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Terrorism and Newspapers: Representation of ISIL and PKK Terror Attacks in Turkish Newspapers¹

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Abstract

This study deals with the news coverage of some of the recent terror attacks in Turkey. It uses a part of the data set compiled for a project on impacts of journalism on countering violent extremism in Turkey (henceforth the CVE Project). The data is analysed using an eclectic version of critical discourse analysis. The analysis starts with an explanation of the data and the context of the terrorist attacks in question. Then, the argumentation strategies used by newspapers are examined through pragma-dialectical argumentation approach. Metaphors are also analysed through the lenses of conceptual metaphor thesis. The findings show that arguments against terrorist attacks taking place in Turkey are highly marked by Turkey's experience with the PKK terror and political stances. Metaphors used in news articles also reveal ideological and political treatment of the issue at stake. All in all, the study points out that there is a close relationship between the ways terror attacks are handled in Turkish newspapers and their ideological political positions. The implications of this finding for the relationship between media and terrorism is discussed at the end of the study.

Keywords: Argumentation, Conceptual metaphors, Journalism, Turkish newspapers, Terrorism, Terrorist attacks

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Terörizm ve Gazeteler: Türk Gazetelerinde Son Terörist Saldırıların Analizi

Öz

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki son terörist saldırılardan bazılarının haber olma şekillerini ele almaktadır. Çalışmada gazeteciliğin Türkiye'de terörizm ve şiddet içeren aşırıcılığa karşı mücadeleye etkileri üzerine bir proje için derlenen verilerin bir kısmı kullanılmaktadır (bundan sonra CVE Projesi olarak anılacaktır). Veriler, eleştirel söylem analizinin eklektik bir versiyonu kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Analiz, verilerin ve söz konusu terörist saldırıların bağlamının bir açıklaması ile birlikte başlamaktadır. Ardından, gazetelerin kullandığı tartışma stratejileri, van Eemeren ve Grootendorst tarafından geliştirilen pragma-diyalektik argümantasyon yaklaşımıyla incelenmiştir. Ayrıca metaforlar George Lakoff tarafından önerilen kavramsal metafor tezinin lensi aracılığıyla incelenmektedir. Bulgular, Türkiye'de meydana gelen terörist saldırılara yönelik argümanların büyük ölçüde, Türkiye'nin PKK terörü ve gazetelerin siyasi duruşu konusundaki tecrübesiyle vurgulandığını göstermektedir. Haber makalelerinde kullanılan metaforlar söz konusu meselenin daha çok ideolojik ve politik olarak ele alındığını ortaya koymaktadır. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma medya ile terörizm arasındaki ilişkinin daha iyi anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Eleştirel söylem analizi, Gazetecilik, Türk gazeteleri, Terörizm, Terörist Saldırıları

Introduction

The role of news media, as the general public's main source of information on terrorism, plays a crucial role in how people perceive terrorism and (in)security. It is a well-researched area and scholars see almost a symbiotic relationship (Cvrtilla and Peresin, 2009, Frey and Luechinbger, 2008) between the media and terrorism. In a report on the relationship between the media and terrorism Spencer (2012: 6) accounts for this symbiotic relationship, arguing that terrorism caters to media by providing exciting and violent stories which boost circulation and the media caters to terrorist groups' interests by helping them disseminate their message and feelings of fear and insecurity among general public. The protean nature of the term 'terrorism' constitutes an important aspect of this symbiotic relationship. No definitional consensus has been reached until now and the concept has been used liberally, and at times arbitrarily, in the literature (Nasser-Eddine, Garnham, Agostino and Caluya, 2011). Investigating how academics define terrorism, Schmid and Jongman (1988) identify 109 different definitions, and group them into 22 definitional elements according to their frequency, the first three of which are violence, force and political. Terrorism is defined with a clear focus on security in Turkish law as follows (Action no: 3713, 1991):

Terrorism is any kind of act done by one or more persons belonging to an organization with the aim of changing the characteristics of the Republic as specified in the Constitution, its political, legal, social, secular and economic system, damaging the indivisible unity of the State with its territory and nation, endangering the existence of the Turkish State and Republic, weakening or destroying or seizing the authority of the State, eliminating fundamental rights and freedoms, or damaging the internal and external security of the State, public order or general health by means of pressure, force and violence, terror, intimidation, oppression or threat (Article 1 of the Anti-Terror Law).

