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Othering and voice: How media framing denies refugees integration opportunities

Abstract

Mainstream media play a significant role in shaping public opinion in modern society. For refugees, misinterpretation (including associations with victimhood, foreignness and deviant behaviour) can hinder integration into New Zealand society and the ability to fully participate in their new communities. This may affect refugees' successful transition into the workforce through effects on both their self-image and mental health, as well as contributing to negative attitudes in potential employers. This study examines the linguistic framing of refugees in New Zealand print media. Starting from the assumption that language is socially constitutive, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework is used to explore discourses surrounding this group, to uncover out-of-sight linguistic strategies that reproduce existing structures of power and inequality. Analysis indicates that discourses around refugees create a negative semantic prosody, or 'aura' of meaning, in which they are framed as a policy 'issue' and as 'othered' victims. Furthermore, refugees are afforded little opportunity to define their experiences in their own terms. Addressing refugees' misrepresentation and any wider societal effects involves granting greater voice to refugees without the need for an 'expert' voice to validate their views. Equally, replacing the existing taken-for-granted framing of refugees to positive framings of strength, capability and resilience could arguably counter the 'othering' this group experiences and the barriers it may create to inhibit successful transition to employment.

Introduction

Economic self-sufficiency has a significant influence on migrants' capacity to fully participate in their new societies; without employment, refugees risk social and economic marginalisation (Immigration New Zealand, 2012; UNHRC, 2002). Furthermore, a 1993 report produced by Refugee Migrant Services (RMS) states that acceptance and support of the public is "the single most important factor in the establishment and maintenance of refugee resettlement" (Worth, 2002, p. 73). Securing and maintaining fulfilling

employment that is appropriate to individuals' skills and qualifications is recognised as an important part of the resettlement process (Department of Labour, 2007; JR McKenzie Trust, 2004). However, research has indicated that within New Zealand, refugees are some of the most marginalised people in terms of employment opportunities. Barriers to securing employment have been identified as English proficiency, New Zealand work experience, sociopragmatic competency, and, importantly, discrimination by potential employers (ChangeMakers Refugee Forum, 2012; Marra, Holmes, & Riddiford, 2011). Meaningful employment is an important contributor to refugees' self-esteem and sense that they are contributing to society, as well as challenging negative stereotypes and building support networks (ChangeMakers Refugee Forum, 2012). If successfully achieved, refugees' increased participation in and contribution to New Zealand society through engagement with the workforce has benefits for both the individual and wider society.

Given the significant effect that the media can have on public opinion and by extension in the success of resettlement and integration of new migrants (Baker & McEnery, 2005; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Kamenova, 2014; Khosravinik, 2008; Sulaiman-Hill, Thompson, Afsar, & Hodliffe, 2011; van Dijk, 2000), it is important to examine the ways in which refugees and asylum seekers are framed linguistically in media reporting and to consider factors which may hinder refugees' and asylum seekers' entry into appropriate employment and thus full participation in their new communities.

To investigate the messages inherent in media reporting, this analysis I present makes use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), examining how assumptions in texts may reveal underlying ideological beliefs about refugees, and how intentionality on the part of the author is not necessary to create disempowering discourses. CDA is an approach that is unambiguously political (van Dijk, 1993, p. 252), focusing primarily on the relationship between language and power, and the ways in which text and talk result in social inequalities. This approach views language as both shaping and being shaped by society (Wodak, 2011, p. 39). That is to say, social discourse both maintains and reproduces existing social and ideological relations as well as contributing to changing them. Through critical understanding, CDA can help to empower those without power,

and to expose those who are abusing it (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; van Dijk, 1993; Wodak, 2011). In this paper, this means drawing attention to the linguistic strategies that deny refugees and asylum seekers autonomy. In considering the representation of refugees, we see that these potentially vulnerable groups are denied power, self-determination, and the opportunity to be masters of their own destinies. As noted by Barreto and Ellemers (2005, p. 633), discrimination and marginalisation need to be visible before they can be challenged as accounts of social inequalities and diminished opportunities. Thus by exploring discourses surrounding these groups in New Zealand newspapers, the relationships between language and out-of-sight power structures in society can be made visible, along with some of the opaque processes through which these groups are 'othered' and denied power. This relates closely to van Dijk's (2001, p. 355) 'two basic questions' for CDA research: how do powerful groups control public discourse, and how does that discourse control less powerful groups, with what social consequences?

