A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Representation of Ukrainian Refugees Across the British Mainstream News Media

Imam Munandar*1
Saiful Akmal2

1English Language Studies and Education, Faculty of Education, Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Takengon, Takengon, Aceh, 24519, INDONESIA
2Department of English Language Education, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh 23111, INDONESIA

Abstract
This research investigates the dominant rhetorical/discursive strategies in the British mainstream news media regarding their reports on Ukrainian refugees in the United Kingdom (UK). While news media have negatively constructed the non-European refugees, as previous studies have revealed, this research is unique because it specifically focuses on European refugees as its research sample. The ultimate objective was to demonstrate how the news media in the UK portrayed the incoming Ukrainian refugees on British soil. The data were 40 Ukrainian-refugee-related news reports published in four mainstream news media in the UK from March until July 2022. The data was then analysed by using Wodak’s Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), consisting of six analytical categories: Referential, Predication, Argumentation (Topoi), Perspectivisation, Mitigation, and Intensification (Reisigl & Wodak, 2008). The research found that regardless of their ideologies, all four news media consistently employed the discursive strategies of humanization and individualization and pervasively established a positive argumentative strategy on Ukrainian refugees. These dominant strategies depict a positive representation of Ukrainian refugees. Moreover, despite the overall negative picture of third-world refugees in British news media, the finding of this research is distinctive from the previous ones, showing that the British news media actively constructed the Ukrainian refugees positively and

* Corresponding author, email: imameducator002@gmail.com


Received September 8, 2022; Revised February 24, 2023; Accepted August 10, 2023; Published Online September 16, 2023

https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v10i3.28014
sympathetically. It is argued that the news media’s ideological stance of Eurocentrism and biased racial values played a decisive role in framing the pictures of European/Ukrainian and non-European refugees in their reports.

**Keywords:** Critical discourse analysis, discursive strategies, discourse, racism, UK news media, Ukrainian refugees.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Due to the extraordinary number of persons leaving war-torn nations such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, and most recently, Ukraine, the issue of immigration and, more specifically, refugees have acquired significant attention since the start of the 21st century. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees by the end of 2021, an estimated 89.3 million people, the greatest number ever recorded, would have been forcibly displaced due to conflict, persecution, or other conflict abuses of human rights (UNHCR, 2021). Meanwhile, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is projected to reach 108.4 million by the end of 2022, while the number of refugees exceeds 27.1 million. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2021), 135,912 refugees were in the United Kingdom (UK) midway through 2021, while 83,489 refugee claims were still being assessed. This number is barely 0.23 percent of the entire population of the UK (based on a mid-2020 estimate of 67.4 million people, (ONS, 2021). As the number of refugees worldwide has risen, so has the media’s attention on these populations. As a result, refugees have increased media attention in the United Kingdom over the past 50 years (Baker & McEnery, 2005). In 2000, the Daily Mail published over 200 items about forced migration. After a few years of relative calm and the immigration debate heated up in the 2020 presidential election, the immigration issue grew more divisive (Blommaert, 2009).

Meanwhile, late February 2022 has become the starting point of Europe’s continuing refugee crisis following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. While an estimated 8 million people were displaced within the nation by May 3, around 6.7 million refugees from Ukraine were documented throughout Europe. In the UK alone, Ukrainian refugees fleeing to the country were estimated as 82,100 people by the end of June 2022. Since then, headlines in the UK have shown the picture of Ukrainian refugees entering the UK.

As various works of literature illustrate, discourse and refugees have been the subject of extensive and varied inquiry. In the UK itself, a series of research has been conducted on the representation of refugees in the UK since 1996. This series of studies examined some of the most prominent discursive tactics employed in depicting refugees from third-world nations such as Afghanistan and Iraq, emphasizing ideological disparities amongst newspapers. A study by Parker (2015, p. 35) revealed the British media’s alienation construction towards incoming refugees by suggesting these illegal immigrants as “unwanted invaders”. Still, in his research, Pruitt (2019, p. 17) described the standpoint of the British media on the refugee problem as “assumptions that allow more people to enter our territory would threaten European borders, security forces, people, and identity”. He continued to mention that these discursive constructions marginalize the instability and dangers asylum seekers and
refugees confront in conflicts and portray them as perpetrators of catastrophe. Another negative portrayal of refugees in the British print media was well presented by Blumell et al. (2020) who found that right-leaning news media focused on criminality and disorders when reporting refugees-related news.

