

# Positive and Negative evaluative Language: A comparative study on British News Reports of the ISIS Conflict in Iraq and Syria using Appraisal Theory

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## 1. An Overview:

This study examines the use of evaluative language in two sets of press reports which are related to ISIS conflict in Iraq and Syria. This conflict started in the summer of 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIS) has transformed the politics of the Middle East. Jihadi fighters combined religious fanaticism and military expertise to win unexpected victories against Iraqi, Syrian, and Kurdish forces. They have also abducted and killed many civilians in both countries Iraq and Syria and caused many civilians to flee their hometowns out of the terror they brought on them.

## 2. Methodology

I used Lexis/Nexis database to compile my corpus. For collecting my data. I divided my corpus into two sets. One of the sets is related to the ISIS conflict in Iraq and the other set is related to the conflict in Syria. I have chosen six newspapers: The Daily Mail, The Daily Telegraph, The Times, The Daily Mirror, The Guardian, and The Independent.

## 4. OUTCOMES

Table (1), shows all the targets involved in the conflict. Iraqi and Syrian Christians target share similar high number of the evaluative pattern of negative security, however, the negative feature of freedom only appears in the Syria texts. This outcome caused me to classify both under the good group.

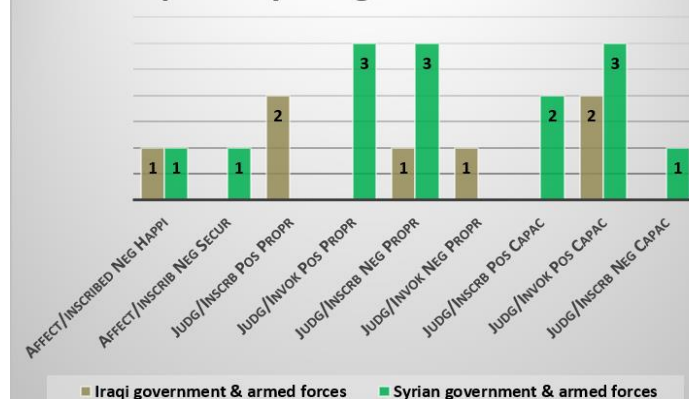
The characters involved in ISIS conflict	Syria	Iraq
Christians	(Inscribed Neg Security) (Inscribed Neg Freedom) (Inscribed Positive Freedom)	(Inscribed Neg Security)  And only one feature for each: (Inscribed Positive Security) & (Invoked Neg capacity)
Civilians	(Inscribed Neg Security) (Inscribed Neg Freedom)	
Yazidis		(Inscribed Neg Security) (Invoked Neg capacity)
Kurds and Kurdish Peshmerga	(Invoked Positive Propriety) (Inscribed Positive Capacity) (Inscribed Neg Security) (Invoked Positive Propriety)	(Inscribed Positive Capacity) (Invoked Positive Propriety) (Inscribed Neg Security) (Invoked Positive Capacity)
ISIS	(Invoked Neg Propriety) (Inscribed Neg Propriety) (Invoked Positive Capacity)	(Invoked Neg Propriety) (Inscribed Neg Propriety) (Invoked Positive Capacity)
Foreign British Jihadists	(Inscribed Neg Propriety) (Invoked Neg Propriety) (Invoked Positive Capacity)	
Extremists other than Isis	(Inscribed Neg Propriety) (Invoked Neg Propriety) (Invoked Positive Capacity)	
Syrian activists	(Invoked Neg Propriety) (Invoked Positive Propriety)	
Syrian rebels	(Invoked Neg Propriety) only (Inscribed Positive Capacity) (Inscribed Neg Security) only	
Moderate fighters	(Inscribed Positive Propriety) (Invoked Positive Capacity)	
Government and armed forces	(Inscribed Neg Propriety) (Invoked Positive Propriety) (Invoked Neg Propriety) (Inscribed Positive Capacity)	(Inscribed Neg Propriety) (Invoked Positive Capacity) (Invoked Neg Capacity)

Table (1) The evaluative outcome patterns in both press sets

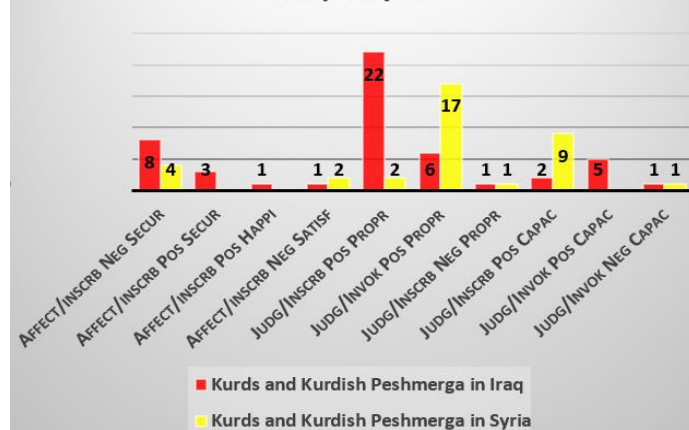
Iraqi Yazidis and Syrian civilians have recorded the highest number of negative security. This encouraged me to also classify them under the good group. On contrary, ISIS target has recorded the highest number of negative features of propriety which led me to classify it under the bad group.

Kurds & peshmerga forces has recorded high number of positive propriety and positive capacity; still I have not decided to which group it belongs. Concerning both governments, it is hard to decide because the evaluative outcomes both positive & negative features are close to each other.

### Iraqi and Syrian governments

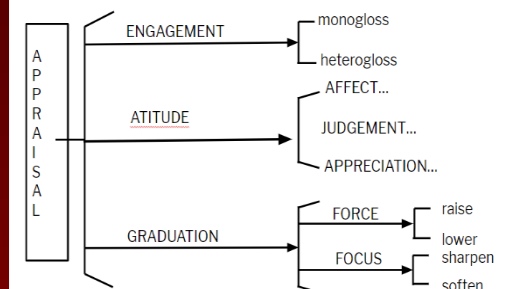


### Kurds and Kurdish Peshmerga forces in Iraq & Syria



## 3. Why Appraisal Theory?

I draw on Martin and White's Appraisal theory (2005) and some other studies such as: (Chiluwa and Ifukor 2015, Chen 2014) in order to investigate whether British journalistic accounts of Iraq and Syria produce similar or different evaluation patterns, also to identify the group identities under which the involved targets can be classified.



## 5. Two Questions

1. As explained in the outcome, I have classified the targets either under good or bad group. Can you suggest any other names for the groups?

2. Under which groups can Kurds & Peshmerga forces, also, Iraqi and Syrian governments be classified, based on the outcomes?