linguistic operations or categories, many pertinent examples of an agency may be overlooked" (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.24). According to the second reason, meaning cannot be tied to any particular semiotics since it is based on the idea that culture rather than language is what gives meaning. To put it another way, the categories proposed by Van Leeuwen (2008) as the priority of CDA analysts should then be viewed as pan-semiotic, implying that each culture or context within a culture not only has its own "particular array," but also "proper ways of tracing the various semiotic modes onto this array, or prescribing what can be realized verbally and visually in that culture (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.25).

The concept of "social actor" unifies this theory's numerous rhetorical and linguistic processes rather than linguistic categories (Van Leeuwen, 2008). Consequently, the theory emphasizes sociological categories like role allocation (the active or passive roles attributed to social actors in speech) rather than relying on language categories like transitivity (verbs that can take direct objects).

#### 2.4.1 Sociological Categories of Discourse

Within the language structures of speech, social actors are depicted in various ways. As a result, Van Leeuwen's approach provides many different sociological categories that may be utilized to examine how social actors are expressed in speech. These categories will be used to analyze the corpora for this study:

**1) Exclusion:** Refers to how social actors are either suppressed or backgrounded from engaging in an action. Discourse creators use this discourse approach to meet their own goals as well as the goals of the readers to whom the discourse is directed. The purpose of suppression is to remove any social actors from the text. However, backgrounding is founded on the idea that social actors are discussed elsewhere in the text even if they are not stated in relation to a single action (Van Leeuwen, 2008). Passive agent deletion (for example, "the families were transported to another site"), non-finite clauses that serve as participants (for example, "*keeping peace in the camp is difficult*"), and nominalizations (for example, "*their response was stunning*") are all



examples of grammatical suppression. Backgrounding is analogous to suppression in terms of grammatical realization. The only distinction is that social actors are referenced elsewhere in the text.

**2) Role allocation:** this category studies the various roles that social actors are assigned to in a discourse. It focuses on the idea that the social actor's role does not have to be consistent with the linguistic role to which it is assigned. In role allocation, social actors seem to be either active or passive. Activation refers to when the social actor is given a dynamic, active role in an activity. The expression "*Afghan refugees*" appears in the sentence "Crews would help transport thousands of *Afghan refugees*." Activation is also grammatically realized via circumstantialization whereby "by" and "from" are used to refer to the subject, as in "*American household*" in the sentence "an *American household* had invited the refugees to experience a Thanksgiving meal." Furthermore, premodification and postmodification of nominalizations can also represent activation, such as "*migrants*" in the sentence "The Biden administration's handling of the influx of *migrants* has drawn sharp criticism from immigration advocates and Democratic lawmakers."

Passivization occurs when social actors are either subjected or benefitialized. The former depicts social actors as objects, such as "*Afghans*" in the sentence "Skopje will also accept *Afghans*," In contrast, the latter depicts social actors from a third party who is either positively or negatively affected by the social action, such as "*refugees*" in the sentence "Catholic Charities are working to provide a comfortable space for *refugees*."

Halliday's systemic functional grammar, especially transitivity, is used to analyze the notion of role allocation. Critical discourse analysis employs transitivity to examine "the semantic structure of sentences" that relates to "who does what to whom, and how" (Simpson & Mayr, 2009, p.65). Material, mental, relational, and verbal processes will all be studied in this study. A quantum of variation in the flow of events caused by an energy input is what material processes represent (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.179). Material processes are utilized in abstract statements like "his motivation has waned" and metaphoric sentences like "she annihilated her rivals." Actor, aim, and patient are all material processes. Variation in the flow of events happening in our own awareness is what mental processes reflect (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.197). Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), classify mental processes as "cognitive" (know, believe, suppose, etc. ), "desirative" (want, wish, would like, etc. ), "perceptive" (see, taste, etc. ), or "emotive" (like, fancy, love etc.). For instance, 'he knows the truth', 'she wishes to see her father, and 'from her house, she can see Germany'. Mental processes are composed of two components: the sensor and the phenomenon. Relational processes aim to "characterize and identify" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.210). These phrases contain the verb "to be," which can be attributive (as in "Sam is a wonderful buddy") or identifying (as in "John is our leader"). The carrier or identifier and the characteristic or identified are both included in relational processes. "My mother explained the equation to me," for

example, is an example of a verbal process. These sentences make it easier to "create narrative by allowing dialogic passages to be built up" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.252). The sayer and the receiver are both involved in verbal operations.