Media Representation

The significance of the media's influence is well-documented. That is, the media largely represent the views of the powerful majority, and minority groups have little access to the means of production of these media and thus over representing their own voices (Barclay & Liu, 2003; Fejes, 1984; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Khosravinik, 2009; Loto et al., 2006; Munshi, 1998; van Dijk, 2000). The lack of control and voice that minorities such as refugees and asylum seekers have in their own affairs, coupled with overall negative or disempowering media representation, can affect these groups through both mental health and self-image (Leach & Mansouri, 2003; Leudar, Hayes, Nekvapil, & Turner Baker, 2008; Loto et al., 2006; Musarrat Akram, 2000). Marlowe (2010) and Pupavac (2008) note that in particular, representing refugees as traumatised can overshadow all other aspects of their identities and may in fact hinder recovery and employment options. The wide-reaching influence of the media means that these negative representations can have unforeseen circumstances

Barclay and Liu (2003, p. 3, following Butler 1990), highlight the importance of groups gaining voice in media reporting, if they are to retain agency. 'Voice' refers to whose

views are reported in the media, how much space they are afforded (Baker et al., 2008, p. 294). In their study, media coverage of the 1995 occupation of Pakaitore/Moutua Gardens in Whanganui was examined. Their findings that Māori voices were outweighed by the voices of other interest groups (2003, p. 10) are highly applicable here in reference to another marginalised community. As noted by Khosravinik (2008, p. 10) the media's management of reporting features such as quotations "can play a significant role in the micro-linguistic mechanisms of a prejudicial ideology"(Khosravinik, 2008, p. 10; following van Dijk, 1991). Other studies have also shown that minority spokespeople are rarely given the opportunity to speak alone (Baker et al., 2008; Loto et al., 2006; van Dijk, 2000), and are frequently followed by an 'expert' voice that validates - or contradicts – their statement (van Dijk, 2000, p. 39). Removing or limiting voice has an obvious effect on representation.

It is clear that research into media portrayal of minority groups generally and refugees specifically, has found that these groups are systematically denied accurate representation of themselves, which can have real-world effects on their lives. Minority groups are regularly underrepresented in media discourse, and when they do appear, are subjected to stereotypical representations. New Zealand's media report a wide range of refugee issues (Sulaiman-Hill et al., 2011) in a fairly benevolent manner (Spoonley & Butcher, 2009). It is nonetheless important to explore underlying ideologies in widely-circulated newspaper discourses, as they may be reinforcing existing power structures as taken-for-granted narratives that impede less powerful groups like refugees access to self-determination and full involvement in society. Given the manner in which linguistic and discursive choices can have disempowering consequences for minority groups, and the power of the media to ideologically shape public opinion, this study aims to address the ways that New Zealand newspapers limit the power of refugees and asylum seekers and thus their successful resettlement options, through linguistic choices and discursive strategies.

Data

CDA has been criticised it terms of both its representativeness and partiality, with claims that texts are chosen for analysis because they are good exemplars of the researcher's

preconceived ideas (Schegloff, 1997, in Blommaert 2005; Widdowson, 1998). To address this concern, following Baker (2012) and others (Baker et al., 2008; Hardt-Mautner, 1995; Mautner, 2009), for the present study the CDA framework was combined with corpus linguistics techniques. Working with a database of texts allows confirmation of the generalisability of observations, and comparing the data with a larger, more general corpus allows identification of significant trends in the present study's data. For this research, themes uncovered through corpus techniques and manual inspection of the data were used to identify newspaper articles appropriate for closer critical analysis.

