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Heroes versus Traitors: U.S. and Afghani Soldiers in the U.S. Press

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Heroes versus Traitors: U.S. and Afghani Soldiers in the U.S. Press

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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper analyzes U.S newspaper discourse about the war in Afghanistan. Coverage of the conflict has increased since the U.S. entered Afghanistan in 2002, but is now on the decline (probably due to the coming withdrawal and the switching of foreign policy focus to Iran, Pakistan and other countries). Stories about soldiers have been a big part of the discourse for some time, especially when they areabout important figures. However in recent years, there has been an increase in stories about the "average" U.S. soldier and, occasionally, about those from other nations, particularly Afghanistan. The language used in describing soldiers in newspaper discourse plays a big role in the public's opinion of them, their societies, and the war in which they are fighting.

This paper addresses issues such aswhat kind of language is used to describe these men? Do the descriptions of American soldiers differ from those of the Afghanis? If so, then how? What kinds of quotes are used to tell their stories? Moreover, who is quoted? What kind of understanding does the reader get from the U.S. newspaper discourse of soldiers both from America and from Afghanistan? This study investigates these questions through (a) a micro-level analysis of newspaper articles and (b) a quantitative analysis of newspaper articles on several linguistic and semantic devices.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Van Dijk (2001) statesthat critical discourse analysis (CDA) "starts from prevailing social problems, and critically analyses those in power, those who are responsible and those who have the means and the opportunity to solve such problems" (p.1). Wodak (2001) adds that "CD Aaims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, legitimized and so on by language use (or in discourse)"(p.2). She explains how CDA became a major analytical method and what roles the concepts of "critical," "ideology," and "power" play in this method (p.9). Finally, she mentions a few issues that have yet to be resolved when using CDA.

Jäger (2001) covers the fundamental issues that CDA tries to tackle. He explains discourse theory, how to get from the discourse to the dispositive and what that means, and the method of discourse and dispositive analysis. He also provides the reader with a basic five-step outline for constructing a discourse analytical method and explains how to process materials in research. He ends with a detailed description of what a dispositive is. This paper adapts Jäger's five-step approach to discourse and integrates it with Fairclough'smethod.

Fairclough (2001) discusses CDA "as a method in social scientific research" (p.121). He first describes the theoretical position of CDA. Then he describes the analytical framework of CDA, which consists of the followingfivesteps that he illustrates in detail: "Focus upon a social problem […], identify obstacles to it being tackled, consider whether the social order […] in a sense 'needs the problem, identify possible ways past the obstacles, reflect critically on the analysis" (p.125).

Mautner (2009) "focuses on the role that corpus linguistics can play in CDA projects" (p.122). She introduces "previous work in the area, explain[s] basic concepts and techniques" (p.122) and after presenting two examples that have used these methods,arguesthat "corpus linguistics has a lot to offer to CDA,"but identifies five issues that may arise when combining corpus linguistics with CDA (p.138). The issues are: "The skills gap and lack of standardization," "institutional barriers," "resisting temptation in data collection," decontextualized data," and "language innovation" (p.138-141).

Almeida (2006) investigated how women of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were depicted in U.S. newspaper coverage in the years 2002 and 2003. Using critical discourse analysis (CDA) and quantitative linguistics analysis, she found that "most Israeli and Palestinian women are portrayed in extremely traditional

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ways," and thus concluded that news discourse in the U.S. supports "conservative Israeli and Palestinian discourses about women" (p.95).

Almeida (2011) comprehensively analyzed U.S. newspaper discourse about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict between the years 2002 and 2006. Once again, she combined the CDA method "with corpus linguistics to produce integrated qualitative and quantitative analyses" (p.1586). She found that the discourse was predominantly "characterized by terms denoting violence, conflict, and negative emotion" (p.1586).

III. METHODOLOGY: COMBINING CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND CORPUS LINGUISTICS

Critical discourse analysis centers on social problems as analyzed through discourse in all types of media and, "especially on the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination" (VanDijk, 2001, p. 96). According to Mautner (2009), corpus linguistics contributes to CDA in three ways: It allows researchers using CDA to work with much larger amounts of data; it "can help reduce researcher bias" by expanding their empirical base; and the programs used process both quantitative and qualitative data, easing some of the workload on the researcher (p.123).

