

Politics of Hijab in British Media

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to probe into the instances of discrimination against Muslim women in Britain. The truth behind this discrimination may indicate the stigmatization of Muslim women who wear head or face covers (HWMW). Critical discourse analysis (CDA), through Van Dijk's framework (1991) is used to deconstruct the language of newspapers' headlines in electronic media. The qualitative study encompasses the headlines' pursuing force in political terms to construct the social order and people's mindset. The data is taken in the form of a corpus from various British newspapers during the years 2016-2017. The analysis determines the manipulative use of language to build the societal and political hegemony and direction of public opinion. The findings may also provide awareness into the discourse practices to depict potentially obscured and intense messages displaying and inciting racism in a multicultural society (Kelly, 2005).

Keywords: *Critical discourse analysis, discrimination speech*

INTRODUCTION

The Arabic word hijab means to cover or to screen. Scarf is also used to depict the head covering of Muslim women. Usually, both words are used interchangeably, but the connotation of the *hijab*⁶ is specifically linked with Muslims while the *scarf*⁷ is just a piece of clothing. For the purpose of this paper, the *hijab* denotes a veil or headscarf which covers the hair of Muslim women and is also Muslim women's religious and cultural identity (Galadari, 2012). In the present day, the hijab is perceived as an Islamic symbol. Muslim women's right to wear hijab has been

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⁶ According to the Oxford Dictionary (2020) hijab is defined as "a piece of clothing that covers the head, worn in public by some Muslim women."

⁷ Scarf is defined as "a piece of cloth that is worn around the neck, for example to keep warm or for decoration. Women also wear scarves over their shoulders or hair." Ibid.

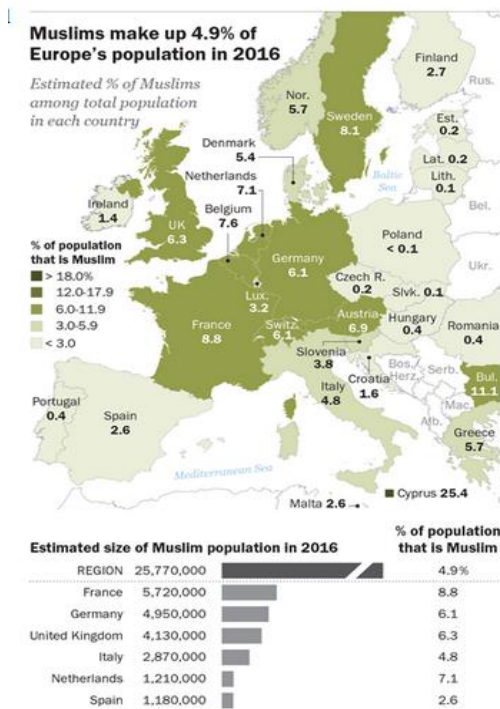
fervently challenged by some governments, and consequently defended by Muslim communities (Kılıç, Saharso, & Sauer, 2008). The traditional clothing worn by Muslim women, covering their head (hijab) has been the focus of frequent vicious media discussions. The hijab debate signifies the clash of cultures wafted by connections between so called Islamic extremism and terrorism. There is a ban on wearing hijab in some European countries such as France, which implemented it in the name of secularism, as well as to protect their fashion industry. In this situation, Muslim women are depicted as oppressed victims of the headscarf by European media. On the other hand, in some countries, wearing hijab and full covering (burqa) is obligatory for women such as in Afghanistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. Therefore, in European eyes, women in these countries have less freedom of choice as compared to what they enjoy in other countries.

The European governments (and white majority, who used the meaning of hijab as oppression and violence for Muslim women before), have changed their ideology about Muslim women in the wake of terrorist attacks by some groups that call themselves Muslims (Mishra, 2007). Currently, the hijab has transformed into a vehicle that may help hide the people who would like to indulge in some extremist activities. Among these incidents, a recent example is, "*female terror suspect, 21, shot by armed forces wearing long dress and hijab*" (Glanfield, 2017). Armed forces caught two other suspects and they appeared in a video link from prison in veil, though they were not Muslims. Hence, furthering misconceptions of equalizing Islam to terrorism. European governments have regarded the veil from altered political, institutional, and societal points of view, resulting in different attitudes, restraints, and rules for wearing of hijab but these views have not lead them to take identical policy measures.