**3) Genericization and specification:** Social actors are provided with either a general or a specific reference in this category. A generic reference groups social actors into a category, whereas a specific reference identifies each social actor separately. A general reference can be expressed using numerous nouns without articles, such as "*Afghan refugees arrive at Dulles International Airport in Dulles, Virginia.*" or as a singular noun with a definite article, such as "*the refugee children continue to suffer.*" A particular reference reveals the precise identification of the social actor, as in "Wahidullah Asghary to explain what turkey is."

**4) Assimilation:** Social actors are either portrayed as individuals or as a group in this type of study. Aggregation and collectivization are two different forms of assimilation. Aggregation quantifies and shows social actors as statistics, but collectivization does not. Aggregation is important to CDA analysts because it is used by discourse makers to "control practice and construct consensus opinion, even if it appears to be just documenting facts" (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.37). Indefinite and definite quantifiers, such as "*a number of refugees*" in the phrase "The two countries would temporarily house *a number of Afghan refugees*," and "*% of Afghan refugees*" in the sentence "*44% of Afghan refugees housed temporarily.*"

**5) Association:** This component describes situations in which a group of social actors is portrayed as engaging in the same activity or sharing a common interest. The use of coordinated nominal groups, such as "*Members of the US military and Afghan refugees*" in the sentence "*Members of the US military and Afghan refugees play soccer at Ft. McCoy US Army base,*" and circumstances of accompaniment, such as "*with the US*" in the sentence "*Majority of Americans support accepting Afghan refugees who worked with the US,*" can be used to achieve association.

**6) Indetermination and differentiation:** Speech becomes indeterminate when social actors are represented as anonymous entities. Indefinite pronouns, such as "*some refugees*" in the phrase "*Some refugees are seeking a new life,*" and exophoric references, such as "*they*" in the sentence "*they supported the refugees in passing the borders,*" are examples of this category. When a social actor or a group of social actors is distinguished from another social actor or group of social actors, differentiation occurs.

**7) Nomination and categorization:** In this component, social actors are portrayed either by declaring their unique identities (nomination) or by identifying the identities and roles they share with other social actors (categorization). In the line "*Asghary came to the United States.*"

**8) Functionalization and identification:** The way social actors are depicted depending on an activity or what they perform is referred to as functionalization. This group includes nouns that are derived from verbs using the suffixes -ant, -ee, -ian, -

ent, -er, and nouns that are closely associated to an action using the suffixes *ist* and *eer*, as well as nouns that are derived from verbs using the suffixes "man," "woman," "person," and so on. When social actors are "defined not by what they do, but by what they are, more or less permanently or inextricably," they are seen to be identified (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.42). In speech, classification, relational identification, and physical identification can all be used to represent identification. Social actors are classified according to their significant identifying qualities, such as race, age, class, religion, etc. Social actors are represented through relational identification based on their particular family and work relationships, such as brother, sister, coworker, and so on. Physical identification refers to the physical qualities of social actors, such as eye color and hair color, as well as post-modifiers and adjectives, as in "a fat guy of long stature" and "a pretty lady."

**9) Personalization and impersonalization:** Personalized social agents might be shown as human, or they can be impersonal. When abstract or concrete nouns represent social actors, the meaning characteristic "human" is removed. Abstraction and objectivation serve to impersonalize social actors. In the sentence "*AIDS* is a real bad problem," abstraction describes social actors with characteristics such as "*Aids*" to represent Haitian migrants. When "social actors are depicted by means of reference to a location or item strongly related either with their person or with the action in which they are portrayed as being engaged," objectivation is represented (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.46).