In this study ofthe U.S. newspaper discourse of the conflict in Afghanistan, we used a five-step discourse analytic methodology based on the works of Fairclough (2001) and Jäger (2001).The first two steps stem from Fairclough's (2001) framework for CDA and includeidentifying the "social problem" and distinguishing a "network of practices" (p. 125).The nextthree steps come from Jäger's (2001) outline of a basic CDA method: "Evaluating the material processed with regard to the discourse strand to be analyzed" (macro-level analysis), followed by a "fine analysis of […] several articles" (micro-level analysis),and finally, the integration of the microanalysis and the data gathered in the macro-level study.

Quantitative corpus linguistics was incorporated into both the micro- and macro-levels of analyses by means of the ATLAS.ti software. Strings or clusters of words were constructed to code the news articles according to certain dimensions. The ATLAS.ti software then counted the number of times different words wereused. The results wereused to verify our qualitative conclusions and to make comparisons to the findings in Almeida's (2011) previous research.

We also used Yates (2001) as a source of information about corpus linguistics. In his article, he defines and explains the use of such key terms as "corpus-based methods," "interactional linguistics," "language practices," "synchronous communication," "literacy practice" (p.94-96).

IV. THE MICRO-LEVEL ANALYSIS: FOUR NEWSPAPER STORIES

In themicroanalysis, a few representative articles of the newspaper corpus were selected and subjected to a fine analysis. The language used to describe American soldiers and Afghani security forcesin U.S. newspaper discoursewas of particular interest. The selected articles include one storyabout the life of a fallen American soldier, and one about a fallen Afghani soldier. Another article provides us with an example of an American accused of …, and the last article provides a direct comparison of an American soldier and an Afghani member of the local security forces.

Article 1: A Memorial Story for Evan O'Neill, U.S. Soldier

Every week in the coverage of the Afghanistan War, there are at least one, if not two or more, stories that commemorate fallen U.S. soldiers. Evan O'Neill's story in the Boston Globe in May of 2012epitomizes the sentiments expressed in most news stories about U.S. soldiers who have died overseas. In "Evan O'Neill Grew Up Wanting To Be A Soldier", McCabe (May 2012) begins by setting a desperate scene and then portraying a brave, smart, honorable, proud and selfless man serving others under extreme conditions. McCabe achieves this with selected quotes from family members, and others who knew O'Neill, reminiscing about O'Neill's life and good character, and with anecdotes about O'Neill's patriotic family history and his moral activities both before and after joining the Army.

According to his father, O'Neill's was "a great son, but […] a damn good soldier" and he adds that "even wounded, he still kept fighting." The medic who tended to O'Neill in his last moments is quoted saying that O'Neill's last words were "Is everyone else OK?" A fire lieutenant who knew O'Neill said, "He wasn't even shaving yet, but he said that if he had to die young, he wanted to die as a soldier" and later adds that O'Neill was so proud of his heritage that "he ran around like he was superman" with his Irish flag wrapped around him. During his high school years, O'Neill "was on the football and debating teams. Outside of school, he read to veterans at a nursing home," and "he volunteered at the […] recruiting office, often leading training runs."

McCabe also reports the remarkable honors bestowed upon O'Neill posthumously. "A memorial marker outside his family home", "a hall […] named for him" at the local veteran's center, "a small park […]dedicated to him," "his mother makes quilts in his memory for homeless veterans" and "his parents also sponsor a scholarship in his name" at his former high school "where a flagpole is dedicated to him." Finally, McCabe concludes with O'Neill's father's efforts to keep his memory alive because, as he puts it, “once a person is forgotten, they really are gone.”

Article 2: Asadullah’sStory - An Afghani Traitor

The article “Rogue Afghan Officer Let Taliban Kill Father” (Hamdard, April 2012), as it appeared in the Washington Post, is the story of Asadullah, a “Taliban sleeper agent” within the Afghan police force who “drugged his colleagues and shot them in the head while they slept” a month before the article was published.