This definition is marked by Turkey's experience with terrorism, particularly with the PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan - Kurdistan Workers Party) which has traditionally directed its attacks at state officials as well as civilians (Dedeoğlu, 2016).

This article will address three interrelated questions: 1) how do Turkish newspapers portray the recent terrorist attacks? 2) What are the main argumentation schema used in newspapers? 3) What are the main metaphors used to legitimise newspapers' argumentation schema? In order to answer these questions, an eclectic version of critical discourse analysis will be utilised. The article is organised into three sections. First, the context of the attacks are explained. Second the data and the methodology are elaborated on. Third, the analyses are presented and finally in the discussion the findings are interpreted.

1. The Context

Turkey has always been a major target of terrorist attacks, mainly by the PKK, since the 1980s. The group's violent activities almost came to a halt during the opening process between 2009 and 2015. However, with the ending of the opening process and Turkey's clear stance against a nascent Kurdish state in northern Syria, the PKK, together with other affiliated terrorist groups, has resumed its attacks on Turkish police and armed forces, and leading to the death of several civilians (Ensaroğlu, 2013).

In addition, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) gained global attention after driving Iraqi forces out of key cities in Iraq and eventually capturing Mosul. As a result of their emergence, Turkey has suffered from some of the deadliest ISIL attacks since 2013 (Reyhanlı Attack), which only exacerbated following Turkey's decision to join the anti-ISIL coalition and open the İncirlik base to the coalition forces in September of 2014 (Yetkin, 2014). By declaring the Turkish state and its leaders "apostate", the group has tried to legitimise its attacks on Turkish cities, airports, and a nightclub on New Year's Eve in 2017.

Within this brief historical account, the nodal points selected for data collection in this research can be better contextualised. Although it is not the focus of this study, each violent attack under investigation has significant repercussions on Turkish as well as regional politics. The six attacks analysed in this study are outlined in more detail in the below table:

Table 1: Brief information on the attacks

Attack Name	Date	Description
Reyhanlı attack	11 May 2013	The explosion of two car bombs in the busiest point of the town, right in front of the municipality and near the post office, left 52 civilians killed and 146 wounded. Initial media reactions to the attack was marked by political rivalry. Although the mystery over the real perpetrators of the attack has not been entirely uncovered, the official indictment of the case states that the attack was organised by Mihraç Ural, the leader of the THKP-C ³ , a Marxist-Leninist organisation, with allegedly close links to the Assad regime and who was reported to have been killed by the opposition group Ahrar-Al Sham.
Diyarbakır Attack	5 June 2015	This attack took place in the south eastern town, just two days before the general election and during the HDP's (Halkların Demokrasi Partisi, in English: People's Democratic Party) pre-election rally. Two separate bombs, which went off in the crowd just before the leader of the HDP Selahattin Demirtaş's speech, killed 5 and injured over 400. A 20 year old Turkish citizen with links to the ISIL, Orhan Gönder, was caught in Gaziantep and charged with the attack.
Suruç attack	20 July 2015	The Suruç attack took place at the Suruç district, which is located on the Turkish-Syrian border in south-eastern city of Şanlıurfa. The attack occurred during a meeting of socialist youth activists who had travelled to Suruç from İstanbul in order to help rebuilding projects in the Syrian city of Kobani, just across the border. The assault was identified as being perpetrated by a 20-year-old Turkish student, killing 32 youngsters and injuring more than 100. The suicide bomber, Şeyh Abdurrahman Alagöz, was reported to have close links to the ISIL. Also, two days after the attack two police officers were found shot dead at their home in the town of Ceylanpınar, a nearby town on the Turkish-Syrian border, for which the armed wing of the PKK, the People's Defence Forces, claimed responsibility as reprisals for the Suruç assault (Kurdish group claims...., 2015).