The current study aims to fill a gap by examining the depiction of European migrants in the news media, Ukrainian refugees, which was lacking in earlier studies. It is hypothesized that the British news media would create the discourse on Ukrainian refugees differently from media outlets in third-world nations. This hypothesis is built upon numerous expert analyses of the Western media regarding their heroic and patriotic ways of reporting Ukrainian refugees flooding into Western Europe. For instance, Muthy (2022), a senior analyst at Aljazeera Media Institute, pointed out that news media in the UK reported Ukrainian refugees humanistically, citing that some news anchors revealed the refugees are ‘just like us’ and glorified women taking up Kalashnikovs against Russian invaders. Another example is a comment from a daily Independent news media analyst, White (2022) who described how the Western media reporting Ukrainian coverage was racially biased and shameful. Still, an analysis from senior media analysts at CNN, Allawati and Ebrahim (2022) condemned the bias which the Western media have caused when reporting Ukraine coverage.

In addition, the present study seeks to contribute to the field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by directly describing how the Western media of the UK discursively constructed the Western refugees from Ukraine in news media. Since the issue of refugees has become a global phenomenon, it lies on the ground and paves the way for other researchers in the future to carry out similar research worldwide, especially in developing countries. For example, a study was conducted to explore how the news media in Indonesia and Malaysia represent Rohingya refugees coming to these countries (Isti’anah, 2019) or how Turkish news media portray forced refugees from Syria (Yücel, 2021).

The present study, within the CDA framework, focuses on selected newspaper extracts which are aimed at addressing the following questions:

1. What discursive strategies do the British media employ in reporting the Ukrainian refugees’ coverages?
2. How do the British news media represent the Ukrainian refugees coming to the UK by employing those discursive strategies?

The study implicates the potential existence of media framing and bias in the representation of Ukrainian refugees. The findings of the CDA can shed light on the dominant narratives and discourses employed by the British mainstream news media when reporting on Ukrainian refugees. This implies that media organizations should critically examine their reporting practices to ensure fair and accurate representation. Also, the research suggests that the representation of Ukrainian refugees in the media can have a significant impact on public opinion. The framing and language used in news articles can shape how the general public perceives Ukrainian refugees, their experiences, and their reasons for seeking asylum. Media organizations should be aware of this influence and strive to present a balanced and nuanced portrayal to foster understanding and empathy. Last but not least, the research emphasizes the importance of media literacy and critical engagement among the audience. By raising awareness about media biases and discursive strategies, the study encourages readers and viewers to critically analyse news content related to Ukrainian refugees. This empowers
individuals to challenge and question media representations, promoting a more informed and nuanced understanding of the refugee crisis.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Discourse on Refugees across News Media

A recent study on stories of migrants in the news media has mostly relied on linguistic analysis of article corpora to find predominantly used terms and utterances (Baker & McEnery, 2005) and discourse analysis on refugee-related newspaper texts (Baker et al., 2008). However, investigations have also used a historical discourse approach (Parker, 2015b). It is presumed that discursive analysis arose as a response to cognitive perspectives that saw discursively generated behaviours as separate and distinct from internal representations.

Furthermore, critical discourse theory has paid considerable attention to constructed ‘out-groups’ such as refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, and different ethnic minorities in modern liberal nations. Numerous studies have been undertaken with diverse sociopolitical aims. Namely, research on media representation of refugees in Australia conducted by Doherty and Lecouteur (O’Doherty & Lecouteur, 2007), and a study of immigrant youth from Sudan in Australia (Macaulay & Deppeler, 2020b). Meanwhile, numerous studies on media discourse on refugees have been done in the UK alone, such as the one by Parker (Parker, 2015a). Still, the British media’s marginalizing practice of refugees is revealed by Pruitt (2019) and (Parker, 2015a). Another negative portrayal of refugees in the British print media is provided by Blumell et al. (2020). Lastly, Parker et al. (2022) in their latest study on refugees in print media in the UK, came with three negative media repertoires on refugees.