The first passage in the article points out that Asadullah “spent years as a Taliban fighter” and, most horrifically, “granted the Taliban permission to kill his father” because his father, as Asadullah puts it, “had long preached against the jihad.” These first sentences set the tone of Afghan treachery for this article. Immediately, Asadullah’s story is linked to the “surge of rogue Afghan army and police personnel [who] have attacked their Afghan and American colleagues” that has become prevalent in U.S. newspaper discourse on Afghanistan in recent months. According to this article, “at least 16 NATO service members have been killed by men in Afghan Army and police uniforms since January, an increase when compared with the same period in previous years.”

When describing Asadullah’s personal history,Hamdard reports that, “local residents considered Asadullah a peripheral Taliban member from his early teenage years.” The district governor, Haji Mohamed, said that when they “told [Asadullah] that his father was a martyr, [Asadullah] said his father was vile” and adds that he “could tell then that [Asadullah] was a traitor.”

Hamdard reports that after his father’s death, Asadullah became a “full-fledged insurgent,” eventually rising “to become a local Taliban commander” who,according to a member of the provincial council, “carried out attacks on Americans and the local government.” After three years Asadullah returned to his village and through the “government’s program to reintegrate Taliban members,” became part of the Afghan Local Police (ALP). One of the local officials who vouched for Asadullah in order for him to enter the ALP “would later be found among Asadullah’s victims, along with two of Ramazan’s sons.”

Both the quotes and the descriptive language used in this article make a clear impression of Afghan treachery on American readers. The article concludes with an explanation of the ALP’s function as an essential part of the wider security forces plan in Afghanistan and the growing problem of its members turning on their comrades, both Afghani and American.

Article 3: An American Soldier’s Problematic Actions

“Four seconds in Afghanistan: Was it combat or a crime?” (Murphy, June 2012), as reportedin the Los Angeles Times, sets its tone from the outset by immediately questioning the possibility of a crime. In the first sentence, Murphy describes Sgt. 1st Class Walker Taylor’s actions as a “decision to stop a possible bombing” and follows with “he’s stunned to be charged with negligent homicide.” Only then does Murphy begin to tell the story of the incident in question, describing it one second at a time:

“His convoy was reeling from a roadside bomb, his fellow soldiers were engaged in combat with insurgents — and a mysterious black car had just screeched to a stop in the middle of the firefight. Some nine minutes later, a black door opens.

Second 1: A figure dressed in dark, bulky clothing emerges.

Second 2: The figure begins walking toward the trunk.

Second 3: Taylor, with five wounded comrades behind him, sees a thin trigger wire seeming to snake directly toward the black car. Could there be a second bomb in the trunk?

Second 4: Taylor squeezes the trigger on his M-4 carbine. The figure crumples to the dirt.”

The incident became an outrage because the black figure turned out to be an unarmed female doctor; a “mother of four who headed the obstetrics department” at a hospital nearby. Her son and niece were also killed in the incident, her husband emerged wounded. Murphy adds that ten days later, “Taylor got […] a dose of Afghan street justice: His vehicle was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade” which “left him without a face.”

Throughout the article, Murphy uses the language of innocence to describe Taylor. Through implicit comparisons of Americans to Afghanis, Murphy depicts Americans as morally superior while pointing out that Taylor’s actions, if seen as criminal, are the exception to the rule. The “dose of Afghan street justice” appears here in contrast to the absence of any mention of revenge from Americans in U.S. newspaper discourse. Taylor is “charged with negligent homicide and deriliction of duty”, a charge which itself implies that Americans are morally superior to Afghanis, since official criminal charges against Afghanis are rarely publicized in U.S. newspaper discourse.

The theme of American innocence is continued with Taylor’s statement about his charge, “this makes no sense. It’s just wrong,” to which he adds, “can people please look at everything I did, and why I did what I did?” Again, such questioning is never cited on the Afghani side; their actions are taken at face value – as cruel, for reasons not worth questioning. Even Taylor’s lawyer argues for self-defense in a system that assumes innocence until proven guilty. Taylor’s innocence is further supported by “witness statements from the Army investigation [that] show that Taylor wasn’t the only one who thought the black Suzuki was a threat,” but rather the “lack of coordination on the ground […] made it difficult for any of the soldiers to know what had been confirmed about the enemy."