The texts for this study were collected from New Zealand's daily newspapers with the widest circulation (The New Zealand Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2014): *The New Zealand Herald* (NZH), *The Dominion Post* (DP) and *The Press* (CP). Articles were sourced from Newstext, an online repository of New Zealand newspaper articles. The three-month periods leading up to the 2005, 2008 and 2011 general elections in New Zealand were selected to explore articles regarding refugees. It was expected that during these time periods, articles referencing refugees would be numerous: during election campaigns, candidates and parties often present refugees as both a threat and a burden on society, increasing negative public sentiment (Parliamentary Assembly, 2012). Following Baker and McEnery (2005), articles referencing refugees and asylum seekers were identified using the search terms *refugee* (and its plural) and *asylum*. A total of 318 articles referencing refugees and asylum seekers were identified.

As mentioned, 'voice' refers to whose views are reported in the media, and how much space they are given to express those views. Adopting the methods of Barclay and Liu (2003), amount of voice was determined by word counts. These counts were collected to gain an overall impression of the distribution of voice in the texts, rather than to perform any quantitative statistical analyses on the outcomes. The word counts (i.e. the number of words inside quotation marks or all words in a sentence which lead or followed an explicit attribution of speech) were taken only from those articles that had refugees as their subject matter. The voice from 107 refugee-themed texts totalled 12,246 words, 3222 (26%) of which were from refugee sources and 9024 (74%) from non-refugee

sources. This indicates that non-refugee sources are afforded significantly more opportunity to express their views than refugees.

The identification of linguistic patterns using concordance analysis and keywords was taken as a starting point from which to begin qualitative analysis on the data (see Greenbank (2014) for more details) . Excerpts were chosen as exemplars of identified themes, and articles that were deemed to display a range of the themes and thus illustrate the cumulative effects of these linguistic strategies were selected for closer examination using a CDA lens.

Common collocations of lexical items may result in a word taking on extra meaning and connotations even when encountered in isolation (Bednarek, 2008, p. 129), i.e. creating a semantic prosody or 'aura of meaning' surrounding the word (Baker et al., 2008, p. 278). Tognini-Bonelli (2001, p. 111, in Mautner, 2009:128) notes that words which are commonly used together "do not maintain their independence", but that "…regularly used in contexts of good news or bad news or judgement…[a word] carries this kind of meaning around with it". Baker and McEnery (2005, p. 218), for example, suggest that *asylum seeker*, if regularly collocated with ideas of falsity and illegitimacy, may automatically cause activation of these ideas when we come across the term *asylum seeker* unaccompanied. This prosody can reveal what kinds of social issues and attitudes are associated with a particular word or concept (Mautner, 2009)

Keywords identified in this study show that the concepts of *refugee* and *asylum seeker* are frequently linked to politics (e.g. *immigration, voters, policy*), foreign countries (e.g. *Palestine, Israel, China, Iraq* and their adjectives) and violence or danger (e.g. *war, security, terrorism*). I would argue that these associations together result in an overall negative semantic prosody of refugeehood as an issue to be addressed by 'experts' or politicians, as associated with violence as both victims and culprits, and overall presented as a group both separate and different from the reader that the text presumes (see also Baker et al., 2008; Baker & McEnery, 2005; Khosravinik, 2009; Threadgold, 2009). This prosody is intensified by the disparity in the amount of space refugees and non-refugees are granted to speak about matters related to refugees. This kind of representation depicts refugees as

incapable of self-determination and denies them the agency to frame their own experiences as autonomous human beings. Fairclough (2003), cited in Baker & McEnery, 2005: 197) comments that CDA's aim is to address the question of how "existing societies provide people with the possibilities and resources for rich and fulfilling lives, how on the other hand…they deny peoples these possibilities and resources". Below, ways in which refugees are denied power, autonomy and thus the 'resources for rich and fulfilling lives' are discussed in relation to themes identified within the data set.

Othering

In the case of refugees and asylum seekers, the cumulative effects of collocations can result in these groups being 'othered'. 'Othering' is a process through which the self (or an 'ingroup') is defined in opposition to the 'other' (or an 'outgroup'). In the process, 'othering' identifies a group as deviant from the 'norms' of the speaker's own group. A complex and multifaceted phenomenon which resists precise definition, the concept is important to CDA as it "raises issues about group boundaries" and can contribute to discrimination based on those boundaries (Coupland, 2010, p. 244).