**10) Overdetermination:** It displays examples of social actors who engage in many social practices. Inversion, symbolization, connotation, and distillation can all be used to show overdetermination. Inversion happens when social actors are assigned more than one position; for example, Afghan refugees are also workers in the UAS in addition to being refugees. Symbolisation occurs when "a "fictional" social actor or group of social actors stands in for actors or groups in nonfictional social activities" (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.48). According to Wright (1975, as cited by Van Leeuwen, 2008), characters in western films, for example, stand for various nonfictional figures such as physicians, scientists, and so on. Connotation happens when a specific determination (a nomination or physical identity) denotes categorization and functionalization. Distillation is used to link "social actors to several social practices by abstracting the same feature from the social actors involved in these several practices" (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.48). For example, aid agencies are frequently depicted as helping refugees; however, what they actually do for the refugees to aid them is abstracted, implying that it makes no difference how aid agencies help refugees as long as they help them.

These various and varied discourse analysis categories will unravel the writer's ideology in order to comprehend his or her principal objective. "Close linguistic study may help us comprehend how ideology is entrenched in language and, as a result, help us become aware of how the reflexes of "dominant" or "mainstream" ideologies are preserved through textual practices," say Simpson and Mayr



(2009, p.4). In examining this research's two corpora, six of Van Leeuwen's sociological categories of speech will be discussed: role allocation, genericization and specification, assimilation, association, indetermination, and identification. In the next chapter, the reason for this choice will be presented.

### 3 Methodology

The researcher utilized a triangulation analysis approach for this study. Initially, qualitative methods are employed to analyze the categories used to describe Afghan refugees. The researcher then utilized a quantitative method to statistically examine the social categories. The combined strategy will eventually uncover the hidden ideology behind the representation of Afghan refugees. This is a corpus-based study. The data was obtained from the most viewed news websites in the United States.

A model based of Van Leeuwen's Theory of the Representation of the Social Actor (2008) Theory was utilized by the researcher to examine the data. Corpus linguistic tools are used such as: collocation, concordance, n-grams, and wordlist. The Software used to analyze the data is AntConc, version 3.5.9 (2020).

The following table explains how Van Leeuwen's selected sociological discourse categories were identified:

*Table 1 Identifying sociological categories of discourse by Van Leeuwen*

Sociological categories	Type	Linguistic description
1) Role allocation	Activation	<p>a) The social actor is in the subject position: <i>Afghan refugees arrive in the U.S.</i></p> <p>b) Circumstantialization ('by' and 'from' are used to identify the agent): <i>It was heralded by Haitians.</i></p> <p>c) Premodification of nominalizations: <i>There is no flood of migrants from Haiti entering the country unchecked, healthy or not.</i></p> <p>d) Postmodification of nominalizations: <i>In reality, not all the migrants arriving at the border in Del Rio are being deported.</i></p>
Passivation		<p>a) Subjection: <i>They also detained Haitians already in the United States.</i></p> <p>b) Beneficialisation: <i>It would provide temporary housing for up to 20,000 Afghans..</i></p>

