



A Comparison of the Representation of the Syrian Airstrikes Vote in Conservative-Endorsing and Labour-Endorsing British Newspapers

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Introduction

Almost all theorists agree that the media directly influences reader's attitudes in some way (Thompson 2013), with newspaper journalism being considered 'the most important textual system in the world' (Hartley 1995: 20). In recent years, corpus analysis has been used to study themes and techniques in newspaper reporting which may have in turn affected public opinion. One area in which newspapers have a particularly high influence is politics as many British newspapers choose to endorse a particular party in the lead up to elections (Greenslade 2010). This can in turn affect the newspapers' representations of political events on a day to day basis in favour of their preferred party or leader. I decided to investigate this by comparing the representation of an important political event in Conservative-endorsing and Labour-endorsing British newspapers; the two main rival parties in the recent 2015 general election. I will do this by conducting a small-scale corpus analysis, focusing on the relevant topic of the recent vote in the House of Commons in favour of joining 'the coalition of nations conducting airstrikes against Islamic State militants in Syria' (Sparrow 2015). Specific research questions will include: is there a difference in the way Conservative and Labour sympathetic British newspapers represent the same event? If so, how do they use language to do this? And finally, how do they each portray political party leaders?

Literature Review

Political Context

The Conservative party is Britain's main centre-right party, it has traditionally stood for free trade, private enterprise, individual liberty, low taxation and strong defence. David Cameron has been leader since 2005. The Labour party, on the other hand, is Britain's main left wing party, and the Conservative's traditional rival. It has moved towards the centre ground in recent decades but wealth redistribution and social justice remain key aims. Jeremy Corbyn has been leader since 2015 (BBC 2015). The vote in question refers to the 10-hour long debate following which MPs voted on 'escalating the UK's military involvement in the fight against the so-called Islamic State in Syria'. David Cameron's views on the matter are as follows:

David Cameron has moved to bring a vote following the recent terrorist atrocities in Paris which claimed the lives of 130 people. He told the Commons last month that the UK is already in the 'top tier' of countries that so-called Islamic State is targeting.

He has consistently said Britain should not 'sub-contract' its security to its allies, insisting the country's weaponry can play a crucial role in defeating the terrorist organisation. He believes striking IS at the 'head of the snake' in Syria will keep Britain safer.'

Jeremy Corbyn, however, has very different opinions:

Jeremy Corbyn, the party's leader, is strongly against airstrikes but the majority of his shadow cabinet - including shadow foreign secretary Hilary Benn - are likely to support the government's pla. Mr Corbyn - who used to chair the Stop the War campaign group - told ITV News that extending airstrikes would lead to the deaths of more civilians and ultimately put Britain at greater risk. But - after the threat of mass resignations - he did eventually decide to allow his party a free vote.

The influence of the Media

Starting with the influence the media has on public opinion generally, there are some critics such as media analyst Ken Goldstein who argue that 'the influence of Britain's printed press on the political sphere is diminishing' due to the rise of the new media resulting in 'circulation figures shrinking'

(Goldstein 2011). However, the majority of critics revoke this claim, instead arguing 'the continuing, and baleful, influence of Britain's press proprietors and editors' and that 'the newspapers' daily drip-drip-drip of stories and commentaries - whether positive or negative - do influence the electorate, including those people who never read [them]' – due to the papers' influence over other media (Greenslade 2011). There are also numerous studies that prove the influence of the media, such as Nagelhout et al's (2011) study which found that 'media attention about smoke-free legislation [in bars and restaurants] can influence smokers' support for the legislation and SHS harm awareness'. Park (2005) found that newspapers and magazines had the effect of increasing women's desires to be thin, and Coleman's (1993) study showed that the mass media also influences people's societal and personal risk judgements for things such as heart disease, AIDS, and smoking.

The utilization of corpus analysis in media/ journalism studies

There have been a number of studies that utilize corpus analysis in order to examine certain themes and representations of events in newspapers. For example, as previously mentioned in the introduction, Baker's (2010) paper describes the analysis of an 87 million word corpus of British newspaper articles which refer to the subject of Islam, utilizing frequency analysis and concordances to compare representations in tabloids and broadsheets. The paper found that Muslims were generally more negatively represented in tabloids, 'raising issues regarding the meaning of bias, and the process by which readers internalise lexical associations and the extent to which such associations impact on attitudes'. Gabrielatos and Baker (2008) also combine critical discourse analysis with corpus linguistics in order to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press, utilizing collocations and concordance analysis to identify common categories of representations as well as performing qualitative analysis. Johnson, Culpeper and Suhr (2003) utilised corpus analysis in order to explore discourses of 'political correctness' in a corpus of articles gathered from three broadsheet newspapers in the UK 1994-1999. Using a numerical count of PC related words and a compilation of keywords the study revealed 'an overall decline in the use of 'PC'-related terms throughout the period in question'.

Political language in newspapers

Fowler (1996) argues that the language of the press is not neutral but a 'highly constructive mediator'. He also explains the significance of different linguistic choices in newspaper articles:

each particular form of linguistic expression in a text – wording, syntactic option, etc. – has its reason. There are always different ways of saying the same thing, and they are not random, accidental alternatives. Differences in expression carry ideological distinctions (and thus differences in representation)... The point [in these choices] is sometimes obvious [but] other linguistic features which work subliminally in the newspapers' ideological practice of representation. (Fowler, 1996: 5)

Reah (1998) further explains how 'After 1975, commercial and political factors led to much greater partisanship in the press' and more hostility towards opposing political parties, and highlights 'the political bias that appears to currently exist' in newspapers:

Decisions may be made to exclude information because it is felt necessary to conceal that information from the readership, or to include information that is seen as in some way beneficial to groups other than the readership – the advertisers, the owners of the paper, the political party the owners support. (Reah 1998: 5)

Belsie (2016) performed an investigation comparing political slants of American newspapers endorsing the two main US political parties: the Democrats and the Republicans. They identified 1000 partisan phrases (used much more often by one party than the other); an interesting example being the partisan divide over the tax on inherited wealth; whilst the Republican newspapers, who generally oppose the tax, frequently describe it negatively as 'death tax', the Conservative newspapers refer to it as the more positive 'estate tax'. They also concluded that reader bias had the biggest impact on the papers' political outlook as 'reflecting the views of their readers... maximises profits'.

