

Structuring the Perception Through Media: The US and the UK Press on 2015 Turkish Parliamentary Elections

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Abstract

In 2015, Turkey went to the polls for the general parliamentary election twice due to the failure of the first election to form a coalition government. In both elections, the news pieces were evaluated from different perspectives by the US and UK press. Although the press consider the 7th June elections as the victory of democracy, the same press announced the 1st November election as the victory of Erdogan. Considering the fact that the contents and formats of the news in the media are affected by the relations of different countries, the news pieces reported by the US and the UK press in the very first two days after the elections were analyzed and contextualized to elucidate complex and ambiguous press representations of 2015 Turkish elections through the frequency and keyword analyses, and the tools of corpus-assisted discourse analysis.

Keywords

Turkish elections, corpus-assisted discourse study, Erdogan, press, news

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1. Introduction

Turkey was at a crossroads in the 2015 general parliamentary election, as it was the first since the Gezi protests and the December 17 and 25, 2013 corruption allegations. The Gezi protests, which were initiated on May 28, 2013 by several environmental activists and continued for 18 days as an uprising against the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP; Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi), have become one of the most critical political and social events in the recent history of Turkey (Ozel 2014, Ozkirimli 2014). According to a report from the National Human Rights Institution of Turkey (TIHK, 2014), 3,611,208 people participated in 5,532 events between May 28 and September 6, 2013. In the wake of the Gezi protests, the December 2013 corruption allegations, which implicated four ministers of the cabinet, emerged. The government blamed the Fethullah Gulen movement for establishing a parallel structure within the government. As Hendrick has written (2013: 58), Gulen is an ambiguous leader “whose impact has become institutionalized in education, finance, media, and trade.” The government’s response to Gulen has amplified concerns regarding the pressure it exerts on the press, the independence of the judiciary, the expression of thought through social media, and the separation of powers (European Commission, 2014). Although one local election and one presidential election took place subsequent to the Gezi protests and the December corruption allegations, the AKP won 45.6% of the vote in the 2014 local election and Erdogan won the presidency with over the half of the vote. Briefly, Erdogan, as the leader of the AKP, won three general parliamentary elections (2002, 2007, and 2011) and became president of the Turkish Republic in 2014 with 51.79% of the total vote. In other words, Turkish politics has been dominated by the rule of the AKP, or Erdogan, since 2002.

After Erdogan became president in 2014, the AKP entered the running in the 2015 general parliamentary election with Davutoglu, who was elected leader of the AKP in 2014. As a Turkish academic, politician, and former diplomat, Davutoglu had served in different positions—for example, as Erdogan’s chief adviser on foreign policy and as Minister of Foreign Affairs (Aras 2009). Certainly, it is possible to say that Davutoglu was a prominent figure in Turkish politics, but his name did not frequently appear in the Turkish media until he became leader of the AKP. During Davutoglu’s

tenure as leader of the AKP, Turkey held two general parliamentary elections, owing to the coalition tie in the first election that was held. However, news stories and editorials in the American and British press were headlined as if it had been Erdogan that had been up for election, despite the fact that by the very nature of the parliamentary system, it was Davutoglu who was up for election. In Chouliaraki's (1999) words, it can be said the foreign press constituted a reality instead of simply reporting on it. Though language is never neutral (Bakhtin 1981, 1896), this does not entail that the media has the right to publish news in a different way because it should not be forgotten that the mass media is the only source for the most to obtain political information (Stromback and Kaid 2008), and the reporting of facts is essential for people.

Considering that language takes its power from the powerful people who use it (Wodak, 2001) and that "the effects of media power are cumulative, working through the repetition of particular ways of handling causality and agency" (Fairclough 1989: 54), the way news stories and editorials in the American and British press interpreted the results of the June 7 and the November 1 elections was concerning. For instance, the American and British press declared the June 7 election a victory for democracy, the people, and the People's Democratic Party (HDP), and a failure for Erdogan. Yet the same press reported the November 1 election as a triumph for Erdogan. Erdogan might be the most prominent and powerful leader of the last 15 years; however, Gardner's news piece, entitled "Erdogan's gamble pays off," was not a criticism but an accusation that implied that the president of Turkish Republic had gambled with the destiny of his country. Hence, it was necessary to have an objective and scientific look at the language of the press regarding the elections in Turkey considering the lack of systematic analyses of news that have used corpus techniques (Bednarek 2006). Notably, no corpus-based discourse study that has analyzed Turkish elections can be found. Therefore, the aim of the current study was to have a critical look at the American and British press and to elucidate the complexity and ambiguity of the press' representation of the 2015 Turkish elections by using frequency and keyword analyses and the tools of corpus-assisted discourse analysis.

