

# Frequency Analysis as a Way of Uncovering News Foci: Evidence from the Guardian and the New York Times

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## Abstract

Institutions or people can express their political stances or attitudes toward a specific topic if they keep using some words rather than others repetitively and consistently. This study uses the corpus linguistic technique of frequency to examine the influence of the country where the newspaper is published on its agenda and coverage using a corpus of about 7 million words of news articles about *Libya* and *Qaddafi* in the *Guardian* (Britain) and the *New York Times* (the U.S.) from 2009 to 2013. The compiled corpus is divided into three time periods, namely: before, during, and after the 2011 Arab uprisings. The analysis shows that the two newspapers had different news foci/themes in the three investigated time periods, and that they are influenced by the stock of ideas circulating in the culture in which they are working. Both newspapers covered more news of events that draw the attention of the people of the countries where they are located and published. The paper concludes that there is a strong relationship between media and politics where media is a central arena for viewing the political events.

**Keywords:** corpus linguistics, frequency analysis, the Guardian, the NYT

## 1. Introduction

Discourse, being “language in action” Blommaert (2005, p. 2), is effective and influential in society since it causes changes and constructs events and behaviours (Van Dijk, 1997). Burr (1995) states that discourse is a way of interpreting the world, giving it a meaning, and allowing some events rather than others to take place. Since discourse is constructed via language and corpus is a collection of naturally occurring language, it may be argued that corpora provide their users with some information about the societies in which that language is used. Language plays an important role in influencing and forming people’s attitudes and ideologies, urging them to act in a specific way rather than another (Van Dijk, 2001). Therefore, language is not a discourse in itself, but a way that influences people to act in a particular way, which can be regarded as traces of a particular discourse. To link these aspects with corpus linguistics, Baker (2010) argues that a corpus contains a collection of naturally occurring language, and has repetitions and patterns that suggest discourse traces, and discourse can be made to be naturalized by being reiterated in everyday language.

This study uses the analytical framework of Corpus Linguistics (CL) in general, and the technique of frequency in particular to discursively examine the most frequent themes in the *Guardian* (Britain) and the *New York Times* (the U.S.) in a corpus of about 7 million words of news articles about *Libya* and *Qaddafi*. It also examines whether there are any constant/frequent discourses with *Qaddafi* in the two newspapers in a time span of 5 years from 2009 to 2013. It follows the research paradigm of Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) (Partington, Morley, & Haarman, 2004) since it fits between the quantitative and qualitative poles, and attempts to combine the advantages of each to create more powerful analyses of linguistic data.

This paper contributes to the growing body of studies that use the methodological framework of Corpus Linguistics to uncover discourses. Since the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011, many scholars have conducted several studies about this era from different points of view—politically, economically, socially, and linguistically (see Abu Hatab, 2013; Al-Ali, 2012; Al-Anani, 2012; Jones, 2012; Michel, 2013; Springborg, 2011). Some of these studies discussed the mass media coverage of the Arab Spring (see Al Nahed, 2015; Bardici, 2012; Baum & Zhukov, 2015; Cottle, 2011; Dağtaş, 2013; Ledwell, 2012; Seeberg & Shteivi, 2014; Seo, 2013). Other studies used some traditional discourse analysis frameworks to interpret some different aspects of this era (see Al-Abed,

Al-Haq, & Hussein, 2012; Maalej, 2012; Skulte-Ouaiss & Baroudi, 2015; Teti, 2012). However, most of these studies used a relatively small amount of data, and paid little or no attention to the newspaper coverage of different regions. Therefore, one of the research gaps that this study fills is working on a large amount of data to examine the news foci of two English newspapers' coverage of events and news about the regime of Qaddafi. This study further contributes to having a better understanding of how the policies and ideologies of where a newspaper is located may affect how certain events are represented.

## 2. Theoretical Background

Corpus linguistics is "the study of language based on examples of "real life" language use" (McEnery & Wilson, 2001, p. 1). Corpus linguistics has largely been accepted as an important way of analysing language in different fields such as lexicography (Hanks, 2012), syntax (Roland, Dick, & Elman, 2007), discourse analysis (Baker, 2006), cognitive linguistics (Gries & Stefanowitsch, 2007), and applied linguistics (Hunston, 2002). Hardt-Mautner (1995) investigates the computer's ability to uncover discourses, and recommends that qualitative and quantitative techniques need to be combined, not play off against each other. Similarly, McEnery & Wilson (2001) argue that combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches offers two main advantages; namely it makes the qualitative analysis more precise, and the quantitative results more reliable and generalizable. Corpus linguistics has a variety of techniques, and it is the choice of researchers to select the most appropriate techniques that help them carry out their research properly.

Frequency analysis, which is quantitative in nature, can contribute to discourse analysis that normally follows a qualitative method of analysis. This study shows how the quantitative analysis which recognizes patterns of language is used to show whether the phenomenon is common or usual, and how numbers cannot tell everything about the language, and must be tied with qualitative analysis to provide functional interpretations of language patterns (Baker, 2006). Frequency analysis allows researchers to count how many times the element occurs in the corpus. It also enables researchers to recognize the most frequent words in a particular corpus, and then compare and contrast them with other frequent words in other corpora. Frequency can reveal some facts about discourse and attitudes, and can be an indicator of markedness which is a way to understand something based on its relation with other things, sometimes by its opposite (a binary distinction) (Baker, 2010). For example, examining the frequencies of words like *natural* and *unnatural* in the British National Corpus (BNC) revealed that people prefer the former over the latter; where *natural* was mentioned 14,068, while *unnatural* was mentioned only 463 (Baker, 2010). Analysing frequencies may also provide researchers with the focus of the corpus. For example, Haider (2016) employed a 19.5-million word corpus of newspaper articles, and used the corpus linguistic technique of frequency to examine the main discussed themes in *Asharq Al-Awsat* (a pan-Arab newspaper) and *Al-Khaleej* (a UAE national newspaper) in a time span of 5 years. The findings showed that the two newspapers had different themes based on their agendas and policies; however, at the times of war and conflict, they tend to have a similar focus. Examining the most frequent words in their context may suggest some other aspects to be studied closely, such as the authors' political stance, and the reasons that motivated them to select particular words and repeat them over their texts (Baker, 2006). Institutions or people can express their political stances or attitudes toward a specific topic if they keep using some words rather than others repetitively and consistently, given the fact that the meaning of words is dynamic and can be changed or expanded (Breheny, 2003). Frequency is important for discourse analysis because language is not a random affair, and people have the choice to select which words to use and which words to neglect or not use. Their choices, therefore, may reveal something about the ideology, attitudes and intention of text producers.

## 3. Corpus Collection

The two selected newspapers in this study are *The NYT* and *The Guardian*. What distinguishes them from their rivals is their high coverage of international issues. For example, Kautsky & Widholm (2008) mentions that 78% of the *Guardian's* online readers are from outside Britain. In the same vein, the *NYT* is a "leading newspaper with regard to the coverage of international news and views, drawing readers from every state and around the world" (Izadi & Saghaye-Biria, 2007, p. 148).

According to industry analyst ComScore (ComScore Data Mine, 2012), *Mail Online*, *New York Times* and *The Guardian* ranked first, second, and third respectively as the most read online newspapers. The *Guardian* has passed the *NYT* in 2014, and became the world's second most popular English-language newspaper website, according to comScore (The Guardian, 2014). *Mail Online* which is the website of the Daily Mail was excluded because it is a tabloid newspaper not a broadsheet. This research is limited to broadsheet newspapers because tabloids sensationalise news using images and headlines to dominate the page (Sparks, 2000; Uribe & Gunter, 2004). In addition, this study depends on a huge amount of data and a large body of text, and broadsheets tend

to have longer and more detailed articles than tabloid (Douglas, 2009).

The corpus used in this study is originally built to investigate the representation of the former Libyan regime of Qaddafi before and after the 2011 Libyan uprisings. Libya is selected as a focus of this study because its leader, Qaddafi, ruled the country for almost four decades that resulted in UN sanctions and Libya's status as a pariah state. Libya is different because it is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, but still its internal situation is poor. Libya and Qaddafi are indeterminate objects in both Arab and global ideologies; Qaddafi is a self-produced object, and the country is both ideal and anomalous in Arab discourse, and this makes them fruitful topics for further investigation.

