



# A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Europe`s Economic Crisis in the European and British Print Media

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## ABSTRACT

Looking at the print media of UK and Europe about the economic crisis, the present study aims to find out how the writers of the print media in UK and Europe use discourse tools to convey their ideas. In a comparative study of the two media with a focus on such grammatical tools like passivisation, nominalisation, thematisation, and word choice strategies, it was found out that the UK media exaggerate the problem while the European media depict a positive picture of the same crisis.

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## Introduction

According to Johnstone(2008, p. 53), texts embedded in recurring "discursive practices" are actually embedded in "social practices" and are the main ways in which ideology is reproduced. The goal of CDA is to unveil the ways in which discourse and ideology are combined. A very good example of combination of text and ideology is print media. All print media are political and their aim is to impose certain ideas on their readers.

The economic crisis in Europe has affected the whole world. As a result, there has been a depression in many European countries. But looking at the media of two kinds in UK and Europe, we see there are different interpretations about the same crisis. The UK media somehow exaggerate the problem as a gripping burden which has immobilized Europe. The European media, on the other hand, conveys a more positive picture about this crisis.

### Review of the Related Literature

#### Theoretical Background

According to Gee ( 2013, p. 7 ), " In using language , social goods and their distribution are always at stake. Language is always political in a deep sense". CDA intervenes in social or political subjects and debates in the world. He believes that CDA is practical or applied. Widdowson(2011) states that a language user is subconsciously influenced by the ideological phenomena. Zhao ( 2011) states that ideology makes great influences on translation, expression, and strategy, which is the product of the ideology. Language understanding means to obtain a semantic network and conditional information from a text in a deep sense. Farrelly (2010) shows how CDA might contribute to the theoretical and methodological repertoire of political studies through its discourse-dialectal theory of how discourse figures as an aspect of social practices without reducing those practices to discourse. Qian (2010) states that news reporting around terrorism is filtered according to a wide range of phenomena including national interests, the goals of those who run the press, international relations, methods of news production, audience, targeting, and other historical, political, and social factors. According to Let & Wang (2009) CDA and

systemic functional linguistics ( SFL ) have a common interest in the link between language and society. CDA uses systemic functional linguistics as tool to analyze texts and discourses. There are four grammatical features which have practical implications for CDA: theme, lexical density, nominalisation, and grammatical metaphor.

Van Dijk (1999) , within a framework of discourse and ideology, identified a conceptual triangle of society, discourse, and social cognition, in which ideology plays a prominent role in creating the common social cognitions accepted by social groups, organizations, or institutions.

#### Empirical Background

Khajeh & Khanmohammad(2012) through a comparative study found that distortions or transformations between the original and the two translated versions were not only arbitrary, but also ideologically encoded in the texts with specific purposes and functions. Bonyadi & Moses (2012) conducted a contrastive textual analysis of selected headlines, culled from the editorials of the English newspaper, New York Times, and those of Persian newspaper, Tehran Times. They found out that headlines in the two newspapers presented a subjective attitude of the writers towards the topic. Benjamins(2012) asserts that contrastive textology assumed that texts are homogeneously designed within and for one country or one language area. He concludes that the relation between media texts, languages, and cultures has to be revisited. Samar & Navidian (2010) investigated the application of Email as a new medium of communication by Iranian and American TEFL students in Academic settings. They found out that the American students indicated more cases of personal and social messages as well as applying more communication strategies in their Emails. Iranian students, however, use more greeting and closing protocols in their Emails. Behnam & Khodadust(2010) ran a comparative statistical analysis of the print media discourse of the two ideologically opposing contexts of Syria and America. In their study they show how discourse producers utilize various lexical and thematic strategies to produce different impressions of the event and implicitly impose the underlying ideology on the readers. Behnam & Moshtaghi(2008) compared the discourse of