2. Method

2.1. Data (Corpora)

The data in the current study were extracted from American (*Daily News*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Washington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal*) and British (*Financial Times*, *Guardian*, *Independent*, *Telegraph*) newspapers with the largest circulations. The number of articles analyzed per newspaper varied, and this difference was considered matter-of-course, given the distance between the two countries. To find the articles, the newspaper archives of the UK and US newspapers with the largest circulations were investigated and news stories within two days of the June 7 and November 1, 2015 elections in Turkey were selected manually. The news pieces included news stories, editorials, and news analyses. News pieces from the American and British press had an average of 849 and 741 words, respectively. The resulting corpus of newspaper pieces on the 2015 Turkish elections contained a total of 76,852 tokens from 98 news pieces, and is referred to as the Turkish Election Corpus-2015 (TEC-2015).

Table 1 – TEC-2015 Corpora

	Country	Number of pieces	Length in tokens
June 7 Election	UK	31	22,200
	US	21	17,632
	Total	52	39,832
	Country		Length in tokens
November 1 Election	UK	28	21,524
	US	18	15,496
	Total	46	37,020

2.2. Tools and Process

This study integrated the methodologies of corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis in a balanced way (Baker et al. 2008) in order to carry out both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The use of these two methods in the same study is not novel (Krishnamurthy 1996) and dates back to Stubbs (1994, 1996) and Partington (2004, 2006). According to Stubbs (1994), discourse-oriented approaches can fail to reveal certain patterns of language use in large compilations of texts. In such situations, it is desirable

to combine the quantitative analysis methods of corpus linguistics and the qualitative analysis methods of critical discourse analysis (Partington 2006). Employing a quantitative approach as well could make it possible “to better understand processes at play in the discourse type” (Partington et al. 2013: 11). In the quantitative part of the current study, keyword analysis was conducted to reveal the framework for the analysis. For the qualitative part, concordance analysis, “as a first step to scrutinise indirect and direct discourse” (Magalhães 2006: 283), was employed to examine the patterns of the keywords and language features in context; furthermore, the concordance lines served as a repository of examples (Flowerdew 1997). Hence, the viewpoints of the newspapers toward the people and institutions in the framework were presented using quotes from the TEC-2015.

In the first, quantitative part of the study, freely available software, AntConc (Anthony, 2014), was used for the keyness analysis. Since “words convey the imprint of society and of value judgments in particular” (Richardson 2007: 47), lexical choices are the starting point for the process of quantitatively analyzing newspapers. As a basis for the quantitative analysis, keyness, defined by Scott (1999), refers to the statistically significantly higher frequencies of particular keywords in one corpus with a comparison of the other. Bondi (2010: 4) also gives a brief definition for keyness as “aboutness.”

In the current study, keywords and their keyness values were found by comparing the TEC-2015 to the written part of the British National Corpus. The keyness values of the keywords were statistically calculated with log-likelihood tests (Dunning 1993); these calculations were automatically performed by the AntConc software. The log-likelihood values of the first 100 keywords varied between 4.854.774 for the word “Erdogan” and 80.044 for the word “southeastern.” Considering that the maximum p-value is 0.01 in corpus linguistics, and this value corresponds to 6.63 as a log-likelihood value, the first 100 keywords, which had the highest keyness values, were taken to the keyword pool for semantic categorization. Subsequently, these keywords were organized into specific semantic categories based on concordance analysis (See Figure 1). Thus, the semantic categories were based “not on intuited encoded abstraction but on actually attested lexicogrammatical regularity” (Widdowson 2004: 123), regarded as necessary for empirical corpus semantics by Stubbs (2001). Through this

categorization, a framework was shaped to analyze the general impressions of the June 7 and November 1 Turkish elections in the TEC-2015, which included articles from six American and four British newspapers.

Table 2 – Keywords used in forming the analytic framework

Keywords	Frequency	Keyness Value (log-likelihood)
election(s)	432 (166)	2.417.839 (806.451)
Turkey	764	7.639.760
president/presidency /presidential	284 / 60 / 69	1.099.963 / 361.633 / 352.102
Erdogan	689	9.490.391
AKP	585	8.132.061
government	277	440.580
political	231	566.933
party/parties	812 / 102	3.455.625 / 261.463
Parliament	227	1.034.532
HDP	315	4.378.802
CHP	50	546.033
MHP	65	903.562
result(s)	133 (112)	279.573 (270.361)
concerns	19	34.506
expectation(s)	4 (8)	4.820 (5.873)