The query terms chosen to compile the corpus are *Libya\**, *Qaddafi*, and some Libyan cities, namely *Benghazi*, *Tripoli*, and *Sirt*. The compiled articles were then divided into three periods, namely: before, during, and after the uprisings. Period 1 (before the uprisings) spans from January 2009 to December 2010. Period 2 (during the uprisings and the immediate aftermath of the event) is from January 2011 to December 2011. Period 3 (after the uprisings) covers events from January 2012 to December 2013. Looking for the query terms in Factiva between (1/1/2009) and (31/12/2013) in *The NYT* and *The Guardian* resulted in 8793 articles with a total word count of 7345100 (Table 1).

Table 1. The size of the compiled corpus

The NYT						
Period	Year	Number of Articles	Duplicates	Total	Word count	Total of periods
Before	2009	350	92	258	202425	357445
	2010	203	37	166	155020	
During	2011	2825	500	2325	2174932	2174932
After	2012	1434	358	1076	1085866	1921381
	2013	1123	333	790	835515	
Total	5 years	5935	1320	4615	4453758	4453758
The Guardian						
Before	2009	535	206	329	210626	400482
	2010	386	119	267	189856	
During	2011	3371	964	2407	1596768	1596768
After	2012	1105	387	718	536403	894092
	2013	722	265	457	357689	
Total	5 years	6119	1941	4178	2891342	2891342
Overall Total	5 years	12054	3261	8793	7345100	7345100

#### 4. Data Analysis

This study has two research questions:

- Are there any constant/frequent discourses with *Qaddafi* in *The Guardian* and *The NYT* from 2009 to 2013?
- What are the most frequent topics/themes discussed in news articles relating to *Libya* and *Qaddafi* in *The Guardian* and *The NYT* in the pre-, during, and post- uprisings periods?

Using the wordlist tool of the corpus analysis software Word Smith 6 (Scott, 2012), I generated frequency lists for the three time periods in the two investigated newspapers. In the process, the most frequent **lexical** 25 words were considered as shown in tables 2 (the *Guardian*) and 3 (the *NYT*).

Table 2. The top 25 lexical words in the Guardian

2009/2010			The Guardian 2011			2012/2013		
Word	R. Freq.	N. Freq.	Word	Freq.	N. Freq.	Word	Freq.	N. Freq.
<b>SAID</b>	1,430	3,571	<b>QADDAFI</b>	6,953	4,354	<b>SAID</b>	3,744	4187.489
MEGRAHI	955	2,385	<b>SAID</b>	6,888	4,314	<b>LIBYA</b>	1,937	2166.444
<b>LIBYA</b>	932	2,327	<b>LIBYA</b>	5,731	3,589	SYRIA	1,752	1959.53
<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	767	1,915	<b>PEOPLE</b>	3,704	2,320	<b>PEOPLE</b>	1,639	1833.145
<b>WORLD</b>	630	1,573	LIBYAN	2,910	1,822	<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	1,585	1772.748
<b>PEOPLE</b>	629	1,571	<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	2,761	1,729	<b>NEW</b>	1,264	1413.725
<b>BRITISH</b>	585	1,461	REGIME	2,331	1,460	<b>WAR</b>	1,255	1403.659
<b>NEW</b>	583	1,456	FORCES	2,284	1,430	<b>WORLD</b>	1,181	1320.893
LIBYAN	575	1,436	MILITARY	2,274	1,424	MILITARY	1,165	1302.998
<b>QADDAFI</b>	565	1,411	<b>NEW</b>	2,176	1,363	SECURITY	1,138	1272.8
RELEASE	530	1,323	TRIPOLI	2,105	1,318	SYRIAN	1,044	1167.665
<b>YEARS</b>	529	1,321	<b>WORLD</b>	2,079	1,302	<b>QADDAFI</b>	1,024	1145.296
SCOTTISH	499	1,246	<b>WAR</b>	2,017	1,263	REGIME	1,019	1139.704
<b>TIME</b>	497	1,241	<b>COUNTRY</b>	1,982	1,241	<b>TIME</b>	1,009	1128.519
UK	465	1,161	NATO	1,918	1,201	<b>COUNTRY</b>	995	1112.861
BRITAIN	410	1,024	ARAB	1,780	1,115	<b>YEARS</b>	992	1109.506
INTERNATIONAL	384	959	<b>TIME</b>	1,741	1,090	YEAR	947	1059.175
<b>FOREIGN</b>	382	954	<b>FOREIGN</b>	1,737	1,088	<b>FOREIGN</b>	946	1058.057
MINISTER	377	941	<b>BRITISH</b>	1,693	1,060	<b>BRITISH</b>	937	1047.991
<b>WAR</b>	364	909	<b>LIKE</b>	1,664	1,042	INTERNATIONAL	917	1025.622
DECISION	353	881	UK	1,648	1,032	OBAMA	903	1009.963
<b>COUNTRY</b>	352	879	REBELS	1,611	1,009	PRESIDENT	894	999.8971
<b>LIKE</b>	349	871	BRITAIN	1,580	989	ARAB	830	928.3161
POUNDS	341	851	YESTERDAY	1,565	980	ASSAD	820	917.1316
LOCKERBIE	340	849	<b>YEARS</b>	1,535	961	<b>LIKE</b>	806	901.4732

Table 3. The top 25 lexical words in the NYT

2009/2010			The NYT 2011			2012/2013		
Word	R. Freq.	N. Freq.	Word	R. Freq.	N. Freq.	Word	R. Freq.	N. Freq.
<b>SAID</b>	2,371	6,633	<b>SAID</b>	17,051	7,840	<b>MR</b>	14,272	7427.990596
<b>MR</b>	1,981	5,542	<b>MR</b>	10,989	5,053	<b>SAID</b>	13,396	6972.068528
<b>NEW</b>	909	2,543	<b>LIBYA</b>	7,719	3,549	OBAMA	4,835	2516.41918
<b>UNITED</b>	862	2,412	QADDAFI	6,681	3,072	<b>PRESIDENT</b>	4,375	2277.008048
<b>LIBYA</b>	825	2,308	<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	5,660	2,602	<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	4,193	2182.284513
<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	746	2,087	<b>PEOPLE</b>	4,518	2,077	SYRIA	4,091	2129.197697
<b>STATES</b>	684	1,914	<b>UNITED</b>	4,360	2,005	<b>UNITED</b>	4,039	2102.13383
<b>PRESIDENT</b>	541	1,514	<b>NEW</b>	4,148	1,907	<b>LIBYA</b>	3,634	1891.347942
AMERICAN	538	1,505	COLONEL	3,910	1,798	<b>NEW</b>	3,449	1795.06303
<b>PEOPLE</b>	525	1,469	LIBYAN	3,892	1,789	<b>STATES</b>	3,335	1735.730706
NUCLEAR	515	1,441	MILITARY	3,824	1,758	<b>PEOPLE</b>	3,151	1639.966253
<b>WORLD</b>	510	1,427	<b>PRESIDENT</b>	3,701	1,702	SECURITY	3,107	1617.066058
<b>LIKE</b>	508	1,421	<b>STATES</b>	3,407	1,566	MILITARY	3,001	1561.897406
<b>YEARS</b>	499	1,396	FORCES	3,400	1,563	AMERICAN	2,980	1550.967767
<b>OFFICIALS</b>	471	1,318	REBELS	3,205	1,474	<b>LIKE</b>	2,522	1312.597554
OIL	450	1,259	OBAMA	3,160	1,453	STATE	2,446	1273.042671
LIBYAN	422	1,181	<b>COUNTRY</b>	3,143	1,445	<b>OFFICIALS</b>	2,436	1267.838081
Megrahi	415	1,161	<b>LIKE</b>	2,840	1,306	<b>WORLD</b>	2,306	1200.178413
OBAMA	406	1,136	<b>WORLD</b>	2,724	1,252	<b>COUNTRY</b>	2,303	1198.617036
<b>COUNTRY</b>	405	1,133	OIL	2,704	1,243	<b>WAR</b>	2,264	1178.319136
ISRAEL	399	1,116	NATO	2,673	1,229	POLITICAL	2,262	1177.278218
INTERNATIONAL	391	1,094	<b>OFFICIALS</b>	2,524	1,160	SYRIAN	2,262	1177.278218
STATE	388	1,085	SECURITY	2,522	1,160	ATTACK	2,220	1155.418941
COUNTRIES	386	1,080	ARAB	2,506	1,152	<b>TIME</b>	2,176	1132.518746
IRAN	373	1,044	TRIPOLI	2,419	1,112	FOREIGN	1,944	1011.772262

Tables 2 and 3 show the most frequent words in the two newspapers based on the investigated period. The three columns in each period include information about the word, its raw frequency (how many times it occurs in the corpus), and its normalized frequency (its occurrences per million words). The words that appear in the three time periods are bolded in these tables.