Murphy also points out that "the criminal case doesn't concern the dozens of rounds of ammunition that sprayed the black car "killing the other two victims," which demonstrates Taylor being singled out. Murphy further reports that according to Army investigators, Taylor did not follow the "Army's rules of engagement – making a positive identification of his target as a combatant," emphasizing his exception to the rule of American high morals. Last, but not least, Taylor's "state of mind" during the event is called into question, which may serve as his legal defense for his innocence, and which is never questioned when Afghanis are the perpetrators.

Much like the previous story of Evan O'Neill and in contrast to that of Asadullah, Taylor is described in terms of selflessness, patriotism, intelligence, loyalty and leadership, with stories that evoke sympathy for his life and good character. The first depiction Murphy gives of Taylor is a gruesome description of his mangled face after the Afghani revenge. The next description of him is as "a well-regarded field leader" who "weighs only 114 pounds and lead his platoon "with quiet authority and wry humor." One of Taylor's soldiers is quoted saying, "he's one of the only [noncommissioned officers] I've ever seen that takes care of his soldiers."

Many examples are given for Taylor's exceptional character before joining the Army, such as: "Taylor spent his summers […] as a youth director" at a summer camp. When Taylor earned his first car, "he used it to drive his mom to work […] and provide rides to half the rest of the neighborhood." Murphy reports that Taylor was the only one among his peers to graduate high school and receive a college scholarship, which he turned down in favor of joining the Army with his best friend. By quoting Taylor's sister saying, "we had babied him" and "[the army] was like him breaking away into his manhood," Murphy further emphasizes Taylor's innocence.

Taylor's honorable actions didn't stop once he joined the Army. Murphy reports that Taylor "bought cars for two younger brothers" with his military pay and at one point in his career, was "offered a brief leave from Afghanistan, [at which point he] had to decide between going to his father's funeral or his daughter's birth. He chose the one who was still alive." Murphy writes that "a few months before the July attack, […] Taylor had to pull his friend's body, missing a face, from the vehicle where he'd died. […] He'd promised [his friend's] wife he'd bring her husband home."

Article 4: A story comparing an American and an Afghani

"A U.S. Soldier and the Afghan Soldier Who Killed Him" (Chawkins & King, May 2012), reported in the Los Angeles Times, compares and contrasts the lives of two fallen soldiers, one American and one Afghani, whose lives ended almost simultaneously in a firefight in southern Afghanistan. U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Andrew Britton-Mihalo, a Green Beret, was shot and killed by hispresumed comrade from the Afghan Special Forces, Sergeant Zakirullah, who was subsequently also gunned down by Britton-Mihalo's fellow Green Berets.

The article explores the lives of these two soldiers through short interviews with friends and families of the fallen and includes summaries of key information from recent events. Chawkins and Kingmostly follow the bigger trends of U.S. newspaper discourse when describing the fallen men. The American soldieris framed as a brave hero, whereas one is left with a more generalized, almost lack of character about the Afghani soldier, who is nonetheless depicted as a traitor.

The article begins with the commonalities between the two soldiers: "Each was tough-minded and physically powerful. Each worked hard to win a place in an elite military unit, and spoke with pride of serving his country." Chawkins and King describe both soldiers were religious 25-year-old men with Special Forces training, ready to begin new families. So far, the two soldiers stand on equal moral grounds, but as the article continues, one finds the differences becoming almost polarized.

Britton-Mihalo's and Zakirullah's relationship is set in "the makeshift base in Kandahar province where […] close quarters conditions can foster strong bonds- or allow small irritants to fester." An Afghani executive officer says of the U.S. and Afghani Special Forces, "they work together, they patrol, they are together all day every day." These quotes assume a certain amount of trust between the soldiers and make a big impression on the reader when Chawkins and King describe incidences such as these as, "the heartbreaks of the Western presence in this country […] in which two ostensible allies have both buoyed and failed each other."

In describing Britton-Mihalo, Chawkins and King begin withhis family's patriotic military roots, and then quote his high school coach describing Britton-Mihalo as "something special when it came to dedication and endurance."Britton-Mihalo is described by another coach as "a hero." His sister describes him as meaning "the world" to her.A friend reminisces about his "greatest memories" with Britton-Mihalo.Just like in the previous story about O'Neill, Chawkins and King name the many ways in which Britton-Mihalo displayed heroic traits before joining the military and how he was honored after his death. Britton-Mihalo'ssuccesses in wrestling and as an honors student are mentioned, along with hisbeing an Eagle Scout. He was honored with a moment of silence at his former high school, and was buried at the prestigious Arlington National Cemetery.