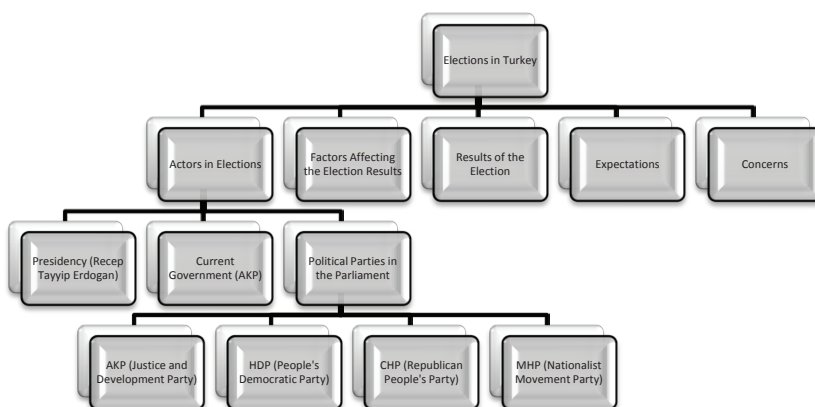


Figure 1 – Framework for the corpora analyses

As it was initiated with a quantitative keyness analysis, the current study is inductive (Gabrielatos and Baker 2008) with regard to how the salient keywords were determined, and corpus-driven (Tognini-Bonelli 2001) with regard to how the keywords were used as a basis for supporting the arguments. Furthermore, corpus linguistics helps analysts not only to quantify recurring keywords in text but also to support qualitative findings or vice versa (O’Keeffe 2006). Therefore, in the second, qualitative part of this study, due to constraints on time and effort, the 100 keywords with the highest keyness values were searched in the concordance lines of the June 7 and the November 1 election subcorpora. Subsequently, the perceptions of American and British newspapers with regard to the Turkish elections of June 7 and the November 1 were analyzed based on the framework, which was informed by the keyword analysis. The analytic results were reported by contextualizing most of the first 100 keywords determined in the quantitative part of the study to have the highest keyness values. When these keywords are presented in the results, the frequencies and keyness values are given in parentheses. These values are expected to help readers understand how the keyness values of the keywords contributed to the contextualization of the results.

Following the analytic results for each election, the difference between the two elections is presented. The particularities of the June 7 election compared with the November 1 election are briefly explained; subsequently, the particularities of the November 1 election compared with the June 7 election are reviewed in depth to disentangle this “Gordian knot.” The results are supported with quotations from the newspapers.

3. Results

Before the analyses, a comparison of the American and British press was attempted, but this comparison produced limited results due to the size of the June 7 and November 1 subcorpora. The only striking finding of the current study was that compared with the British press, the American press in the TEC-2015 placed greater emphasis on the economic effects of the elections. Hence, the results are presented to compare the June 7 and the November 1 elections.

3.1. June 7 Elections in the British and American Press

The citizens of Turkey voted ($n=138$, $ll=781.101$) for a new parliament ($n=193$, $ll=632.349$) on Sunday ($n=93$, $ll=418.916$), June 7. The Turkish ($n=170$, $ll=1.510.127$) elections ended the 13-year majority ($n=124$, $ll=578.636$) of the ruling ($n=34$, $ll=139.649$) AKP, and discussions to establish a coalition ($n=124$, $ll=903.955$) government ($n=173$, $ll=328.201$) with opposition ($n=81$, $ll=319.335$) parties were initiated.

The keyword that had the highest keyness value was “Erdogan.” Recep ($n=54$, $ll=804.443$) Tayyip ($n=56$, $ll=852.130$) Erdogan ($n=324$, $ll=4.854.774$), as the successor of Abdullah Gul ($n=7$, $ll=73.422$), is the current **president** ($n=149$, $ll=581.903$) of Turkey. He was characterized as authoritarian ($n=21$, $ll=145.270$) in the newspapers. All of the US and UK newspapers analyzed compared Erdogan with the Russian President Vladimir Putin ($n=9$, $ll=136.950$) in terms of authoritarianism, and they pointed to his growing power ($n=123$, $ll=165.710$) and his ambitions ($n=22$, $ll=125.570$) to shift Turkey to a presidential system. Before the elections, Erdogan had sought 400 out of 550 seats to change the military-authored constitution ($n=41$, $ll=175.225$) since 367 out of 550 seats are required to change the Turkish constitution.

When the June 7 election took place, a single-party **government** ($n=173$, $ll=328.201$) controlled by the AKP ($n=293$, $ll=4.458.468$) had dominated Turkish politics for almost a decade ($n=25$, $ll=85.635$) and a half. Through this long span of time, the Islamist ($n=24$, $ll=301.538$)-rooted AKP aimed at ending the insurgency ($n=13$, $ll=116.528$) of the PKK with the help of the HDP. The AKP was founded in 2001 by Erdogan. As the founder and leader ($n=56$, $ll=183.512$) of the AKP, Erdogan served three terms as prime minister, and handed over his position as prime ($n=49$, $ll=122.079$) minister to Ahmet Davutoglu after being elected president. In the June 7 election, Davutoglu ($n=37$, $ll=563.015$) won 258 out of 550 seats ($n=99$, $ll=562.502$). According to Kate Lyons of the *Guardian* (June 8, 2015), the “HDP cut into the vote of the ruling ($n=34$, $ll=139.649$) AKP in Kurdish regions.”