The ban on full-face veil in communal institutions has been imposed in France, Belgium, and Austria. Austria stepped ahead and warned that it would fine women who wear the full veil in public whereas in the United Kingdom, it is the discretion of school heads to decide whether the veil can be worn or not. Nevertheless, Muslim women who wear the headscarf feel discriminated against when looking for employment. According to the Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (2017), 35% of Muslim women reported feel discriminated against on the basis of clothing choices when looking for employment. 22% of Muslim women also feel discriminated against based on clothing in their workplace. In addition, 9% were prevented from wearing a headscarf or praying apart from other religious practices. The same report states that only 15% of women who feel discriminated against, actually report it. A further, 31% of HWMW suffered harassment due to their ethnicity or immigrant background. Nevertheless, clothing is fundamentally relevant for women when speaking about discrimination. Also, 19% of Muslim women cite religion as a reason for the discrimination they have suffered as

compared to 16% of Muslim men. The following figure shows the percentages of Muslims living in Europe per country. In the British context, this is 6.3% with a total of 4, 130,000 people.

Figure 1. Muslim Population in Europe in 2016



Source: Pew Research Center
 Estimates (2017)

Research questions

- Q1. How does discrimination against the hijab spread through newspaper headlines in Britain?
- Q2. What are the linguistic topographies that help understand the perpetuation of discrimination regarding headscarves and veil wearing women in British newspapers' headlines?
- Q3. What implications of banning and discrimination against the veil in a multicultural society are represented by British newspapers' headlines?

LITERATURE REVIEW

News discourse analysis reverts back to the scholarly work produced by Van Dijk

Limitations of the study

This research only focuses on the prevailing perspective about the hijab and veil in British newspaper headlines.

1 Objectives

The research will assist to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To examine the ways in which the press in Britain covers 'ethnic' or 'racial' events attributed to hijab and Muslim women.
- ii. To study the structures and contents of media discourse (headlines) revealing the relationship between text and context.

(2011) and Fairclough (2013). There is a range of theories in the discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis that investigates the process of migration (Permyakova & Antineskul, 2016). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) recognizes social problems that have rambling characteristics (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). The study of ethnic groups through discourse analysis is associated with acculturational research (Berry, 2001). Wood and King (2013) find that the media plays a vibrant role in which media artists and customers as well as emigrants and marginalized groups make sense of multiculturalism and its magnitudes.

This study aims to address the discrepancies about the hijab portrayed in British Press. British Muslims consider that a massive amount of unfavorable stereotyping is found in the reporting of Muslims and Islam (Abbas, 2001). Similarly, Muslim women are not free from this stereotyping. This sensitivity is vindicated when media reflects the mounting indication of Islamophobia across different social circles and media itself (Allen, 2010). In earlier media reports, Muslim women have been symbolized as 'passive' and 'oppressed' (Al-Hejin, 2014). An unnecessary attention to the hijab which is connected with backwardness and oppression and tends to be associated with terrorism (Bullock, 2002; Khiabany & Williamson, 2011). Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery (2013) discovered in their study that the most common collocations of Muslims was women showing a tendency of dressing with a headscarf as negative predications. That endorses the importance of Muslim women in making the macrostructure of media discourse by the fact that the use of hijab by HWMW bothers some sectors of the non-Muslim population.