Sociological categories	Type	Linguistic description
2) Genericization and specification	Generic reference	<p>a) Plural nouns without articles: <i>A mass expulsion of Haitians at Del Rio is sure to anger immigration advocates who say such returns are inhumane considering the conditions in Haiti.</i></p> <p>b) A singular noun with a definite article: <i>Both royals also spent time chatting one-on-one with the Afghan children who were eager to practice using their conversational English, with simple phrases like such as, "Nice to meet you".</i></p>
	Specific reference	a) Specific noun: <i>Asghary is to explain to his children what turkey</i>
3) Assimilation	Aggregation	<p>a) Indefinite quantifiers: <i>The two countries would house a number of Afghan refugees.</i></p> <p>b) Definite quantifiers: <i>44% of Afghan refugees housed temporarily.</i></p>
4) Association		<p>a) Coordinated nominal groups: <i>U.S. military and diplomats to ferry Americans and Afghan allies to safety.</i></p> <p>b) Circumstances of accompaniment (signified by <i>with</i>): <i>On military bases, personnel improvise with available material and facilities to deal with the influx.</i></p>
5) Indetermination	Indetermination	a) Exophoric references: <i>They also detained Haitians already in the United States, to keep them confined until they could be expelled from the country.</i>
6) Identification	Identification	<p>a) Classification by using age , race, religion, class, and so on.</p> <p>b) Relational identification comprises individual kinship and work relations that include colleague, brother, sister, and so on.</p> <p>c) Physical identification comprises bodily characteristics of the social actors which consist of hair colour, eye colour, height, and so on.</p>

## 4 Data Analysis

This section includes a corpus analysis of the American online media news reports. This corpus comprises news stories from CNN, FOX NEWS, NEWYORK TIMES, WASHINGTON POST, CNBC, NEWYORK POST, REUTERS, and US NEWS. The linguistic tools from Van Leeuwen's theory of the representation social actor and Van Dijk's Ideological Square theory were utilized to investigate how Afghan and Haitian minority groups are portrayed.

### 4.1 Role allocation

As indicated in sections 2.2.4.3.1 and 3.4, the role allocation analysis investigates the roles assigned to social actors in discourse. In this type of analysis, social actors are either activated, subjected, or beneficialized. The data analysis of role allocation in the American online media news reporting is represented in the table below:

*Table 2: Role allocation in the online media news reports of US*

	Activated %	Subjected %	Beneficialized %
Afghans N 113	54.0	41.5	4.5
Refugees N 100	40.0	41.0	19.0
Afghan Refugees N 94	43.6	44.6	11.8
Evacuees N 45	49.0	46.6	4.4

The following parts will look at how Afghans and Haitians are activated, subjected, and benefited.

#### 4.1.1 Activation

This role allocation category examines cases in which social actors operate as an active dynamic force in a discourse-depicted activity. As seen in the chart above, Afghan refugees are activated more than being subjected or beneficialized in this corpus of US online media news reports. In this corpus, the grammatical expression of role allocation is dominated by social actors in the subject position.

To adequately analyze the representation of activation, the many categories of transitivity (i.e. material, mental, relational, and verbal processes) are studied to investigate how Afghan refugees are indicated in connection to the transitivity

category with which they are related. The following table depicts the activation categories as shown in the corpus of the host nations' online media news reports:

#### 4.1.1.1 Material processes

According to the material process analysis, the movement of Afghan refugees is the most major material process. The material process that depicts **movement** are mostly referring to the way Afghan refugees *fled* their country seeking refuge. For example, “Eight military bases in the U.S. have been temporarily housing the refugees who **fled** after the Taliban toppled Afghanistan’s U.S.-backed government on Aug. 15.”, “the spending measure includes emergency funding for the resettlement of Afghan refugees who **fled** amid the takeover of the country by the Taliban and U.S. military exit”, “The group saw support for refugees **fleeing** Afghanistan in August.” The second most frequent process that depicts the movement of the Afghan refugees is their *arrival* as in “the American people wanted to support Afghans who were **arriving** and help them find safe homes,” and “Afghan refugees who **arrived** in the U.S.” The process of *entering* the US comes next. “Biden said that all of those **evacuated** to the U.S. would undergo "security screenings,"”, “Afghans that were **evacuated** to the United States before they **entered** the country.”