Iranian newspapers with the British newspapers on the nuclear power program of Iran. The results showed that the British newspapers tended to depict Iran as the main participant mainly portrayed as a social deviant. Khodabandeh(2007) compared the headlines of English and Persian languages. These headlines were the same in using dynamic verbs, active voice, short words, declarative sentences, finite clauses and simple sentences, and different in the use of tense forms, headline types, modification, and omission of words. Sahragard & Rahimi(2006) analyzed the CDA of the e-mails written about the Pope. They have underscored the fact that ideological manipulations are expressed, enacted, sustained, and at times inculcated through discursive structures. Yamashita (1999) studied the relationship between the value of news sources and the choice of representing the verbs in Japanese and American newspapers. They found out that in the Japanese newspaper reports, the reporter transfers himself from the position of first-person singular pronoun "I" to that of first person plural pronoun "we". By contrast in the American news report, the reporter represents discourse from the position of first person singular pronoun. Hatim (1997) states that contrastive discourse processes should be regarded as part and parcel of contrastive linguistics- a component that goes well beyond the sentence and thus below it in a search of higher order decisions that pertain to the intertextual potential of genres, discourses, and texts. Due to the differences between the print media in the two contexts of Europe and Britain, the following research question was raised and investigated in this study: "How are the different ideologies regarding the economic crisis of Europe represented in the two contexts of Europe and Britain print media?"

#### Method

In this study we analyzed the print media in the two contexts of UK and Europe. One context was *Gaurdian*(2013) from which three pieces of news were chosen at random (Appendix A). The other context was the European media which were chosen by chance from electronic sites ( [opinionpublicfinanceinternational.org](http://opinionpublicfinanceinternational.org), [www.euinside.eu](http://www.euinside.eu), and [www.mondaq.com](http://www.mondaq.com), Appendix B ). In order to unveil the ideology underlying the news, the grammatical tools of passivisation, and nominalisation(Halliday's (1985) systemic functional grammar ), thematic structure (Paltridge, 2008), and the lexical tool of word choice strategy ( Widdowson , 2011 )were studied.

#### Data Analysis and Discussion

##### A. Word Choice Strategy

In this part we studied the diction in the two kinds of print media. According to Widdowson(2011) we choose particular words and expressions unconsciously; therefore, the expressions we choose show the underlying ideological attitude. Based on our persuasive purpose our particular textual choice is affected. Below we have studied word choice in the UK print media. Based on the first piece of news from Guardian ( 2013 ), the following results are obtained.

- \* The word "**controversial**" has a connotation of dispute and disagreement.
- \* The word "**rescue funds**" implies being stuck in a financial crisis.
- \* "**Fight**" implies chaos and dispute.
- \* "**Protesting trade unionists**" and "demonstrations" have an implication of fight and disagreement.
- \* "**Firing**" and "**high unemployment rates**" imply joblessness as a result of the economic crisis.
- \* "**Fierce opposition**" has an implication of disobedience.

\* "**Protesting**" is repeated in the last paragraph, which emphasizes dissatisfaction.

Reviewing the second piece of news from the *Gaurdian* the following results are obtained:

- \* "**Selfish**" and "**intrasigent**" imply self-centeredness on the part of some of the European countries which consequently would lead to dissatisfaction in the European community.
- \* The word "**crisis**" is repeated several times for emphasis.
- \* "**A mega-European disaster**" implies the idea of a tremendous financial problem in Europe.
- \* "**...the savings of depositors in Germany...**" refers to the fact that Germany needs foreign help.

Looking at the third piece of news from the *Guardian* the following results are obtained concerning the word choice:

- \* The word "**anti-austerity**" is a side effect of the financial crisis.
- \*The word "**recession**" is associated with the idea of financial crisis.
- \* The word "**reform**" is a change as a result of financial crisis.
- \* "**Debt-choked**" implies too many loans as a result of budget deficit.
- \* "**Blasting**" which means criticism is the result of Berlin's policy concerning the economic crisis.
- \* The words "**divide**", "**social disintegration**", and "**intergovernmental disagreement**" mean the disagreement among the European countries about how to tackle the financial crisis.
- \*"**U-turn**" is an abrupt change in the financial policies which is the result of instability.

Analyzing the European media the following results were obtained. The first piece of news gives us the following results:

- \* The words "**appropriate**", "**sound footing**", and "**reducing the biggest challenge**" evaluate the economic policies positively.
- \*"Competitive Europe", "**growth again**", and "**sustainable growth**" imply that Europe's economy is in a good condition now.
- \*"**Mid-term fiscal consolidation**" refers to the unification in Europe.
- \* The words "**courage**", "**determination**", and "**commitment ( clear and specific)**" show Europe's resolution towards solving the economic problems.
- \* "**Supporting (both camps)**" emphasises unity among the European countries.