'Othering' generally results in marginalisation and disempowerment for the 'othered' group (Coupland, 2010; Grove, Zwi, & Allotey, 2007; Marlowe, 2010). However, it is not inherently an act of alienation. Through emphasising positive differences, an ingroup member may fetishise the supposed differences of an outgroup, by bestowing 'exotic' attributes to that group (Coupland, 2010, p. 244). Nonetheless, despite benevolent enactment, this positive 'othering' still imagines an outgroup whose observed difference from society exclude those groups from that society by implication.

The following extracts, taken from a 2011 DP article ("Community weeps for stabbed refugee," 2011) exemplify the fetished 'other'. Here, Coupland's (2010: 244) ideas of using distance to bestow 'mystery' and 'reverence' can clearly be seen:

1. ***Women in headscarves wailed*** *yesterday morning as Eman Jani Hurmiz was carried into the* ***Ancient Church of the East*** *in Strathmore.*

2. ***The men of the community*** *then carried Mrs. Hurmiz's coffin out of the church, followed by a* ***procession of mourners.***

   ("Community weeps for stabbed refugee," 2011)

It could be argued that the phrases indicated in bold work together to create the feeling of exotic spectacle 'otherness'. The mention of the headscarves, the verb *wail*, the full name of the church, the description of delineated gender roles (women wailing, *men of the community* carrying the coffin) and the noun phrase *procession of mourners* together invoke imagery of an exotic foreign ceremony: a spectacle in opposition to the funerary expectations of the supposed reader. The article, obviously sympathetic to the woman who was murdered, goes about describing her funeral in a way which almost fetishises the grief of her community and firmly positions them as 'others' within New Zealand.

Defining and distancing a group through identification of 'otherness' is to treat the individuals who comprise that group as uniform, and remove their agency to act independently. This kind of representation "obscures more than it reveals because it fosters a belief in an illusory homogeneity and separateness" (Munshi, 1998, p. 98). Stereotyping groups in this way results in suppression of a vast array of backgrounds, interests and motivations of individuals, in favour of one or a few shared characteristics. Although this may have some beneficial outcomes – such as recognising the refugee circumstances within a resettlement context, homogeneous representation can lead to one label - such as *refugee* or *asylum seeker*- becoming an individual's "master status", eclipsing any other form of identity (Marlowe, 2010, p. 183). This label and its associations have the potential to affect people's (including employers') attitudes towards and willingness to engage with refugees in an employment context.

'Othering' can be seen clearly in a 2011 CP article headlined *Woman claims rape by refugee* ("Woman claims rape by refugee," 2011), which immediately makes a very strong association between the concept of 'refugee' and the violent criminal act that has been claimed. Headlines have significant ideological implications. They are the most visible and the first-read part of the article, and the brief information they contain "activate[s] the relevant knowledge in memory" that readers need to understand the article's contents

(van Dijk, 1991: 50). The headline's role is to summarise the most important information in the article, but this summary is the journalist's (or editor's) necessarily subjective perspective. Furthermore, they are generally the best-remembered information from an article (van Dijk, 1991, p. 51). Thus, headlines can undoubtedly contribute to ideological representations held by the wider public, particularly regarding minority groups that an individual might not otherwise come into contact with (Spoonley & Butcher, 2009, p. 357). While a headline like *Woman claims rape by refugee* serves to associate the crime with refugeehood (and is the association most likely to be retained by readers), it is also important to note that the text goes on to clarify that the victim of the crime was herself a refugee. The fact that the accused's but not the victim's status as refugee is identified in the headline is a clear example of 'othering' – refugeehood as connected to criminal activity and deviant behaviour. Crime is thus something that 'other' people do, and is a problem which does directly relate to 'us'. Similarly, irrelevant ethnic qualifiers in stories about crime can also result in 'othering', through associating that ethnicity, and the concept of 'ethnicity' in general – with crime and general deviance (see also Loto et al., 2006; Munshi, 1998).