**Accommodation** is another key category of material processes that depicts Afghan refugees in terms of their *habitation*; for example, “6,000 refugees **settled** in permanent homes, while 50,000 remain **housed** at eight military bases.”, “refugees **stay** in brick buildings.”, She says the community has already donated pallets of necessities to be shipped out next week to those **sheltering** in the upper Midwest. The third most significant issue of the material processes related to Afghan refugees is represented by the *assistance* they receive, as in “Afghans to **receive** an education.”, “refugees **receive** clothes.”, “refugees **receive** temporary assistance.” The process of *facing* the challenges comes fourth. For example, “Some Afghans trying to flee country **face** exorbitant costs.”, “Afghans **face** a recently extended 10-foot-high wall.”, “Afghan refugees **struggling** to build a new life in the face of financial difficulty and discrimination.” The fifth process is that of *registration*, as in “Afghan women **register** to see a doctor” The sixth process is *postponement* as in “Afghans **wait** at US bases while worrying about family left behind”. The process of *financial capability* comes next as in “They've **rented** a small apartment, and when they moved in, their landlord came by with a few pounds of halal meat.” And the last process of movement is their *percentages* in the USA as in “37,000 **surpassed** at six bases.”

#### 4.1.1.2 Mental processes

According to the examination of mental processes, Afghan refugees are mostly represented in the corpus of online media news stories of the US in terms of their aspiration as in “While access to housing is essential, many refugees will **need** to find jobs in their new countries to become financially independent.”, “Mahmoodi says her

group finds out what refugees **need**, be it clothing, medical care, or transportation, and they take care of it.” The second process is their *search for necessities* as in “After fleeing the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, some refugees are **seeking** a new life in the UK., CNN's Nada Bashir reports.”, “Minnesota has a strong tradition of welcoming those who **seek** refuge and supporting them to rebuild their lives and become part of our communities,” their letter said.”, “Thousands of Afghans **seeking** to escape the new regime continued to rush to the airport amid violence and several deaths.” The third process of mental processes is *sensory reception*. For example “Mahmoodi stresses, for all the physical things these refugees need, their biggest desire is to **see** a familiar face and hear that everything will be alright.”, “Now they **feel** forgotten. Why doesn't the U.S. care about these people who fought beside them?”, “More grateful foreigners who **feel** indebted to us, who we can claim to have rescued.” Their discovery represents the fourth process as in “Afghans **find** language barriers.”, “one in five refugees **finds** employment in the first year,” “refugees will **find** the support.” The fifth process is of *cognition*, as in “She said she **thought** she might be raped, despite the fact she wasn't even there at the time.”, “Hanna Karimi says, "They love Afghanistan. It's their home, but they **understand** they have to come here and start over.” The sixth process is the *challenges* the refugees face as in “Rahel said he can appreciate the challenges the new arrivals will **face**.”, “Afghans **fear** for their lives.” The seventh process is their *anticipation* as in “Evacuees who fled Afghanistan **prepare** to board buses at Dulles International Airport in Dulles, Virginia, on Aug. 31.”, The last category in mental process is the process of *exhibition*. For example, “On Fox Business Network, he claimed, without evidence, that the U.S. has “no knowledge” of 90% of the people being evacuated and said some have **shown** up on wide-ranging terror databases.”

#### 4.1.1.3 Verbal Processes

The verbal processes represented in this corpus of media news reports of the US represent statements uttered by Afghan refugees. The *narration* process is the most frequent verbal process as in “Asghary **said** they have much to be thankful for.”, “We know what it means to be refugees, they **tell** us.”, “Along with other refugees who **spoke** to reporters, the girl was not identified by age or name under an agreement with South Korean government officials.” The process of *valuation* comes next as in ““I don't want to **complain** because we are in the U.S., and they are trying their best,” he told the Journal.”

#### 4.1.1.4 Relational Processes

The use of the "be verb" to express situations or qualities of Afghan refugees in the US dominates relational processes in the corpus. For example, “Until they are resettled, the refugees **are** stuck in cramped military barracks.” The second category of the relational process is of *ramification* as in “Refugees have become an emerging flashpoint.”, “Vermont has a long history of warmly welcoming refugees who have **become** an integral part of communities across our state," Leahy said. “They have made Vermont stronger.”