Section 4.1 examines the words that occurred in the three time periods to check if *Qaddafi* was represented similarly/differently across the three time periods. Section 4.2 investigates the words that occurred uniquely in (a) particular period(s) rather than others to uncover the different news foci in the two newspapers in the three periods.

#### 4.1 The Similarities in the Frequent Lexical Words in the Three Periods

Some words, bolded in tables (2 and 3), occurred in the three time periods; therefore, a more detailed investigation is needed to see why these words were among the most frequent in all periods. This is also to check whether there are any constant/frequent discourses with Libya and Qaddafi across the three time periods or not. Going through the common words, it can be observed that *Libya* and *Qaddafi* were two of the query terms I used to compile the corpus, which made them to be frequent in the whole corpus. Some of the common words refer to the names of the countries where the newspapers are located and published (*British* in the *Guardian*, and *United States* in the *NYT*), their style (*Mr.* in the *NYT*), and journalism related words (*said* in the two newspapers). The frequent use of the word *British* in the *Guardian* suggests the newspaper's interests in showing how some issues might affect how Britain deals with the national and international (critical) matters. The words *united*, *government*, *states*, *American*, and *officials* were predominantly used in the *NYT* showing how the US officials see and react to different events all over the world.

For the word/phrase to appear in the three investigated periods does not necessarily indicate that it was used similarly in these periods. The word **government** in the *Guardian* was usually used in the context of the United Kingdom as the frequent clusters *British government*, and *Labour governments* show. Also, it co-occurred with various nationalities such as Scotland, Libya, the U.S, Israel, China, Egypt, France, and Germany in period one; Libya, Syria, and Scotland in period two, and Libya, Syria, the U.S, Algeria, and Scotland in period three as shown in the cluster analysis in table 4.

Table 4. Cluster analysis for the word *government* in the *Guardian*

The Guardian ( <i>Government</i> )		
2009/2010	2011	2012/2013
Scottish government	Libyan government	British government
British government	British government	Libyan government
Libyan government	interim government	Syrian government
UK government	UK government	UK government
US government	Syrian government	new government
Israeli government	transitional government	US government
American government	Qaddafi's government	coalition government
Chinese government	coalition government	transitional government
Egyptian government	US government	Algerian government
French government	rebel government	unity government
German government	Scottish government	Scottish government

The *Scottish government*, for example, was repeated in the three time periods mainly in the context of Megrahi, the prime suspect in the 1988 Lockerbie bombing to discuss the decision of his release, sending him back to Libya, and his death there. Some clusters such as the *interim government*, *transitional government*, *coalition government*, and *rebel government* began to appear on the surface in 2011 after the outbreak of the uprisings in the Arab region, and this suggests that a change in the status quo occurred somewhere. In the third period, similar clusters to the ones observed in period 2 were found, in addition to some other clusters that suggest the establishment of *new/unity* governments. The *Syrian government* ranked 3rd as most of the main Arab protests have overthrown the presidents by that time except in Syria where civil war is still going on.

The word *Mr* was mentioned frequently in the *NYT* as the newspaper uses it as a title term for male characters regardless their positions as table 5 shows.

Table 5. Cluster analysis for the word *Mr.* in the NYT

The NYT ( <i>Mr.</i> )					
F.	2009/2010	F.	2011	F.	2012/2013
324	Mr. Megrahi	1441	Mr. Obama	2495	Mr. Obama
127	Mr. Obama	369	Mr. Assad	911	Mr. Assad
75	Mr. Khan	296	Mr. Gates	823	Mr. Romney
40	Mr. Brown	287	Mr. Sarkozy	328	Mr. Kerry
34	Mr. Burroughs	259	Mr. Mubarak	255	Mr. Putin
34	Mr. Macaskill	234	Mr. Qaddafi	232	Mr. Stevens
33	Mr. Netanyahu	228	Mr. Saleh	221	Mr. Mandela
29	Mr. Bashir	216	Mr. Putin	197	Mr. Petraeus
27	Mr. Assayas	166	Mr. Cameron	172	Mr. Hagel
27	Mr. Qaddafi	155	Mr. Erdogan	172	Mr. Ryan
24	Mr. Damache	136	Mr. Cain	169	Mr. Hollande
22	Mr. Taylor	112	Mr. Panetta	159	Mr. Sarkozy
21	Mr. Berlusconi	95	Mr. Ibrahim	147	Mr. Morsi
21	Mr. Chavez	95	Mr. Medvedev	135	Mr. Cameron

Based on the corpus analysis, it was rare in the *NYT* to observe names of people without preceding them with titles such as *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *president*, *colonel*, *prime minister* and others. Table 5 contains the names of some people who were considered prominent in the investigated period (2009-2013) in the Libyan-US context. Megrahi, the prime suspect in the Lockerbie bombing was the most frequent person in period 1. Some other names which are related to the same case were also frequently mentioned such as *Brown*, Britain's former PM, and *MacAskill*, Scotland's Justice Secretary. In 2011, the names of some Arab presidents whose countries were mainly involved in the protests were mentioned, such as *Assad*, *Mubarak*, *Qaddafi*, and *Saleh*. *Qaddafi* ranked 6th in period 2 though he was one of the query terms because he was referred to, in the majority of cases, as Colonel Qaddafi. In period 3, *Obama* and his republican rival in the US presidential election, *Romeny*, were mentioned frequently. The president *Assad* of Syria, and *Mohammed Morsi*, the first elected president in Egypt after the 2011 uprisings, were the most frequent Arabs in period 3.

In order to get a general idea about the representation of *Qaddafi* in the two newspapers, and check whether there are any constant discourses with him in the three periods, I carried out a cluster analysis for the common word *Qaddafi* in the two newspapers as table 6 shows. The cluster size is selected to be between 2 and 5 words, and the minimum frequency is set as 5.

Table 6. Cluster analysis for *Qaddafi* in the two newspapers

Cluster Analysis for <i>Qaddafi</i>		
Period 1	Period 2	Period 3
	<b>The Guardian</b>	
Colonel Qaddafi	Qaddafi's Forces	Qaddafi Regime
Leader Muammar Qaddafi	Qaddafi Regime	Colonel Qaddafi
Libyan Leader Qaddafi	Colonel Qaddafi	Saif Al Islam Qaddafi
Qaddafi's son	Pro Qaddafi	Pro Qaddafi
Qaddafi Stadium	Qaddafi Forces	Qaddafi Era
	<b>The NYT</b>	
Colonel Qaddafi	Colonel Qaddafi	Colonel Qaddafi
Qaddafi The Libyan Leader	Qaddafi Forces	Qaddafi Government
Seif Al Islam El Qaddafi	Qaddafi Government	Uprising Against Colonel Qaddafi
Qaddafi Said	Qaddafi's Forces	Qaddafi Loyalists
Qaddafi's Son	Pro Qaddafi	Qaddafi Era
Qaddafi would	Anti Qaddafi	Fall of Col Qaddafi

The cluster analysis of *Qaddafi* in the two newspapers (table 6) shows that the discourse of war began to appear in period 2 (2011) as the words *forces*, *pro-* and *anti-* suggest. Such discourse is not observed in period 1 (2009/2010) where *Qaddafi* seems to be reported and represented as any other world leader. Unlike period 1, the word *regime* which has negative discourse prosody being suggestive of illegitimate governments began to appear in period 2, and so negative representation of Qaddafi is expected. In period 3 (2012/2013), both war and

post-war discourses are observed as some words like *era*, and *fall* suggest. The clusters *Qaddafi's era*, *Qaddafi loyalists*, and *Saif Qaddafi* are mentioned in this period perhaps to discuss their fate in the new Libyan state, and highlight their role in the atrocities that the toppled regime committed.

The cluster analysis of *Qaddafi* in the two newspapers showed that the cluster of *Qaddafi regime* was not found in period 1, and only began to appear in period 2. To check with which countries the word *regime* was used in the investigated corpus, I carried out a cluster analysis with a minimum frequency of 5 for *regime* in the two newspapers (table 7). I only considered the clusters that contain names of countries or people.