³ Also known as Acilçiler, the THKP-C is a revolutionary leftist organisation founded in 1970s and was very influential around Hatay.

Ankara Attack	10 October 2015	The attack took place in the capital city of Ankara with a death toll of 103 civilians and more than 500 injured (Ankara explosions..., 2015). Two successive explosions targeted people attending a rally, namely the "Labour, peace, democracy" rally, organised by the Confederation of Public Sector Trades' Unions (KESK) and other labour unions and attended by various leftist groups including the HDP calling for an end to the renewed conflict between the terrorist organization PKK and the Turkish state (97 killed, 246 injured..., 2015). Following the attack, the chief prosecutor of Ankara said that the explosions were likely to have been caused by two suicide bombers (Başsavcı: İki canlı bomba..., 2015) but no group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack (Letsche & Khomami, 2015).
Istanbul Attack	12 January 2016	A Syrian member of the ISIL, Nabil Fadlı, blew himself up in the historic Sultan Ahmet square of İstanbul among a tour group, killing 13 and injuring 16 tourists, mostly German nationals. The attacker was found to be given a biometric ID by the Zeytinburnu Migration Administration Office in İstanbul after entering Turkey illegally through a false statement that he fled Syria due to fear of ISIL persecution (Kizilkoyun, 2016). As minute details of the explosion emerged in the social media, the RTÜK (Radio and Television Supreme Council of Turkey) imposed a temporary broadcast ban on images of to the bombing. The Turkish press gave wide coverage to the attack with details of the explosion, the identity of the attacker and international condolences.
Ankara Attack	13 March 2016	The Ankara attack took place in central Ankara, in the district of Kızılay, killing 38 civilians and injuring 125. A car bomb exploded in Güvenpark of Kızılay, a central transport hub, less than a month after a suicide car bomber killed dozens of military personnel and civilians, for which the Kurdistan Freedom Hawks (TAK-Teyrêbazên Azadiya Kurdistan) claimed responsibility. Turkish Interior Ministry identified the bomber as a 24 year old university student, Seher Çağla Demir, who joined the PKK in 2013 and received training in the YPG camps in Syria (Letsch, 2016). However, the TAK claimed responsibility for the latter attack as well, declaring in a statement on its website that it was a 'vengeful action' and warned for future attacks (ibid). The attack was condemned by all political groups in Turkey.

2. The Data and the Method

This article uses a part of the data collected for the CVE project. The original data consists of 2,330 new items, including 640 columns and 1,690 hard news. The details of the news corpus are shown in the below table. All the news and columns related to

attacks and published one month after each attack were collected and processed by two members of the research team.

Table 2: Turkish News Corpus

News source	Reyhanlı	Diyarbakır	Suruç	Ankara (2015)	Sultan Ahmet	Ankara (2016)
Cumhuriyet	88	20	55	183	26	56
Hürriyet	53	8	67	104	28	69
Ortadoğu	75	0	35	76	23	57
Özgür Gündem	68	66	146	198	21	33
Star	88	21	89	151	31	82
Yeni Akit	70	6	71	86	28	52
Total number of news items	442	121	463	798	157	349
Grand total	2330 news items (640 columns)					

The selection of the newspapers, as the table below suggests, depends on previous literature regarding ideological/political affiliations of the newspapers and their circulation numbers. Therefore, the newspapers included in the sample are *Cumhuriyet*, *Hürriyet*, *Ortadoğu*, *Özgür Gündem*, *Star* and *Yeni Akit*.

Table 3: Newspapers

<i>Cumhuriyet</i>	Secular, nationalist, anti-government
<i>Hürriyet</i>	Secular, centrist, popular
<i>Ortadoğu</i>	Anti-government, nationalist
<i>Özgür Gündem</i>	Leftist, pro-Kurdish, anti-government
<i>Star</i>	Pro-government, popular
<i>Yeni Akit</i>	Pro-government, religious-conservative

Considering the research questions, the current study will only focus on news columns. All news columns were scrutinised to identify main argumentative schema and metaphors used in the aforementioned newspapers.