Looking at the second piece of news from the European print media, the following results were obtained:

- \* The words "**export**" and "**a significant increase ( in exports)**" shows Italy's strong economy.
- \* "**Made in Italy products**", and "**strength ( of Italian companies)**", "**react( to international crisis)**", and "**export of technology**" are repetitions emphasising Italy's sturdy economy.
- \* "**Cultural identity factor**" appreciates Italy's products even as a cultural advertisement.
- \* "**Opportunity**", "**economic recovery**", "**an increase in exports**", "**increase of production**", and "**flourishing professions and services**" are all positive words that imply a sturdy economy.

Looking at the third piece of news from the European media the following results are obtained:

- \* "**Limited effects ( of debt crisis )**", and "**not endured( painful deficit reduction)**" imply that Germany is not affected greatly by the crisis.

\* *"Low interest rate"*, *"Germany( safe haven)"*, *"exports"*, *"thrive"*, and *"(money has) flown into"* all refer to Germany's prosperous economy.

\* *"Germany's trade surplus"*, *"( hit ) highest level"*, and *"record low"* implicitly mean Germany's flourishing economy.

\* *"Unemployment falling markedly"*, and *"(unemployment) be over"* refer to the plethora of job opportunities in Germany.

In a nutshell, looking at the print media of the European context, we can see a positive picture of the economic crisis. Here, it is shown that Europe has been able to overcome the crisis. Even it has benefited from the economic problem as it has taught the European countries to become more resistant and determined in the time of crisis. But looking at the British print media we can see a desperate environment regarding the economic crisis of Europe.

#### Nominalisation

According to Paltridge (2008, p. 15) "Nominalisations present actions and events as nouns rather than as verbs." By using nominalization a writer foregrounds processes and backgrounds the agents of an action.

Looking at the UK print media (Appendix A) the following nominalisations are observed.

The results for the first piece of news are as follows:

\* In the phrase *"The bill outlining the dismissal of..."*, it's not clear who has offered the bill. Intentionally information about the agent is missing. The action of dismissal is emphasised.

\* *"The firing of some 4000..."* emphasises the action of dismissing workers from their jobs.

Looking at the second piece of news from the UK print media the following nominalisations are obtained:

\* *"...accusing her (of causing the single currency crisis)"* emphasizes Merkel's responsibility for the crisis.

\* *"demanding( a showdown)"* emphasises the act of asking for a showdown.

Looking at the third piece of news the following results are obtained:

\* *"the malaise gripping a nation..."* emphasises the fact that Europe is now trapped in an economic crisis.

\* *"calling for enhanced dialogue"*, emphasises the need for a consensus in Europe. This would indirectly mean that Europe is disintegrated.

\* The nominalisations *"divide"* and *"social disintegration"* are repetitions showing that Europe is disintegrated.

\* *"Berlin's fixation with austerity..."* criticizes Berlin's policies of economy.

Considering the nominalisations in the UK print media we see that the economic crisis is exaggerated and the side effects of this economic crisis are foregrounded ( e. g. social disintegration, austerity, divide in Europe,...)

Looking at the European print media, we observe the following nominalisations: In the first piece of the news we observed the following:

\* *"Confusion"* emphasises lack of clarity about Reinhart/Rogoff mistake.

\* *"reducing the biggest challenge"* refers to the act of minimizing the economic crisis in Europe.

\* *"sound footing"* refers to the correct path Europe is now taking.

\* *"Growth"* emphasises Europe's economic prosperity.

\* The word *"commitment"* emphasises loyalty to Europe's economic consolidation plans.

\* *"Consolidation measures"* foregrounds Europe's unity in financial matters.

\* *"Determination"* emphasises the certainty that politicians need in solving the economic problems.

Looking at the second piece of news from the European print media, we observe the following results:

\* *"Reference to goods"*, *"significant increase"*, *"strength ( of our economy)"*, *"exports"*, and *"exportation"* highlight Italy's prosperous economic condition.

\* *"Surprise"* foregrounds Italy's large increase in exportation.

\* *"Growth"* emphasises Italy's developing economic condition.

\* *"Economic recovery"*, *"increase ( in exports)"*, and *"increase ( of production)"* imply that Italy's economy is advancing.