Table 7. Cluster analysis for *regime* in the two newspapers

Cluster Analysis for <i>regime</i>					
Period 1		Period 2		Period 3	
The Guardian					
The Libyan Regime	6	Qaddafi Regime	292	Assad Regime	104
		Qaddafi's Regime	101	Syrian Regime	71
		Libyan Regime	90	Qaddafi Regime	60
		Assad Regime	48	Assad's Regime	31
		Syrian Regime	45	Qaddafi's Regime	26
The NYT					
		Qaddafi Regime	113	Assad Regime	101
		Assad Regime	35	Syrian Regime	58
		Syrian Regime	34	Qaddafi Regime	20
		Libyan Regime	25	Assad's Regime	15
		Qaddafi's Regime	24	The Iranian Regime	14

Table 7 shows that no clusters appeared in the *NYT*'s list in period 1, while the *Libyan regime* was mentioned only 6 times in the *Guardian*. However, some clusters related to Libya and Syria, and Qaddafi and Assad began to appear in period 2, and continued to appear in period 3. This suggests that different discourses are employed in periods 2 and 3 in contrast with period 1. The clusters in period 3 also suggest that the focus moved from Libya towards Syria due to the ongoing civil war there.

Based on the cluster analysis above for the words *Qaddafi* and *regime*, there seems to be a shift in the representation of Qaddafi after the outbreak of the Arab uprisings.

#### 4.2 The Differences in the Frequent Lexical Words in the Three Periods (Unique words)

In order to uncover the different news foci in the *Guardian* and the *NYT* in the three time periods, I examined the most frequent unique words, i.e., the words that occurred in (a) particular period(s) other than others as shown in table 8.

Table 8. Unique words in the three periods in the *NYT* and the *Guardian*

Newspaper	Period	Unique words in the Guardian and the NYT
The Guardian	1 2009/2010	Megrahi, Libyan, release, Scottish, UK, Britain, international, minister, decision, pounds, Lockerbie
The NYT		American, nuclear, world, years, oil, Libyan, Megrahi, Obama, Israel, international, State, countries, Iran
The Guardian	2 2011	Libyan, regime, forces, military, Tripoli, NATO, Arab, UK, rebels, Britain, yesterday
The NYT		Qaddafi, colonel, Libyan, military, forces, rebels, Obama, world, oil, NATO, security, Arab, Tripoli
The Guardian	3 2012/2013	Regime, Syria, military, security, Syrian, year, international, Obama, president, Arab, Assad
The NYT		Attack, Obama, Syria, security, military, American, like, state, world, war, political, Syrian, time, foreign

##### 4.2.1 Period 1 (2009-2010)

In period one (2009/2010), almost all of the unique words in the *Guardian* were used in the context of the 1988 Lockerbie plane bombing as the words *Megrahi*, *Libyan*, *release*, *Scottish*, *minister*, *decision*, and *Lockerbie* show. This is mainly because the only person convicted in the bombing, the Libyan Abdelbaset Ali al-Megrahi was freed

on compassionate grounds and returned to Libya in 2009. In the *Guardian*, the name *Megrahi* was the second most frequent lexical word in period one and came after the reporting verb *said*, which is the most frequent content word in the whole corpus. In the *NYT*, if we exclude the words that are related to the country where the newspaper is located such as *American*, *Obama*, and *state*, the name of *Megrahi*, and some general words such as *world*, *years*, *international*, and *countries*, the remaining four words summarize the focus of the *NYT* in this period namely, *Israel*, one of the most important allies of the United States in the Middle East, *Iran* that has strained relations with the U.S., *oil* and *nuclear*; two core issues in the US politics.

Although *Libya* and *Qaddafi* were involved in different events in this period such as Libya's dispute with Switzerland over the arrests of one of Qaddafi's sons, Qaddafi's election as a chairman of the African Union, his visit to Italy, buying weapons from Russia, and signing agreement with the European Union to slow illegal migration, in the *Guardian*, the majority of the unique words in this period were used in the co-text of the Lockerbie plane bombing, while the *NYT* focused on Libya's *oil* and *nuclear* program and its relation with other countries, mainly *Israel* and *Iran*. Accordingly, the focus of both newspapers was a reflection of the interests of the countries where they are published, and was influenced by some other factors related to newsworthiness criteria that emphasize conflict and proximity.

The *Guardian*, being a national British newspaper, tends to give some focus to British news stories in addition to its coverage of international events, and so in the Libyan context, Megrahi's release was a "critical" event to be covered since it is considered as one of the worst terrorist attacks in Britain's history. In terms of newsworthiness, Phillips (2015) argues that "a disaster at home will attract more detailed and longer coverage than a bigger one far away" (p. 19). In the same vein, Bednarek & Caple (2012, p. 42) also note that "what is newsworthy usually concerns the country, region or city in which the news is published". In the *Guardian*, the event was categorized as "national" in the headlines of the articles that discuss the decision of Megrahi's release as concordance 1 shows.

National: Megrahi release: A question of compassion? How did Libya try to secure	August 2009.txt
National: Megrahi release: Business links: Libya pours millions into City	August 2009.txt
National: Megrahi release: Lockerbie bomber decision leaves SNP facing censure	August 2009.txt
National: Megrahi release: Downing Street: Brown accused of cowardice and	August 2009.txt
National: Megrahi release: Trade: British firms hope release will boost business	August 2009.txt
National: Megrahi release: Whitehall reaction: Miliband rejects claims of	August 2009.txt
National: Megrahi release: Analysis: Confusion as old and new Libya collide Libya's	August 2009.txt
National: Megrahi release: Bomber's welcome sparks warning from UK and US:	August 2009.txt
National: Megrahi puts Lockerbie appeal papers on website The man convicted of	September 200
National: Megrahi case: Brown finally admits support for Lockerbie bomber release	September 200
National: Megrahi case: Exclusive interview: Britain has nothing to hide, says	September 200
National: The new Libya: Ideology: Country's jihadis reject violence as leader bids	September 200
National: Reports of Megrahi's death in Tripoli denied Abdelbaset al-Megrahi, the	October 2009.b
National: Megrahi release: Profile: Kenny MacAskill: A singleminded reformer with	August 2009.txt
National: Megrahi case: Anglo-American relations: Rise of the new powers puts	September 200
National: Megrahi case: Political briefing: Brown's costly lack of courage Whatever	September 200

Concordance 1. Categorizing the news about *Megrahi* as "National" in the *Guardian*

In spite of describing the decision of releasing Megrahi as Scottish in the *Guardian*, Britain was involved and frequently mentioned in this co-text. Wilkinson (2011) argues that although the decision of the release was taken on compassionate grounds, it appears to be extraordinary due to the seriousness of the terrorist crime involved pointing out that the UK government was able to exercise a veto over the release because of the UK major foreign policy and its wider security implications. However, the whole matter seems to be linked with oil, and how some institutions and elites in the West change their principles to win oil contracts; "ultimately, Megrahi's release is such an affront to common sense that one can be forgiven for thinking that the Scots released him for the same reason many believe the Americans invaded Iraq: oil" (Hall, 2010, p. 268). In the *Guardian*, those who agree and disagree with the decision of the release were reported, providing balance in the story by introducing the opposing voices. For example, in the *Guardian*'s coverage of the release, the newspaper tended to cover the event by focusing not only on the British point of view, but also highlighting the American, Scottish and even Libyan reaction on the decision of the release. However, the Libyan points of view were mentioned less than the other voices. Cushion (2012) argues that in the newsrooms of the UK, there is a built-in requirement to provide



space for secondary voices. This means that there will be a space for oppositional reading although the elite source will be given more space and given the final words.

The unique words in the *NYT* also reflected the type of news covered and preferred by the newspaper in the Libyan co-text; for example *Israel* was one of the most frequent words in this period because it is seen as the US most reliable strategic partner in the Middle East, and at the time of conflicts, America sides always with Israel (El-Bendary, 2011) providing it with massive and unconditional financial, diplomatic, military and intelligence support. In addition, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is considered to be newsworthy, and so attracts the media and the public. Some main themes were mentioned in this period in the *NYT*, namely oil and nuclear weapons. Huliaras (2006) referred to some factors that influence the U.S. policy toward other countries especially the oil-rich ones; mainly the war on terror, and oil interests. Regarding the other discussed theme in the *NYT* in this period, the newspaper reflected the vital role of nuclear weapons in the U.S. national security policy and how they sometimes determine its relations with other countries (Buchan, 2002). Accordingly, the focus of the *NYT* in this period was, to a great extent, in harmony with the interests of the United States and its foreign policy. In addition, the two discussed topics, i.e., oil and nuclear weapons are considered to be newsworthy especially when accompanied with some other factors which include socio-economic factors, physical and cultural proximity to home (the U.S. in this case), and others.