The HDP ($n=215$, $ll=3.271.572$) is a political party that claims to represent the minority ($n=46$, $ll=216.792$) of Kurds ($n=70$, $ll=715.159$) and the

Kurdish ($n=182$, $ll=1.941.572$) community in Turkey. Selahattin Demirtas ($n=57$, $ll=867.347$) was the leader of the HDP when they won 80 out of 550 seats in the June 7 election. Since Demirtas took the greatest proportion of the vote in Kurdish regions and helped his party pass the 10 percent electoral threshold ($n=57$, $ll=420.524$), he was called the “Kurdish Obama” by some newspapers. For instance, in Diyarbakir ($n=37$, $ll=487.102$), located in the southeastern ($n=8$, $ll=80.044$) part of Turkey and the unofficial capital of the supposed state of Kurdistan, the HDP won 79 percent of the vote. In the Turkish Election Corpus (TEC), the PKK (Kurdish Workers Party, $n=38$, $ll=410.922$), which has been declared a foreign terrorist organization by the United States, European Union, and certain other countries, and the HDP, were mentioned in the same news pieces. Moreover, Abdullah Ocalan ($n=4$, $ll=45.598$), as the jailed leader of the PKK, was mentioned in news pieces related to the PKK insurgency. His niece, Dilek ($n=3$, $ll=45.650$) Ocalan of the HDP, was among the 96 female members who won seats in the elections.

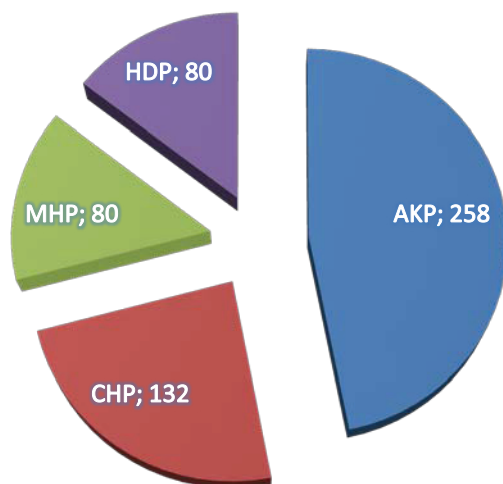


Figure 2 – June 7 Election Results

According to the official election results (see Figure 2), the other political parties that won seats in parliament were the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP, $n=50$, $ll=760.831$) and Republican People’s Party (CHP, $n=33$, $ll=383.010$), with 80 and 132 seats, respectively. Although the CHP won

more seats than the HDP and the MHP won the same number of seats in the parliament, the frequency and keyword analyses reflected the political rivalry between the AKP and HDP in the UK and US press.

According to newspapers in the TEC-2015, *the factors affecting the June 7 election results* were the Gezi ($n=21$, $ll=319.335$) Park protests, fierce campaigning ($n=59$, $ll=196.993$), the war with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Kobane ($n=8$, $ll=121.733$) across the Syrian ($n=48$, $ll=111.899$) border, and the AKP's authoritarian ($n=6$, $ll=145.270$) rule. One of the newspapers interpreted *the results* by giving credit to Turkish democracy ($n=34$, $ll=127.444$): “the election result in Turkey shows again that democracy can function in Muslim countries” (*Telegraph*, June 9, 2015). In the June 7 elections, the AKP could not get a majority of 330 seats to call a referendum ($n=20$, $ll=96.273$) for changing the 1982 constitution, and Davutoglu attempted to form ($n=74$, $ll=110.005$) a coalition ($n=124$, $ll=903.955$) or minority ($n=46$, $ll=216.792$) government in 45 days. In a first evaluation of the election, Demirtas, co-chairman with Figen Yuksekdag, said the victory ($n=30$, $ll=91.778$) was one for all minorities, women, workers, and the oppressed. In other words, it was “a joint victory of the Left” according to Demirtas (Raziye Akkoç, *Telegraph*, June 7, 2015). Certainly, political and economic uncertainty ($n=35$, $ll=178.224$) and instability ($n=19$, $ll=123.732$) had an effect on the evaluations of market strategists ($n=10$, $ll=97.434$) in an emerging ($n=24$, $ll=118.995$) market like Turkey. Due to the selloff of Turkish stocks by investors ($n=23$, $ll=89.267$) on account of political risks, the Turkish lira ($n=49$, $ll=549.316$) lost around 5 percent of its value against the US dollar ($n=30$, $ll=144.886$).

Political and economic uncertainty yielded *concerns* instead of *expectations* in the June 7 election. The expressed main concerns were the debate on the presidential ($n=4$, $ll=211.696$) system, peace ($n=52$, $ll=165.656$) talks with the PKK, European Union accession talks, ISIL (called the Islamic ($n=24$, $ll=126.430$) State in the UK and US press), and Turkish secularism ($n=24$, $ll=141.124$).

In one remarkable difference between the June 7 and the November 1 elections, the press emphasized the defeat ($n=14$, $ll=12.543$) of the ruling party and the victory of Demirtas' ($n=57$, $ll=33.161$) HDP ($n=215$, $ll=35.205$). The press reported that the HDP, which is based in Diyarbakir

($n=37$, $ll=13.084$), was representative of the Kurdish minority ($n=46$, $ll=14.390$). Another nationalist party, the MHP ($n=50$, $ll=17.480$), was mentioned more during the June 7 elections due to the polarization between the two nationalist parties, the HDP and MHP. Inarguably, the preeminent word for this election was “coalition” ($n=124$, $ll=38.036$).

