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**The representation of multilingualism
and multiculturalism
by the British media in the UK**

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1 Introduction

In this study I will be focussing on the mapping and representation of multilingualism in the British media, specifically during the period when David Cameron expressed his stand - point on the 'Muslim women policy'. The policy outlined how twenty million pounds would fund English lessons to help Muslim women in the UK to learn English (MacLellan, 2016). The policy was introduced in early January of 2016. Many media outlets focussed on this story, either showing scrutiny or approval of the new scheme, scrutiny was mostly targeted towards what the intentions behind the policy was. My research addressed specific media outlets who reported this issue directly, analysing the news discourse at the time. This analysis went beyond word to word analysis and also focussed on the discourse itself and how multilingualism is represented in the UK – specifically towards Muslim women. It addresses possible hidden ideologies and agendas that the media try and portray through their writing and beyond. As a minority myself, it was really important that I keep my research as un-biased as possible. My initial intentions were to interview as many journalists as I could, focussing on their style and intentions behind their content. However, I had some obstacles with the general election taking place in 2019 and a Coronavirus outbreak in 2020. So, I decided to research different media outlets who supported different political opinions, using methods from different linguists, mentioned in my methodology, analysing text-image cohesion across different articles to highlight the ideologies the UK media try to push about migrants and minorities and their attitudes towards multilingualism and multiculturalism in the UK.

2 Methodology

The first step was to find a number of media sources, ranging on a spectrum of political opinions, as close to the time of the policy introduction as possible. Below is a list of the news articles I chose to analyse the articles of and their respective political opinions (Smith, 2017). I needed an insight to whether the newspapers were tabloid or broadsheet as there is a significant variation on how news is presented. Broadsheet newspapers have more serious/intellect and are referred to as broadsheet due to their larger size. Tabloids are known as the 'popular press' as they focus on more sensationalised news coverage to gain their traction. I made a table distinguishing the separate names, political stance and their format, papers, their political stance and their distinguished categories (Connell, 1998)

| Name of Paper | Political stance | Format |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| The Guardian | Labour and Liberal Democrats | Broadsheet |
| The Daily Mirror | Labour | Tabloid |
| The Independent | Conservative and Liberal Democrat | Broadsheet |
| The Daily Mail | Conservative and UKIP | Tabloid |
| The Daily Express | UKIP | Tabloid |
| The Sun | Conservative and UKIP | Tabloid |

It is important to distinguish what political stance a media source has as (Carey, 1989) stated ‘journalists can construct and maintain our reality (as cited in Van Dijk, 2009, pp.1). Journalism is intrinsically joined to democracy, playing a key role in shaping our personal identity and views, allowing us to communicate and deliberate with one another (Van Dijk, 2009). Considering this insight, it is fair to say that journalists can use their style of writing and content to control the way their work is perceived by their readers – enabling them to maintain and even manipulate reader’s ideologies. The use of images has the potential to unpack and expose the cultural work of the press (Coward, 1998, as cited in African Journalism Studies, 2004). There is a huge significance in using images when presenting a reader with news discourse. The way we see other nations, religions and races are heavily influenced by the media we consume (African Journalism Studies, 2004). This therefore allows me to assume that images and videos be used to portray certain ethnic minorities in a positive or negative light. Analysing multi-modal discourse is crucial when studying social meaning through language and other ‘semiotic modes such as images’ (Kress & Van Leeuwe 1996 as cited in Wodak, 2009, pp. 168). UK media that reports more sensationalised versions of the news tend to use more dramatic imaging. Images can be used out of context, without credit, captions and sometimes showing no correlation to the text (Van Dijk, 2009, pp 32). This therefore can allow journalist to push political and personal agendas through their work, even though it is necessarily relating to what they’re reporting on. More specific examples of this will be given in my analysis. Certain features of this images include being bold, prominent with the sole reason of gaining interest, images have the power to act as news relays (Van Dijk, 2009, pp 32), giving an insight in how influential multi-modality adds to news discourse.

3 Analysis

This analysis will take you through three different media outlets in the UK analysing the way they reported on the Muslim women policy in the UK. One is from a Conservative newspaper, another from Labour and the final will be Liberal Democrats – a party that balances between left and right wing. I will be analysing the text – image cohesion and how the British media represent multilingualism in the UK – and elaborate on any hidden agendas and visible attitudes the authors/ outlets have for and against minorities. There is a fair mix between broadsheet and tabloid type newspapers to get a good range of media outlets. In the

appendix are screenshots of any material I found necessary to add however, this will be explicitly outlined within the analysis.