Since the language used in newspapers is not mere reflection of what 'really' happens in the world, critical discourse analysis will be conducive to understanding the language used in the media. Depending on the view that language is not only used for constructing social identities but also as constitutive in creating systems of knowledge and belief (Fairclough 1995), the study considers discourse as a form of social practice

and therefore it will try to account for the broader societal and political conditions of the processes of production and interpretation of terrorism discourse in Turkish newspaper. Since the representation of social actors involved in the aforementioned attacks has been extensively reported in an essay (Efe, 2018) produced from the same project, this study will look at argumentation strategies and metaphors in detail.

Argumentation strategies simply refer to linguistic means which are used to justify each newspaper's take on the issue. Drawing on Toulmin's functional approach (1969), Kienpointner (1996: 75) proposes a scheme with three basic elements which each argumentation includes either explicitly or implicitly.

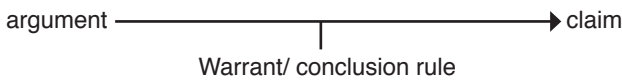


Figure 1: Elements of an argument (Kienpointner, 1996)

According to this scheme, the argument is the reason given for or against a controversial claim/thesis, and the claim is the disputed, contested statement that has to be justified or refuted (Kienpointner, 1996: 75). Conclusion rules are seen as the central elements, which connect the argument with the claim. The conclusion rules, while being rarely explicitly stated, are known as 'topoi' within argumentation theory (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 74). They are the content related warrants that justify the transition from the argument or arguments to the conclusion. Kienpointner (1996) distinguishes various topoi that can be found in formal argumentation schemes. One such example, which is frequently used in media discussions over any issue, is the 'topos of authority'. This topos can be restructured as follows:

Conclusion Rule (Topos): If authority X says that A is true, A is true.

Argument: X says that A is true,

Claim: Thus, A is true.

Topoi, however, do not necessarily function on fallacious bases as exemplified in the aforementioned topos, they can also be reasonable (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 110). Against this background we will analyse the argumentation strategies in the news texts at stake by elaborating on the highly conventionalised argumentation premises, i.e., topoi. The arguments detected in the current study will be reformulated following this model. In order to be able to distinguish sound from fallacious argumentation the analysis will also draw on the pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation developed by van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Henkemas (1996).

The cognitive approach to metaphors founded by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their seminal book *Metaphors We Live By* in 1980 has been very influential in pointing to the central role of metaphors in the construction of social and political reality. The conceptual approach claims that "most of our conceptual system is metaphorically constructed; that is, most concepts are particularly understood in terms of other concepts" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 56). What matters most about a metaphor, therefore, is its conceptual nature, inasmuch as verbal metaphors reflect mappings across domains of knowledge; through which language users understand the world.

Hence, metaphors allow language users to transfer forms of reasoning and words from one domain to be used in the other domain. More importantly, research by Semino (2008: 32) provides ample evidence that “metaphors are seldom neutral: constructing something in terms of something else results in a particular view of the ‘something’ in question, often including specific attitudes and evaluations.”

3. The Analysis

Before the analysis, it will be useful to provide readers with a brief synopsis of the general findings gleaned from the CVE project. Critical discourse analyses of the news reporting on the six attacks reveal that most of the news stories are told from episodic frame; that is, they focus on the single event at the expense of neglecting the overall trends, and that coverage of newspapers changed depending on the perpetrators of the attacks and the ideological allegiances of the newspapers. (Efe, 2018). The coverage of the six attacks by six Turkish newspapers are placed next to a sundry of discourses; discourse on lack of security/intelligence, discourse on Turkish government’s inadequacy in dealing with terrorism, discourse on government’s failure in Syria related foreign policy, discourse on the victims of the attack and pain of their relatives, discourse on vastness of terrorism, discourse on the enemies of Turkey, discourse on lack of empathy among oppositional groups, and so on. While newspapers that are supportive of the government focus on enemies of Turkey and lack of solidarity, oppositional newspapers put emphasis on the lack of security measures and intelligence. Also, the bulk of coverage of *Özgür Gündem* and *Ortadoğu* are influenced by the type of the attack. As it is clear from the number of published articles, *Özgür Gündem* gives more importance to those attacks carried out by the DAESH against Kurds and leftist groups while *Ortadoğu* pays no or least attention to these attacks perpetrated by the DAESH.

