

Investigating the Role of Conceptual Metaphor in the Representation of Syrian Human Crisis in British Newspaper Articles: A Cognitive Approach

Abstract

This thesis tackles the representation of the Syrian human crisis through the conceptual metaphor of the “Other”. It particularly tackles the role of conceptual metaphor in the representation of the Syrian human crisis in western media. Western mainstream media has depicted the Syrian human crisis in terms of refugee and migrant metaphor. The oscillation between the two labels is instrumental in deciding the politics and the stance towards the Syrian crisis. Utilizing Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory and its cross-domain mapping, along with Van Dijk’s (1995) Ideological Square, the thesis examines the use of conventionalized and novel conceptual metaphors to highlight the representation of the Syrian human crisis in British newspaper articles. In this thesis, 100 newspaper articles about the Syrian human crisis are collected from three British newspapers (*The Guardian, The Daily Mail and the Daily Telegraph*) in the period between 2014 and 2016. The software “AntConc” is used to quantify the data and findings. The thesis concludes with a discussion of how British mainstream media makes use of conceptual metaphor to portray Syrian refugees as a THREAT, OBJECTS, WATER, ANIMALS and ILLNESS/DISEASE. Moreover, the frequent use of pronouns “them, they, these and those” indicates social distance and contributes to the representation of Syrian refugees as the “Other”. Additionally, “immigrants” and “asylum seekers” are also used in addition to “refugees” to label Syrians. The oscillation between these labels highlights the strategy mainstream media follows to strip Syrian refugees from the official rights identified by the United Nations.

Key words: *conceptual metaphor, cross-domain mapping, cognitive linguistics, mainstream media representation, Syrian human crisis, refugees, immigrants, the Other, racism.*