#### 4.1.2 Subjection

As stated in the prior chapter, subjection displays social actors as objects in speech. The bulk (99.26 %) of the cases in which Afghan refugees are subjected in this study's corpus of online media news reports of the US portray governments, humanitarian agencies, and contributing countries as dynamic forces in supporting the refugees.

Afghan refugees are frequently depicted as being on the receiving end of hospitality and sympathy from the United States, humanitarian organizations, and contributing countries. As noted in the table above, the most frequent states in which Afghan refugees are in the subjected position are welcoming, help, resettlement, support, and acceptance. This passive positioning of Afghan refugees in the US media news stories is meant to motivate those who acknowledge the refugees' needs while also raising awareness of the enormous presence of Afghan refugees so that the international community could provide financial assistance for those refugees.

Only (0.74 %) of the cases depicted Afghan refugees as invaders. The procedures used to represent the issue of help supplied to Afghan refugees are depicted in the table below:

#### 4.1.3 Beneficialization

As stated in section 2.2.2.5, role allocation of beneficialization reflects how the acts of the doer influence social actors. According to Van Leeuwen (2008: p.34), this form of role allocation indicates the "participant is recipient or client in relation to a material activity, or receiver in relation to a verbal process." According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), the prepositions "to" and "for" are used to convey the beneficiary status of social actors in speech.

The help that Afghan refugees get from the US, contributing countries, relief groups, and activists is the only beneficialized status of Afghan refugees. The following table shows where this category appears in the corpus:

#### 4.2 Genericization and Specification

As stated in section 2.2.2.5.1, a generic reference categorizes social actors into a group, whereas a specific reference categorizes the social actor exclusively. This study denotes generic references by nouns without articles and definite articles, whereas proper nouns denote special references.

Generic references without determiners are used more frequently in the corpus of online media news reports from the host nations than generic references with determiners. This phenomenon is depicted in the table below:

Table 3: Genericization with, and without, determiners.

Genericization (plurals without determiners)	Genericization (plurals with determiners)
N = 666 (87%)	N = 8 (13%)

It's important to notice that the Genericization categories are similar to the role allocation categories; therefore, it is redundant to include the same tables of activation, subjection, and beneficialization.

The technique of genericization, according to Van Leeuwen (2008), is designed to symbolically remove social actors from "the readers' view of direct experience, depicted as faraway "others" rather as persons with whom "we" have to interact in our daily lives." (p.36).

“Busloads of *refugees* arrived for processing at the Dulles Expo Center in Fairfax County, Virginia.”, “The U.S. government is able to help (*refugees*) find things like housing or a new job.”, “Barack Obama - have banded together behind a new group aimed at supporting *refugees* from Afghanistan settling in the United States.”, “They were from Afghanistan, part of a wave of *refugees* newly resettled in Arizona after escaping the Taliban regime.”

#### 4.2.1 Specification

Specification is used to give Afghan refugees a voice and to sensitively depict them so that they may be identified as humans with whom the reader can connect. This point is reinforced by the widespread usage of refugees' accounts of the problems they are experiencing or have experienced. The corpus contains the following examples of specification:

“*Asghary* said his daughter, especially, liked all the food.” , “*Asghary* said they have much to be thankful for: "We may have more opportunities in our life in our hands.”, “We just really hope to represent Afghanistan and Afghan music," *Elham* said.” , “Don't lose hope. You did a lot," *Elham* said of American soldiers who served in Afghanistan, some of whom were disheartened by the Taliban takeover.”

#### 4.3 Assimilation

As stated previously in this study, assimilation refers to social actors as individuals or as a group. Aggregation and collectivization are the two kinds of assimilation. The former is conveyed by terms that signify a community, whereas definite and indefinite quantifiers depict the latter.

### 4.3.1 Aggregation

Definite quantifiers mostly evidence aggregation in the corpus of US online media news reports. However, indefinite quantifiers also persist.