3.2. November 1 Elections in the British and American Press

The citizens of Turkey went to the polls to renew ($n=21$, $ll=102.043$) the elections for a new parliament on Sunday, November 1 after the June vote. The Turkish elections ended up a victory ($n=109$, $ll=614.496$) for single party-rule by the AKP ($n=292$, $ll=4.484.681$), and they regained a parliamentary majority ($n=110$, $ll=503.128$) and power ($n=80$, $ll=144.268$). However, this five-month period could not be considered peaceful. Two huge suicide ($n=21$, $ll=98.916$) bombings were allegedly carried out by ISIL, and ISIL ($n=65$, $ll=291.339$) killed approximately a hundred people at a rally ($n=22$, $ll=111.437$) of the HDP ($n=100$, $ll=1.535.849$) in Ankara ($n=55$, $ll=630.015$). Furthermore, talks with the PKK were suspended due to the political uncertainty that arose after the June 7 election. As a result of this suspension, “PKK attacks ($n=25$, $ll=94.671$) have killed more than 150 security personnel since July” (Ishaan Tharoor, *Washington Post*, November 2, 2015).

The current *president* of Turkey, Erdogan ($n=365$, $ll=5.528.557$), was again the most important keyword in the analysis. “Erdogan” appeared in the US and British press much more than “presidency”; that said, the use of “presidency” in the media decreased for the November 1 election, possibly due to the election campaign of the AKP. His authoritarian ($n=21$, $ll=121.666$) character, which was compared with the character of Putin ($n=7$, $ll=107.509$), continued to be emphasized by the press, but they also agreed that “what critics describe as authoritarianism ($n=11$, $ll=98.373$), voters see as strength in uncertain times” (Mehul Srivastava, *Financial Times*, November 2, 2015). “After a decade in control, President Erdogan is probably the most powerful Turkish leader [$n=37$, $ll=98.245$] since Mustafa Kemal Ataturk” (Editorial, *Telegraph*, November 2, 2015), as well as the “undisputed strongman of Turkish politics” (Mehul Srivastava, *Financial Times*, November 2, 2015). On the other hand, he was called a divisive ($n=18$, $ll=154.135$) (Editorial, *Telegraph*, November 2, 2015; Orhan Coskun, Tulay

Karadeniz, Daren Butler, and Nick Tattersall, *New York Times*, November 2, 2015; Simon Tisdall, *Guardian*, November 1, 2015; Tim Arango and Ceylan Yeginsu, *New York Times*, November 1, 2015) leader in the pursuit of “one-man presidential rule” (David Gardner, *Financial Times*, November 1, 2015). Among the US newspapers, 13 out of 18 reported on the results of the election by emphasizing the executive power of Erdogan. Although the success should have been attributed to Davutoglu as the leader of the AKP, only a few newspapers reported that Davutoglu and Erdogan shared in the success of the election and many, such as the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *New York Times*, and *Telegraph*, announced the election as a triumph for Erdogan. As things stand, everyone, including Turks, wonder how this power ($n=80$, $ll=144.268$) equation involving Erdogan and Davutoglu will play out. As a difference from the June 7 election, the name of the former president Abdullah Gul was a keyword in June 7 elections due to the fact that the AKP had lost votes; however, his name did not place on the subsequent list thanks to the victory ($n=109$, $ll=614.496$) of the AKP.

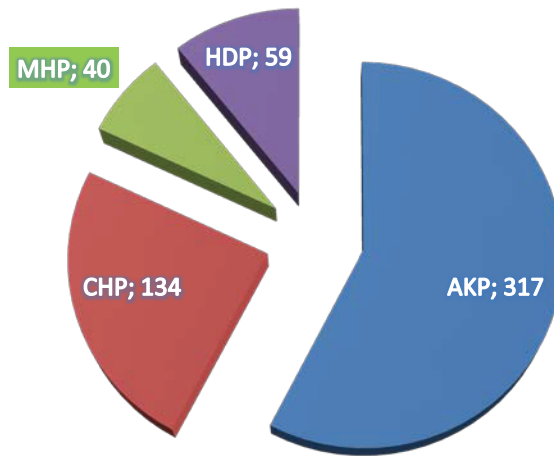


Figure 3 – November 1 Election Results

In the November 1 election, the AKP ($n=292$, $ll=4.484.681$) won 317 seats in parliament. According to the corpora analyses, the frequency of “HDP” decreased to 100 from 215, and the keyness or log likelihood value for the same word was also substantially weaker, from 3.271.572 to 1.535.849.

These results showed that support for the HDP had diminished, and the results seem to suggest that the PKK ($n=64$, $ll=755.983$), according to the same corpora analyses, had won favor. In the November 1 election, the HDP lost roughly one million votes, and the leaders of the party “attributed [this loss] to the government’s efforts to tarnish the Peoples’ Democratic Party by linking it to terrorism by the militants [$n=27$, $ll=236.699$] of the [PKK]” (Tim Arango and Ceylan Yeginsu, *New York Times*, November 1, 2015). However, David Gardner from the *Financial Times* (November 2, 2015) interpreted the situation in a different way: “The PKK leadership, banking the electoral legitimacy won by the HDP in Turkey, and basking in the international legitimacy won by its Syrian Kurd militia allies—backed by the US air force as the most effective fighters against Isis in northern Syria—has dangerously overplayed its hand.” David Gardner also mentioned its results in another news piece (November 1, 2015) that Erdogan and Davutoglu benefited from this perception, and “The confrontation with the PKK was stepped up; the HDP was branded as terrorist.”