Methodology

To answer my research questions, I conducted a small-scale corpus analysis (the 85 million word corpora of the aforementioned studies being far beyond the scope of this essay) in which I compared Conservative-endorsing newspaper articles on the Syrian airstrikes vote with Labour-endorsing articles on the same subject. For each corpus I included four different articles from three newspapers, posted on the newspapers' online websites within three days of the vote. The Conservative newspapers were 'The Daily Mail', 'The Sun' and 'The Daily Telegraph', whilst the Labour newspapers were 'The Daily Mirror', 'The Morning Star' and 'The Guardian'. These were chosen to include two tabloids and one broadsheet paper for each corpus to take into account their 'different journalistic styles and attitudes' (Wilson 2004). Some newspapers have switched party allegiance over the years so their political endorsements have been chosen according to which party they backed in the 2015 general election (Wikipedia 2015). When copied from the newspaper's online websites, articles were edited to omit any images and features of online journalism, including repeated quotes, links to other articles and social media tags.

Using the online tool *Wmatrix* (Rayson 2008), I conducted a corpus analysis by comparing the Labour and Conservative corpora against each other. I first ran a key word test and analysed the top 40 most frequently used words in comparison to the opposing corpora. I used the log likelihood value of 3.84 ($p < 0.05$); generally accepted as 'the minimum score for statistical significance' (Jones and Waller 2015), and only included overused lexical items for ease of comparison. Whilst I used the concordance lines of significant words for context, I did not analyse them extensively so they are not included in my analysis section. I then performed a key domain analysis using the same p value and analysed the concordance lines of the top three most frequently used semantic categories for each corpus in order to 'investigate the data in a more qualitative way' (Baker 2008). Finally, I performed a simple word search of 'David Cameron' and 'Jeremy Corbyn' in each corpus in order to analyse the representation of both party leaders.

Analysis

1. Frequency analysis

Figure 1: Top 40 of the most frequently used words in **Conservative** corpus in comparison to **Labour**. $P < 0.05$ (log likelihood 3.84)

	Item	O1	%1	O2	%2	LL	%DIFF
1	Concordance perfect	26	0.27	0	0.00 +	30.42	265930218756112384.00
2	Concordance they	95	0.97	31	0.40 +	21.05	143.67
3	Concordance Isil	20	0.20	1	0.01 +	16.99	1490.26
4	Concordance forces	19	0.19	1	0.01 +	15.92	1410.75
5	Concordance UN	12	0.12	0	0.00 +	14.04	122737031309688832.00
6	Concordance tonight	23	0.24	3	0.04 +	13.20	509.60
7	Concordance border	10	0.10	0	0.00 +	11.70	102280857993084928.00
8	Concordance know	14	0.14	1	0.01 +	10.66	1013.18
9	Concordance planes	9	0.09	0	0.00 +	10.53	92052779924717568.00
10	Concordance operations	9	0.09	0	0.00 +	10.53	92052779924717568.00
11	Concordance confront	9	0.09	0	0.00 +	10.53	92052779924717568.00
12	Concordance we	116	1.19	56	0.72 +	9.88	64.71
13	Concordance yes	8	0.08	0	0.00 +	9.36	81824684676481024.00
14	Concordance evil	8	0.08	0	0.00 +	9.36	81824684676481024.00
15	Concordance 'we	8	0.08	0	0.00 +	9.36	81824684676481024.00
16	Concordance 's	38	0.39	12	0.15 +	8.90	151.79
17	Concordance resolution	12	0.12	1	0.01 +	8.62	854.16
18	Concordance you	25	0.26	6	0.08 +	8.56	231.30
19	Concordance votes	7	0.07	0	0.00 +	8.19	71596602313146368.00
20	Concordance significant	7	0.07	0	0.00 +	8.19	71596602313146368.00
21	Concordance russian	7	0.07	0	0.00 +	8.19	71596602313146368.00
22	Concordance islam	7	0.07	0	0.00 +	8.19	71596602313146368.00
23	Concordance help	7	0.07	0	0.00 +	8.19	71596602313146368.00
24	Concordance global	7	0.07	0	0.00 +	8.19	71596602313146368.00
25	Concordance able	7	0.07	0	0.00 +	8.19	71596602313146368.00
26	Concordance Isil_in_Syria	7	0.07	0	0.00 +	8.19	71596602313146368.00
27	Concordance Akrotiri_in_Cyprus	7	0.07	0	0.00 +	8.19	71596602313146368.00
28	Concordance tornado	11	0.11	1	0.01 +	7.62	774.64
29	Concordance already	14	0.14	2	0.03 +	7.58	456.59
30	Concordance raids	19	0.19	4	0.05 +	7.49	277.69
31	Concordance words	6	0.06	0	0.00 +	7.02	61368515654844416.00
32	Concordance something	6	0.06	0	0.00 +	7.02	61368515654844416.00
33	Concordance security	6	0.06	0	0.00 +	7.02	61368515654844416.00
34	Concordance process	6	0.06	0	0.00 +	7.02	61368515654844416.00
35	Concordance notes	6	0.06	0	0.00 +	7.02	61368515654844416.00
36	Concordance muslims	6	0.06	0	0.00 +	7.02	61368515654844416.00
37	Concordance between	6	0.06	0	0.00 +	7.02	61368515654844416.00
38	Concordance their	49	0.50	20	0.26 +	6.83	94.81
39	Concordance Mr_Benn	13	0.13	2	0.03 +	6.69	416.84
40	Concordance welcomes	5	0.05	0	0.00 +	5.85	51140428996542464.00

Firstly, there are a number of significant differences between the top 40 most frequently used words in the Conservative corpus compared to the Labour corpus. The positive stance of the articles is immediately exemplified through the most frequently used adjective 'perfect'. Whilst on its own an adjective with very positive connotations, its concordance lines show it is most frequently used within the term 'perfect war': a political description for 'a war that is the least morally bad as is possible' (Allhoff et al 2016). This therefore conveys a focus on the morally responsible aspect of the war against Syria, in order to portray it favourably. This positive theme is encouraged through the frequent use of the word 'yes' (number 13); an affirmative response that indicates certainty. Its frequent use in conjunction with the noun 'votes' (19) also indicates a focus on the free choice MPs were given on the matter and on those who voted for the motion rather than against.