In a stark contrast to Britton-Mihalo, the detailed description of the Afghani soldier begins with “Zakirullah didn’t bear the hallmarks of a hometown hero.”His commander is quoted describing him as “nothing unusual.” Zakirullah’s uncle describes him as a “generally easy-going boy,” adding that “his temper occasionally flared” and “in an argument, he could sometimes go crazy.” Zakirullahis portrayed as a product of his childhood, which contrasts harshly with that of Britton-Mihalo, but is normal for his culture according to Chawkins and King. He was “born into a typically large family in the impoverished Pashtun [area].” He worked as a teenager, then “became estranged from the clan.” The question of his ties to the Taliban is raised, but not answered. Zakirullah’sdeath is observed with a lack of emotion. Even though “hundreds of mourners” were present and “wails rang out,” “some of those in attendance did not know how he died.” He was buried in a “forlorn-looking cemetery less than a mile from the family home” and there was “little talk of his final act.” The chore of identifying and claiming Zakirullah’s body “had fallen on” his uncle, who “saw neither rage nor fear written on the features of his young nephew.” The article ends with a question hanging over it why he chose to turn on his American comrade.

V. Some Conclusions of the Micro-Level Study

Our qualitative analysis reveals that U.S. newspaper discourse depicts American and Afghani security forces in a very polarized manner. Americans are portrayed positively, even when their actions are questionable, while Afghanis are portrayed negatively, as traitors. While it is perfectly true that these treacherous events actually happened, and are continuing to happen, information that would present a more balanced view of Afghanis is almost completely absent. There were a few positive articles to be found about Afghani civilians, but none about Afghani soldiers. All the stories that featured Afghani soldiers collected for this sample were negative. The feature stories about Afghani soldiers in our sample all portray them as traitors. These descriptions reinforce American views that Afghanis are not yet ready to be left to fend for themselves when the U.S. ultimately withdraws from Afghanistan in 2014. We believe it would be helpful to the American people to have a more balanced picture of Afghani soldiers,since most Afghani soldiers are still fighting and dying loyally beside their NATO allies.

VI. A Quantitative Analysis

In the second part of our analysis, we looked at the use of certain classes of terms, and of quotes, in the newspaper coverage of the Afghanistan war. Table 1 is a summary of the word counts for all 14 word clusters used in this study for the four articles used in the qualitative study. Overall, the total counts are highest for words denoting weapons (847), then for casualties (604) and conflict (583). Positive word counts are also high (404). Words denoting violence appear 269 times and those denoting fear appear 125 times in the sample. Notably low totals occur for anger (30), hate (11) and revenge (3).

Table 1: Word Count Results

2012 Codes	Anger	Casualty	Conflict	Epic	Fear	Hate	Love
A US soldier and the Afghan	1	21	7	5	4	0	4
Evan Oneill grew up	0	9	3	0	0	0	5
Four seconds in Afghanistan	0	30	19	2	7	0	4
Rogue Afghan officer	0	13	12	1	3	0	1
4 Article Totals:	1	73	41	8	14	0	14
Sample (50 articles) Totals:	30	604	583	56	125	11	52

2012 Codes (continued)	Pastoral	Positive	Revenge	Say	Sorrow	Violence	Weapon
A US soldier and the Afghan	1	11	0	17	5	30	26
Evan Oneill grew up	0	5	0	0	1	0	13
Four seconds in Afghanistan	0	18	0	0	2	0	57
Rogue Afghan officer	0	2	0	0	1	0	8
4 Article Totals:	1	36	0	17	9	30	104
Sample (50 articles) Totals:	11	404	3	264	52	269	847

Because they are both examples of international conflict, we thought it would be informative to compare the quantitative results of this study to those of a study of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Almeida, 2011).Table 2 shows the 2011 study counts, which were the basis for the comparisons made in Table 3.