#### 4.2.2 Period 2 (2011)

**Period 2** is a key phase in this study since the Libyan uprisings that led to the Libyan civil war happened in it. In this section, I examine whether the focus of the two newspapers are affected by the pressure of the international community especially after Qaddafi's "violence" in facing the uprisings and his decision to fight his own people. As shown in table 8, and unlike period 1, there was more coverage of the situation in Libya, perhaps because news organizations generally favor novel, large-scale developments that represent a change from the status quo. Moreover, in Western democracies "news stories containing a conflict, however small, are far more likely to make it onto the pages than those that are simply reports of the status quo" (Phillips, 2015, p. 18).

Some of the unique words mentioned in table 8 occurred in the two newspapers, namely *NATO*, *forces*, *military*, and *rebels*. Putting the foreign news (civil war in Libya in this case) into a domestic context to explain to readers their importance and consequences, both newspapers focused on the role of the international coalition in saving the lives of the "innocent" civilians in some of the Arab Spring countries. To further examine this role, I analysed a unique word that occurred in the *Guardian*'s and the *NYT*'s lists in this period, namely *NATO*. Before carrying out a corpus analysis for this word, I investigated the main purposes/motives of the NATO intervention in Libya. The legitimacy of its intervention, according to R2P doctrine (Responsibility to Protect, 2005), is humanitarian, and derived from the international community's right intention to stop or prevent human suffering. Evans (2008, p. 143) points out that "mixed motives, in international relations as everywhere else, are a fact of life". Pattison (2011) argues that the humanitarian motives might be switched to regime change as the intervention goes on. In the Libyan case, the main motive is said to be Libya's major role in global oil markets. For example, Castro (2011) mentions that the "Cuban President Fidel Castro had pointed at the "cynicism" of the West in using the cover of a humanitarian intervention to actually wage a war to gain control of Libyan resources, particularly oil" (p. 309).

To uncover how *NATO* was referred to in both newspapers, I carried out a collocation analysis, and categorised its statistically strongest 50 collocates (with highest dice score; an effect size statistic which is a measure of strength of association between two words) into three thematic groups as shown in table 9.

Table 9. Thematic categories of the collocates of *NATO* in the *Guardian* and the *NYT*

Thematic Category	Collocates of <i>NATO</i> in the two newspapers	
	The <i>Guardian</i>	The <i>NYT</i>
<b>Military actions</b>	strikes, campaign, bombing, operations, operation, commanders, planes, warplanes, air, jets, strategy, targets, strike, hit, airstrikes, action, aircraft, sorties, struck, no-fly, attacks, intervention	targets, airstrike, general, operations, planes, strikes, aircraft, bombed, defense, backed, bombing, airstrikes, warplanes, strike, struck, attacks, attack, troops, intervention, mission
<b>Countries and Officials and their role</b>	Fogh, Anders, Rasmussen, Brussels, France, official, countries, alliance, allies, secretary, Italy	Fogh, Anders, Rasmussen, Brussels, allies, alliance, headquarters, Europe, secretary, partners, diplomat, Afghanistan, Italy, Britain, European, Naples
<b>Consequences and Results</b>	role, support, protect, cover	civilians, destroyed, conflict, protect, support

As can be observed in table 9, the thematic categories of the *NATO*'s collocates in both the *NYT* and the *Guardian* are identical; however, in some cases the collocates themselves are different, and the concentration on one particular category rather than another is also observed. For example, when going through the concordance lines, I found that the concentration in the *NYT* was on Obama and the United States rather than Britain and France as in the *Guardian*.

**Military Actions.** In the *Guardian*, I investigated the statistically strongest collocate in this group *strikes*, and found that the British enthusiasm and justifications for *NATO*'s intervention in Libya were highlighted. Britain, for example, emphasized that the bombing *strikes* would not end in Libya until Qaddafi stops "slaughtering" his own people. Britain and France are frequently referred to as the countries that are leading the military actions against Qaddafi. In the *Guardian*, *NATO*'s *strikes* are said in almost all cases to target Qaddafi's troops and military sites. *NATO* was also said to help the rebels to advance in some regions by backing them by powerful air *strikes*.

In the *NYT*, I also investigated the statistically strongest collocate *targets*, and found that the focus was on the nature of the *NATO*'s *targets* being against the systematic attacks on the Libyan civilians by the regime of Qaddafi. *NATO*'s role in supporting the rebels was also highlighted in several incidents; for example, its airstrikes cleared the lands, and gave the rebels the opportunities to advance. Sometimes, *NATO*'s "unintentional" killing of civilians is justified by saying that Qaddafi's forces mixed with the civilians to protect themselves from the air attacks. Accordingly, in both newspapers, the military action of the *NATO* is said to be against the Qaddafi forces that kill the Libyan civilians (negative out-group description), and its aim is to protect the Libyan civilians (positive in-group description).

**Officials and Countries.** Anders Fogh Rasmussen was the most quoted person in the co-text of *NATO* because he was, at that time, the Secretary General of *NATO*. Therefore, most of the official news about the raids on Libya was revealed by him. The collocate *Brussels* is mentioned since it is the place where *NATO*'s headquarters are. In the *Guardian*, two countries were saliently mentioned in the co-text of *NATO*, namely *Italy* and *France*. In the *NYT*'s coverage, more focus was given to Obama and Washington, and so the White House rather than Brussels was portrayed as the place where decisions are taken. In the same vein, the *NYT* put more focus on the US rather than the European role in supporting the military operations in Libya. It is also reported that the U.S., at the beginning, decided to lead from behind to force the European countries to "take responsibility for protecting their own back yard". This, according to some voices reported in the newspaper, implies that the U.S. is no longer prepared to "offer unconditional defence guarantees" to the European countries if they are not prepared to do more themselves. As a consequence, the European countries took the leading role in Libya. However, after two months, they ran critically low on munitions, and the U.S. intervened and sold the alliance ordnance saving *NATO* from embarrassment. This implies that the European countries lack a number of essential military capabilities and should spend more wisely on defence. Based on this, it appears that the *NYT*, by showing the "weakness" of the leading European countries, tended to portray the U.S. as the strongest and most dominant country in the world, and as the one that steps in not only to defend the rights of the third world countries, but also to save the reputation of some other very strong countries. Accordingly, the story of the *NATO* intervention in Libya becomes a case of coverage that focuses on the US perspective and military interests. Covering the story this way also contributes to sustaining the American people's confidence in their armed forces and political system (Fialka, 1992).

**Consequences and Results.** When investigating how the verb *protect* was used as a collocate with *NATO* in this category, I found that it is mainly used in the *Guardian* in two contexts. First, to emphasize the apparent reason behind the West intervention in Libya that is "to *protect* the Libyan civilians" (frequent), and second reporting some Libyan officials who claimed that the excuse of *NATO*'s intervention to *protect* the civilians is fake as scores of Libyan civilians died since the airstrikes began, and the bombing delivered far more killing than before (not frequent). By doing so, the *Guardian* seems to achieve some core principles of journalism represented here by reporting the different voices regarding the intervention in Libya; the British officials and the international coalition (first context), and some of the Libyan officials (second context). However, although the newspaper provided some space for secondary voices (Qaddafi's loyalists in this case), more space was given to the other party that includes anti-Qaddafi groups and some Western officials. This means that there was a space for oppositional reading (pro-Qaddafi sources), but still the elite sources (pro-international coalition sources) were given more space and had the final words on the topic.

In the *NYT*, investigating how the collocate *support* was used; I first thought that it is used in the context of supporting civilians and rebels. However, it was mainly used in the *NYT* to categorize the countries based on whether they supported *NATO*'s intervention in Libya or not, and the US support for the military operations

there being praised by the international community. This suggests that the US relationship with other states is not so much a humanitarian one, and that the US news media, as found by Kim (2014), tend to classify the world countries into specific categories based on their stance towards the United States. The collocate *civilians* was used in the co-text of *NATO* in two polemic contexts (concordance 2). First, *NATO*'s apparent role in Libya to protect the Libyan civilians (lines 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, and 24), and *NATO*'s airstrikes killing civilians (lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, and 26) although the speakers in the second category are, in most cases, Libyan officials who are loyal to Qaddafi. This suggests that in the *NYT*'s coverage of the *NATO*'s intervention in Libya, some people who disagree with the *NATO* narrative of the story were reported, providing some balance in the story by introducing the opposing voices. This is according to Phillips (2015) an important way of broadening the number of voices in a story. Moreover, this contributes to having a multiplicity of points of view. At the end, when all views have been taken into account, rational people can make better judgements (Phillips, 2015).