Despite growing media coverage, relatively few research studies analyse the rhetorical construction of refugees in UK media. Pilkington (2021) pointed out that research studies often have diverse objectives and focus on various aspects of refugee-related topics. While some studies may touch upon the portrayal of refugees in UK media, they may not explicitly concentrate on the rhetorical construction of their representation. This narrower focus requires a distinct research approach. In addition, as far as literature is concerned, most studies on Western media focused on the depiction of non-European refugees. This emergent phenomenon is what this research seeks to analyse. The most striking outcome of previously conducted studies discussed above was that migrants were negatively framed by the use of water metaphors (floods, tides, swamped) in media coverage (Pickering, 2001). The use of these analogies was prevalent in tabloid newspapers. Lynn and Lea (2003) investigated public letters addressing the refugee topic to study the rhetorical construction of refugees in the UK media. They demonstrated how these lay discourses tended to portray refugees negatively. This construction was achieved by modifying several different social groups’ social structures to relocate refugee populations outside civilization.

2.2 Discourse-Historical Approach

Within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Ruth Wodak from the University of Vienna developed the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) as a collection of
analytical tools. This strategy identifies five discursive strategies: nomination, predication, argumentation/perspectivation, and mitigation/intensification (see Table 1). Furthermore, Reisigl and Wodak (2008, p. 67) also created a criterion for the main argumentative/topoi of outgroup discourses. These topoi include the topoi of advantage/usefulness, danger/threat, name interpretation, burdening, law, culture, topoi of abuse, and authority. Influenced by this approach, several studies on refugee discourse have significantly contributed to the systematization of approaches for evaluating outgroups in speech. Namely, studies carried out by Baker et al. (2007), Macaulay and Deppeler (2020), and (Khosravinik, 2009). These studies focused on the depiction of refugees by news media by employing the DHA framework as their analytical instrument. Their findings revealed the negative depiction of refugees. The commonality between these studies and this undertaking research is that they similarly analyse refugee related texts and attempt to uncover media portrayals of refugee by employing DHA approach. Therefore, as pointed out by Reisigl & Wodak (2008), the methodology is reasonably beneficial for analysing the outgroup discourses including refugee, discrimination, racism, nationalism, and xenophobia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question to approach discursive features</th>
<th>Discursive strategies</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How are persons, objects, phenomena, social events, processes, and actions linguistically in question?</td>
<td>Nomination</td>
<td>the discursive construction of actors, the discursive and referred to objects, phenomena, and discourse in construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What characteristics or qualities are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena, events, processes, and actions mentioned in the discourse?</td>
<td>Predication</td>
<td>discursive characterization of social actors, objects, events processes, and actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What arguments are employed in discourse?</td>
<td>Argumentation</td>
<td>persuading addresses of the validity of specific claims of truth and normative rightness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From what perspective are these nominations, attributions, arguments, writer’s point of view, and expressed?</td>
<td>Perspectivization</td>
<td>positioning the speaker or expressing involvement or distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the respective utterances articulated overtly, are they to be intensified or mitigated?</td>
<td>Mitigation</td>
<td>modifying the illocutionary force of utterances with respect to their epistemic or deontic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first strategy in the DHA framework is referential or nomination strategies, which are especially relevant to self and other representation and by which people, processes, events, and all other (abstract or concrete) things are named, either positively by demonstrating respect for them or negatively by holding them in low regard (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). By looking at the words that are employed to designate and represent various groups of social actors as the creation of in-groups and out-groups is promoted, the methods are discovered. It is accomplished by utilizing a variety of membership categorization tools, such as deictic, tropes like metaphors, metonymies, and synecdoche (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).
Second, predicational procedures are employed to describe or linguistically characterize all subsequent (concrete or abstract) things following their formation or identification. It describes all subsequent things after identification is made (Forchtner, 2011). Predicational procedures can be expressed in the linguistic form of implicit or explicit predicates as positive or negative evaluative attributions or qualities (Reisigl & Wodak, 2008). These tactics seek to categorize individuals, events, processes, and all other objects (abstract or concrete) in a positive or negative, disparaging or complimentary manner. Since references already have the predication property, they cannot be clearly distinguished from nomination strategies. However, careful analysis reveals subtle distinctions that can enhance our understanding of language usage (Paksoy, 2022). Textual argumentation schemes are frequently assumed to serve as argumentation’s foundations and draw on referential and prediction techniques (Reisigl & Wodak, 2008). To put it in another way, categorizing and attributing individuals, events, processes, and all other things (abstract or concrete) using referential/nominative and predication strategies is frequently introduced as given and shared background information, which hides much of the political and ideological interests served by this categorization of qualities. Unravelling these underlying interests is essential for a more nuanced understanding of discourse and power dynamics in the language (Forchtner, 2021).