In Table 3, we compare the word counts for seven categories of word clusters between the two studies and the two parts of this study. When comparing the totals for the microanalysis and the fifty-article sample in this study, one would expect to see an average of 8% of total words for each category represented in the microanalysis articles. A perfect representation would of course be hard to come by, but the results are fairly close to these expectations, except for those connoting sorrow (17%) and anger (3%). We find more than twice the expected percentages of sorrow represented in the four chosen articles, but anger accounts for less than half of the expected percentage.

Table 2 : Almeida (2011) Study Totals

Almeida's 2011 Study Totals	Anger	Fear	Sorrow	Hate	Casualty	Violence	Weapon
2002	43	178	132	35	811	1061	1261
2003	36	101	85	22	501	1054	1131
2004	32	132	120	39	524	1002	1041
2005	29	86	44	21	322	839	847
2006	24	111	88	16	508	1013	1124
Annual averages:	32.8	121.6	93.8	26.6	533.2	993.8	1080.8

Table 3 : Comparison of Totals Between this Study and Almeida's 2011 Study

Comparison	Anger	Fear	Sorrow	Hate	Casualty	Violence	Weapon
A US soldier and the Afghan	1	4	5	0	21	30	26
Evan Oneill grew up	0	0	1	0	9	0	13
Four seconds in Afghanistan	0	7	2	0	30	0	57
Rogue Afghan officer	0	3	1	0	13	0	8
Micro-analysis Article Totals:	1	14	9	0	73	30	104
% of Sample Total	3%	11%	17%	0%	12%	11%	12%
2012 Sample Totals (50 articles):	30	125	52	11	604	269	847
2011 Study Annual Averages:	32.8	121.6	93.8	26.6	533.2	993.8	1080.8

When comparing the sample totals with the previous research's annual averages, we find similar numbers in the anger (30 vs. 32.8) and fear (125 vs. 121.6) categories, bur much smaller counts for this study than in the previous one for the other five categories.

Counts were also made of direct and indirect quotes and their sources. Direct quotes are defined as the exact words of a speaker and are enclosed in quotation marks. Indirect quotes consist of paraphrases of a speaker's words. Both direct and indirect quotes have various functions, but are often persuasive or lead to the reader's identification with the speaker. The ATLAS.ti software could not be programmed to do a perfect count of quotes, so this part of the coding was done by hand.

Table 4 : Sources of Quoted Speakers in This Study

Quote Sources	Direct Quotes:		Indirect Quotes		Total Quotes	
		%		%		%
U.S. Authorities	202	13	195	12	397	12
Afghani Authorities	226	14	509	31	735	23
International Authorities	133	8	292	18	425	13
U.S. Civilians	316	20	167	10	483	15
Afghani Civilians	415	26	237	14	652	20
U.S. Soldiers	225	14	84	5	309	9
Afghani Soldiers & Police	80	5	175	10	255	8
Totals	1597	100	1659	100	3256	100

Table 4 shows the sources of quotes used in the discourse studied here. The results show that 49% of direct quotes came from U.S. and Afghani civilians. U.S. and Afghani authorities and U.S. soldiers appear almost equally directly quoted (13%, 14% and 14% respectively), while International authorities and Afghani security forces are rarely quoted directly (8% and 5% respectively). When it comes to indirect quotes, Afghani authorities account for 31% of them, while all authorities taken together account for 61% of all indirect quotes in this discourse.Civilians account for 24% of indirect quotes, while U.S. and Afghani soldiers and police account for only 15% of indirect quotes. When both types of quotes are considered together, 23% of quotes originate from Afghani authorities and 20% of all quotes are from Afghani civilians.

Table 5 : Sources of Quoted Speakers in Almeida's 2011 Study

2011 Study	Direct Quotes:		Indirect Quotes		Total Quotes	
		%		%		%
Israeli Authorities	880	22	1,175	36	2,055	28
Palestinian Authorities	808	20	759	23	1,567	22
U.S. & International Authorities	210	5	220	7	430	6
Israeli Civilians	855	21	343	11	1,198	17
Palestinian Civilians	1,200	30	741	23	1,941	27
U.S. & International Civilians	54	1	11	0	65	1
Totals	4007	100	3249	100	7,256	100

Table 5 summarizes the 2011 study results for quotes within that discourse. It is given here for comparison to the current study. In that study, most quotes originated from Israeli authorities (28%) and Palestinian civilians (27%), with direct and indirect quotes accounting for similar percentages. Palestinian authorities represented 22% of total quotes and Israeli civilians accounted for 17% of total quotes, while U.S. and international sources were rarely quoted (6% and 1%).