These kinds of stereotypes are widespread in Europe as shown by two opinion polls in Germany in which emerging themes are oppression of women (93%) and terror (83%) (EUMC, 2006). According to YouGov (2010), in recent polls, 69% of non-Muslim respondents in Britain assumed that 'Islam encourages the subjugation of women.' Moreover, non-Muslims in the US, Britain, France, Germany, and Spain believe that Muslims have the least respect for women (Pew, 2011). On the other hand, an investigation conducted at local and global levels by Gallup between 2001 and 2007 (Esposito & Mogahed, 2007) shows that a majority of Muslim women and men are in favor of women's work and right to vote. This is the context in which British media offers the headlines about hijab and Muslim women. In a multicultural society, the political discourse is associated with understanding and responding to the challenges linked with diverse cultural and religious issues. Since the proponents of multiculturalism have rejected the idea of the 'melting pot', so ethnic minority groups of a society do not need to assimilate their cultural and religious identity (Rattansi, 2011) and if they keep their religious and ethnic identities, the differences are obvious.

David Miller (2005) states that ethnic association is subjected to individual uniqueness, and therefore individuals are not assumed to give up, so the requirement

of a given culture should be flexible. Interestingly, in Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland religious rituals of animal slaughter have been banned but Jews and Muslims are allowed to slaughter animals when they have been anesthetized before killing.

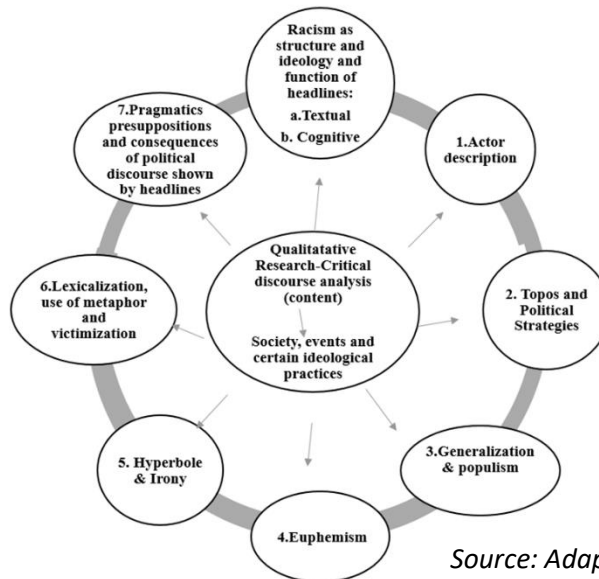
Weichselbaumer (2016) focuses on immigrant determined varieties and the concerns kept for Muslim ethnic groups and anxiety about hijab or veil is one of them. The issue of the hijab is more evident in Europe, where Muslims represent a significant segment of the total migrant population. There are many interpretations of the veil in every society. To most, it classifies culture, religion, or identity while some consider it a symbol of freedom. However, all people agree that it is a symbolic expression in society (Geertz, 1973).

Hessini (1994) indicates several models of Muslim women living in Islamic societies who wear hijab out of belief and consider it an expression of identity. They believe that revoking to prohibit a human being from expressing their religious identity is illegitimate and contradictory to the laws of human rights. Therefore, many European countries claim that women's headscarves and veils are not religious symbols. In this way, they tend to sidetrack the issue pretending that they are trying to address the security issues instead of suppressing the freedom of religious expression. There are noticeably increasing debates between those who demand the elimination of all spiritual codes in a community, those who fancy imposing them in public life, and those who argue for freedom of religious choice and expressions (Van Dijk, 1991).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative study of contents and structures of the news headlines by conducting content analysis, which is one of the approaches of critical discourse analysis (CDA). Since discourse shapes societal mindset through a specific way of using language to influence people (Fairclough, 2003), it can be analyzed in relation to society, events, and certain ideological practices (Van Dijk, 2011). The discourse of headlines of newspaper articles or news reports are analyzed following the ideological categories presented by Van Dijk (2006, p.735). These include actor description, topos, authority (argumentation), comparison, political strategy, counterfactuals, euphemism and rhetoric, generalization, populism, hyperbole, implication, irony, lexicalization, metaphor, hyperbole, victimization, and presupposition.

Hence, CDA, via an adaptation of Van Dijk's model was used to deconstruct the language of newspapers' headlines in electronic media to reveal the manifold-connotations informing the selected headlines about discernment and banning of hijab.