1	Libyan cities, and doing so without inflicting casualties on civilians. A NATO official said that two member nations,
2	scenario, it was assessed these vehicles were a threat to civilians." In April, NATO admitted its planes twice hit rebel
3	made new charges that a NATO airstrike had killed civilians, including children, when it hit a palatial country
4	the strikes' main victims, and often the intended targets, are civilians, and not military, as NATO has said. But so far, the
5	global community has decided to step in to protect innocent civilians from suffering further harm. NATO is preventing
6	crusader aggressors" (that's NATO) are not protecting civilians; they are massacring them. Every day a barrage of
7	, who said the rebels still needed NATO "protection for our civilians." The Security Council resolution authorized the use
8	where the moral argument and the "responsibility to protect" civilians is clearer. NATO, like the European Union, is suffering
9	that authorized "all necessary measures" to protect Libyan civilians, the basis of NATO's support for rebel forces. But
10	said the Libyans had raised the issue of the killing of civilians by NATO air strikes since NATO began bombing in
11	, as the Libyans told it, of NATO's "barbarity" toward Libyan civilians and the West's utter lack of concern for international
12	throughout the air campaign. NATO's mandate to protect civilians who are threatened or have come under attack
13	of tardiness and indecision. "What is NATO doing?" he asked. "Civilians are dying every day. They use the excuse of
14	very active and it was more leaning toward protecting the civilians." "NATO is very slow responding to these attacks on
15	Lines of Battle Blur in Libya, NATO Warns Rebels Not to Attack Civilians WASHINGTON -- Members of the NATO alliance have
16	forces shell the rebel-held city of Misurata, killing hundreds of civilians, NATO's credibility is suffering, with critics saying it
17	are conducting airstrikes against Libyan targets that attack civilians. But NATO commanders say they are still struggling
18	burials of empty coffins in order to accuse NATO of killing civilians, gravediggers cursed at the unidentified, five-day-old
19	family is innocent." On Aug. 8, NATO hit buildings occupied by civilians again, this time in Majer, according to survivors,
20	. "Only when we had a clear shot would we take it," he said. Civilians were killed by NATO within days of the alliance's
21	have filed a civil lawsuit in Belgium accusing NATO of killing 13 civilians, including three children, by bombing a residential
22	surveillance video, he said, would prove NATO wrong. Only civilians were there, he said, and he demanded that the
23	, cited the bombing as evidence that NATO was killing civilians, not protecting them, as called for in the United
24	, apparently deviating from NATO's nominal mission to protect civilians. "I can confirm that NATO is providing intelligence
25	amounted to poor public policy. "It's crystal clear that civilians died in NATO strikes," said Fred Abrahams, a
26	and photographs — found credible accounts of dozens of civilians killed by NATO in many distinct attacks. At least 40

Concordance 2. The collocate *civilian* in the co-text of *NATO* in the *NYT*

Going through the concordance lines in the *NYT*, I found that the intervention in Libya is sometimes described as war (concordance 3). For example, some clusters/clauses such as "NATO in a third war in a Muslim nation" (line 2), "NATO coalition's war" (line 3), "NATO war" (line 4), "NATO-run multilateral war" (line 5), "NATO-led war" (lines 6 and 7), "NATO-led air war" (lines 8 and 9), and "NATO's air war in Libya" (lines 10 and 11) were found. This use apparently contradicts the UN Security Council resolutions 1970 and 1973 which were used to legitimize *NATO* to conduct the so called "humanitarian intervention to Libya" to uphold human rights by saving lives. I think that the word *war* was used in the *NYT* because the European countries and *NATO* rather than the United States played the leading role in the intervention, and so it seems that other countries' wars can be described as that more easily. In addition, given that the United States' own wars are more likely labelled as "campaigns", "interventions" or other terms (the exception being the war on terror), this word might have also been used to reflect the opposing opinions of the *NATO* intervention in Libya. Moreover, Libya, the place where the conflict occurred, is a strategic area that is full of natural resources and so many powerful countries were motivated to intervene there. The situation in Libya and the international intervention there is

similar to what happened in Iraq in 2003, where the Western power intervened allegedly to protect the region from Saddam Hussein's policies and his nuclear power. However, the ultimate goal was to take over the country's oil reserves (Klare, 2004; Lieberfeld, 2005). Therefore, it appears that the international intervention is seen in the majority of cases as a war on resources rather than humanitarian intervention to protect "innocent" civilians.

N	Concordance
1	that has led both countries and NATO into waging war against the forces of the Libyan leader, Col.
2	involved, either directly or through NATO, in a third war in a Muslim nation. "We're not in a good place,"
3	invested in the European rescue; the NATO coalition's war in Libya; and the denouement of the Arab Spring
4	on Libya had been twisted to encompass a NATO war against the Libyan government and saying they
5	costs." Libya represents the first NATO-run multilateral war where the United States has pulled back from
6	Africa and the Middle East, even as the NATO-led war in Libya drags expensively and bloodily toward
7	. That would be a disaster. Just look at the NATO-led war in Libya in which only six out of the 28 NATO
8	in Tunisia and Egypt, prompted a NATO-led air war against Libya and led to harsh crackdowns in
9	continued American participation in the NATO-led air war in Libya at its current level, even as he
10	military activities in Libya, arguing that the NATO air war -- while officially limited to protecting civilians --
11	by continuing American participation in NATO's air war in Libya without Congressional authorization, but
12	behind," if "leading" is even the right word — in a war prosecuted by the NATO alliance and driven by

Concordance 3. The collocate *war* in the co-text of *NATO* in the NYT

The analysis of the word *NATO* suggests that the coverage of both newspapers of the international intervention in Libya focuses on the US and British perspectives and interests bearing in mind that mass media plays a vital role in shaping the public's perception of the military and its missions. Such role is crucial; for example if media covered a particular military operation (the intervention in Libya in this case) positively; the public will probably react positively to it, and be convinced that the military has executed its mission in manners accepted by society (English, 2005).

Going through most of the unique words in this period, it appears that the two newspapers focused on the role of the international community in protecting the Libyan people, supporting the rebels, and reducing Qaddafi regime's systematic attacks on civilians. The *Guardian* focused on the European countries' efforts in helping the Libyan people, while the *NYT* highlighted the role of the U.S. in ending the conflict. This suggests that the two newspapers, to a great extent, reflected the policies of the countries where they are located and mainly published producing narratives of "good" wars, on the side of justice and emancipation. Lindström & Zetterlund (2012) argue that legitimising international support in Libya was linked with humanitarian threat that the Libyan citizens face, and the conflict was portrayed by media like a play in which good fights evil where Qaddafi represented the villain, some others (mainly France and the UK) played the role of good guys, while the U.S. chose a more discreet but very crucial role as a promoter.

Unlike period 1, the similarities in the unique words in this period were more than the differences not only in the unique words themselves but also on how these words were represented. Two points can be drawn from this; first, the Arab Spring represented a turning point in the focus of the two newspapers, and second, the Arab Spring not only attracted the attention of the Western countries and media, but also led to some convergence of their political points of view on how to deal with conflicts in the Middle East. For decades, the United States and some European countries had the tendency of tolerating the violations of human rights in some Arab countries (Eran, 2011). Such tolerance might be interpreted by the fact that the leaders of most Arab countries are allies of the West. However, this might not be accurate as such lenient reaction was applicable with Iran, which has strained relationship with the West after the Iranian authorities' violence against the Iranian demonstrators following the 2009 elections. Accordingly, it appears that there are some other factors that influence the West's reactions to some events, and these could be related to the countries' network of relations and interests, leading them to militarily intervene in some cases and only verbally criticize and condemn in others. Such variety of reaction "conveys a message of double and triple standards, of interests overcoming morality, and of extreme action being taken against tyrannical regimes only when there is no economic and/or political cost for such action" (Eran, 2011, p. 16). Regarding the British reaction to the Arab Spring, Leech, & Gaskarth (2015) argue

that the British government's responses to the era of uprisings in the Arab world are criticised for being inconsistent and selective and seen as evidence of unethical foreign policy-making. Similarly, Kitchen (2012) refers to the United States' cautious and contradictory approach to the Arab Spring. Both countries condemned the government violence in Libya, and rarely commented on the brutality in Bahrain, Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen. Therefore, although newsworthiness is an important factor in determining which news should be covered more, the country where that media operates may have its own preferences about the depth and emphasis of news coverage, especially when the discussed event is sensitive as in the case of conflicts and wars (Baum & Zhukov, 2015).