\* *"Investment"*, and *"the flourishing ( of professions)"* emphasise the fact that Italy is now a safe haven for foreign investors.

Looking at the third piece of news from the European print media, we obtained the following results:

\* *"Deficit reduction"*, and *"downgrading of sovereign debt"* emphasise that Germany has been able to control the economic crisis.

\* *"Exports"* and *"capital flight"* imply that Germany is now a safe place for investment.

\* *"Unemployment (falling )"* means that there are enough number of jobs now in Italy.

\* *"Budget constraints"* and *"spending cuts"* refer to the austerity measures that other countries are enduring.

Taking into account the nominalisations in the European print media we conclude that such processes as Europe's growth after the economic crisis, reduction of unemployment, growth in exports, economic recovery, and other positive consequences of the economic crisis are foregrounded. Generally speaking, these nominalisations depict a positive picture about the economic crisis in Europe which is contrary to the picture that the UK print media shows about the same crisis. Figure 2 shows the number of nominalisations in UK and EU print media. As it is seen, in the EU print media more cases of nominalisations are reported. By using nominalisations in this context processes like *economic growth, reduced unemployment, downgrading of sovereign debt, and deficit reduction* are foregrounded. In the UK context, on the other hand, by using less nominalisations agents like *Merkel, Hollande, the socialists, and Anglo-German cabal* are foregrounded agents dealing with the economic crisis. The role of these agents would have been played down if nominalisations had omitted them.

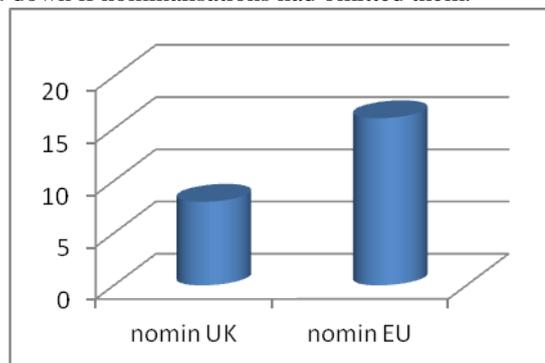


Figure 1: Nominalisation in UK and EU Print Media

#### Passivisation

Passivisation is a structural technique which is used to foreground an action and background the subject of a sentence. This structure also foregrounds the object of a sentence. According to Billing (2008) passivisation has important ideological functions such as deleting agency and reifying processes.

Looking at the UK print media the following passivisations are observed. In the first piece of news from *Gaurdian* we observed the following passive sentences:

\* *Greece's parliament is preparing to...mandated reforms.*

In this sentence reforms are emphasised to be obligatory.

\* *More demonstrations are planned when the bill is put to vote.* In this sentence demonstrations against the bill are emphasised. The bill ( outlining the dismissal of the civil servants ) is also foregrounded.

\* *The firing of ... has been met.....* . In this sentence the act of dismissing a lot of workers is foregrounded.

Looking at the second piece of news from the UK media the following results are obtained:

\* *Europe is being run by a rightwing Anglo-German cabal dominated by liberal...* . The passive verbs *run* and *dominate* imply that Europe is like a puppet in the hands of Germany and England.

\* *...Hollande's government has been organized...* . In this sentence the role of the government is downgraded.

\* *The [EU] community is now scared by an alliance...* . Here the existing terror in Europe is emphasised.

Looking at the third piece of news the following passivisations are observed:

\* *... reforms that Greece has been obliged to enforce.* In this sentence Greece has been given a passive role in front of EU union.

\* *... the country was headed in the wrong direction.* In this sentence the passive verb implies that Greece has no agency rather it is lead by other countries during the economic crisis.

\* *... a nation now trapped in a sixth straight year of recession...* .The passive verb in this sentence emphasises that Greece is economically paralyzed.

Analyzing the passive structures used in the UK print media we came to the following conclusions. In this context European countries are shown to be passive in accepting the crisis and the consequent problems which are imposed on them. Themes like **demonstration, firing, and economic reforms** are foregrounded. But the real instigators ( i.e. UK) of such imposed problems on Europe are backgrounded.