Table 4: Use and frequency of the indefinite quantifiers

Indefinite articles	Frequency
thousands of 34	19.88 %
many 25	14.61 %
more than 20	11.70 %
about 19	11.11 %
number of 18	10.52 %
more 13	7.60 %
some 13	7.60 %
most 8	4.70 %
around 5	2.92 %
nearly 5	2.92 %
several 4	2.33 %
fewer than 3	1.75 %
hundreds of 2	1.16 %
almost 1	0.60 %
few 1	0.60 %

The most frequently occurring indefinite quantifiers are **thousands of** (19.88%) as in “Inside the effort to resettle **thousands of** Afghans, **many** (14.61 %) as in “**Many** of the Afghans who arrived in the U.S. this summer”, **more than** (11.70 %) “VanHerck said that slightly **more than** 4,000 refugees have completed all medical and security screenings.”, **about** (11.11 %) as in “**About** 9,000 refugees have been resettled in the US, with more to come.”, **number of** (10.52 %) as in “Airbnb says it has doubled the **number of** Afghan refugees it plans to temporarily house”, **more** (7.60 %) as in “**more** Afghan refugees continue to arrive.”, **some** (7.60 %) as in “Harry and Meghan speak to **some** of the Afghans who arrived.”, **most** (4.70 %) as in “California has taken the **most** Afghans overall, with over 31,000 war-time arrivals”.

**around** (2.92%) as in “The New York Times, at least 50,000 Afghans will be admitted into the U.S. within the next month, and **around** 31,000 have already arrived and are being processed.”, **nearly** (2.92%) as in “The Biden administration to place **nearly** 37,000 refugees in U.S. communities.”, **several** (2.33%) as in “Just as concerning, **several** Afghans housed on military bases across the country have already been indicted for crimes, including crimes against children and against American service members.”, **fewer than** (1.75 %) as in “Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana and North Dakota are all set to resettle **fewer than** 100 Afghans.”, **hundreds of** (1.16 %) as in “The evacuation involved about 40 embassy staff working 24/7 in shifts, the ambassador said, processing **hundreds of** refugees arriving on three aircraft a day.” , **almost**(0.60%) as in “Almost none of 82,000 refugees from Kabul were vetted” , **few** (0.60%) as in “officials relayed that **few** Afghans know their birthday””

There are hundreds of instances in this corpus of research where definite quantifiers are used in relation to Afghan refugees in the US, such as " Rescue Committee urged the E.U. to resettle **30,000** Afghans " , "**44%** of Afghans housed at US military bases " , "The United States verified the identities of approximately **150** Afghans after gaining access to the last group in mid-October." , "There are **55,600** Afghans at US bases".

### 4.3.2 Collectivization

Afghan refugees are shown as a huge, undifferentiated swarm in collective representations. In the corpus, Afghan refugees are often collected using several terms, such as:

Table 5: Expressions referring to collectivization

Arrivals (N=12) 85.72%	(They work with the <i>arrivals</i> to help them.)
Newcomers (N=1) 7.14 %	(The group is to provide support to Afghan <i>newcomers</i> .)
Invaders (N=1)7.14 %	(They're painting Afghan refugees as <i>invaders</i> . There are undertones even of racism here.)

### 4.4 Association

This category, as mentioned previously, refers to occasions in which groups of social actors are represented as engaging in the same activity or sharing a common

interest. Association conditions (denoted by with) or coordinated nominal groupings can both be used to express association. There are ten distinct themes in which requirements of accompanying are applied in the corpus of the online media news reports of the US. The following table depicts these themes and their frequency in the corpus:

The most frequent subject of association, which refers to the Afghan refugees being connected with the US community, is the subject of work. It refers to the Afghans as working with the US and the US forces. This subject makes up 57.60% of the connection between the Afghans and the US community and the US forces. The second most frequent subject of association is the subject of evacuation. It makes up 15.20%. The third most frequent subject is a matter of entertainment. It refers to the US forces playing football with the Afghans. This subject makes up 6.20 %. All the other subjects make up 3.0%, as stated in the table above.