One of the central and reiterating topoi in the argumentation structure of oppositional papers is the topos of responsibility, used as a short-cut argumentative strategy in which the Turkish government is depicted as an omnipotent actor and thus the main responsible for the attacks. This topos is explicitly stated in the following extract from a Hurriyet column focusing on the Reyhanlı attack:

They will not even recall the fact that for anything going wrong in a country the government is responsible (M.Y. Yılmaz, 2013).

This argumentative strategy is also used persistently in *Cumhuriyet*, *Ortadoğu* and *Özgür Gündem*. This strategy is closely related to the topos of pre-emption, in which the government and the security forces are accused of being not pre-emptive or deterrent despite the intelligence of an imminent attack. Then why the security forces of the state cannot arrest bloody handed terrorists before the attack although our intelligence units have warned the security forces? (Çetinkaya, 2013)

Notice that this topos functions on a fallacious premise or in legal terms on a disputable presumption since one cannot be arrested of a crime until there is the external element

or the objective element of the crime (actus reus). In fact, the rhetorical question in the extract begs the question (petitio principii) of whether the government knew what would happen, and thereby resorts to the fallacy of making unfair use of a presupposition in asking this question (fallacy of many questions). The same fallacy arises in the Cumhuriyet column when the author begs the question “If there is Syria behind this act, why this attack is [committed] against Turkey but not Israel?” (Çetinkaya, 2013) which invokes the presupposition that if a terrorist attack is organised by Syria it must be against Israel. This also violates the relevance rule in argumentation, that is, a party may defend his/her standpoint by advancing argumentation related to that standpoint (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Henkemans, 2002). The macro-legitimatory argument in oppositional papers also hinges on the topos of cause and effect, which draws a causal relationship between the government’s Middle East policies and the terrorist attacks in Turkey. This argumentative strategy is further aggrandized through metaphors, shown in the following extracts:

This is the result of turning the Syrian border into a sieve with the government’s political choices. (M. Y. Yılmaz, 2013)

As a result Turkey is in the middle of troubling terrorism and mothers cry. And this is totally a work of JDP... The JDP has not sow the wind but the storm and it has reaped typhoon, whirlwind and disaster (Karataş, 2013).

Colloquially speaking, the JDP has sown the wind and it is now reaping whirlwind... Turkey’s Syria policy hits itself like a boomerang (Üçlü, 2013).

In the first example the concept of permeability is transferred into the field security through the sieve metaphor. The natural metaphors used in the second and third examples, the latter of which is indeed an idiomatic expression, together with the simile (like a boomerang) bring the concept of reciprocity into the field of foreign policy, accusing the government for following wrong policies and thereby establishing a causal relationship with these and the attack. The topos of responsibility draws an implicit connection between an attack and the Turkish government as the responsible agent. Such causality is also established in a column of Özgür Gündem published right after the Diyarbakır Attack. The author, Adil Bayram, argues that while the popular vote for the JDP (Justice and Development Party, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) has decreased it has increased for the PDP (People’s Democratic Party, Halkların Demokrasi Partisi) and therefore, the attack is implicitly connected with the “success” of the PDP and the “failure” of the JDP. This implicit connection becomes a more apparent insinuation in the following lines: The PDP is carrying out a zealous but difficult election campaign by having many having martyrs under the oppression and massacres of the JDP (Bayram, 2015).