The Guardian (Mason and Sherwood, 2016)

The Guardian is a broadsheet news outlet supportive of the Labour and Lib Dem parties. The article is titled 'Cameron 'stigmatising Muslim women' with the English language policy. This article was written by Rowena Mason and Harriet Sherwood, both white, British citizens. The title in itself shows that it takes a neutral position as no false claims are made in the title and any criticism is placed in quotation marks, to show not personal beliefs but a direct quote of someone else's opinion. There seems to be some fair criticism made however this is supported with data to support their balanced views on this topic. It has a neutral standpoint on the matter – as direct quotes are used by the journalist, with claims against David Cameron are all preceded with words such as 'accused' and 'allegedly'. The direct quotes give an insight into what the PM's intentions were with this policy as it was used as a way to reduce radicalisation within the Muslim community. The first insight given was that 38,000 Muslim women could not speak English and that 190,000 Muslim women had limited skills. The intention of this policy was to improve skills to reduce radicalisation. However, there is no data at all showing the correlation between spoken languages and the rate of radicalisation. The notion of radicalisation is not just reliant on language – whereas the assumption here is that English will give Muslim women the intelligence to be able to fight against any forms of radicalisation. This viewpoint pushes an attitude that Muslim women, who have poor English skills, are vulnerable and with the help of English they should be able to protect themselves, as David Cameron is quoted saying 'some of these people come from patriarchal societies and perhaps the menfolk haven't wanted them to speak English'. The discrepancies with the PM's reasoning to this new policy are questionable. Is this to empower Muslim women who are oppressed by their own men? Is it to give Muslim women skills needed to make them more eligible for jobs? Is it to reduce the rate of radicalisation? These unclear intentions were what caused many MP's and some media outlets to challenge this policy. To solely blame Muslim women for the growing rate of radicalisation is irresponsible. This is because the most vulnerable people are new religious converts and teenagers who have been rejected by family/peers (Cole, 2009). It was criticised within the article that spreading these misinformed facts was damaging to the Muslim community. This policy gives an insight on the attitudes toward immigrants who come to the UK knowing limited to no English. It is assumed that if you don't know English you are weak and to gain power and awareness in the UK you have to know English – a nationalist idea. However, The Guardian seemed to give a neutral argument for and against this policy.

The Daily Mail (Owen, 2016)

The Daily Mail is seen as a tabloid newspaper in the UK, as it has sensational headlines, small bodies of text and are notorious for their political standpoint. This specific article had many factors to dissect from the language used to the image chosen for it. The title to this specific

article is 'Cameron's call to Muslim mothers to learn English to help beat fanatics as 700 Britons are now believed to have travelled to Syria to join jihadis.' The title in itself is extremely misleading. As we know factually the policy is targeted towards Muslim women and not Muslim mothers. The title then mentions '700 Britons' being radicalised and going to Syria. This creates an us vs them attitude as it directly links Muslim women being blamed for the rise in British radicals. There are a few short comments made in the beginning of the article saying, 'Mr Cameron believes learning English will also make them more equal'. The words 'them' referring to the Muslim mothers. Once again, the word 'them' is creating a divide between UK citizens and UK immigrants versus Muslim women. The idea of English being a language at the top of a hierarchy which boosts you up to be equal to those who know it already, also pushes the idea that those who do not know English are uneducated and seen as lower. It creates an ideology that the one nation of the United Kingdom needs one language, the English language – an extremely nationalist idea. To be accepted into Britain and not to be seen as a national threat, the English language provides you that privilege, even though research shows many factors aside from languages play into the radicalisation of British citizens. There is no mention of any other immigrants who may not know English as there are many other groups of minorities who struggle to speak English. This article is directly targeted to Muslim women who lack skills in English, pushing the notion of them needing to be educated, using Cameron's policy to support their ideas. The media pushing these ideologies and attitudes are directly linked to fuelling Islamophobic attitudes in the UK (Saeed, 2007, pp,2). Islam is a religion, with people coming from all types of backgrounds and cultures but the Daily Mail seems to group them all into one linking them to jihadis and Syria, even though the Muslim community ranges from the Middle East to Africa and South East Asia. It begs the question that does a British Muslim who lacks skills in English make them 'un-British'? The way that multilingualism is represented in the Daily Mail is that if you do not know English, you're seen as a threat, which is recognised by the British government itself, where the policy itself is to reduce radicalisation. If you write an article read by someone who has little to no social contact with ethnic minorities the media tend to be the sole provider (Van Dijk, 2009). In this case the journalist is able to push their ideologies onto the reader who doesn't know any different as they don't come into contact with minorities within their day to day lives. When the media represent the out- group (Muslims) in a certain negative light, then the reader (if white or non – Muslim), will see themselves as part of the in group. This then creates a negative attitude instilled in the readers mind who may then have preconceived notions on a certain group of people, which feeds into a vicious cycle. This article shows how your cultural heritage can affect your position in society. Adopting British culture, adds to your 'Britishness', which includes learning English. The image used in this article is in the appendix as this picture was deemed significant by me. This picture I deemed significant as it depicts members of ISIS in Syria and captioned with '700 Britons are believed to have travelled to Syria to join ISIS'. Even though the article is meant to address the new policy of Muslim women learning English, however by using the reasoning of radicalisation The Daily Mail has navigated their article to focus on solely this issue and push the idea of