Voice

Selective reporting of voice can be a strategy of 'othering' certain groups, and absence of voice is certainly ideologically relevant here. Inadequate reporting of the views of the community that a particular article concerns would seem to indicate that the author (or newspaper) does not value that group's opinions regarding their own affairs. It implies that experts external to the topical group are better qualified to speak about and for these people.

These themes can be seen in an NZH article concerning an Auckland family who had been in need of financial assistance ("Family overwhelmed by generosity," 2014). Three voices are reported in the article, one (child) refugee voice and two 'expert' voices – a Public Health Nurse and a spokeswoman for a charity. The refugee voice totals 37 words (23%) of the total voice in the article. The two other voices comprise 127 words (77%). Each 'expert' voice has more coverage than the refugee voice, and their combined voice

is three times as much as the refugee voice. It is also interesting to note the difference in the content of the voice. The refugee voice consists of the following three sentences:

3. *Eleven-year-old Ruth Salama, the family's eldest surviving child and chief interpreter, said the family were surprised and excited.*
4. *"Mum wants to say thank you to all those people and may God bless them," she said.*
5. *"The exciting thing for me is we are getting a TV and I'm getting an iPad."*

   ("Family overwhelmed by generosity," 2014)

These quotes all express the family's gratitude at the generosity of the readers. Using the voice of a child to represent the family's gratitude works to position the refugee family as child-like and naive.

The Public Health Nurse is given the role of explaining what goods the family were donated, and how they will be helpful:

6. *Ms Fyfe said the other items would all make a big difference.*
7. *"The washing machine had broken so they were hand-washing everything," she said. "The fridge leaks and they have to mop up the water every day.*
8. *"They have never had a dryer before. They didn't have a toaster. The curtains are very thin, so warm thermal curtains will be awesome. The trailer of firewood — that's how they heat the house."*

The refugee family are not framed as autonomous agents, constructing their own identities and responding to their own financial problems. The article allows the refugees space to express gratitude but not to discuss practicalities. We should also note the claim by van Dijk which is of relevance here: minority voices are rarely heard in isolation but must be followed and backed up by expert, majority voices (2000, p. 39)

Denying Power

The concepts of Semantic Prosody, Othering and Voice, and their application to representation of refugees and asylum seekers in news media, together make a compelling argument for denial of power to refugees in those representations. Viewed collectively, these features reveal that, as asserted by CDA theorists, discourse both shapes and is shaped by society (Wodak, 2011: 39; also (Paltridge, 2012; Titscher, Meyer, Wodak, & Vetter, 2000). As well as reproducing taken-for-granted assumptions about reality, discourse helps to reinforce those assumptions.

To illustrate the effects of these phenomena together I present an article in its entirety. *Helping People in Dire Straits*, a full page DP feature article ("Helping people in dire straits," 2011), was chosen for several reasons. The subject matter is a refugee camp in Kenya and it has many references to refugees to examine. It is a long enough article (2,073 words) that it was felt the cumulative effects of any prosodic themes would be evident. The article talks about the experiences of both workers in the camp and refugees themselves, and seems to have been written from a standpoint which encourages sympathy and compassion towards the camp's residents. Thus, ways in which ostensibly benevolent representation can in fact have detrimental effects can be explored.

The article is divided into two sections, the first of which introduces three New Zealanders working at Dadaab refugee camp. The second, larger section, describes the camp itself and some of the refugees living there. Over both sections, refugee voices comprise 14% (62 words) of the total voice, and non-refugee voices – including the three New Zealanders profiled, and other workers in the camp – comprised 86% (395 words).

The profiles of the three aid workers that make up the first section of the feature contain non-refugee voices only. Given that the focus as specified by the headline is the aid workers, it is unsurprising that their voices are more prominent here. The framing of the voices of these three along with other discourse features in the article, however, contribute to an overall prosody of 'othering' of refugees in this first section, as discussed below.