There also appears to be a focus on togetherness through the frequent use of the plural personal pronoun 'we' (12); including all MPs in the decision rather than focusing on parliamentary divisions. The noun 'forces' (4), although refers mostly to the armed forces, also implies a group working together as one. This theme is also extended to include the whole world through the frequent use of the term 'global' (number 24) and references to the 'UN' (number 5). Concordance lines also indicate a particular focus on Britain's support from other UN members and agreements that require Britain to aid other countries in need. Specific mentions of other countries such as Russia (number 21) and Cyprus (number 27) help to create this feeling of international togetherness.

There are, conversely, some frequently used more negative words, such as the loaded adjective 'evil' (14). However, concordance lines show that it is used to describe the terrorist organisation, Isil, reiterated through the frequent reference to the group itself (3). This, along with the common occurrence of the third person pronoun 'they' (2) indicates an attempt to attribute blame elsewhere and remind readers of the justifications behind declaring war.

Figure 2: Top 40 of the most frequently used words in **Labour** corpus in comparison to **Conservative**.
 $P < 0.05$ (log likelihood 3.84)

	Item	O1	%1	O2	%2	LL	%DIFF
1	Concordance EU	16	0.21	0	0.00 +	26.06	205814248708767744.00
2	Concordance mp	16	0.21	2	0.02 +	15.84	906.12
3	Concordance clause	9	0.12	0	0.00 +	14.66	115770517046165504.00
4	Concordance momentum	7	0.09	0	0.00 +	11.40	90043731662602240.00
5	Concordance european	7	0.09	0	0.00 +	11.40	90043731662602240.00
6	Concordance deselection	7	0.09	0	0.00 +	11.40	90043731662602240.00
7	Concordance an	45	0.58	25	0.26 +	11.30	126.38
8	Concordance movements	6	0.08	0	0.00 +	9.77	77180338970820608.00
9	Concordance would	28	0.36	13	0.13 +	9.59	170.88
10	Concordance view	5	0.06	0	0.00 +	8.14	64316954868973568.00
11	Concordance lead	5	0.06	0	0.00 +	8.14	64316954868973568.00
12	Concordance bullying	5	0.06	0	0.00 +	8.14	64316954868973568.00
13	Concordance Camerons	5	0.06	0	0.00 +	8.14	64316954868973568.00
14	Concordance BBC	5	0.06	0	0.00 +	8.14	64316954868973568.00
15	Concordance 42.7	5	0.06	0	0.00 +	8.14	64316954868973568.00
16	Concordance on	69	0.89	53	0.54 +	7.37	63.73
17	Concordance who	39	0.50	25	0.26 +	7.14	96.19
18	Concordance for	92	1.18	78	0.80 +	6.59	48.34
19	Concordance whether	9	0.12	2	0.02 +	6.57	465.94
20	Concordance believe	9	0.12	2	0.02 +	6.57	465.94
21	Concordance she	7	0.09	1	0.01 +	6.54	780.36
22	Concordance warning	4	0.05	0	0.00 +	6.51	51453562177191936.00
23	Concordance power	4	0.05	0	0.00 +	6.51	51453562177191936.00
24	Concordance partys	4	0.05	0	0.00 +	6.51	51453562177191936.00
25	Concordance oratory	4	0.05	0	0.00 +	6.51	51453562177191936.00
26	Concordance matter	4	0.05	0	0.00 +	6.51	51453562177191936.00
27	Concordance issues	4	0.05	0	0.00 +	6.51	51453562177191936.00
28	Concordance calling	4	0.05	0	0.00 +	6.51	51453562177191936.00
29	Concordance aggression	4	0.05	0	0.00 +	6.51	51453562177191936.00
30	Concordance airstrikes	20	0.26	10	0.10 +	6.08	151.53
31	Concordance i	28	0.36	17	0.17 +	5.83	107.14
32	Concordance greatest	10	0.13	3	0.03 +	5.75	319.22
33	Concordance any	14	0.18	6	0.06 +	5.39	193.45
34	Concordance public	8	0.10	2	0.02 +	5.36	403.06
35	Concordance movement	6	0.08	1	0.01 +	5.20	654.59
36	Concordance way	11	0.14	4	0.04 +	5.20	245.85
37	Concordance wish	3	0.04	0	0.00 +	4.89	38590169485410304.00
38	Concordance treaty	3	0.04	0	0.00 +	4.89	38590169485410304.00
39	Concordance speak	3	0.04	0	0.00 +	4.89	38590169485410304.00
40	Concordance sovereignty	3	0.04	0	0.00 +	4.89	38590169485410304.00

There are also a number of interesting differences between the words most frequently used in the Labour corpus compared with the Conservative. Whilst not perhaps as overtly emotive as the Conservative corpus, the articles do appear to there does appear to be a negative stance portrayed within the articles. For example, the frequency of the verb 'bullying' (12) focuses on the backlash caused by MPs who voted yes. Whilst most examples condemn the public's behaviour, the repeated references to the backlash in itself acts as a reminder of the negative public opinion. The frequency of the words 'warning' (number 22) and 'aggression' (number 29), which both have negative connotations, also give an inkling to the overall Labour corpus' views on the matter.