Third, perspectivization involves the examination of various linguistic and discursive strategies used to represent different perspectives. These strategies include lexical choices, evaluative language, rhetorical devices, and discursive structures. By analysing these elements, researchers can uncover how certain perspectives are privileged or marginalized within a discourse (Reisigl & Wodak, 2008).

Fourth, mitigation in the DHA approach refers to the linguistic and discursive strategies used to downplay or soften the impact of certain events, actions, or statements within a discourse (Reisigl & Wodak, 2008). It involves the analysis of how language is employed to mitigate or minimize responsibility, blame, or negative evaluations. In e mitigation is associated with CDA’s language view as a site of power and ideology. Mitigation is thus a discursive strategy that can be employed to manage or manipulate the perception of events or actions, often serving the interests of certain actors or social groups.

The final component consists of argumentation methods. Following Wodak’s DHA Approach, argumentation techniques are premises that must be either expressed or inferred. Argumentative methods are the ‘conclusion rules’ or content-related grounds that link an argument or group of reasons to a conclusion or claim (Reisigl & Wodak, 2008). It justifies the transition from the argumentation to the conclusion. This tactic is crucial for classifying arguments that seem persuasive and it is regularly employed in biased discourse against outgroups.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to analysing language and discourse that aims to uncover the social, political, and ideological dimensions embedded within them (Paltridge,
CDA recognizes that language is not neutral but is loaded with power dynamics. It acknowledges that media discourse is influenced by various power relations and ideologies that can shape the representation of social groups such as refugees. By analysing the language and discourse used in newspaper articles, CDA aims to uncover hidden biases, stereotypes, and ideological frameworks that may perpetuate negative or positive portrayals of refugees. Therefore, this approach is suitable for this research as it attempts to uncover the embedded ideology behind the production of Ukrainian refugees-related news texts.

In relation to CDA, Wodak and Meyer (2009) pointed out that the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) is a specific methodological framework within CDA that focuses on the historical dimension of discourse. It combines the analysis of language use with an examination of the historical context and the social processes that shape discourse over time. DHA specifically aims to uncover how historical events, ideologies, and power relations are reflected and reproduced in discourse. DHA focuses its analysis on uncovering the ideologies embedded in discourse related to refugees, nationalism, cultural identity, and security. DHA can shed light on how such ideologies may influence the portrayal of refugees and shape public opinion. As this study took the refugees-related text for its analysis, the DHA framework therefore was suited to be employed in this research.

3.2 Data Collection

The data were derived from four major UK daily newspapers chosen purposively, namely The Daily Mail, The Daily Mirror, The Telegraph, and The Guardian. These magazines were selected because they represented two mainstream political viewpoints in the UK, with The Daily Mail and The Telegraph supporting conservative ideology and The Guardian and The Daily Mirror favouring liberalism. The decision is also based on their vast circulation in the UK and their widespread appeal, which makes them worldwide. Moreover, the most significant articles were chosen by typing ‘Ukrainian refugees’ as the keyword in the search box of the newspaper’s website. The search resulted in 10 articles from each newspaper or 40 articles altogether which were analysed using a Discourse-Historical Approach to determine the prevalent discursive sources of Ukrainian refugee portrayals. Table 2 summarizes the newspaper, including the names of the newspaper, its ideological stance, and the number of articles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News media</th>
<th>Ideological stance</th>
<th>Number of articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Daily Mail</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Telegraph</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Guardian</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Daily Mirror</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 Data Analysis