#### 4.5 Indetermination

Social actors are shown as anonymous entities in this category. This study will concentrate solely on the exophoric reference "*they*." There are 179 occurrences of the exophoric term "they" being used to refer to host country and Afghan refugees in the corpus of online media news broadcasts from host countries. The table below shows the subjects, frequency, and instances of how the term "they" is used to refer to Afghan refugees.

'They' is also used to refer to host nations or persons from the host communities in the corpus of the online media news reports of the host countries. This category is represented in the table below:

When the pronoun 'they' is used to refer to the Afghans, it is mostly used with themes as: *need, settlement work, arrival* and many other themes that can refer to what refugees need, and when it is used to the US as a host country, it used with a *sense of sympathy*. It signifies that the Americans sympathize with the Afghans as it is used with subjects such as processing, settlement, accepting, work, flying evacuees, welcoming, etc.

#### 4.6 Identification

Social actors are distinguished "not by what they accomplish, but by what they are, more or less constantly or inevitably" (Van Leeuwen, 2008: p.42). Afghan refugees are mostly classified based on gender and age, according to an examination of categorization in the corpus of US online media news reports.



Table 6: Use of gender and age to refer to Afghan refugees

Gender and age	Frequency %
Children (N= 53)	55.80
Women (N= 28)	29.47
Men (N= 14)	14.73

Gender and age are frequently combined since the majority of refugees are women and children, like "The official claims eighty percent of them are *women*, *men* and *children*," , "44% Afghans housed are *children*." , "34% of the refugees are adult *men*, 22% are adult *women*." , "These *men* and *women* served alongside U.S".

## 5 Conclusion

According to the role allocation study, the US media refer to Afghans as refugees and Afghan refugees. This is to demonstrate that Americans have a higher level of sympathy for Afghans; hence, Afghans are represented using movement with relatively neutral verbs (as in flee and arrive).

Afghan refugees are subjected to completely positive verbs. Afghans are characterized by verbs such as (welcome, help, support, resettle, accept, house, assist, allow, etc.) Afghans are referred to as (arrivals, newcomers, invaders) in the subcategory of collectivization. This particular theme is portrayed in the corpus in which Afghans are depicted negatively. 'THEY' is used, in the subcategory of indetermination, to refer to Afghans. When Afghans are referred to using verbs such as (need, arrive, work, resettle, say, want, receive) this means that the American media is using neutral verbs, not negative ones.

Ultimately, the representation of the Afghan refugees in the online media news reports appears to be done in a positive way. This is to demonstrate that the Americans feel guilty, because they feel responsible for the situation in there.

## References

- Becker, H. S. (2007). ASA Convention. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 70(2), 101–102. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019027250707000201>
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. UK: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N., & Wodak, R. (1997). *Critical Discourse Analysis*. In T. van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction* (Vol. 2, pp. 258-284). London: Sage.

Flowerdew, J. (2020). *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies (Routledge Handbooks in Applied Linguistics) (1st ed.)*. Routledge.

Halliday, M., & Matthiessen, C. (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar*. UK: Arnold.

Holmes, S. M., & Castañeda, H. (2016). Representing the “European refugee crisis” in Germany and beyond: Deservingness and difference, life and death. *American Ethnologist*, 43(1), 12-24.

O’Keeffe, A. (2006). *Investigating Media Discourse*. UK: Routledge.

Richardson, J. E. (2007). *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Simpson, P., & Mayr, A. (2009). *Language and power: A resource book for students*. UK: Routledge.

Talbot, M. (2007). *Media discourse: Representation and interaction*. UK: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.

Van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *Discourse and Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Widdowson, H. G. (2000). Critical Practices: On Representations and the Interpretation of Text. In S. Sarangi, & M. Coulthard (Eds.), *Discourse and Social Life* (pp. 155-169). London: Longman.

Wodak, R. (1989). *Language, Power and Ideology: Studies in political discourse (Critical Theory)*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Wodak, R. (2001). The discourse-historical approach. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp.63-93). UK: Sage.