Whilst the Conservative corpus focuses on togetherness, there are no frequent descriptions of unity in the Labour corpus, although there is an interesting focus on Europe as opposed to global interests. For example, the abbreviated term 'EU' to describe the European Union is the most frequently used noun, along with the adjective 'european' at number 5. This is likely an attempt to disassociate the UK from the likes of the USA, who have been encouraging a US-British alliance in joining the airstrikes. Whilst the Conservative newspapers attempted to portray the impression of the world joining forces and working together, the Labour newspapers reject this unity; instead wishing to stick to their own continent and not get involved with the Syrian conflict.

In line with this argument, there is also interestingly no frequent descriptions of the conflict itself or allusions to the terrorist group Isil that are present in the Conservative corpus. Rather than the Conservative attempt to justify the yes vote, the Labour corpus does not attempt to explain the reasons

behind declaring war, instead attributing blame to the 'MPs' (2) who voted. A lot of focus is also given to the calls for 'deselection' (number 6) of these MPs; another reminder that many British people are unhappy with the results. The frequency of the word 'clause' at number three as well as the specific clause number: '42.7' (15) also indicates an attribution of blame to previous agreements made with other countries. Concordance lines show a focus on the clause being 'invoked' and 'complied with', as well as it being 'little-known' therefore giving the impression that the UK has been *forced* into action by an insignificant term of agreement. Blame is also attributed to David Cameron as the possessive term 'Cameron's' (13) is generally used in a negative way to describe 'Cameron's war', 'Cameron's fantastical claim' and 'Cameron's rush'.

2. Key semantic domain analysis and collocations of the top 3

Table 1: the top 3 key semantic domains in the Conservative and Labour corpora found by using the wMatrix key domain analysis tool ($P < 0.05$ (log likelihood 3.84))

		Top 3 key semantic domains in order of highest to lowest frequency 1-3		
		1	2	3
Corpus	Conservative	Flying and aircraft	Able/intelligence	General actions/making
	Labour	Mental object: conceptual objects	Thoughts/beliefs	Mental object: means/method

Figure 3.1: Concordance lines of most frequently occurring semantic domain in **Conservative** corpora: **flying and aircraft** (not including unnamed category)

60 occurrences.			Extend context	
bing raids over Syria today . UK	jets	geared up for combat after an ext	1 More	Full
ts funds ' as 150 British troops	fly out	to wage war in Syria which is set	2 More	Full
h is set to last three years RAF	bombers	have targeted oil fields in easte	3 More	Full
irstrikes A total of six Tornado	jets	were sent into action fromRAF Akr	4 More	Full
our Typhoons as well as 15 extra	pilots	and 135 crew members Efforts to d	5 More	Full
y personnel and eight additional	bomber	jets to a base in Cyprus in prepa	6 More	Full
nnel and eight additional bomber	jets	to a base in Cyprus in preparatio	7 More	Full
tal . Yesterday four Tornado GR4	jets	were sent from RAF Akrotiri , in	8 More	Full
oin the war against ISIS , after	flying	from RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland	9 More	Full
AF Marham in Norfolk . The eight	aircraft	doubled the number of jets alread	10 More	Full
t aircraft doubled the number of	jets	already stationed at the base , a	11 More	Full
argets and free up other Tornado	jets	for Syria . The Tornado GR4 aircr	12 More	Full
jets for Syria . The Tornado GR4	aircraft	offers a new capability for the c	13 More	Full
difficult what we are asking our	pilots	to do , and our thoughts should b	14 More	Full
Britain votes to bomb Syria : UK	jets	will join U.S-led coalition in st	15 More	Full
ard' to UKjoining the attacks UK	jets	have joined America , France and	16 More	Full
forward to having British forces	flying	w ith the Coalition over Syria ,	17 More	Full
rt against ISIS in Syria and RAF	planes	were 'just eight minutes away' ov	18 More	Full
re on [ISIS] British	planes	have already been bombing ISIS ta	19 More	Full
means that eight British Tornado	jets	will immediately begin launching	20 More	Full
om RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus . Four	jets	took off from the base within hou	21 More	Full
forward to having British forces	flying	with the Coalition over Syria , a	22 More	Full
e downing of a Russian passenger	aircraft	in October were because of those	23 More	Full
ho supported his leader , said :	Bombers	will be in the air tonight and pe	24 More	Full
nctively waver between fight and	flight	, looking to the pack chief to in	25 More	Full
ed chamber . His exhortation for	flight	had been underwhelming and now bu	26 More	Full
succeeded in his call , fighter	jets	with our young men on board would	27 More	Full
ts . They do not drop bombs , or	fly	planes , or fire guns . They writ	28 More	Full
They do not drop bombs , or fly	planes	, or fire guns . They write repor	29 More	Full
bombing ISIS in Syria ? ? ? RAF	pilots	were sent to bomb Isis in Syria w	30 More	Full
f Defence confirmed four Tornado	jets	had taken off from an RAF base in	31 More	Full
fighters and six Typhoon attack	jets	to RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus . They	32 More	Full
kup has arrived : Eight more RAF	jets	touch down in Cyprus to boost Bri	33 More	Full
attack on ISIS ? ? ? RAF Typhoon	jets	have arrived in Cyprus to join in	34 More	Full
ng Britain 's strike force . The	jets	are expected to attack fresh IS t	35 More	Full
hat could last three years . Six	planes	plus another two Tornados touched	36 More	Full
he green light . The British war	planes	- armed with laser-guided 500lb P	37 More	Full
difficult what we are asking our	pilots	to do , and our thoughts should b	38 More	Full
ried out this morning . Four RAF	planes	heading to Syria for the first ti	39 More	Full
rmed . Hours later , the fighter	planes	were pictured touching down safel	40 More	Full