In the November 1 election, the HDP ($n=100$, $ll=1.535.849$) exceeded the 10 percent electoral threshold ($n=21$, $ll=120.759$) once again and won 59 seats. The victory of the AKP proved the survival of the fittest one more time, and in the analytic results from the November 1 election, Demirtas (called the “Kurdish Obama” in the June 7 elections) and the People’s Democratic Party did not appear. Fuat Keyman, the head of the Istanbul Policy Center, quoted in the *Financial Times* (Piotr Zalewski, November 2, 2015), stated: “What failed was the idea that Kurds may win through violence as opposed to politics.” The HDP’s loss of votes was explained by the switch of religious Kurds ($n=56$, $ll=557.558$) from the HDP to the AKP (Tim Arango and Ceylan Yeginsu, *New York Times*, November 1, 2015; David Gardner, *Financial Times*, November 1, 2015), violence ($n=56$, $ll=243.320$) in the streets (Suzan Frazer and Desmond Butler, *Wall Street Journal*, November 2, 2015), the stagnation of business in the southeast ($n=14$, $ll=94.717$) of Turkey (Constanze Letsch, *Guardian*, November 2, 2015), and the effect of fears about security on the election campaign (Tim Arango and Ceylan Yeginsu, *New York Times*, November 2, 2015).

According to the official election results, the MHP lost half of its parliamentary members when compared to the results of the June 7 election. The loss of

votes for the MHP was reflected in the frequency and keyness analyses. The frequency of occurrence and the keyness value for MHP decreased to 15 from 50 and to 230.377 from 760.831 respectively. The situation was similar for the CHP, which won 134 out of 550 seats in the parliament due to the stability of votes for the CHP and the obviation of the possibility of a coalition. The frequency of the occurrence of this word decreased from 33 to 17, and its keyness value dropped from 383.010 to 180.865.

One of the factors affecting the November 1 election results was Merkel's (n=14, ll=177.638) visit to Erdogan. Before the election, Merkel visited Erdogan to negotiate on Syrian (n=25, ll=174.830) refugees (n=22, ll=101.533) and EU (n=31, ll=363.730) accession; this visit, which was considered "tacit support for Erdogan's regime" (Robert Ellis, Independent, November 2, 2015), was criticized by some newspapers. The criticism of the Guardian might have been the harshest: "Merkel must now also ask herself whether she played into Erdogan's hands by holding a meeting with him and boosting his standing shortly before the vote" (Simon Tisdall, November 1, 2015).

According to the TEC, the November 1 election resulted in the rise of the Turkish lira (n=33, ll=352.434) around 4 percent against the US dollar; this was ascribed to Turkey's political and economic stability (n=66, ll=431.842) instead of political and economic uncertainty, investors' (n=28, ll=122.876) hope for the rejuvenation in the economy, and a stable and strong government. The *Financial Times* interpreted the results by underlining Erdogan's prediction that "The election victory appears to have fulfilled his prediction that the Turkish people would prefer stability to the prospect of coalition government" (Mehul Srivastava and Funja Guler, November 2, 2015). On Sunday night, Davutoglu (n=36) gave a speech to thank his supporters for the vote results in Konya (n=8, ll=98.147), the hometown of the prime minister and a vote repository for the ruling party. However, while the AKP would be the ruling (n=49, ll=242.100) party of Turkey for the next four years, it fell short of the number of seats needed to put the new constitution (n=33, ll=131.930) to referendum in order to place Erdogan in the presidency (n=26, ll=151.993). The result of the election was a disappointment for left-leaning Kurds (n=12, ll=103.059), and they protested the election results by building barricades and firing shots into

the air in Diyarbakır ($n=11$, $ll=127.779$), the city with the largest Kurdish majority in Turkey. As aforementioned, the US and UK press considered the June 7 election a victory for democracy. However, the results of the November 1 election caused concern in the press: “What was at stake in these elections was whether Turkey would emerge from them closer to a western-style democracy, or a central Asian-style autocracy” (Yavuz Baydar, *Guardian*, November 1, 2015). In response to critics ($n=25$, $ll=104.754$), Erdogan asked journalists ($n=22$, $ll=104.216$) to respect the election results.

With the victory of the AKP, the US and the UK press voiced some **concerns**. These concerns were concerns over the Islamicization of secular ($n=22$, $ll=128.716$) Turks, over battle or peace ($n=46$, $ll=142.216$) talks with the PKK ($n=64$, $ll=755.983$), and over pressure on the media ($n=67$, $ll=264.666$). For instance, the *Telegraph* (Agency News, November 2, 2015) expressed concerns as follows: “question marks remained over the fate of the Kurdish peace process.” The answer to this concern came at Davutoglu’s first security meeting with security forces, in which Turkey’s determination to press on with terrorism was declared (Prime Minister of the Turkish Republic, 2015). The reason behind the concerns over media pressure was the pre-election raids against media considered to have non-organic relations with Fethullah Gulen ($n=7$, $ll=107.509$), but it is too early to see how this concern of the UK and the US press will be addressed by the new government.