Figure 2. Theoretical framework for the current study

Source: Adapted from Van Dijk, (2006)

As the diagram shows the following features will be analyzed in each of the headlines:

1. Actor description
2. Topos and political strategies
3. Generalization and populism
4. The presence of euphemisms and how they are utilized positively or negatively.
5. Use of hyperbole or irony, to what ends?
6. Lexicalization, use of metaphors, and victimization
7. Pragmatic presuppositions and consequences of political discourse portrayed by the headlines.

Data collection

Constitution of the corpus

Through purposive sampling technique, 10 headlines of the articles from the Guardian, BBC News, the Independent, the Sun, and the Daily Mail are selected for analysis, from January 2016 to December 2017 to provide the gist of the news narratives to realize the purpose of the content analysis encapsulating all main ideas of the news bulletin. Out of all of these newspapers, The Guardian is the only one

that is not conservative. One of the main challenges of studying press articles is arriving at valid conclusions considering the time-consuming nature of CDA. In another article, the authors engaged in a quantitative analysis of headlines. However, this analysis is purely qualitative and is based on the social and cultural views and representations of British society. It is important to keep in mind the fact that news headlines are what attract the readers towards a particular news item and they acquire prominence through diffusion. They also have an important role in influencing the reader, guiding him/her, and producing evocations or a particular cultural context. In turn, they create national representations. In this context, the headlines are usually credible due to the fact that these newspapers are not new and have been printing news for many years. Their reader base already has trust built for whatever they publish. There is a natural trust when an institution has a reputation and years of operation behind them. There may be a question on the validity of the data at the current time (2020) since it took time to collect the data and analyze it. However, headlines from the last two years (2019-2020) are similar and serve as a confirmation that the situation continues in the same manner and is relevant even after 2 years.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION:

After the initial discussion on social practices linked with the hijab, the study probes into the ideological and socio-political functions of headlines. Headlines are what attract the readers towards particular news. Headlines about ethnic events such as racist attitudes towards hijab wearing-women have a special place in the outlining of these events. The following section reveals the conceptual implications of the headlines from a socio-political perspective.

Actor description

Example 1: The Guardian 31-05-2018

Burqa bans, headscarves and veils: a timeline of legislation in the west, European states have moved over the years to outlaw Muslim headwear in public (Weaver, 2017)

The drive to ban headscarves and veils has been on the rise in Europe. The European court of justice has decided that banning of the hijab would be at the discretion of employers. The first debate about banning the hijab began in France in 2004 and it is now widespread in most countries in Europe (Weaver, 2017). According to Van Dijk, specific ideologies determine the description of actors in any discourse (2007). The in-group members are described impartially or affirmatively and out-group members are depicted adversely. Likewise, negative descriptions of 'our' group are alleviated and other members are liked with negative attributes.

Example 2: The Guardian 31-04-2016

French PM calls for ban on Islamic headscarves at universities: Manuel Valls also claims most French people think Islam is incompatible with values of the Republic (Chrisafis, 2016)

Examples 1 and 2 reflect the dominance of government and society on ethnic minorities. Also, these may highlight the hidden ideology with dominant nature to legitimize power abuse by dominant groups to transform such dominance into hegemony (Gramsci, 1971). As the dominant group equates headscarves with terrorism, it considers the hijab a symbol of violence. There is a shift about Muslim women in European media, which represented them as oppressed and enslaved before, but after incidents such as 9/11 and several attacks in London and Paris by some Muslim groups, Muslim women seem to have become terrorists according to various countries' media channels.

Topos and Political Strategy

Argumentation against hijab is mostly grounded on different typical opinions, which denotes the properties that are taken for granted, as obvious and adequate motives to consent with inference (Van Dijk, 2007). One of the topoi of anti-hijab discourse is that Islam is not compatible with the values of the country. In example 2, the French PM not only claims the incompatibility of Islam but also inclusively pronounces the mindset of all French people about Islam. To claim that most people view Islam as being incompatible with the principles of the state, the French PM is including non-Muslims and excluding Muslims in his narrative.