Figure 3.2: Concordance lines of second most frequently occurring semantic domain in **Conservative** corpora: **able/intelligence**

17 occurrences.			Extend context	
bers Efforts to disrupt ISIS 's	ability	to sell oil could mean that it i	1 More	Full
f funding - which could hit its	ability	to hire fighters in the Middle E	2 More	Full
revenues then they will not be	able	to pay their fighters , and they	3 More	Full
the amount of oil that ISIS is	able	to sell in order to finance its	4 More	Full
rnado GR4 aircraft offers a new	capability	for the coalition forces because	5 More	Full
ial operators will over time be	able	to conduct raids , free hostages	6 More	Full
raids , free hostages , gather	intelligence	and capture [ISIS] l	7 More	Full
esert winds except for the rare	talent	of an experienced journalists sh	8 More	Full
n Syria ? Then you are free and	able	to say to , and you should do so	9 More	Full
ties , using the YKs particular	capabilities	; Notes the Government will not	10 More	Full
mate has been made by the Joint	Intelligence	Committee . It is the body respo	11 More	Full
body responsible for making the	intelligence	assessments upon which every sig	12 More	Full
e perfect plan , or the perfect	intelligence	assessment or the perfect bombin	13 More	Full
land of Raqqa we can reduce its	ability	to launch attacks against the UK	14 More	Full
rorists depend . They have been	able	to attack these terrorists on on	15 More	Full
der . " Now they are free to be	able	to attack some of their key targ	16 More	Full
high as 50,000ft , making them	able	to dodge virtually any attempt b	17 More	Full

Figure 3.3: Concordance lines of third most frequently occurring semantic domain in **Conservative** corpora: **general actions/making**

193 occurrences.			Extend context	
, an RAF Tornado takes off in	preparation	for bombing raids over Syria t	1 More	Full
ds over Syria today . UK jets	geared up	for combat after an extraordi	2 More	Full
ock 174 majority for military	action	397 votes to 223 paving the wa	3 More	Full
said : If we are to take this	action	, it must be effective . He wa	4 More	Full
the Commons . After weeks of	making	the case for war , Mr Cameron	5 More	Full
ome who suggest that military	action	could in some way undermine ou	6 More	Full
seeking . Anti-war protesters	reacted	furiously after the result was	7 More	Full
into rapturous applause as he	made	a compelling case for action ,	8 More	Full
he made a compelling case for	action	, declaring : 'We must now con	9 More	Full
on , declaring : 'We must now	confront	thisevil . It is now our time	10 More	Full
bitter row which threatens to	tear	the Labour party apart . Throu	11 More	Full
he Commons as he struggled to	make	the case against bombing ISIS	12 More	Full
ainst bombing ISIS in Syria .	Labour	grandees including Dame Margar	13 More	Full
teous certitude of the finger	jabbing	representatives ' of Mr Corbyn	14 More	Full
ld his leader bluntly he must	do	'better than this to be a cred	15 More	Full
, the means by which we will	make	our decision tonight , in cont	16 More	Full
to be defeated. 'We must now	confront	this evil . It is now time for	17 More	Full
150 British troops fly out to	wage	war in Syria which is set to l	18 More	Full
x Tornado jets were sent into	action	fromRAF Akrotiri in Cyprus yes	19 More	Full
r jets to a base in Cyprus in	preparation	for further airstrikes within	20 More	Full
rritory in Iraq and Syria and	carry out	attacks on the West . The UK G	21 More	Full
suggested that the US had not	done	enough to disrupt the jihadist	22 More	Full
rupt the jihadists ' economic	activity.	'We have been giving the Ameri	23 More	Full
but they do not seem to have	done	very much about it , ' the dip	24 More	Full
sell in order to finance its	operations	around the world . After the i	25 More	Full
Cameron welcomed the start of	operations	, but warned the public that i	26 More	Full
t we are asking our pilots to	do	, and our thoughts should be w	27 More	Full
s to join them in taking this	action.	'There will be very strong sup	28 More	Full
ed to us to take part in this	action	as part of a process that will	29 More	Full
t in this action as part of a	process	that will help to deliver the	30 More	Full
s proposal to extend military	action	in Syria by397 votes to 223 -	31 More	Full
ave their backing to military	action	. Prime Minister David Cameron	32 More	Full
e them into our Coalition Air	Tasking	Orders as quickly as possible	33 More	Full
Corbyn , leader of Britain 's	Labor	opposition party , opposed the	34 More	Full
t Francois Hollande for joint	action	against the terror group in th	35 More	Full
ek part of Cyprus in order to	carry out	their first sortie in Syria .	36 More	Full
ria . The UK has already been	carrying out	strikes against ISIS in Iraq a	37 More	Full
position forces attempting to	wage	a ground war with ISIS have lo	38 More	Full
t , but are now authorized to	carry out	strikes across the border in S	39 More	Full

The top three semantic domains in the Conservative corpora generally continue the positive representation of the airstrikes. Whilst the most frequently occurring theme of flying and aircraft shows

a focus on war, it is presented in a positive light through the inclusion of details such as the number of planes and types of jets being used. This therefore emphasises the impressive machines themselves rather than the places they will bomb. The repeated descriptions of them as 'British' and setting off 'from the UK' arouses patriotism, while the references to them 'joining' other troops once again gives the impression of global teamwork. This links with the second most frequently used domain: able/intelligence as these concordance lines focus on the positive aspects of winning the vote. These include now being able to attack enemy bases and gather intelligence in order to ultimately defeat ISIS. The general actions/ making domain also focuses particularly on 'military' action, emphasising their and the government's readiness to 'carry out' necessary actions and to 'confront' evils. This therefore gives the impression that the government knows what its doing and can be trusted to carry out this war effectively.