Looking at the European print media the following results are obtained:

Looking at the first piece of news the following passive verbs are obtained:

\* *... consolidation which should be viewed...* .In this sentence economic consolidation measures are foregrounded.

\* *Consolidation measures should be selected very carefully.* Again economic consolidation is foregrounded.

\* *Words that can be interpreted as supporting both camps.* In this sentence words about consolidation measures are emphasised.

\* *But this did not prevent Olli Rehn from being literally crucified.* In this sentence Rehn is criticized because of his anti-consolidation measures. Crucification is emphasised by using a passive structure.

\* *... these skills cannot be observed.* In this sentence the passive structure emphasises courage and determination which are needed in times of acrisis.

Considering the passive sentences in the European print media we concluded that issues like **economic consolidation measures, courage, determination, and supporting words** are thematized as the subject of the passive sentences. Figure one shows the frequency of passive structure in UK and European

print media. As it is shown the frequency of passive verbs are twice more often in UK print media than Europe print media. By using passive structure in the UK print media the economic crisis of Europe and different aspects of it are more emphasised.

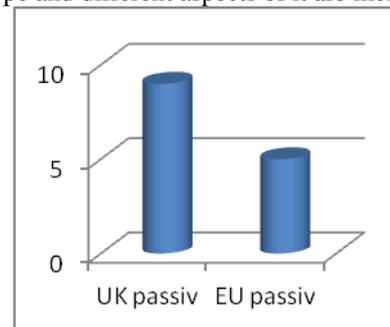


Figure 1: The Frequency of Passive Verbs in UK and Eu Print Media

#### Theme-Rheme Structure

Looking at the UK print media the following themes are foregrounded:

In the first piece of news from the UK media the following themes are observed:

\* The word **"bill"** is thematized. This bill is about the economic reforms.

\* **"Protesting", "demonstrations", and "protesting farmers"** emphasise chaos and unrest in Europe.

\* **"Firing"** foregrounds the act of making many people redundant in Europe.

Looking at the second piece of news from *Gaurdian* the following themes are observed:

\* **"Hollande's governing socialists"** is thematized as accusing Merkel of causing crisis.

\* **"Draft paper"** which is on party policy of Europe ( about the austerity measures ) is foregrounded.

\* **"Europe"** is foregrounded as being run by Germany and England.

\* **"French socialists"** are thematized as opposing Germany's dominance over the Europe.

\* **"Merkel", "Cameron", and "Sarkozy"** are foregrounded as officials who are criticized for their hegemonic stances regarding the economic crisis.

\* **"The [EU] community project"** is foregrounded as being spoilt by England and Germany.

\* **"British prime minister"** and **"Angela Merkel"** are foregrounded as politicians who want to manipulate the economic crisis by forming an alliance.

\* **"France"** is foregrounded as being alone in Europe.

Looking at the third piece of news from *Gaurdian* the following topics are thematized:

\* **"A survey"** about the polling in Greece is foregrounded.

\* **"Some 76% of respondents"** is foregrounded as the majority who think Greek government is on a wrong direction.

\* **"Antonis Samaras"** is foregrounded as a suitable candidate for prime minister. This is a matter of debate in Greece.

\* **"No politician"** is foregrounded meaning that no one can solve the economic problem in Greece.

\* **"Malaise"** is thematized comparing the economic crisis in Europe with an incurable disease.

\* **"Mandated reforms"** is foregrounded. These are the economic reforms that Greece is forced to implement as a consequence of the economic crisis.

\* **"Debt-choked"** is emphasised meaning that Greece is under so much economic pressure.

\* *"Tsipras"* is thematized as opposing Berlin's austerity measures.

\* *"No country"* is foregrounded as stating the fact that no European country can solve EU's economic crisis.

\* *"The future of Europe"* is thematized. It is said that the current divide between the north and the south Europe would harm it.

\* *"Samaras"* is thematized. He is supposed to reshuffle his cabinet as a result of the intergovernmental disagreement which is by itself the result of the EU economic crisis.

\* *"Reform"* is emphasised. This reform is a consequence of the economic crisis.

Taking into account the themes in the UK print media we concluded that in this context Europe's economic crisis is foregrounded and different problems and aspects of it are emphasised by their being thematized (e.g. *mandated reforms of Eu economy, malaise gripping Europe, demonstrations, firing,...*). On the other hand some officials like *Merkel* and *Sarkozy* are thematized as authorities who are criticised for their policies regarding the economic crisis.