Generalization and populism

The above instance highlights the generalization of people by the French PM, such as 'most people think'. This kind of discourse is utilized to frame bigotries generalizing undesirable individualities of others, as in this case the nouns, Muslims and Islam make the headline discourse racist. In this way, political leaders in a populist stratagem may generalize the detrimental approaches against hijab-wearing Muslim women.

Euphemism

The rhetorical device euphemism is also used in the news headline to create a general opinion. To present the self positively and avoid the negative impression formation by others is one of the macro strategies of political and ideological discourses (Van Dijk, 2007). Thus, negative attitudes about hijabi women are often alleviated in political talk as shown in example 4. On the one hand, parliament members take the instance

of hijab banning, on the other hand, police catch the man who pulls off the hijab of a woman thus demonstrating the positive impact of police on the readers' consciousness. Consequently, the action of pulling off the hijab is mitigated by the highlighting of the police intervention in the matter.

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a rhetorical device for the amplification of connotation (Van Dijk, 2000, p. 354). Within the inclusive approach to represent the self positively and others negatively hyperbole is used as in the following example.

Example 3: The Sun

'YOU ARE NOT SAFE' Muslim Londoner films shocking moment airport staff 'refuse to let her fly unless she removes her hijab'. Passenger said she saw nuns passing through security without being asked to remove their headscarves (Knox, 2017)

Occasionally hyperbole is inferred by the use of distinct adjectives, as it can be witnessed in the airport staff's use of the word 'SAFE' and the way The Sun highlights it. At Ciampino Airport in Rome, the capital of Italy, a woman security official says, "You could hide something in your hair. If you don't take it off, we do not know if there's something inside, okay? You are not safe for us." Usually, speakers do not say everything they believe, because it is understood according to the context and situation, but in this instance the security official's attitude is apparent. It can be noticed in the above headline and conversation that readers do not need to infer meaning. On the contrary, nuns were observed passing without any enquiry. In fact, meanings are obvious in the debate about hijab which can be interpreted as biased or racist towards Muslim women only. The debate at the airport to take off the hijab shows approach and the construction of a mental model regarding hijab demonstrating the power dynamics of the society between various sections of non-Muslims and Muslims.

Irony

Example 4: The Sun 22-07-20216

The hijab is a religious statement... would TV regulators allow a Christian cross that prominent? Sun columnist says telly presenters shouldn't wear artifacts that advertise their religion (MacKenzie, 2016)

Example 5: The Sun

Why did Channel 4 have a presenter in a hijab fronting coverage of Muslim terror in Nice? Would C4 have used a Hindu to report on the carnage at the Golden temple of Amritsar... of course not (MacKenzie, 2016)

The Sun's former editor Kelvin Mackenzie raised the question about a hijab-wearing presenter, Fatima Manji fronting the Channel News coverage on the night of the Nice lorry massacre. A cargo truck purposely collided with a public gathering who were celebrating Bastille Day in Nice, France, on 14 July, 2016. As a result, 86 people died and 458 were injured. He objected to Channel 4 (C4) for sending Muslim anchors to cover the massacre when the attacker was a Muslim. He asked C4 if it would have used a Hindu to report on the carnage at the Golden Temple of Amritsar and responds himself in the negative.

Van Dijk (2007) suggested that allegations in news discourse might be more effective when they are not made absolute, because they encroached face restraints, but in the form of irony. Consequently, there is ample irony in the shared criticism of Hindus and Christians in both headlines for face-saving. Conversely, he suggested that C4 and its presenter should have fronted the documentary of second class Muslim women. The comments about Hindus and Christians crossed the lines of sanity and Muslim women served to derogate the criticism which he was facing, such as using a Hindu on the carnage at the Golden Temple.