Refugees are not directly mentioned in the first of the three bios, but are referenced only as an unspecified problem:

9. *"There is a set of systemic problems that's been going on for generations, but it has become more intense in the past 40 to 50 years. It's going to become hotter and drier, so the more you can prepare, the more you can prevent."*

This paints a picture of refugees as homogenous and problematic, without their own agency. This is further exemplified in the second bio:

10. *As the Dadaab camp expanded, UNHCR, which is charged with organising the area, decided to open another extension camp to relocate refugees who were overcrowded in older camps.*

Discourse about 'relocating refugees' could be seen to position these people as objects or goods, removing them of any agency. Baker and McEnery observe that movement of refugees is often described using words associated with the transportation of goods (*delivered, transported, smuggled*), which constructs the refugees themselves as transported goods, as "a token of their dehumanisation" (2005: 206).

Later in this second bio, the capability of refugees to make decisions on their own behalf is questioned:

11. *Smith wonders whether the Somali refugees understood exactly what they were getting themselves into. "People don't realise their options are limited. The only place they can go back to is Somalia. It's a problem that is not going to go away but you can only do what you can do."*

This positions refugees as unequipped to make a reasonable decision about their own fates. I would argue that it is often precisely because people realise that their options are limited that they make the choice to uproot and travel to a refugee camp. While it is probably true that no one knows exactly 'what they are getting themselves into' when going to a refugee camp, we could argue that anyone making that choice is more concerned with what they are getting themselves out of.

These kinds of assumptions that texts make about opinions and background knowledge are central to CDA's objective of addressing opacity within texts. As mentioned by van Dijk (2000: 40), much of the information in discourse is implied, thus examining what texts assume can reveal underlying beliefs. This kind of assumption is demonstrated in the third of the aid worker profiles:

12. "*The thing which really strikes me is the extraordinary compassion - you have western donors, predominantly Kenyan staff and a population of muslim Somali refugees working together."*

This sentence makes the assumption that it is a noteworthy fact – i.e. unusual – that Western donors, Kenyan staff and Muslim Somali refugees work well together. It seems to envisage that people from different parts of the world would normally struggle to work harmoniously.

The second section of the feature focuses on life for the refugees within the camp. Topics that each group speaks about are relevant. Refugee voices express gratitude, comment on the community benefits of life in the camp and include two short quotes concerning a refugee's son and her own looks. These could all be described as serving affective functions, i.e. fuelled by emotion rather than facts. The task of conveying factual information – statistics regarding the camp – is given to non-refugee voices such as medical staff. While I am not suggesting that these are not the people most qualified to impart the technical information, it is worth considering that the kind of division of

speaking topics contributes to the perception of refugees as incapable of controlling their own lives.

Refugees as a group are consistently viewed as helpless victims throughout this article, with several phrases focusing on limited options:

13. *The pastoralists that dominate Somalia have little choice - stay and starve, leave and eat*

This kind of construction contributes to a discourse of plight surrounding refugees, whereby they are positioned as victims and thus as powerless. Although arguably framed in this manner with good intentions, this is an example of an opaque way in which these groups can be denied power through common discourses.

Interestingly, the inanimate causes of their plight are agentivised:

14. *Rains failed to come. Then the crops failed and livestock died*

One human cause of the plight is mentioned in passing:

15. *The Islamist militant group Al Shabaab, which controls the vast majority of southern Somalia, refuses international assistance.*

These constructions collectively create the idea that the causes of refugees' plight are largely beyond anyone's control, and it is a situation being made worse by a group who are distanced from the supposed readers through two qualifiers *Islamist* and *militant*, which together create the image of a very 'othered' group on which to blame the worsening of the situation. This serves to problematise refugee status as a vast, unavoidable and seemingly insurmountable plight, and firmly plants any blame on firstly, inanimate causes, and secondly, an 'othered' group who, I are arguably linked to terrorism through their pronominal qualifiers.