Both the UK and the US press have expectations for the new government. The main expectation of the UK regards the issue of immigration. Considering the fact that “The main ‘area’ is immigration since Turkey is the pivotal country between Europe and Syria [$n=52$, $ll=398.601$] and is the main source of the hundreds of thousands of people trekking up the Balkans to the gates of the EU” (Ian Traynor, *Guardian*, November 2, 2015), the EU ($n=31$, $ll=363.730$) had only good things to say about the Turkish election. From the viewpoint of the US press, the allies ($n=20$, $ll=95.978$) of Turkey expect Turkey to play a bigger role in issues related to ISIL and Syria.

Comparing the June 7 and November 1 elections yielded differences with regard to several specific keywords. Certainly, the renewed ($n=21$, $ll=19.672$) election of November 1 was a victory ($n=109$, $ll=53.479$) for the ruling party. While Erdogan expected respect ($n=26$, $ll=30.684$) for democracy in Turkey,

the American and British press pointed to the concerns of critics ($n=25$, $ll=13.900$) over, for example, pressure on the media ($n=67$, $ll=22.999$), relations with Europe ($n=36$, $ll=35.304$) and the world ($n=49$, $ll=33.254$), Syrian refugees ($n=22$, $ll=25.177$), and the divisive ($n=18$, $ll=12.978$) talks of the president. The press also claimed that Merkel's ($n=14$, $ll=20.419$) visit to Erdogan was a booster for the November 1 victory. The British and American press interpreted this election as representing the desire for stability ($n=66$, $ll=45.087$) and a stop to the violence ($n=56$, $ll=41.246$).

4. Discussions and Conclusion

With regard to many subjects, readers' opinions about other nations are manipulated, particularly on the basis of the contrasts of good-bad and friend-foe. The "cultivation theory" developed by Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli (1986), which takes the long-term impacts of journalism into consideration, is based on the claim that the impact of the media on people can be studied by taking long-term intervals into consideration. The impact of the media on people is not manifested in the short term. On the contrary, perceptions established by the media develop in the long term. The various perceptions disseminated by American and British newspapers to their readers begin, in time, to determine how future messages are perceived. Thus, viewers acquire habits regarding how and what will be perceived. In time, people develop similar attitudes regarding news about specific subjects presented by the media. After a while, ideas that people think are theirs start to manifest themselves as a result of long-term steering by the media.

The elections held in Turkey on June 7 and November 1, 2015 have been reflected in various ways. In the media, how news is presented in terms of content and format is affected by the relations of different countries with Turkey. Therefore, while the elections of June 7 were lauded as a "victory for democracy," the elections of November 1 were declared a "triumph for Erdogan." In other words, the American and British newspapers did not assess Erdogan's triumph as a triumph for democracy. The political structure of the country that the news outlet is active in is relevant; furthermore, international affairs policy is also directly affected by the way developments in other countries are interpreted and reported. People develop common understandings, perceptions, and attitudes under the umbrella of information promulgated through the media. In this way, people start to have the same

ideological tendencies. As the state acquires a justified steering opportunity through information tools, administration can be realized more efficiently.

However, notwithstanding the impact of the shaping of the news in the examined newspapers, it is evident that the newspapers managed to determine basic features that differentiated the June 7 and November 1 elections. It is not really possible to formulate news in a completely objective way. It was expected that a coalition would be formed after the June 7 election, and the HDP exerted an impact on the political process at a high level. The dissemination of the view that governance by the AKP, which had been in power since 2012, was ending, was reflected in both the American and British newspapers. The impact of the HDP in the June 7 elections (HDP, $n=215$, $ll=3.271.572$) was seen to have rapidly receded in the November 1 elections ($n=100$, $ll= 1.535.849$). It is evident in our analysis that the HDP lost its potential key party position after the June 7 elections because the formation of a coalition, which had been the main topic on the agenda after the June 7 (coalition, $n=124$, $ll=903.955$) election and had been expected, was off the agenda after the November 1 elections (coalition, $n=41$, $ll=216.772$). Thus, the sudden losses incurred by the HDP in the politics of Turkey are indicated in our analysis.

The increased expectation that a coalition would be formed after the June 7 election also raised expectations of a political and economic crisis. Such expectations enhanced the importance placed on stability. As the AKP was expected to ensure economic and political stability, it was assured a win in the November 1 elections. Therefore, while the word “instability” was significant in the June 7 elections ($n=19$, $ll=123.732$), the word “stability” ($n=66$, $ll=431.842$) achieved major significance in the November 1 elections. This change between the two elections manifested a sensitivity in the Turkish public. With the impact of concerns regarding economic and political uncertainty, voters appear to have revised their decisions in the November 1 elections. Voters, concerned about whether they could continue their lives in stability, gave a landslide victory to the AKP in the November 1 elections.