According to Ms. Manji, the article breached clauses of accuracy, harassment, and discrimination. The Independent Press Standards Organisation (Ipsos) allowed Kelvin to explain his point of view in the background of a terrorist attack which was carried out apparently in the name of Islam. There is also a satirical and dual-standard situation when the former editor passed racist remarks about the footballer Ross Barkley calling him a gorilla; he was suspended, and later he resigned. On the other hand, officials cleared Kelvin MacKenzie after the hijab article complaints and the Sun supported his action as freedom of speech (MacKenzie, 2016). In many cases "freedom of press serves the purpose of demonizing a specific community or culture just because of a religious or cultural difference." (Maldonado Garcia, 2016).

Lexicalization, use of metaphor, and victimization

There are particular underlying beliefs and concepts in specific lexical items to analyze hijab debates. The same meanings can be represented in different words depending upon the purpose and context of news headlines.

Example 6: The Sun

‘THIS IS A HATE CRIME! ‘Fury as Muslim McDonald’s customer was told by the staff to take off her headscarf. The 19-year-old said she had ‘never faced such discrimination’ and the fast food chain has now apologized (Wheatstone, 2017)

This is one of the very thought-provoking and eye-opening discriminatory moments happening in Britain. The remarks about the hijab ban by David Cameron in 2016 and the ban on hijab in different European countries may lead to these kinds of incidents. The above headline is one of the two racist forms of discourse given by Van Dijk (2000) that is, racist discourse directed at ethnically *others*. The choice of words to show the anger of the HWMW who is refused to serve at McDonald is confrontational. The words HATE and CRIME in capital seem linked with that woman. The word fury is more intensive than anger and irritation. The word crime is used metaphorically to express the anger of HWMW. The Sun also includes the apology of the food chain. Moreover, it states the fact by implicitly leaving the negative impression of the Muslim woman while an apology of the food chain is represented as a positive action. In fact, the woman is a victim of a racist attitude, but in the headline, she is represented as being ferocious. This categorization is embedded with ideological norms and beliefs.

Pragmatics, presuppositions and consequences of political discourse shown by headlines

Van Dijk emphasizes that discourses are like axiomatic icebergs because they have imprecise meanings which are not articulated but presumed to be identified and can be inferred from overall sociocultural awareness. Van Dijk advocates that presuppositions are firmly used to adopt the reality of some proposition when it is not proven, on the contrary, the above instances and example 7 demonstrate the established truth of the racist attitude with HWMW. It can be perceived when a German university Professor, Gisela Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, at the University of Würzburg in 1991 was accused of "discrimination" after asking students to take off their headscarves during the lecture because she said that the lecture hall was a secular space; university students considered it to be public humiliation.

Example 7: BBC News

Headscarf row: German university lecturer ‘humiliates’ Muslim: A row has erupted in Germany after a university lecturer told a Muslim woman she should remove her headscarf. (BBC Reporter, 2017)

The depicted situation may be instigated by the political discourse of those people who are in power and in the race of getting more power, such as Angela Merkel's political speech (6 December 2016, BBC) in Christian Democratic Union (CDU) meeting about banning of hijab wherever it is possible.

Example 8: BBC News

Angela Merkel endorses burka ban 'wherever legally possible'. (BBC Reporter, 2016)

BBC sees it as political symbolism which may show her faithfulness with the country's non-Muslim and secular population. Angela Merkel has faced substantial party and public apprehensions about the integration of about a million refugees. This kind of political statement by a powerful political leader may lead the people to draw micro and macro narratives enhancing the dominant ideology of the majority (Van Dijk, 2002, p. 30). Similarly, Britain Ex-Prime Minister's statement (Dominiczak & Swinford, 2016) about the face veil in which he claims that Muslim women should remove face veil to look proper and sensible meaning that hijab-wearing and face covering are insensible acts that prevent the integration of Muslim women in a multicultural and multi-faith society.

Example 9: The Daily mail

Anti-immigrant group confuses Muslim women with bus seats. Members of Fatherland first group described the chair as 'tragic' and 'scary'. (Matthews, 2017)

Underneath is the picture in question.

A Norwegian anti-immigration Facebook group has been left red-faced after they confused burka-clad Muslim women with bus seats. The Daily Mail (2017).