To explore the kinds of ideas commonly associated with a particular word, it can be useful to generate a list of the most salient collocates of that word in a general corpus, as those collocates can "contribute to its meaning [and] provide a semantic analysis of a word and convey messages implicitly" (Baker et al., 2008: 278). Using AntConc to find collocates of *Islamic* in Macalister's larger, more general newspaper corpus, the top five collocates generated were:

i. Syria
ii. Guerrillas
iii. Fundamentalism
iv. Afghan
v. Terrorism

If these are the kinds of words that regularly appear in proximity of *Islamic*, it could be argued that this word has a semantic prosody of war, danger, extremism and 'foreignness'. Simply by virtue of its presence, *Islamist* here serves to associate Al Shabaab's militancy and refusal of aid with Islam. Islam is 'othered' as a contributor to refugees' plight. Later in the article, Islam is (indirectly) involved in 'othering' Habiba Hassan, a refugee at Dadaab:

16. *"I do not normally look like this," she says. Her cheekbones protrude from a gaunt face hiding beneath a black hibjab* [sic]

Habiba's hijab is seemingly only relevant to this description because it is a presumed point of difference between the reader and Habiba. Furthermore, the phrase *hiding beneath a black hibjab* [sic] is interesting in that it presents a taken-for-granted and western view of the hijab as something which women are hidden beneath, which may not be the view of many actual readers of the text, not to mention Habiba Hassan, the woman wearing the hijab.

A very clear example of refugees being denied agency and 'othered' through discourses of powerlessness and incapability is shown below:

17. *Hassan and his family wait for hours, alongside the dozens of others in the centre who gradually shuffle into a beige prefabricated building...Blue tags are tied around their ankles and wrists and they are directed to a UN employee handing out boxes of high-energy biscuits. Hassan is unsure how to open them. The employee takes the boxes back…pulls out two bars and… [hands] them to the children. They paw at them slowly, crumbs spilling down their fronts*

This paragraph depicts Abdi Hassan and his family as helpless and naive, and dehumanises them by likening them to animals. Firstly, the phrase … *who gradually shuffle into a beige prefabricated building* brings to mind images of animals being herded, or at the very least, people who are directionless and are not in control of their situation. Baker and McEnery similarly concluded that phrases in their corpus such as *trudge aimlessly*, along with metaphors comparing refugees to movement of water (*streaming, flooding, overflowing*), contribute to a construction of refugees "…as having no real understanding of their situation or what motivates them" (2005: 204) and their movement as "an elemental force which is difficult to predict and has no sense of control" (205).

Similarly, *Blue tags are tied around their ankles and wrists and they are directed…* evokes images of passive animals being marked, or goods being coded. The association with animals is later emphasised when the children are given biscuits and they *paw at them slowly, crumbs spilling down their fronts*. This, after their father was *unsure how to open them*. The refugees are depicted as incapable of dealing with simple tasks like opening a box of biscuits. This paragraph presents refugees as an aimless, child-like group in need of external help for the simplest of tasks. Mentioned earlier in the article is the fact that Hassan and his family had walked for a week to get to this refugee camp, during which time they presumably had managed to feed and shelter themselves. My goal is not to suggest that refugee camps do not provide sorely-needed and immeasurable aid to

vulnerable people, but to highlight the fact that refugees are not altogether helpless people incapable of governing their own lives.

It is clear that the article discussed here aims to draw attention to the very real plight of the hundreds of thousands of refugees in Dadaab camp, something which is important when attempting to address the growing number of refugees worldwide in need of aid and resettlement. This analysis highlights the dominant, taken-for-granted discourses surrounding refugees that consistently deny them the space and opportunity to define their situations and lives on their own terms. While I would argue that the intention of writers or articles such as this one are honourable, employing these prevalent discourses of helplessness and 'othering' can have negative real-world effects on the experiences of refugees who have not had access to channels in which to frame their experiences themselves. Refugees' skills and ability to contribute to their new communities are obscured by representations that framing them frequently as requiring help and as traumatised victims of terrible plight. Despite benevolent intentions, this could result in employers being unwilling to hire refugees and thus actually hinder their integration.