Looking at the European print media the following results were obtained. Looking at the first piece of news the following topics are foregrounded:

\* *"The heaviest strike"* is foregrounded. This is the strike over Reinhart/Rogoff mistake.

\* *"That news"* is foregrounded. The news is about Reinhart/Rogoff's mistake.

\* *"The current policies"* is foregrounded as being appropriate in solving the economic problem of Europe.

\* *"The need ( to deleverage, to put Europe on a sound footing)"* is emphasised showing that there is an urgency to help Europe with the financial crisis.

\* *"Growth"* is foregrounded. This is the growth we can see in Europe's economic status.

\* *"Fiscal consolidation"* is thematized emphasising the need for the unification of Europe.

\* *"Olli Rehn"* is foregrounded to emphasise that his views regarding the economic policies are criticised.

\* *"Skills"* is foregrounded to say that courage and determination are necessary in times of a crisis.

Looking at the second piece of news the following topics are foregrounded:

\* *"Italian exports", "an increase in exports", and "made in Italy products"* are foregrounded implying that Italy's economy is flourishing now.

\* *"Germany"* is foregrounded as having experienced a rise in exportation.

\* *"The report (on the Italian exportation)"* is foregrounded.

\* *"Surprise"* is foregrounded. It emphasises the boom in exports of Italian goods.

\* *"Growth"* is thematized emphasising Italy's prosperous economy.

Looking at the third piece of news from the European print media the following topics are thematized:

\* *"Global economic crisis"* and *"Europe's sovereign debt crisis"* are foregrounded as having limited effects on Germany's economy.

\* *"Germans"* are foregrounded as not having endured painful deficit reduction.

\* *"Downgrading of sovereign debt"* is emphasised as benefitting Germany in numerous ways.

\* *"Germany's exports"* and *"Germany's trade surplus"* are thematized showing Germany's flourishing economy.

\* *"Youth unemployment"* is foregrounded as being very low.

\* *"Budget constraints"* is foregrounded as forcing countries other than Germany to make painful spending cuts.

Considering the European print media, we concluded that in this context topics like *growth, fiscal consolidation, downgrading of sovereign debt, and reduction of youth unemployment* are foregrounded. Such foregrounded pieces of information emphasise Europe's prosperity, and reconstruction after the economic crisis.

### Discussion

Looking at the print media in the two contexts of Europe and UK, we can see how they have explicitly and implicitly shown their ideologies. Explicitly they have chosen certain words to depict the situation as they like. In the UK news word strategy shows the economic situation to be very severe and paralyzing. The European media, on the other hand, looks at the situation in a positive way considering it as an opportunity which has helped Europe grow and become independent. Implicitly the two contexts have taken advantage of nominalisation, passivisation, and thematization in order to impose their ideologies on the reader. Regarding nominalisation in the UK print media, we saw that the economic crisis is exaggerated as a problem which has affected Europe severely and cannot be cured any more. But the European print media depicts a positive picture about this crisis emphasising topics like *Europe's growth after the economic crisis, reduction of unemployment, and economic recovery*. Analyzing the passivisation in the two contexts, we concluded that in the UK print media the European countries are shown as helpless countries which have to suffer the economic problems imposed on them. In this context, issues like *firing of the workers, unemployment, and demonstration* are foregrounded. In the European print media, on the other hand, topics like *consolidation measures, courage, determination, and supporting words* are foregrounded. Less number of passive sentences were observed in the European print media, a fact which thematizes the European countries as the agents rather than passive entities in more active sentences. Considering thematization, we saw that in the UK print media topics emphasising Europe's economic crisis and different by-products of it are thematized (e.g. *mandated reforms of the EU economy, firing of the workers, a malaise gripping Europe, demonstrations, ...*). The European print media, on the other hand, thematizes topics like *growth, fiscal consolidation, downgrading of sovereign debt, and reduced rate of youth unemployment*. Such themes refer to the Europe's reconstruction of its economy, and prosperous economic condition at present.