#### 4.2.3 Period 3 (2012-2013)

I now turn to investigate how the **post-uprisings period (2012/2013)** is represented in the two investigated newspapers. Based on the unique words of this period (table 8), it seems that there is a shift from the Libyan uprisings towards the Syrian case as some words such as *Syria*, *Syrian*, and *Assad* show. This is due to the civil war that erupted there after the president Assad of Syria rejected to step down and his governmental forces committed "cruel" deeds against the Syrian people.

In this section, the unique words **regime** in the *Guardian*, and **attack** in the *NYT* will be investigated because I found them the most relevant to the Libyan case and the study's overall objectives. I carried out a cluster analysis to examine how the unique word *regime* was used in the *Guardian* (table 10).

Table 10. The most frequent clusters with *regime* in the *Guardian*

Cluster analysis for the word " <i>regime</i> "	
The Guardian	Freq.
ASSAD REGIME	104
'S REGIME	72
SYRIAN REGIME	71
QADDAFI REGIME	60
REGIME CHANGE	54
OLD REGIME	27
FORMER REGIME	26
QADDAFI'S REGIME	26
REGIME FORCES	25
AL-ASSAD'S REGIME	16

The cluster *regime change* was used about 85 percent of the time with the Syrian regime to highlight the demands of the international community for Assad's immediate departure. Investigating how *Assad* was referred to in the co-text of *regime*, I found that he was mentioned in a variety of contexts. These include: the Russian support for him, his regime's chemical power and its effect on the region, the sectarian division in Syria, and finally the cruelty and violence of his regime against the Syrian people. The representation of the *Assad's regime* varied but negativity was dominant in the *Guardian*, followed by neutrality, with few or no positive descriptions. His regime is described as *dictatorial*, *criminal*, *brutal*, *pernicious*, and *cancerous*. Some clusters in table 10 such as *regime change*, *old regime*, and *former regime* were mainly used to question whether the loyal people for the old and former regimes will play any roles in the post-revolution period or not. That was also to highlight the risk of overthrowing the heads of the regimes and keeping their residues in critical positions, so some phrases such as former regime's *security apparatus*, *loyalists*, *elements*, and *officials* were frequent. It appears that the *Guardian*, by referring to such issues in the post-uprisings era, wants to highlight that the role of the international community that helped in the toppling of some long-standing regimes is almost done, and it is now the role of the new authorities to restore stability. Also, negatively representing the regime of Qaddafi, and highlighting the atrocities it committed throughout the past 42 years imply that the intervention in Libya that was led by Britain and overthrew Qaddafi was the right decision to be taken to save the innocent Libyan civilians. Accordingly, the focus was not only on the conflict arena at the time of the crisis, but also on the causes of how the conflict arose in the first place (oppression, suppression, and lacks of human rights). Hällgren (2012) argues that if news reporting dedicated some room for understanding the cultural context of the place where the conflict happens, some acts of the parties taking part in the war may become more understandable.

In the *NYT*, to investigate how the unique word **attack** was used, I carried out a collocation analysis, and examined the statistically strongest collocates (table 11).

Table 11. Top collocates with the word *attack* in the NYT

Collocates of “ <i>attack</i> ” in the NYT			
Collocate	With	Relation	Total
DEADLY	attack	0.012	54
TERRORIST	attack	0.011	105
KILLED	attack	0.011	114
SEPT	attack	0.011	65
CARRIED	attack	0.010	36
SEPTEMBER	attack	0.010	41
DIPLOMATIC	attack	0.010	100
MISSION	attack	0.009	115
RESPONSIBILITY	attack	0.009	21
COMPOUND	attack	0.009	44
INITIAL	attack	0.008	23
CONSULATE	attack	0.008	45
RESPONSE	attack	0.008	31
LED	attack	0.008	20
INVESTIGATION	attack	0.008	17
BENGHAZI	attack	0.008	235

Carrying out a concordance analysis for these collocates, I found that most of them are related to the Benghazi attack that took place on the evening of September 11th, 2012, and targeted the American diplomatic compound. The attack resulted in killing the US ambassador and three other officials. Although there were different bombings and crimes in the post-Qaddafi era, this particular event was privileged in the *NYT* and a detailed and long coverage was dedicated to it, probably because it is salient to the newspaper’s main targeted audience (US People). Moreover, the power of the United States and its symbolic role in the region played an important role in giving the attack such particular resonance, and so much coverage was dedicated to this story not because of its relevance to the security situation in Libya but perhaps because of its reflections and consequences on the other “Western” countries that have embassies in the Arab region in general and the Arab Spring countries in particular. The collocates *Benghazi* and *consulate* refer to the place and the targeted institution of that attack. To see how the event was described, I first examined how the verb *carried* was used, and found that there was no clear reference to the person/group that carried out the attack. However, some different opinions regarding the doers and their relationship to Qaida were covered. The collocate *terrorist* was used 105 times to describe not only the 2012 Benghazi attack, but also different events or attacks (lines 2, 5, 28, 34 in concordance 4); however the majority of the cases referred to the “brutal” (line 32), “deliberate” (line 10), “organized” (line 8), “lethal” (lines 3 and 27), and “horrible” (line 12) *terrorist* attack on the US consulate in Benghazi. The attack was also used by the Republicans in the US presidential election to accuse Obama’s administration of playing down a terrorist link to the attack to save Obama’s re-election chances (lines 23 and 24). The newspaper sometimes concentrated on the time of the attack because it happened at the same time of the New York attack on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Therefore, some expressions such as “September attack”, and “the Sept. 11 attack” were frequent (lines 19, 26, and 33). Other times, the concentration was on the place and the targeted institution as in the clusters: “the Benghazi attack”, “embassy attack”, and “consulate attack” (lines 7, 11, 15, 18, 24, and 25).

1	hijacked by extremists, not a premeditated <b>terrorist</b> attack. Within days, Republicans in Congress were
2	South Korea attributed to a North Korean <b>terrorist</b> attack. All 115 people on board were killed. Eighty
3	prospect for president in 2016. A lethal <b>terrorist</b> attack on Americans overseas -- and the accusation
4	been a spontaneous protest rather than a <b>terrorist</b> attack. Mr. Kerry, who is the chairman of the
5	of state for African affairs in a 1998 <b>terrorist</b> attack on American embassies in Kenya and
6	, "Yes, they were killed in the course of a <b>terrorist</b> attack on our embassy." The next day, asked about
7	a hawkish stand on Syria while ignoring the <b>terrorist</b> attack on the U.S. Mission in Benghazi, Libya. "Mr.
8	that it was a deliberate and organized <b>terrorist</b> attack carried out by extremists." That statement,
9	. "Four Americans lost their lives in this <b>terrorist</b> attack," Mr. Boehner said, "and Congress is going to
10	that it was a deliberate and organized <b>terrorist</b> attack carried out by extremists." By the end of
11	ground in Benghazi, Libya, during last year's <b>terrorist</b> attack on the United States diplomatic mission that
12	agencies stressing "that this horrible <b>terrorist</b> attack came with the framework of the unfair
13	and having left the nation exposed to a <b>terrorist</b> attack in Libya. In a speech on Monday at the
14	U.S. diplomatic facility in Benghazi, Libya, a <b>terrorist</b> attack. "It is self-evident that what happened in
15	that what happened in Benghazi was a <b>terrorist</b> attack," the White House press secretary, Jay
16	making sure that where we can prevent a <b>terrorist</b> attack, where we can get information ahead of time,
17	. Officials eventually termed the assault a <b>terrorist</b> attack tied to Qaeda sympathizers and played down
18	had confirmed: that Benghazi was a <b>terrorist</b> attack involving Al Qaeda affiliates. When Rice asked
19	proved to be wrong, of the September <b>terrorist</b> attack on the diplomatic outpost in Benghazi, Libya.
20	Eight months after four Americans died in a <b>terrorist</b> attack on the American diplomatic compound in
21	that it was a deliberate and organized <b>terrorist</b> attack carried out by extremists." The unusual
22	to suggest that she dissembled on the <b>terrorist</b> attack last year against a U.S. mission in Benghazi,
23	administration cover-up of the <b>terrorist</b> nature of the attack and links to Al Qaeda. The criticism has
24	administration on issues like the Benghazi <b>terrorist</b> attack and the misuse of funds by government
25	American consulate in Benghazi, Libya, a <b>terrorist</b> attack, and Ms. Crowley backed Mr. Obama's version
26	." The spectacle in Washington over the <b>terrorist</b> attack last Sept. 11 in Benghazi, Libya, is focusing
27	minute-by-minute account of the lethal <b>terrorist</b> attack in Benghazi, Libya, last September and
28	for information. He's worried about another <b>terrorist</b> attack in the United States, which would be the
29	characterized the Benghazi incident as a <b>terrorist</b> attack — inappropriately because the president's
30	. knew quickly that the Benghazi raid was a <b>terrorist</b> attack. "It was such a no-brainer," one intelligence
31	American diplomatic mission in Libya was a <b>terrorist</b> attack, but that the administration refrained from
32	and security earlier this year. But the brutal <b>terrorist</b> attack on an upscale mall in Kenya last month has
33	and about its actions in the Sept. 11 <b>terrorist</b> attack in Benghazi, Libya, that killed the American
34	sources in news accounts considered it a <b>terrorist</b> attack days before Rice went on the shows. (The