In the same column, however, the connection turns into an overt accusation. The author refers to the attack as “the Diyarbakır massacre”, thereby founding the premise of his claim invariably through reiteration of the same term, i.e., ‘massacre’. The argument therefore draws on the assumption (petitio principia) that since “the JDP has been the perpetrator of earlier massacres it must be behind this massacre (Diyarbakır).” The same topoi are used across several Özgür Gündem news articles covering the Diyarbakır attack, which can be deduced even from glance at the headlines:

Bombalarınız da kurtaramayacak [Your Bombs will also not save [you] (2015), Kanlı bir seçim süreci [A Bloody Election Process] (2015), Küresel değil AKP destekli saldırı [Not Global, the JDP Backed Attack] (2015) and so forth.

The topos of responsibility draws a causal relationship between the ‘wrong’ policies of the government and the attacks. This line of argument simply violates the relevance rule in argumentation (van Eemeren ve diğerleri, 2002, p. 119), that is the argumentation is not directly (and/or is very loosely) connected to the standpoint advanced in the confrontation stage. Drawing a direct causal relationship between the government’s “failed” policies with the attacks, it appeals, in classical rhetorical terms, to the emotions of the readers, thereby rendering what is called a pathetic fallacy. This is exemplified in the following extract from a Hürriyet column published after the Suruç attack:

But the couple of Erdoğan-Davutoğlu did all their calculations wrong, fuelled the civil war in the neighbour, overlooked the fact that the borders were turned into sieve. And the cost of their mistake have been paid by innocent people in Reyhanlı and Suruç with bomb explosions (M.Y. Yılmaz, 2015).

Next to topos of responsibility, another argumentation strategy running through oppositional papers draws on a causal relationship between the attack and the benefits of the politicians i.e., the topos of benefit. This topos underlies the claim that “the president and the JDP let this attack happen because the JDP could not get 400 seats” which is clearly stated in a Cumhuriyet editorial entitled 400 vekil için [For 400 MPs] (2015). This argumentation strategy also incorporates argumentum ad hominem, i.e. an attack against the personality of the president, through a historical metaphor shown in the following extract, providing the conclusion rule for the main claim, that is; since chaos benefits the president and JDP politicians, they must have let the attack happen.

Against Nimrods who set the square afire for their personal power, we should at least line up near the peace at least to show our side. (400 vekil için, 2015)

Metaphors of darkness are also used by oppositional papers to support their claims and to intensify the criticism against the government as to its failure in Syria related policies.

...the state should have surfaced and revealed those who desire to trap...to all people living in this geography by taking out them from their dark caves...(Çetinkaya, 2015)

What sort of a country has it become? What sort of business is this, how a dark environment? (Atılbaz, 2015).

Other topoi supporting the main argumentative strategies of oppositional papers are topos of negligence and insecurity. The only exception among the oppositional papers, pertains to the Ortadoğu’s argumentative strategy in which the government is represented not as active but a passive agent which tried maintain power at the expense of allowing the attack to happen and empowering the PKK:

The JDP is undermining the order itself, has overlooked, permitted and authorised the PKK and other terrorist groups lest ‘the opening process is not ripped’ and at the expense of protecting the opening process in the fridge⁴ which came as a coffin covered with the [Turkish] flag (Atılbaz, 2015).

4 This refers to the president’s statement that the negotiation process was suspended due to the PKK attacks against security forces, see <http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/politika/296110.aspx>.

The topoi of negligence and insecurity are linked with the Syrian civil and the refugee crisis. After the Sultan Ahmet attack, the author of the Hürriyet column casts doubt on the credibility of Syrian refugees, since the attacker had a refugee ID:

In the days when the Syrian civil war escalated and the wave of migration spread into our borders, how many people have gone to Syria to fight along jihadist organisations? How many of them have returned? (M. Y. Yılmaz, 2016).