### Conclusion

As it was shown in this study, the writers could take advantage of discourse tools to hide their ideology. It was shown how nominalisation, passivisation, and foregrounded themes are used to impose certain ideologies on the reader. Also it was studied how diction affects the attitude and feelings a text conveys. In this study we saw that a problem is interpreted differently in different print media. The economic crisis in Europe is exaggerated in the UK print media. It is depicted as an incurable disease which has paralyzed the Europe. Contrarily, looking at the European print media we saw a positive picture of the economic crisis. Here the economic crisis is looked upon as an opportunity rather than an incurable disease. It has taught Europe great lessons of commitment and courage in times of crisis and helped it grow.

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### Appendix A: Texts from Gaurdian

#### I. Greece Prepares to Vote on Controversial Reforms

Greece's parliament is preparing to vote this weekend on a controversial multi-bill of internationally mandated reforms. Helena Smith writes:

The bill outlining the dismissal of 15000 civil servants from the public sector and a host of other "prior actions" Athens' ruling coalition has pledged to enact in exchange for rescue funds worth €8.8bn has just been presented to parliament.

But not without a fight. Protesting trade unionists representing the public and private sector have been out in force today and more demonstrations are planned when the bill is put to vote in the 300-seat House late on Sunday. The firing of some 4,000 civil servants this year and around 11,000 next has been met with fierce opposition at a time when unemployment rates in Greece are nudging 28% - the highest in the euro zone. Protesting farmers in Athens claim that their investments on photovoltaic systems are no longer profitable due to tax reforms.

#### French Socialists Accuse Merkel of Causing Crisis

Here's more on the blast aimed at Angela Merkel by France's governing socialist party. Europe editor Lan Traynor writes:

French president Françoise Hollande's governing socialists have delivered a blistering assault on Germany's chancellor Angela Merkel, accusing her of causing the single currency crisis that has been tearing Europe apart for more than three years, of acting selfishly and intransigently in her own political and German interest, and demanding a showdown with the chancellor of austerity.

In a draft paper on party policy on Europe ahead of a conference in June, the socialists contend that Europe is being run by a right-wing Anglo-German cabal dominated by liberal free trade interests with the rest of the world and austerity within the EU.

They call into question the Franco-German alliance that has been at the heart of the EU for as long as it has existed and argue that France alone of the big EU countries has a government that is genuinely pro-European.

Merkel, as well as Hollande's predecessor, Nicolas Sarkozy, and David Cameron come in for stinging attack. Merkel and Sarkozy, the draft declares, managed to turn a small crisis that started in Greece more than three years ago into a mega-European disaster.

The 21-page draft leaked to Le Monde which said it had the tacit support of Hollande's government has been organized by Jean-Christophe Cambadélis, a party vice-president. "The EU community project is now scarred by an alliance of convenience between the Thatcherite accents of the current British prime minister- who sees Europe only as a la carte and about rebates - and the selfish intransigence of Chancellor Merkel who thinks of nothing else but the savings of depositors in Germany, the trade balance recorded in Berlin and her electoral future," the paper said. "Today France is alone among the big countries of the EU in having a government which is genuinely European."

#### Syriza Party in Lead in New Greek Poll

Over to Greece where a poll released today shows the fiercely anti-austerity far left Syriza party in the lead as speculation also grows of an imminent government reshuffle. Helena Smith writes:

A survey conducted by the polling firm, VPRC, shows Syriza recapturing its lead with 29.5% against 27% for the centre-right New Democracy party, the predominant force in the governing coalition. Some 76% of respondents said they believed the country was headed in the wrong direction even if a majority continued to believe that Antonis Samaras was more suitable as prime minister- he received 16.6% compared to 9.1% who backed Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras in the role. But 60.3% thought "no politician" was suited for leadership.

In a further study sign of the malaise gripping a nation now trapped in a sixth straight year of recession a nation now trapped

in a sixth straight year of recession ,77% of those polled voiced support for the "immediate abolishment" of the EU -IMF mandated reforms that Greece has been obliged to enforce in return for aid, saying the debt-choked country should instead apply a "a plan of economic and productive reconstruction."

Tsipras, who is currently visiting Portugal has been busy blasting Berlin's fixation with austerity. Earlier today , he insisted that no country in southern Europe would be able to exit the crisis if it continues to enforce such policies. " We have to be aware that the future of Europe does not lie in the divide between the north and the south," he said calling for enhanced dialogue between the countries of the south.