Concordance 4. The word *terrorist* in the co-text of *attack* in the NYT

The high frequency of the word *attack* and some other words in the *NYT* suggests that the newspaper gives more focus mainly to covering news stories that are related to the US relations with some Arab countries in the Middle East and North Africa rather than focusing on how new civilized societies may be established. To read this from a different angle, the focus on *Benghazi* is also very significant in terms of the US domestic politics. For example, some US domestic words such as *administration*, *officials*, *Republican\**, and *department* were collocates with *Benghazi* and the attack that happened there, and this would suggest how much this was domestic not international news for the *NYT*. In addition to the saliency and relevance of this event to the American audience, the attack was also densely covered in the *NYT* when compared to its counterpart (the *Guardian*) perhaps because the newspaper wanted to highlight that the "US citizens are major victims of international terrorism" (Neumayer & Plümper, 2011, p. 3) not only in their own country as happened on September 11th, 2001, but also abroad. This attack happened at a time of chaos and regime change. Kydd & Walter (2006) note that terror



groups seek to gain power and political influence in the countries where they are based and abroad. Moreover, the groups responsible for terror attacks usually aim to gain some support from the population (Enders & Sandler, 2006). In the same vein, it is argued that “terrorism serves as an instrument used by radical political groups which aim at gaining influence on important policies and political control in their home country (or wider region)” (Neumayer & Plümper, 2011, p. 5). This interpretation might fit the situation in post-Qaddafi Libya as there was a power vacuum that led at the end to violence in almost everywhere in the country. Moreover, Green (2011) argues that the era of the Arab uprisings is seen by terrorist groups as an anti-Western phenomenon. This might explain why some “terrorist” acts against the diplomats and embassies of some Western countries occurred in the aftermath of the Arab Spring.

The unique words analysis in the *NYT* and the *Guardian* in this period showed that the two newspapers gave much space to the Syrian case, on the one hand, and the consequences of the Arab revolutions on the other one. The two newspapers referred to the case of chaos that spread across not only the main Arab spring countries, but also the region in the post-uprisings era. Sometimes, such consequences are said to be inevitable linking the Arab Spring with other revolutions throughout history. For example, in Libya and although the country has been suffering from different problems since the 2011 overthrow of the Qaddafi regime, the *Guardian* focused on the democratic aspect that the uprisings provided people with; holding the first election in the country since about four decades. This might be to legitimise the international coalition in which the UK took the leading position. Similarly, on some occasions, the *Guardian* referred to the absence of a functioning state in the post-Qaddafi era and how the state needs to be built from scratch, not because the international coalition destructed the infra-structure, but because of the fragility of the Libyan state at the time of Qaddafi that left no institutional infrastructure behind. In the *NYT*, the focus in the post-Qaddafi Libya was on the security situation and how Libya became a safe haven for Qaida-linked groups. This is likely because the American institutions in Libya were targets for “terrorist” attacks; an example of this is the Benghazi attack on the American consulate that led to the killing of the US ambassador, and was described in the *NYT* as “brutal”, “deliberate”, “organized”, “lethal” and “horrible”. Therefore, and unlike the *Guardian*, the theme of terrorism continued to be covered heavily in the *NYT* highlighting how it is a vital matter in the American foreign policy especially in the Middle East.

## 5. Conclusion

In this study, a corpus of about 7 million words is used to examine how frequencies can direct the analysts toward news foci/themes. In this paper, I asked two questions, to which I now return:

- Are there any constant/frequent discourses with *Qaddafi* in *The Guardian* and *The NYT* from 2009 to 2013?
- What are the most frequent topics/themes discussed in news articles relating to *Libya* and *Qaddafi* in the pre-, during, and post- uprisings periods?

I examined the most frequent 25 lexical words in the *Guardian* and the *NYT*. The common words analysis, which refers to the words that occurred across the three investigated time periods when investigating the most frequent 25 words, suggests the absence of prominent/common discourses with *Qaddafi* in the three periods. The findings also showed that the discourse of war began to appear in period 2 (2011). Such discourse was not observed in period 1 (2009/2010) where *Libya* and *Qaddafi* seem to be reported and represented as any other country and leader. In period 3 (2012/2013), both war and post-war discourses were observed. This supports the idea that there was a change in the way *Qaddafi* was represented before 2011 (pre-revolution period), and after it (post revolution period). Therefore, it appears that the different types of media during the Arab uprisings brought “critical news and opinion to a broad public, gave voice to the voiceless, built ties between activists and ordinary citizens, and linked local protests into a powerful master narrative of regional uprising” (Lynch, 2015, p. 90).

After examining the words that occurred in the three periods, I investigated the most frequent unique words in each period separately by looking at the words that only occur in (a) particular period(s) rather than others. The aim behind this was to uncover the different news foci about *Libya* and *Qaddafi* in the three periods. In period 1, the *Guardian* mainly covered the release of Megrahi, while the *NYT* focused more on nuclear program issues, oil, and Libya’s relation with other countries. Therefore, the two newspapers discussed Libya’s involvement in some events on the international arena. This period was taken as a baseline and a starting point to measure and assess the newspapers’ style and type of coverage in the other two periods. In period 2, the two newspapers mainly focused on the outbreak of the Arab uprisings, and how the security forces in most of the involved countries responded “severely” and “violently” to the demonstrations against the regimes. The situation in *Libya* was heavily and predominantly discussed, simply because the whole corpus was built using some query terms related to the Libyan civil war. Moreover, given the newsworthiness preferences in the market-oriented media, more coverage of the 2011 Libyan civil war and Qaddafi was expected in this period especially in the days of heavy



fighting and when the the Qaddafi forces and loyalists commit atrocities against the Libyan civilians. Examining the unique words in this period, I found that the *Guardian* and the *NYT* highlighted the role of the international community in supporting the democratic waves in the Arab world, and NATO's role in protecting the Libyan people, supporting the rebels, and reducing Qaddafi regime's systematic attacks on civilians. In period 3, the two newspapers gave more space to the *Syrian* case, on the one hand, and the fate of the former regimes' residues, and the consequences of the Arab revolutions on the other one.

In common with Haider (2016, 2017), the analysis shows that there is a strong relationship between media and politics where media is a central arena for viewing the political events. The political coverage does not occur in a vacuum (Wolfsfeld, 2011). Also, politics has an impact on the news media. There are different factors that influence the media's tendency to "systematically" downplay or densely cover some events. These include newsworthiness factors, the policies of the country where the media organization operates, and news sources in relation to Western and non-Western countries. Regarding the political aspect, it is argued that the news agenda can be shaped by the state through direct ownership and media sources' control (Enikolopov, Petrova, & Zhuravskaya, 2010), or through regulating the activity of privately owned media by placing licensing requirements and imposing laws that limit the use of particular forms of expression (Whitten-Woodring & James, 2012). Although it is argued that media in democracies are in most cases independent from government influence as they mainly care about profit maximization, and have their own institutional biases, this study shows that media institutions operating in democratic societies are not immune from state influence. For example, at the time of wars and conflicts, there are some restrictions in reporting even in democratic states. These can be related to direct government censorship (Roeder, 1995), and rally-around-the-flag effects (Groeling & Baum, 2008). Moreover, the state and media preferences may align.

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