Figure 4.1: Concordance lines of most frequently occurring semantic domain in **Labour** corpora: **mental object: conceptual objects**

23 occurrences.			Extend context	
on as it was now an " operational	matter	. " Many Labour MPs were swayed by	1 More	Full
nson said . Mr Jarvis added : Any	idea	these fanatical terrorists will le	2 More	Full
stubbornly failed to address the	issue	. Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said	3 More	Full
we support the armed forces . Our	thoughts	are with the RAF crews and their f	4 More	Full
e asking our pilots to do and our	thoughts	should be with them and their fami	5 More	Full
Hilary 's oratory was great . It	reminded	me of Tony Blair 's speech taking	6 More	Full
nt has now made a decision and my	view	now is we wish our pilots safe som	7 More	Full
ts a free vote on Syria , we must	remind	the partyLABOUR MPs were granted a	8 More	Full
who are undecided on the emotive	issue	. The results were revealed on the	9 More	Full
from the shadow cabinet over the	issue	less likely . But Plaid Cymru MP J	10 More	Full
: By allowing a free vote on this	matter	, Jeremy Corbyn is paving the way	11 More	Full
said : The debate on such crucial	issues	is greatly diminished when MPs are	12 More	Full
of a deeply arbitrary nature . No	matter	how tragic the events , under no s	13 More	Full
this particular clause go beyond	issues	such as legal definitions or param	14 More	Full
of the EU . At the heart of this	issue	is also a lack of respect for demo	15 More	Full
rojects and not for other crucial	matters	? What all of this entails is that	16 More	Full
is a great man a man apart but my	view	is that he should have whipped ove	17 More	Full
trikes on Syria with the apparent	view	to combat the growth of Islamic St	18 More	Full
ur leader Ed MilibandThe Guardian	view	on Syria : MPs should say no to ai	19 More	Full
strategy . But there is no clear	vision	of the role Britain or our allies	20 More	Full
ng as they were good on the other	issues	, he said . A Labour spokesman sai	21 More	Full
ction of candidates is entirely a	matter	for local party members and rightl	22 More	Full
to keep their messages about the	issues	and to refrain from any personal a	23 More	Full

Figure 4.2: Concordance lines of most frequently occurring semantic domain in **Labour** corpora: thoughts/beliefs

52 occurrences.			Extend context	
e vote David Cameron said : " I	believe	the House has taken the right de	1	More Full
e for the Government to act . I	think	we got to the right place in the	2	More Full
g in the Bataclan in Paris were	deemed	justified by ISIS , because they	3	More Full
ues in contempt . They hold our	belief	in tolerance and decency in cont	4	More Full
onsters of ISIS in their Syrian	heartland	would make Britain safer. These t	5	More Full
after these terrorists in their	heartlands	from where they are plotting to	6	More Full
ked us for support , she said .	Consider	how we would feel and what we wo	7	More Full
he said . Consider how we would	feel	and what we would say if what to	8	More Full
dermines the seriousness of the	deliberations	we are having today , he said .	9	More Full
omers must respect each others	views	instead of fighting together and	10	More Full
will serve as a ground force ,	supposedly	to liberate the areas we are now	11	More Full
the Independent . They have to	come up with	an overall plan , which they hav	12	More Full
, which they have not done . I	think	the focus for now is finding a p	13	More Full
stance in the free vote . It 's	thought	several were persuaded by a pass	14	More Full
adio 4 's Today programme : " I	thought	Hilary 's oratory was great . It	15	More Full
r should be arrested because we	believe	he should be brought before the	16	More Full
he bombing of Iraq and I do n't	believe	bombing is the right answer . "	17	More Full
cal solution . " He added : " I	thought	the debate yesterday was excelle	18	More Full
y 's speech was excellent and I	thought	the whole nature of the debate w	19	More Full
ecretary Michael Fallon said he	believes	air strikes 'can be very effecti	20	More Full
on us all to ensure the country	feels	there has been the fullest parli	21	More Full
hat most shadow cabinet members	believe	the conditions for action in Syr	22	More Full
nior Tory backbenchers who were	sceptical	of Mr Camerons plan . And Ms Luc	23	More Full
he whips offices . Labour whips	believe	as many as 100 of Labours 231 MP	24	More Full
. In other words , any country	deemed	to have suffered an armed attack	25	More Full
vents , under no stretch of the	imagination	can it be claimed that France ha	26	More Full
daries regulating what might be	considered	an armed aggression of a member	27	More Full
opriate responses have not been	thought out	. It is doubtful whether they wi	28	More Full
s doubtful whether they will be	considered	in future instances either . And	29	More Full
of this mechanism also confirms	long-held	fears by organisations such as N	30	More Full
countries into war despite the	opinions	of its populace , EU treaties in	31	More Full
rom reality . Despite my better	judgement	, I joined Labour a few months a	32	More Full
d whose efforts and displays of	conviction	since being elected have impress	33	More Full
ty . Britain should be pursuing	creative	and peaceful strategies in relat	34	More Full
g for the Chilcot report . I do	believe	that its earlier publication wou	35	More Full
committee Julian LewisI do not	think	the case has been adequately mad	36	More Full
wrong way . The wrong way is to	view	it through the lens of the bitte	37	More Full
if Isis were ousted , who do we	imagine	will take its place ? The UK gov	38	More Full
is higher now , the public more	sceptical	after Iraq than before . But as	39	More Full
fore . But as things stand , we	believe	MPs should say no . Cameron wins	40	More Full
he gave an impassioned speech ,	regarded	as the best of the debate , in f	41	More Full

Figure 4.3: Concordance lines of most frequently occurring semantic domain in **Labour** corpora: **mental object: means/methods**