The common feature between the June 7 and November 1 elections was the vision of President Erdogan as the leading actor. Both American and British newspapers determined Erdogan to be the most important political

figure in the two elections ($n=689$, $ll=9.490.391$). It is noteworthy that Ahmet Davutoglu, head of the AKP, assumed a less significant position in both elections (Davutoglu, $n=73$, $ll=1.014.770$). This is the most important indicator of how policies in Turkey are formulated with regard to political leaders. Although Erdogan, the founder of the AKP, occupies the office of the Presidency, which has an impartial position in the Turkish political system, he has maintained his influence in the elections. The fact that political leaders and charisma are determinant in the functioning of the political system is a negative feature because this indicates that the political system has not been established based on law. An ideal political system should be able to function independently from individuals. The charisma of political actors is more important under political conditions where law does not fully function.

In addition to all this, our analysis reveals that in the two elections, words pertaining to international relations such as Syria ($n=82$, $ll=581.476$), EU ($n=46$, $ll=500.337$), Isis ($n=35$, $ll=312.556$), and Putin ($n=16$, $ll=222.415$) have been prominent. It is absolutely true that developments in the modern world system require all countries to establish various economic and political relations with each other. Hence, countries' internal political developments are affected by their relations with other countries. Therefore, it is evident that the American and British newspapers evaluated the results of both the June 7 and November 1 elections jointly with developments in foreign policy. It is an unavoidable fact that political developments in a country affect other countries in the modern world system.

As observed, although the American and British newspapers had developed views in parallel with their own concerns with regard to the June 7 and November 1 elections, it can be attested that they displayed significant success in informing their readers correctly to a certain degree. However, under the contemporary global condition of intertwined economic and political interests and conflicts, the fact remains that a journalist perceiving an event cannot report independently from his own concerns and interests. Journalists who are influential in shaping the information presented to the public indirectly as well as directly influence the opinions of individuals and the public as they see fit. Thus, today, the media generates discourse to influence the public and has also become an influential power in international

affairs. The international media has developed complex affiliations with the states it is active in and is an efficient tool for the generation of certain perceptions of reality. Discourses dependent on these perceptions that are related to certain countries and pertain to communities, religions, and cultures may provide advantages for some, but may also disadvantage other groups, countries, and communities. The elimination of this situation depends on the realization of the independent reporting of all interests, which is a very difficult task to achieve. Further research is also needed for a detailed, qualitative look at news values based on the approaches of Caple and Bednarek (2013) and Bednarek (2016). Moreover, collocation networks can be scrutinized for the some key concepts in the news corpora as can be seen in some previous studies (e.g. Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery 2013; Gabrielatos and Baker 2008).

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Medya Aracılığıyla Algı İnşası: ABD ve Birleşik Krallık Basını Gözünden Türkiye'nin 2015 Genel Seçimleri

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Buğra Kalkan**

Öz

2015 yılındaki ilk genel seçimlerde koalisyon hükûmeti kurulamadığı için Türkiye ikinci kez genel seçimlere gitti. Her iki seçimde de ABD ve Birleşik Krallık basını tarafından haberler farklı perspektiflerden değerlendirildi. Söz konusu basın 7 Haziran seçimlerini demokrasinin bir zaferi olarak değerlendirirken, 1 Kasım seçimlerini Erdoğan'ın zaferi olarak duyurdu. Basında çıkan haberlerin içeriklerinin ve şekillerinin farklı ülkelerin ilişkileri tarafından etkilendiği gerçeği ışığında, ABD ve Birleşik Krallık basını tarafından bahsi geçen seçimlerden sonraki iki gün boyunca bildirilen haberler, frekans ve anahtar kelime analizi ve korpus destekli söylem analizi araçları kullanılarak, 2015 seçimlerinin basındaki kompleks ve belirsiz temsili dikkate alınarak analiz edilmiş ve bağlamına oturtulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Türkiye'de seçimler, korpus destekli söylem analizi, basın, Erdoğan, haberler

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Создание Восприятия Посредством Медии: всеобщие выборы Турции 2015 года в прессах США и Соединенного Королевства

Дэврим Озкан*
Бура Калкан**

Аннотация

В первой всеобщей выборы 2015 года никакое коалиционное правительство не создавался, и по этой причине Турция участвовала во второй раз в общих выборах. В обоих выборах новости со стороны пресса США и Соединенного Королевства были оценены с разных точек зрения. В прессе выборы 7 июня был расценен как победа демократии, а выбора 1 ноября объявили победой Эрдогана. Принимая во внимание тот факт, что содержание и форматы новостей в средствах массовой информации находятся под влиянием отношений разных стран, через два дня после выше упомянутых выборов новости сообщенные в прессах США и Соединенного Королевства учитывая представительный комплекс и неопределенность проанализировали и контекстуализировали выбора 2015.

Ключевые слова

выборы в Турции, анализ дискурса, Пресса, Эрдоган, Новости

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