Conclusion

In line with CDA's commitment to exploring the links between language and social inequalities, this study was undertaken with the intention of revealing ways in which refugees and asylum seekers are denied power, autonomy and full participation in society in order to bring about change. Media discourse was chosen as the site in which to explore these inequalities because, as Martínez Lirola (2014, p. 487) points out, it is a "socially recognised discourse that contributes to the image of others." Furthermore, Van Dijk (2000, p. 36), in considering the role of the news in reproduction of ethnic inequality, asserted that discourse within the media is the central source of "knowledge, attitudes and ideologies…of ordinary citizens" (also Baker & McEnery, 2005; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Sulaiman-Hill et al., 2011). The influence that the media can have is important to CDA's focus on the way inequalities are maintained through reproduction of dominant discourses. For refugees, support and acceptance from their new host communities is imperative to successful resettlement (Worth, 2002, p. 73).

However, as Grove, et al. (2007, p. 217) note, "acceptance may remain conditional on favourable local and global circumstances", and negative attitudes and 'othering' discourses surrounding refugees and asylum seekers can result in "exclusionary practices related to education, employment and other types of resources" (Marlowe, 2010, p. 6). This research has examined the relationship between language used in the framing of refugees and asylum seekers in the media and the consequences such representation may have on these groups' successful transition into New Zealand societies.

Seeking to examine the ways New Zealand newspapers deny refugees power through discursive strategies, it was found that the lexical items and themes which surround these groups collectively create a negative semantic prosody. Even if well-intentioned, this depicts them as separate from and different to the assumed 'ingroup' community the texts are aimed at. This 'othering' excludes refugees and asylum seekers from full involvement in their communities. Equally, it was found that, in line with Barclay and Liu's (2003) and Loto et al.'s (2006) findings, the groups under investigation were granted significantly less space to have their views and opinions expressed in their own affairs than non-refugee voices. Refugee 'issues' were thus presented as matters for 'experts' to deal with, while refugee voices were largely confined to performing affective functions. These themes together show that refugees are systematically being refused the opportunity of self-definition in New Zealand. It has also been shown here that, in line with previous research (Baker et al., 2008; Sulaiman-Hill et al., 2011; Threadgold, 2009; van Dijk, 2000 and others), many taken-for-granted and out-of-sight discursive processes depict refugees as 'othered' victims, associated with crime, danger and helplessness. Newspaper discourses can deny refugees and asylum seekers power and autonomy by reproducing and reinforcing these existing ideologies.

Even if benevolently enacted, it has been observed that representing groups as traumatised victims can draw much need attention to their plight, while at the same time suggesting that they are incapable of helping themselves. This can create a prosody of 'impaired reasoning' (Pupavac, 2008); also (Grove et al., 2007; Marlowe, 2010; Threadgold, 2006) and can actually be an "impediment to…standings as full members of society" (Fraser, 2003, p. 31; cited in Marlowe, 2010, p. 7). In spite of its intentionality,

these apparently supportive messages contribute to the reproduction of social inequality because it is frequently not perceived to be a form of prejudice (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005, p. 634, also Araeen, 2000). Although by definition, refugees are 'victims of adversity' (Grove et al., 2007, p. 217), recognising 'ordinary' refugee perspectives not associated with trauma or suffering "does not diminish or invalidate traumatic experiences…but…recognises people as agents capable of responding to difficulties, recovering , and importantly, contributing to society" (Marlowe, 2010, p. 6).

This study's exploration of common discourses and linguistic features that surround refugees has made visible underlying ideologies prevalent in the reporting of these groups. To address the misrepresentation of refugees and asylum seekers discussed here, it is imperative to resist positioning of this group as needing supervision or management, and instead to consider refugee views in reporting concerning them. Equally, a dramatic readjustment of the common themes surrounding refugee discourse is necessary to counter the semantic prosody associated with them. Instead of being framed using linguistic strategies that suggest victimhood, refugees and asylum seekers could perhaps better be framed, as put by Harrell-Bond (1999, p. 143; cited in Marlowe, 2010, p. 7), as "heroes who have stood up to and escaped oppressive regimes". Titscher at al. (2000, p. 146) claim that "every single instance of language use reproduces or transforms society and culture, including power relations." Thus re-framing refugees and asylum seekers as capable and resilient would arguably contribute to addressing the inequalities currently reproduced and maintained in the media, and minimise the barriers that these groups face to gaining access to satisfactory employment, and thus full and successful integration into New Zealand communities.

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