23 occurrences.			Extend context	
" They hold our democracy , the	means	by which we will make our decisio	1 More	Full
he said . David Cameron got his	way	but he may live to regret itThe P	2 More	Full
e . So David Cameron has got his	way	and his war . None of the objecti	3 More	Full
. David Cameron : The PM got his	way	in the Commons yesterdayHilary Be	4 More	Full
us for now is finding a peaceful	solution	to the civil war . The most usefu	5 More	Full
litary and arrive at a political	solution	. " He added : " I thought the de	6 More	Full
of aid and assistance by all the	means	in their power . In other words ,	7 More	Full
ouse of Commons were given their	way	and now the blood will run in Syr	8 More	Full
by British bombs . Another year	approaches	and another British war in the sa	9 More	Full
rity but it would have eased the	way	to an isolation and mass deselect	10 More	Full
ois parties . Parliament is one	tactic	in a wide arsenal let us use it .	11 More	Full
drew nearer . Mr Cameron gothis	way	in the vote after stating in Parl	12 More	Full
Cameron to set out in a credible	way	why British intervention could be	13 More	Full
a prayera prayerThere is a right	way	to approach a question as serious	14 More	Full
lamic State to Syria and a wrong	way	. The wrong way is to view it thr	15 More	Full
yria and a wrong way . The wrong	way	is to view it through the lens of	16 More	Full
ther airstrikes are an effective	means	to that end . There is surely a c	17 More	Full
us movement . The debate is over	method	and whether the proposal set out	18 More	Full
, especially if they are in any	way	connected to the Labour party . T	19 More	Full
t Jeremy Corbyn as an individual	somehow	encourages the bullying of Labour	20 More	Full
e has nt been a well-organised ,	systematic	and well-resourced attempt to bul	21 More	Full
y , the source said . There is a	procedure	to deal with such behaviour by La	22 More	Full
eoyle outside the party then the	procedure	is not to moan to the media , it	23 More	Full

The most frequently occurring semantic domains in the Labour corpus, on the other hand, continue representing the vote with a negative stance. Firstly, the Labour corpus seems much more preoccupied with mental concepts, focusing on the 'issue' and 'matter' of the vote itself and the views of labour members such as Ed Miliband and Jeremy Corbyn, as opposed to the Conservative more forward-looking focus on actions *following* the vote. There is also a repetition of thoughts being with the RAF crews to invoke sympathy from the reader. The thoughts/ beliefs domain is quite similar in that it frequently represents opinions. Whilst some appear more positive in that many 'thought' the debate, and Hilary Benn's speech in particular, were very impressive, there are also many that 'believe' bombing is not the right answer and that the issue has not been properly considered. The repetition of words such as 'sceptical' and 'supposedly' also indicate distrust of those who argued to bomb Syria. The main themes of the means/methods domain are also generally negative due to the frequent declarations that the government is going about things the wrong 'way', instead believing in other 'procedures' and 'methods' to find a 'peaceful' solution.

3. Word search and collocations on Labour and Conservative party leaders: David Cameron and Jeremy Corbyn

Figure 5.1: word search and collocations of **David_Cameron** in **Conservative** corpus

11 occurrences.			Extend context	
o defy their leader and support	David Cameron	's plans to bomb terrorists in t	1 More	Full
ilitary action . Prime Minister	David Cameron	said it was time to join the att	2 More	Full
ponse . 'British Prime Minister	David Cameron	tonight hailed the decision to j	3 More	Full
ders position . The victory for	David Cameron	means that eight British Tornado	4 More	Full
nonsense , of course . Because	David Cameron	was so scarred and scared by the	5 More	Full
rus . Speaking after the vote ,	David Cameron	said : " I believe the House has	6 More	Full
ade in the House of Commons " .	DAVID Cameron	will today launch an impassioned	7 More	Full
in Parliament Square chanting :	David Cameron	. Shame on you . One Labour sour	8 More	Full
IS targets in Syria tonight as	David Cameron	braced Britain for a complex and	9 More	Full
ake time and require patience .	David Cameron	said : " We are going to need to	10 More	Full
ing ISIS in SyriaPrime Minister	David Cameron	said MPs took the " right decisi	11 More	Full

Figure 5.2: word search and collocations of **Jeremy_Corbyn** in **Conservative** corpus

13 occurrences.			Extend context	
benches . On a day of tension :	Jeremy Corbyn	refused to support even existing	1 More	Full
Ps defied their pacifist leader	Jeremy Corbyn	to back the Tory government , af	2 More	Full
97 to 223 in favor of strikes .	Jeremy Corbyn	, leader of Britain 's Labor opp	3 More	Full
aded a show of defiance against	Jeremy Corbyn	as MPs voted in favour of air st	4 More	Full
Sunday to discuss ? #syria ? ?	Jeremy Corbyn	, by contrast , looked desperate	5 More	Full
tical movement , ultimately put	Jeremy Corbyn	in post as Labour leader , and g	6 More	Full
iehard pseudo-pacifists such as	Jeremy Corbyn	who will never be reconciled to	7 More	Full
23 who voted no . Labour leader	Jeremy Corbyn	saw 66 of his own MPs vote in fa	8 More	Full
ust not side with Labour leader	Jeremy Corbyn	, who he dubbed a terrorist symp	9 More	Full
not to side with Labour leader	Jeremy Corbyn	and a bunch of terrorist sympath	10 More	Full
have faced threats of reLeader	Jeremy Corbyn	's protests that the Government	11 More	Full
sm , fighting Islamic State . "	Jeremy Corbyn	refused to comment on last night	12 More	Full
s in Syria - defying his leader	Jeremy Corbyn	who sat with his arms crossed th	13 More	Full

Whilst the inclusion of shouts from protestors such as 'shame on you' and descriptions of David Cameron as 'scarred and scared' are perhaps a bit unexpected in the Conservative corpora, most other collocations still represent him in a positive light. For example, there are a number that refer to his victory, support and suggest that MPs 'took the right decision'. He is also frequently referred to by his position as Prime Minister, indicating respect, and giving the impression of power as he is described as 'bracing Britain' and 'hailing' decisions.