Britons being radicalised and being coaxed into moving to Syria. This article therefore creates a Us vs Them attitude, where they are referring to the radicalised as Britons and the Muslims as 'jihadis, Muslim men and Muslim mothers'. By referring to both of these groups by different names they're creating a divide, which by readers can be interpreted as non-English Muslim women as not British, even though a religion is different to a nationality. The Daily Mail shed a negative light on non – English speaking Muslims by driving their article in a direction that focussed more on radicalisation and less on the policy itself. There was no statistics used to prove that knowing another language other than English and its correlation to radicalisation. However, the narrative to this article still focussed on Muslim women being weaker due to their lack in skills in a language they did not speak.

The Daily Mirror (Grant, 2016)

The Daily Mirror is a tabloid newspaper, supportive of the Labour party. There is a great difference between the ideologies that drive the conservative and labour parties and are seen as opposites on the political spectrum. The greatest difference in this article compared to the last two is that it heavily focused on factual information and statistics on which specific areas were affected the worst when it came to non-English-speaking women. It highlighted the problem in a factual manner without suggesting new ideas and more so mentioned the benefits of this new policy. It mentioned how the policy could help Muslim women integrate into Britain, if they knew the national language. It also mentioned that this policy was to help any minority group that was vulnerable due to their lack of skills in English and was not just exclusively for Muslim women. This was the only article to mention this fact, while others chose to ignore it. By mentioning this fact, the journalist has created a sense of inclusivity, highlighting the fact that anyone can get these English lessons if needed. Many minority groups who have immigrated to Britain struggle with speaking English, so it would be fair for anyone to have access to these lessons. There was no mention of radicalisation when talking about this policy but only that the people who don't know it are vulnerable in a country where they do not speak the national language, it doesn't blame them for not knowing the language but encourages them to learn the language – to further benefit them. Statistics are given saying that the East of London has the highest rate of non-English – speakers, while also highlighting the top 10 cities with non-speaking Muslim women over the age of 16. This allows for the article to target the areas that matter and creates a systematic method into where the funding matters most. It has a very inclusive attitude towards multilingualism and focusses on the benefits of knowing English. It doesn't mention English 'adding' any value to their 'Britishness' but focused on enhancing the skills they have to navigate themselves in a country where they do not understand the national language.

4 Conclusion

By analysing these news articles across different places on the political spectrum, I was able to judge how language and semiotic techniques can be used to change the way readers

perceive the news they read. I focused on how the media portrayed immigrants and minorities and their views on multilingualism in the UK. The main proportion of the British media is supportive of the conservative party so it would be fair to say that a majority of the news outlets shed a negative light on multilingualism in the UK. It portrays as them as weaker – due their lack of knowledge in English and pushes the English language higher on an imaginary hierarchy, adding value to anyone that speaks it. If I had a longer time frame to conduct thus research, I would have chosen more news sources to analyse and also research how this effected politics in the future – and their attitudes towards minorities in the UK. When any behaviour is accepted, for example nationalist ideology, it allows for powerful people to seize these ideas and push them into their manifestos. The current PM, Boris Johnson, was quoted comparing Muslim women to ‘letter boxes’ and ‘bank robbers’. It is clear that Muslim women are under constant scrutiny from the government and the media, whether it be the language they speak or the way they dress. A proportion of the UK seems to be only accepting of people who immigrate and integrate with their culture – which includes knowing English. Until they can’t prove their ‘Britishness’ they’re seen as weak and vulnerable and in some cases a threat – due to radicalisation.

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