The news excerpts from the selected news media were analysed using qualitative analysis techniques. Themes and rhetorical patterns were identified and interpreted to understand how Ukrainian refugees are represented in the British mainstream news media. There were two analytical tools used in analysing the data: (1) discursive
strategies and, (2) argumentative strategies. The discursive strategy is used to examine and interpret discursive practices in order to uncover power relations, ideologies, and social structures embedded in language use. These tools help researchers analyse and deconstruct how language shapes and reflects social reality. Meanwhile, argumentative strategy refers to how arguments are constructed and employed within discourse to support or challenge certain viewpoints, ideologies, or power relations. It involves analysing the rhetorical techniques, reasoning patterns, and persuasive tactics used to advance a particular position or influence the beliefs and opinions of the audience.

4. RESULTS

After analysing the data, the researchers found three discursive strategies the British news media employed in reporting Ukrainian refugees. These three strategies aimed at establishing a positive view of Ukrainian refugees. The first two strategies were Nomination and Predication. The former refers to the state/condition of Ukrainian refugees that British people must support, while the latter refers to the humanist characteristics to which Ukrainian refugees are attributed. What follows in this section is a detailed explanation of Humanization and Individualization, as well as argumentative processes found in the news media in constructing a positive account of Ukrainian refugees.

4.1 Humanization and Individualization Strategies

Compared to other categories of discursive strategies, Humanization and Individualization as antidotes to Collectivization became the major themes in the discourse of Ukrainian refugees fleeing the war as indicated in Table 3. It reached above 50% in all given researched news reports. These processes entailed that the discourse emphasized the plight of individuals (Victimization), where the refugees were portrayed as acting normally in a normal situation (Humanization). This generic rhetorical strategy of Individualization attributed voices to various individuals. It asserted the diversity of these individuals in terms of their ways of life, upbringings, jobs, ages, sexes, and political stances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News media</th>
<th>Number of total clauses</th>
<th>Occurrence of strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Daily Mail</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Telegraph</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Guardian</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Daily Mirror</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Daily Mail story excerpts illustrate how the migrants were exploited by depicting their desperate situation. The article humanizes the parties involved by describing the persons in terms of who they are and what they do. Readers can more easily identify with and sympathize with the characters if the Predicational technique depicts the people engaging in normal and familiar activities.
A mother’s miracle: Ukrainian refugee who survived Bucha massacre gives birth to a daughter after finding sanctuary in the UK. (The Daily Mail, 16 August 2022). (Humanization)

Ukrainian women and children are being trafficked into the UAE as sex slaves (The Daily Mail, 12 Mei 2022). (Humanization)

Another Humanization and Individualization consistently appeared in other three news media:

UN says 75,000 children a day are forced to flee their country (The Guardian, 25 June 2022). (Humanization)

Ukrainian refugee, 9, so traumatised by war she could not speak for five weeks (The Telegraph, 12 July 2022). (Humanization)

Family considering going back to Ukraine because they cannot keep their cats with them (The Daily Mirror, 2 June 2022). (Humanization)

Other strategies of Humanization and Individualization were used by mentioning the social actors with their names and relations:

Dad-of-two Tony Garnett is starting a new life for Ukrainian refugee Sofiia Karkadym who had moved into the family’s home just ten days before after leaving Lviv at the start of the invasion (The Daily Mirror, 2 June 2022). (Individualization)

Ukrainian refugee family are reunited with eight-year-old Yorkshire Terrier Ellie, stolen six days after they arrived in the UK after police trawl CCTV footage (The Daily Mail, 12 Mei 2022). (Individualization)

Two Ukrainian sisters, Tetiana and Anna, are pursuing their dreams of becoming competitive figure skaters after fleeing a warzone (The Guardian, 25 June 2022). (Individualization)