Jeremy Corbyn, however, is unsurprisingly most commonly cited as 'labour leader' but is also described in much more derogatory terms such as 'pacifist leader', pseudo-pacifist, and even controversially 'dubbed a terrorist sympathiser'. The collocations also centre around his refusal to 'support' and 'back' the Tory government or 'comment' on the vote, therefore portraying him as a childish sore-loser and uncooperative. A second evident theme is that of betrayal as Corbyn's labour MPs are described as 'defying' him.

Figure 6.1: word search and collocations of **David_Cameron** in **Labour** corpus

14 occurrences.			Extend context	
hours . Speaking after the vote	David Cameron	said : " I believe the House has	1 More	Full
from both Labour and Tory MPs .	David Cameron	opened the marathon ten-and-a-ha	2 More	Full
we are having today , he said .	David Cameron	got his way but he may live to r	3 More	Full
e greatest office of state . So	David Cameron	has got his way and his war . No	4 More	Full
ted attack by Corbyn supporters	David Cameron	said : This is going to take tim	5 More	Full
nd persistence , Prime Minister	David Cameron	has said this lunchtime . Speaki	6 More	Full
the UK was joining the battle .	David Cameron	: The PM got his way in the Comm	7 More	Full
r 66 Labour MPs decided to back	David Cameron	's stance in the free vote . It	8 More	Full
decided to support the call for	David Cameron	to step back from the rush to wa	9 More	Full
ed debate was necessary to call	David Cameron	to account on the unanswered que	10 More	Full
test on Tuesday where chants of	David Cameron	, shame on you ! and Do nt bomb	11 More	Full
whether the proposal set out by	David Cameron	will be effective . The case for	12 More	Full
felt speeches , it became clear	David Cameron	was guaranteed a clear overall m	13 More	Full
. These targets referred to by	David Cameron	as dynamic are identified by sur	14 More	Full

Figure 6.2: word search and collocations of **Jeremy_Corbyn** in **Labour** corpus

13 occurrences.			Extend context	
MPs a free vote , Labour leader	Jeremy Corbyn	told the Commons the case for ai	1 More	Full
o walk through the lobbies with	Jeremy Corbyn	and a bunch of terrorist sympath	2 More	Full
dress the issue . Labour leader	Jeremy Corbyn	said Mr Cameron should apologise	3 More	Full
ar remains regrettable and , as	Jeremy Corbyn	suggested , may smack of fears t	4 More	Full
nn which reduced MPs to tears .	Jeremy Corbyn	looked on as the shadow foreign	5 More	Full
mbers overwhelmingly stand with	Jeremy Corbyn	in opposing air strikes . Three-	6 More	Full
ng a free vote on this matter ,	Jeremy Corbyn	is paving the way for the Prime	7 More	Full
ine or shore up the position of	Jeremy Corbyn	. The question that the prime mi	8 More	Full
defiance of the party leader ,	Jeremy Corbyn	. In a day of soul searching , r	9 More	Full
lectionHilary Benn (left) and	Jeremy Corbyn	. The shadow foreign secretary w	10 More	Full
unday to explain her decision .	Jeremy Corbyn	, the Labour leader , released a	11 More	Full
asked our supporters to emulate	Jeremy Corbyn	, and to keep their messages abo	12 More	Full
campaign , I do nt believe that	Jeremy Corbyn	as an individual somehow encoura	13 More	Full

These collocations show that, in the Labour corpus, Cameron and his views are represented much more negatively. For example, a frequent sentiment is that he 'got his way' in the vote, focusing on his own personal agenda as opposed to what he believes is right for the country; even quoting protestors: 'David Cameron, shame on you!' Whilst the 66 Labour MPs that voted for bombing Syria *are* cited, they are represented as deciding to back's Cameron own stance as opposed to the whole party's and it is once again *him* that is given a clear overall majority. The effectiveness of his methods are also called into question.

Whilst there is some mention of Corbyn being defied by his fellow Labour MPs, he is represented in a much more positive light in the Labour corpus than Conservative. For example, one collocation ensures readers that many 'overwhelmingly stand with Jeremy Corbyn in opposing airstrikes' and that he is 'paving the way' and is actions should be 'emulated'. He is also interestingly quoted as urging Mr Cameron to apologise.

Conclusion

To conclude, the utilisation of both corpus methods and qualitative discourse analysis, as exemplified by Baker (2010) and Gabrielatos and Baker (2008), gives a useful insight into the study of reporting themes in newspapers. Regarding my first research questions, there definitely appears to be a difference between the reporting of the Syrian Airstrikes vote in Conservative-endorsing and Labour-endorsing newspapers. Whilst the Conservative papers represent it generally more positively, the Labour papers report more negatively, as would be expected by their opposing political ideologies.

Whilst the key word analysis highlighted the Conservative corpus' use of words with positive connotations and focus on the MPs' free choice, global togetherness and the evils of terrorist group Isil, it emphasised the Labour corpus' use of negative words and focus on public backlash and attributing blame to clause 42.7, the MPs and Cameron. The top three semantic domains for each continued these themes as the Conservative corpora focused on impressive war aircraft, defeating Isil and the government's readiness, whilst the Labour corpora focused on negative opinions on bombing and other possible solutions. Each corpus also represented their own parties' political leaders more positively; the Conservative highlighting Cameron's victory, support and power but Corbyn's unco-operation and his MPs' betrayal, and the Labour corpus questioning Cameron's methods and selfishness yet representing Corbyn's actions as exemplary.

The study therefore supports previous conclusions made on political bias in newspapers, including Fowler's (1996) argument that linguistic choices reflect ideological practice and Reah's (1998) belief in the rise of partisanship and hostility towards other political parties in the press. The study also bears similar conclusions to Belsie's (2016) investigation into opposing political representations in American newspapers. This raises important questions about the effect this could have on public opinion due to the perceived influence of the media (Greenslade 2011, Park 2005, Coleman 1993). Further studies could build on this research by studying the representation of other important political events or comparing different political parties. Larger corpora could be used to look at general reporting trends as opposed to reporting on specific events.

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