A significant argumentative strategy used in Özgür Gündem, particularly after the PKK attacks, rests on problematisation of the concept of terrorism, as can be seen in the following extract from a column of Özgür Gündem on the Ankara attack in 2016:

Historically, "terror" has emerged on the hand as a state tool against public enemies, as Robespierre said on 5 February 1794, and a legitimate response to imperialism, on the other hand. . From this perspective, looking at the societal ingredients, it can be said that terror is a tool used for reactionary and progressive aims (Çakır, 2016).

Drawing on anti-imperialist discourse, the macro-structure of this rhetoric introduces terrorism as a "plausible method" and legitimises "some" terrorisms and de-legitimise others. This argumentative strategy has been a persistent theme in leftist and pro-Kurdish groups. The central topos in this macro-legitimatory argument is the topos of tit for tat, which leads to the depiction of terrorism as a legitimate response to states' expansionist policies. This topos is further supported by metaphors alluding to the heroic deeds of leftist youth. For instance, the victims of the Suruç attack, i.e., the youngsters who set off to help rebuild Kobane, are described with anti-capitalist and anti-system, in other words heroic qualities:

While the concepts of competition, getting on the gravy train, becoming rich by approaching to some [the powerful], being a cog in the wheel, as well as being "religious and furious" are being pumped into that generation; while fascism, nationalism are rising and legitimate values; they have decided voluntarily and full heartedly where to go without living the depression of "everywhere is so crowded where should we go" (Koçali, 2015).

In the column, interdiscursive references to socialism and critique of modern capitalist societies are incorporated within the criticism directed against the government of Turkey. Therefore the young people who were killed in the attack are exalted not only for "resisting against the manipulation of the system" but also for "shaking the domination of the government". Therefore the author romanticize the attack and the victims with frequent references to "revolution" and "internationalism".

The argumentative strategies of the oppositional papers are confronted by a set of topoi used in the Star and the Yeni Akit, i.e., the pro government papers. Of these, the topos of enemies of Turkey is significant.

The Baathists see and are encouraged by the fact that step by step a faction as hostile as themselves to the government of Erdoğan, forms in Turkey (M. Yılmaz, 2013).

Some want to punish Turkey... (Dilipak, 2016).

This strategy deviates the focus of the discussion from the attack and turns to "bigger threats" and therefore alleviates the politicization of the issue. Similarly the oppositional groups' argumentation strategies exasperate the political bifurcation by focusing on political criticism directed against the president and the government. In this environment, from the oppositional groups' perspective it becomes impossible to

think positively about or at least independent of the president and the government. The oppositional criticism as to them turn into demonization, as can be seen in the metaphoric expression of 'sold creatures' from the Yeni Akit:

Unfortunately, there are those sold creatures within the army who can carry fuel to this hell. They are entities who have become so monstrous as to let their people burned furiously, due to their enmity toward the JDP! (M. Yılmaz, 2013)

The macro-legitimatory arguments in the pro-government papers function through a set of topoi. The topos of benefit is a significant one, as exemplified in the following extracts, the first taken from the Yeni Akit after the Diyarbakır attack and the second from the Star after the Suruç attack. The topos of benefit, as can be seen in the following extracts, leads to the conclusion rule: if an attack benefits a certain group it must have been planned or desired by them or if it doesn't a group it must not have been desired or planned by them, vice versa.

Why would the state⁵ set bomb in the PDP meetin? Why would it shoot its own foot while it knew this would be against itself? (M. Yılmaz, 2015)

Those who benefit from this [attack] are those who are willing to see the massacre of Asad against his own people but also a clash between DAESH-PYD or DAESH-Turkey.... (Kartoğlu, 2015)

This argumentative strategy, which is frequented by conspiracy theorists alike, has been a persistent theme, and through years of repetition and re-contextualisation in various domains it has become an automatic conclusion rule: if an attack benefits a group, it must have been committed by them. It is to be noted that a similar anti-Israeli argument has been discerned in the Cumhuriyet column. This is mainly because historically anti-American/Israeli discourses have been central to leftist and Islamist groups in Turkey. However, new meanings and in fact meaning potentials are thrust to each text in Cumhuriyet, Özgür Gündem and Yeni Akit through recontextualisation, by invoking the assumptions of the old knowledge repertoire and thrusting them into new contexts. In Cumhuriyet and Özgür Gündem it is used as part of the macro-legitimatory arguments constructing a world in which Turkey and Turkish government sides with imperialists, and in Yeni Akit and Star vice versa.