Adriana, a mother, and her 13-year-old son - told that she thought her hosts would be kind and caring, but within weeks she “did not feel safe or secure” (The Telegraph, 3 April 2022). (Individualization)

Furthermore, another form of Humanization and Individualization is realized by highlighting terrible occurrences (Wetherell & Potter, 1998). Such an approach, for instance, focuses on the specifics and various facets of a dreadful incident rather than just calling it a ‘bad tragedy’. One instance of this in the text is how the victims who participated in the attack described the incident’s beginning:

On the CCTV, you see them shooting their way into rooms, stealing bicycles and even a scooter and lolling around in the director’s office, drinking his whisky, and rifling through his cupboards (The Daily Mirror, 2 April 2022)

People were being beaten up and tortured with electric shocks. If someone did not say something, the torture would continue, sometimes for several hours (The Guardian, 19 July 2022)

Mr. Sychevskyi told The Telegraph. “They killed my dog and were cruel to my family, threatening us with weapons” (The Telegraph, 9 April 2022). (Individualization)

The footage, which is not published, shows a group of men wearing Russian camouflage pinning a soldier in Ukrainian fatigues down and using a box-cutting knife to remove his genitals and then hold them up to the camera (The Daily Mail, 29 July 2022). (Individualization)
Still, foregrounding a victim as an ordinary innocent individual (Victimization) is another way of forming Humanization and Individualization strategies:

(14) Putin’s army handcuffed man, an ordinary Ukrainian peasant whose relatives had stayed there for many years (The Guardian, 23 April 2022). (Humanization)

To highlight the Humanization and Individualization narratives, other victimization processes were introduced by presenting the suffering circumstances of those who were fortunate enough to flee. It also provides a dramatic explanation, the sympathetic picture of the migrants such as in the following excerpts:

(15) To save his life, his father carried him in his arms through a thick and dense forest with a potent of wild animal attacks (The Daily Mail, 2 Mei 2022). (Individualization)

(16) After the Russian shelling, the relative managed to flee the beloved country. With Audrina in her arms, Sergey showed the way. Behind him were his two other children, and their grandmother Maria Audrei (The Telegraph, 27 April 2022). (Individualization)

(17) Some young men had collapsed in the mud, unable to manage the last distance to the border with Poland. Their friends had no strength to carry them (The Guardian, 2 April 2022). (Individualization)

4.2 Argumentative Strategies ‘Refugees Desperate for Support’.

Topoi/Topos, according to Wodak, can be described as parts of “Argumentation which belong to the obligatory, either explicit or inferable premises” (Wodak, 2006, p. 67). Concerning critical discourse analysis, Wodak and Richardson (2013, p. 36) defined Topos as “Reservoirs of generalised key ideas from which specific statements or arguments can be generated”. They continued to classify Topoi, which characterised the most common topoi used when writing or talking about ‘other’, specifically about migrants, into the following types: Usefulness, Advantage, Uselessness, Disadvantage, Definition, Name-interpretation, Danger and Threat, Humanitarianism, Justice, Responsibility, Burdening, Weighting, Finances, Reality, Numbers, Law and Rights, History, Culture, Abuse.

After deeply analysing the 40 selected articles, the writer found that the most dominant and persistent topoi in those articles were topoi of Humanitarianism. In order to frame the Ukrainian refugees positively, the news media employed the argumentative strategy of Humanitarianism. This strategy was realised in an argumentation form. The researcher conclusively formulated the most dominant argumentative form, which he identified as ‘refugees desperate for support’. The distribution of this argumentative strategy can be seen in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News media</th>
<th>Number of total clauses</th>
<th>Percentage of ‘the support’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Daily Mail</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Telegraph</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Guardian</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Daily Mirror</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The arguing method that ‘refugees are needy for help’ recurred throughout the forty pieces. Here, refugees were portrayed as victims who required protection. This argumentation was achieved in the examined newspaper articles by employing various discursive constructs that will be examined in the following news excerpt samples.