"[ The future] does not lie with a German Europe of surpluses in the north and social disintegration in the south."The survey was released amid mounting speculation that Samaras will soon that Samaras will soon reshuffle his cabinet after intergovernmental disagreement , and an embarrassing u-turn, over a reform that was to be part of a bill Athens must pass to secure further aid from creditors.

Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras at a rally during a two day visit to Portugal.

### **Appendix B**

#### ***It's Not the Austerity, Stupid, It's the Structural Reforms!***

But the heaviest strike the Commission got exactly from the revelation of the Reinhart/Rogoff mistake. That news caused confusion and as a result Commission president Jose Manuel Barro was forced to say that the limits of the current policies were about to be reached. What MrBarroso actually said on April 22nd was that " *the current policies are of course appropriate in terms of reducing the biggest challenge that we have today which is the challenge of unsustainable debt, public and private, the need to deleverage, the need to put Europe on a sound footing so that Europe can be more competitive and can have growth again, but growth that is sustainable, because what we have learned, and this is for me the biggest lesson of the crisis, and I think a lesson that we have not yet completely drawn, is that growth based on debt is not sustainable*".

The difference between what he says and what was heard in media is essential, isn't it? And the first deputy director of the IMF, David Lepton, joined the controversy by saying that countries should have clear and specific commitments for mid-term fiscal consolidation which should be viewed country by country, while consolidation measures should be selected very carefully. Words that can be interpreted as supporting both camps. But this did not prevent Olli Rehn from being literally crucified in the European Parliament economic committee on April 25th when MEPs from all political groups attacked him strongly. According to one of the influential MEPs, Jean-Paul Gauzes ( EPP, France), in times of a crisis politicians needed courage and determination, but in the past months these skills cannot be observed in the Commission, he noted.

#### ***Italy: Internationalisation of Small to Medium Sized Businesses in an Economic Crisis***

With reference to goods, Italian exports have seen a significant increase in October of 2012 of 8.6% while the

imports decreases to 3.2%. Looking at Italy compared to other industrial countries, the data confirms the health of our "made in Italy products" and therefore the strength of our companies to react to the effects of the international crisis. In 2012, the Italian exports of goods and services amounted to 6.7%, with a higher position than France that registers 5.3% and the United Kingdom with 4.6%. Germany registers 7.8%, which owes. It is "the best result ever reached by Italy", as stated by a report from Coldiretti. The report on the Italian exportation of "made in Italy products" such as traditional food products, with a stable percentage of exportation towards the European countries and particularly the United Kingdom, for a total increase of 6% in the European Union.

Alongside the traditional trend we find surprises such as a boom in exports of 19% of Italian beer to the UK and 20% rise with cheese exports to France. The growth in the exportation of these manufactured Italian products shows more value than meets the eye: especially given the exports go to countries notorious for the exportation of their own beer and cheese that also are cutting back on the imports of foreign products.

It is also true that 'made in Italy products' are not only a cultural identity factor felt by the majority of Italians but it is also seen as an opportunity for the economic recovery from the crisis. An increase in exports means an increase of production, investment, and also the flourishing of professions and services related to it.

#### ***Germany: Still behind the European Project?***

Compared to other EU member states, the global economic crisis and the European sovereign debt crisis has had limited effects on the German economy. Unlike Greece, Portugal, and Spain, Germans have not endured painful deficit reduction policies and austerity. In actual fact, the spectre of default and subsequent downgrading of sovereign debt of some member states has benefited Germany in numerous ways: Germany borrows money at low interest rates on international bond markets because of its status as a safe haven, its exports thrive because of the Euro's low exchange rate, and money has flown into German economy as a consequence of capital flight from the European fringe.

During the peak of the European crisis in 2012, Germany's trade surplus hit its second highest level in more than 60 years and unemployment was at a record low since German unification. Even in the structurally weaker parts of Germany, unemployment has been falling markedly. Whilst youth unemployment is over 55 per cent in Greece and Spain, and about 20 per cent in the UK, it is only 8 per cent in Germany. Budget constraints forced some countries to make painful spending cuts that seriously disadvantage future generations. But in stark contrast to the much-debated increase in tuition fees in the UK from approximately £3000 to £9000 per annum, German Lander are abandoning fees altogether.