VII. Conclusions of the Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative results indicate that the categories in the 2011 study were fruitful for the 2012 study although these two studies reflected different international conflicts. Table 1 shows that most of the discourse revolves around factual accounts of what is happening in Afghanistan, with some mention of emotions related to those events. Fear is the emotion expressed most often, while anger and revenge are surprisingly hard to find in this sample. We can also deduce that the four articles chosen for the microanalysis are good representations of the overall sample because their percentages are similar in almost all categories (Table 3).

The distribution of quoted sources speaks to the U.S. press's attempts to portray a fair and accurate account of what is happening in Afghanistan. U.S. and Afghani civilians are quoted almost equally. Among the authorities mentioned in the discourse, Afghani authorities dominate, which may account for reporters' attempts to compensate for the weight of established U.S. readers' opinions on the matter. Understandably, U.S. and Afghani soldiers and police are not quoted often, as it is mostly their deaths that are reported on and because military policies make it difficult for the remaining soldiers to talk to reporters. These quantitatively verified facts give us good reason to believe that the trends discovered within the qualitative analysis are likely to be perceived by all parties.

When comparing this study with the 2011 study, we find that both studies list more facts than emotions, which is appropriate for objective reporting. Words denoting violence and weapons appeared in much greater numbers in the 2011 study than in this one, while casualties were mentioned at about the same rate. In the 2011 study, most quotes stemmed from Israeli and Palestinian authorities and civilians, while the distribution of U.S. and foreign quoted sources is quite different in the current study. The differences observed here originate from the differing nature of the two discourses. The 2011 study involved U.S. coverage of a conflict between two foreign nations, so quoting them was most appropriate, while the current study involved conflict between the U.S. and Afghanistan, making the distribution of quotes found therein more appropriate.

While the facts are emphasized, it is the nature of the facts and how they are reported that affects the reader. The quantitative results reveal who is quoted and which words are used within the discourse (quoted and descriptive),and the qualitative analysis puts these two together to find who says what and ultimately reveals the "flavor" of the discourse. In this case, the "flavor" is polarized. American soldiers are portrayed as heroes and morally superior to their Afghani comrades, even while committing a crime. The facts are in themselves emotion provoking due to the nature of war, but they are also accompanied by emotional quotes of those involved, which further polarize the discourse.

The danger of this one-sided perspective is that Americans who follow the discourse lose sight of the positive contributions of the Afghanis, who sometimes serve as the only model of Muslims to American readers. Here again, a fair portrayal of Afghanis could only benefit Americans for all the reasons that make discrimination damaging and should therefore be avoided.

VIII. General Conclusions

In this paper, we have performed a discourse analysis of American newspaper coverage of the Afghani conflict using a two-part methodology, a qualitative micro analysis and a quantitative macroanalysis. The qualitative analysis utilized repeated close readings to achieve a finely grained analysis of the discourse of four news articles. The qualitative discourse analysis illustrates how the selection of certain words and phrases can construct images of the person being described along with the selection of different types of quoted material. The in-depth analysis of four different articles effectively demonstrates how these linguistic practices can produce negative images of Afghani soldiers, as traitors, and positive images of American soldiers, as heroes.

For the quantitativeanalysis, we merged discourse analysis with corpus linguistics in order to establish the frequencies of selected keywords in a large collection of articles. Wealso compared word frequencies in this research with word frequencies in previous research done on another international news topic, U.S. news coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We concluded that many of the previously used word clusters also identified patterns in the discourse of the articles about Afghanistan, namely, words denoting weapons, casualties, conflict, positivity, violence, and fear. The quantitative analysis also showed that Afghani authorities were quoted more than Palestinian authorities, and, as expected, U.S. authorities and U.S. soldiers were quoted much more often than in the Palestinian-Israeli news articles. On the other hand, Afghani civilians were quoted less often than Palestinian civilians.

These conclusions shed light on the type of discourse used by U.S. news writers to report the news about the war in Afghanistan, and support our belief that this type of two-part study can be extremely fruitful in the discourse analysis of international news coverage.

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