Figure 3. Empty Bus Seats assumed as Hijab-Wearing Muslim Women

Source: The Daily Mail (2017)

The discourse about the hijab has gained much electronic and print media's attention. News of this kind has succeeded in building an ideology and a mindset in a way that could consider empty bus seats as terrifying women sitting in burkas. The other mainstream newspapers have used the word 'mistake' while the daily mail writes the word 'confuses'. This is also a positive representation of anti-immigrant groups to reduce the irrationality of the situation. In fact, it shows the implicit belief of the white majority behind the veil of 'confuse and mistake'. It is the second form of racist discourse about ethnically different 'others' explained by Van Dijk (2007).

Example 10: The Independent

London attack: Muslim woman photographed on Westminster Bridge during terror incident speaks out. (England and Pasha-Robinson, 2017)

It may be obvious from the above headline how Islamic hijab is linked with words used as adjectives as well as nouns, such as scary, terrorists, and weapons respectively. It also indicates that the Islamic hijab has become the flashpoint for European discussions over integration, radicalism, and autonomous religious practices in recent years. These headlines may be the result of presuppositions about Muslims and the hijab in the mind of Western dominant groups.

The Photographer has also criticized those who have taken the image out of context to push a 'hate agenda' Lorriman, J. *The Independent* (2017).

Figure 4. The woman faced criticism while passing by the injured



The Hijab wearing woman was criticized because social media users had considered her unconcerned about the injured. Though, the picture itself is a witness of her anxiety and it is more apparent in figure 4, people perceived differently. The photographer also condemns this attitude of taking the picture out of context.

But people jumped to her defense when a photograph showed that she looked distressed and horrified after walking down Westminster Bridge

Figure 5. Anxiety is apparent on the woman's face



The *Independent* and *The Daily Mail* use the words she speaks out, which may represent anger and impression of shouting, but *The Guardian* uses the word responds that is rather positive. The use of lexical verbs in that way also shows the newspapers' policies to represent others. Likewise, it also reveals the ideology of the non-Muslim majority about the Muslim women wearing hijab, that is, the readers thought she must be indifferent just because she is wearing hijab and she is

Muslim, so she does not care about any person and maybe, she belongs to a terrorist group (stereotype intended), as media creates social representations and shapes the readers' minds. Due to this sort of attitude these women may also face discrimination in getting jobs. The Chair of Women and Equalities Select Committee, Maria Miller says that discernment against HWMW is the last form of acceptable discrimination (Bingham, 2016).

CONCLUSION

The discussion on hijab and its representation in the British media has revealed that headlines are systematic parts of news reports. They articulate the most fundamental words of newspaper articles and reports and cannot be disregarded due to their decisive position, meaning, and perceived implications. They are expressive in nature and portray the entire picture in news reports anticipating a news event as they see it. Headlines are what attracts the readers towards a particular news. Headlines about ethnic events such as racist attitudes towards hijab wearing-women have a special place in the outlining of these events. The study found that the description of events is rarely positive about hijab, though it may sometimes be neutral and often negative. The headlines in the conservative press generally use intense words as nouns, adjectives, and different forms of verbs. It was found that the lexical style of the right-wing press is intense and antagonistic while The Guardian's headlines appear to be softly articulated about minorities, with the most obvious cases being those of the woman on Westminster Bridge. The same is true for ideological arguments, such as the French PM's statement about the incompatibility of Islam ("Macron warning on stigmatizing Muslims amid France veil row" (BBC News 17th October, 2019), and "French government resists calls for school trip headscarf ban" (The Guardian, 16th October, 2019), where the difference in ideology is clear. Thus, the viewpoint of minority groups and of those who sympathize with them, not only hits the headlines very rarely, but is also questioned reflecting the racism and double standards about Muslim minority and non-Muslim dominant majority. The fight for or against the headscarf is far from over in Europe; it has just been softened by the COVID pandemic which hit the world at a time when it was not prepared for it.

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