(18) Mr. Javid said the government was supporting Ukraine ‘in every single way we can’ (The Daily Mail, 21 March 2022)

(19) Health Secretary vowed the rescue schemes would be dramatically scaled up (The Daily Mail, 21 March 2022)

Another ‘the refugees desperate for support’ consistently appeared in other three news media:

(20) As refugees continue to pour out of war-torn Ukraine, it is beholden on the global community to respond with open arms and not just with warm hearts (The Daily Mirror, 26 February 2022)

(21) Government must offer Ukrainian refugees a safe route to the UK (The Daily Mirror, 26 February 2022)

(22) So far, around 4,000 visas have been issued to Ukrainians, with “tens of thousands” more expected to be provided, according to the levelling up secretary, Michael Gove (The Guardian, 14 March 2022)

(23) The “homes for Ukraine” program allows individuals, charities, community groups, and businesses across the UK to offer a room or home rent-free to Ukrainians escaping the war, regardless of whether they have ties to the country (The Guardian, 14 March 2022)

(24) The British public will be asked to offer homes to tens of thousands of Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion under plans to be announced this weekend (The Telegraph, 10 March 2022)

(25) Charities, including the Refugee Council and Save the Children, have urged ministers to waive the visas to speed up the process (The Telegraph, 17 March 2022).

(26) Michael Gove says millions of Britons could be willing to accept Ukrainian refugees for £ 350 a month (The Daily Mail, 25 March 2022)

(27) Thousands of British families offering sanctuary to Ukrainian refugees are stuck in a massive backlog (The Daily Mail, 27 March 2022)

As mentioned previously, the purpose of ‘the refugees desperate for support’ argumentative strategies in the news media was to enhance the already positive framing of the refugees, which Humanization and Individualization have initially achieved. The ultimate goal of this strategy was to persuade a positive attitude on the part of the readers and construct a public opinion that Ukrainian refugees coming to British land should be protected and supported.

5. DISCUSSION

The article mentioned that refugees attempting to reach safe nations is not a new problem. Since the 1990s, numerous refugees, primarily from non-European nations,
have sought to reach Britain, prompting the British government to impose stricter regulations on the entry of newcomers (Dijk, 1991). Research indicates that these policies were supported by the British media’s portrayal of migrants as criminals or deviants (Pickering, 2001) and the need for secure borders. Similar media discourses were prevalent during the so-called ‘refugee crisis in Europe’ in 2015 (ter Wal, 2002). However, until recently, the number of Ukrainian migrants arriving in the United Kingdom remained quite low. This paper provides an innovative contribution to the research on the media construction of refugees by focusing on refugee coverage in the United Kingdom.

In the early stages of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, as Ukrainian refugees began to pour into the United Kingdom, British President Boris Johnson said that the United Kingdom and other European nations would assist Ukrainian refugees in any manner necessary. This speech illustrates how populist politicians discursively intertwined the ‘Ukrainian refugee tragedy’, although it is hard to determine its effect on the public’s desire to aid the migrants. Likewise, the major news media in the United Kingdom maintain a clear picture of Ukrainian refugees. This situation demonstrates how UK politicians and the news media portrayed the Ukrainian refugee as ‘a tragedy’ rather than a problem and a moral obligation to the British and the European people.

Through the constant use of the words ‘folks and fellows’, it was evident that the British government and its citizens supported only those seeking to join the nation lawfully. The study determined that Humanization and Individualization were the primary means by which the British news media manufactured a ‘humanity tragedy’ of Ukrainian migrants. Numerous papers implemented these methodologies by utilizing positive nomination and prediction. This favourable perception of refugees was further bolstered by using persuasive methods known as topos. Nearly all investigated British news outlets emphasized the acute need for aid among Ukrainian refugees. The lines ‘we must open our doors to our Ukrainian people’, ‘it is our moral duty as Europeans to assist other Europeans’, and ‘the British government must safeguard our fellow Europeans’ were examples of the reasoning techniques the news media wished to develop. Through the employment of language tools such as the humanist metaphors ‘folks and fellows’, the discursive constructs of the news media can affect their audiences. This result consequently contradicts Pickering’s (2001) and Van Dijk’s (2003) findings that refugees were formed as a deviant group through the deployment of stories that distinguished ‘them’ from ‘us’ (Pickering, 2001). Similarly, Van Dijk (2003, p. 34) stated that discourses of immigration and socioeconomic issues generated a clear ‘us’ versus ‘them’ division, which redefines these problems in terms of ‘race’ and immigrants as outsiders who must be ‘kept out’. The examples of this research illustrate how two different images of refugees are portrayed in British news media.