Closely related to this argumentative scheme is the topos of rationality. The topos of rationality is used in the Yeni Akit column after the Suruç attack as an argumentative strategy in which the ISIL is represented as a rational actor who would not take the risk of carrying out such an irrational act, i.e., the attack.

They must be crazy to perpetrate this massacre! (Şimşek, 2015).

It is to be noted that the topos of rationality is closely linked with the topos of benefit. Thus the author of Yeni Akit column responds to the question whether the ISIL would want this attack with a clear "no", as the ISIL would not want to confront Turkey and empower its enemy, the PYD. According to the author, the only actors who would like this attack for various reasons are the USA and Britain, Israel and the oppositional groups in Turkey. This argumentation strategy also necessarily draws on a fallacy,

⁵ The "state" here is used interchangeably for government.

argumentum ad hominem, i.e. the treason of the oppositional groups. Both the Yeni Akit and the Star columns hint at the involvement of foreign powers in the attacks through darkness metaphors. The author of a column in the Yeni Akit refers metonymically to the people in Diyarbakır and alludes to the enemies of Turkey through a set of trope in the following extract:

Diyarbakır has been silenced...Diyarbakır is silent...The shadows growing under the walls have covered everywhere...The back streets are sticky, full of devil, insecure...but...you can still touch the fingerprints of the Prophets...the souls of the Companions stroll in solitude. (M. Yılmaz, 2013).

Implicit references to the involvement of foreign fingers in the attack closes up the door for criticising the government as well as legitimising the excluding US and THEM discourse. Used frequently, such implications hinge on a realist understanding of politics and international relations, which pre-supposes the animosity of other states.

Discussion

This paper aimed to answer three interrelated questions as mentioned in the introduction. The analyses reveal that Turkish newspapers approach to different terrorist attacks at different times is marked by newspapers' political stance and ideology. This schism can be related to the definitional ambivalence regarding what terrorism means to each group of newspapers. Using Schmid and Jongman's (1988) definitional elements, it can be argued that the political element of terrorism is foregrounded by Turkish newspaper. It is also to be noted that victimhood is also a significant aspect of the representation of terrorist attacks and the emotional language use in Turkish newspapers, as shown in the CVE project. However, schism across Turkish media along ideological and political lines is so deep that terrorism cannot escape its effects (Efe, 2018). Reporting becomes highly marked by each newspaper's political stance, for Turkish newspapers often portray so irreconcilable versions of the same terrorist attack.

Within the main argumentation structure of oppositional papers which hinges on government's failure and at times involvement in the terrorist attacks, the government is represented as a hostile actor that conspires against its own people. The topoi of lack of security and negligence of security forces are also conducive to this argumentation scheme. Another common theme that feeds the macro-legitimatory argumentation of the oppositional papers is government's involvement in Syria and other Middle East related politics. On the contrary, the common denominator that marks pro-government newspapers in terms of their argumentation strategies is their frequent resort to enemies of Turkey, and therefrom constructing a sharp 'US and THEM' discourse. In this line of pro-government arguments, perpetrators of the attacks are usually referred metaphorically, through darkness metaphors. Marked also with emotional language, such representations also lead to ambivalence, and what is more important these can lead to an understanding of terrorism and violent extremism as unstoppable (as in discourses on the vastness of terrorism). In parallel with discourses on enemies of Turkey, another common theme that provides content for pro-government

newspapers pertains to the accusations of treason (argumentum ad hominem) in relation to oppositional groups. Last but not least, semiotic and linguistic choices of the newspapers that are used in the representation of violent extremist events are marked by their ideological stance. This leads to diversion from the main issue and hinders a thorough understanding of violent extremism and violent extremist events.

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