As CDA is meant to look below the surface of a text to explore ideology under a discourse, this study’s findings reinforced a view that the British news media, especially right-leaning media, deliberately or not adopt ‘biased racial’ ideology reporting global refugees’ coverage. Biased racial ideology refers to a set of beliefs or ideas that promote or endorse discriminatory attitudes and actions based on race. It involves holding unfair prejudiced views toward individuals or groups based on their racial or ethnic backgrounds (Van Dijk, 1993). In the assessed UK mainstream media, this ideology is replicated in the ‘othering’ rhetorical strategy as ‘us versus them’.
Numerous studies namely, studies from Khosravinik (2009), Parker (2015), Pruitt, (2019), and Xu (2021) unveiled how the British media depicted coloured refugees from third-world countries negatively. The media portrayed non-European refugees in a negative portrait, calling them ‘boat people’, ‘unwanted invaders’, and ‘illegal immigrants’. This research’s findings, on the other hand, reveal the positive construction of Ukrainian refugees, who are white, by the UK mainstream media. The media represented Ukrainian refugees in humanist and appealing images, referring to them as ‘just like us’, ‘fellas’, and ‘people desperate for help’. This double standard and biased racial views on refugees can be traced to the deep root and long history of racism in the British Empire, especially among the British news media (Kaul, 2006, p. 12) revealed how the British rulers during the colonization era established media to preserve ‘white systems’ throughout their colonies. Similarly, Polońska-Kimunguyi (2022, p. 3) illustrated how the British media referred to the immigrants as either a threat to the national economy or security, marginalizing their voices, thus continuously reproducing ‘the age-old hierarchies of the colonial system, which divided humans into superior and inferior species’.

6. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to illustrate the discursive construction of Ukrainian refugees in British news media. Humanization and Individualization were the major discursive methods, augmented by the reasoning strategies of “refugees yearning for aid.” The necessity to help and protect Ukrainian migrants exemplified the ideological usage of these methods. In addition, the publications from the United Kingdom emphasized the necessity for all Europeans to provide a helping hand to their Ukrainian neighbours by employing persuasive arguments. There was evidence that migrants were created as figures of desperation. These publications focused on the human aspect of war to justify political actions and provided the picture of a sympathetic nation concerning the human rights of individuals who have experienced losses. Because refugees from non-European countries were portrayed negatively by the British news media, as revealed by previous research, this study’s findings suggest the need for further investigation into why news media in the United Kingdom presented refugees from different countries differently to reveal the ideology behind this stance.

The study is limited by its narrow scope, as it exclusively examines the British mainstream news media, hence limiting the generalizability of the findings. The temporal scope of the study may not adequately account for the dynamic nature of media portrayals, while the sample size and selection may not comprehensively represent the range of discourse variety. Furthermore, the presence of language hurdles imposed constraints on the incorporation of non-English language media, hence potentially resulting in the exclusion of valuable perspectives. The employment CDA might potentially add inherent biases, and the subjectivity that is inherent in the readings of conversation remains a persistent worry. The study may have failed to thoroughly examine all contextual aspects that impact media coverage. In order to overcome these limitations, future research endeavours may incorporate cross-national comparisons, longitudinal analyses, mixed-methods approaches, multilingual analysis, audience reception studies, policy impact assessments, investigations into media ownership and editorial decision-making, considerations of intersectionality, ethical
evaluations, and stakeholder interviews. These combined efforts would contribute to a more comprehensive and comprehensive comprehension of the portrayal of Ukrainian refugees in the British mainstream news media.

REFERENCES


