



Pronouns and Ideology in Newspaper Discourse

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Abstract

It is a fact that the role of pronouns, especially personal pronouns, in representing socio-political ideologies is not new as it has been studied extensively in relation to political discourse. However, this role needs to be examined in the newspaper discourse. Consequently, the current paper intends to examine personal and possessive pronouns used in newspaper articles to represent socio-political ideologies. Such a study requires a critical discourse analysis (CDA) to analyse excerpts from news articles in Iraqi English newspaper, known as the Kurdish Globe (henceforth, KG), on the event of American military forces' (henceforth, AMFs') withdrawal from Iraq. Using a qualitative content analysis, the excerpts are categorized thematically in relation to the ideological values found in them. It is revealed that the KG newspaper made use of direct quotation of American politicians' statements which contain plural personal and possessive pronouns when referring to their actions. This has served two aspects; firstly, it showed its objectivity in conveying the news event using quotations of newsworthy value. Secondly, it enhanced its socio-political ideologies through the direct quotations of American politicians whose government has a powerful authority over Iraq. On the one hand, the KG newspaper used personal and possessive pronouns associated with the positive representation of the U.S. government and its forces to show its trust in them. On the other hand, personal and possessive pronouns related to the Iraqi politicians were associated with negative representation to enhance its distrust in the Iraqi government.

Keywords: pronouns, critical discourse analysis, socio-political ideologies, newspaper discourse, political event

1. Introduction

Recently, newspaper discourse attracts the researchers' attention in the critical analysis field, particularly in relation to political issues (Sadeghi, Hassani, & Jalali, 2014). The essence of the newspaper discourse has changed. Thus, news articles in newspapers can be analysed to disclose the underlying intentions hidden behind the discursive construction of them (Sadeghi et al., 2014). Newspapers occupy an important role in any modern society since they address its various issues. The language employed in the newspaper does not simply convey the information that it overtly indicates. Language is, as asserted by Wodak (2001), a medium of domination and social power so that language is a suitable medium for uncovering hidden ideologies intended to construct social norms and values (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2001).

Consequently, newspaper discourse is composed of varied structures through which editors and writers attempt to deepen their beliefs, values, and attitudes in the minds of their audience. This provoked CDA practitioners to examine the relation between text structures and hidden ideologies. Hence, van Dijk (2006a) defined ideology as a foundational belief that underlies "the shared social representations of specific kinds of social groups. These representations are in turn the basis of discourse and other social practices". As well, ideology is "largely expressed and acquired... by spoken or written communicative interaction" (pp. 120-1).

It is believed that the use of pronouns as an ideological strategy to construct differences between 'us' and 'them' needs not to be ignored as they represent a source for comparison and contrast as well as serving more neutral purposes (Duszak, 2002). According to van Dijk (2006a, p. 123), "all variable lexical or syntactic forms may be controlled by the underlying representations, as is also the case for the actions engaged in by the language users". van Dijk (1998, p. 203, 2006a, p. 123) believed that pronouns, among many other syntactic features, "are perhaps the best known grammatical category of the expression and manipulation of social relations, status and power, and hence of underlying ideologies".

It is a fact that the role of pronouns, especially personal and possessive pronouns, in representing socio-political ideologies is not new as it has been studied extensively in relation to political discourse (Bello, 2013; De Fina, 1995; Grigoletto, 2002; Hasan, 2013; Muqit, 2012; Sotillo & Wang-Gempp, 2004). These studies focused on analyzing the ideological use of pronouns in the political discourse through examining how political actors use and articulate the personal pronouns in their speeches to imply various socio-political ideologies. However, this role needs to be examined in newspaper discourse. Consequently, the current study intends to examine how the KG newspaper used personal and possessive pronouns to present its hidden ideologies.

2. Literature Review

Although it is regarded to be an old-fashion news media, the newspaper is still the main category of news coverage and it is the preferable one than other media forms (Youssefi, Kanani, & Shojaei, 2013). Besides its role in informing and transmitting different issues, the newspaper presents a great amount of details related to the news, events descriptions, and analysis of their significance and effect. Newspapers have a crucial part in portraying social and national issues (Mahmood, Javed, & Mahmood, 2011). Such issues bear ideological values hidden under the words chosen to represent them. These values are revealed through the use of CDA (Fairclough, 1995). Hence, Fairclough (1992) defines CDA as a systematic investigation of “opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes” to reveal the way in which such events, practices and texts take place and how they are ideologically categorized by power relations (p. 135). CDA has been applied in many studies in relation to newspaper discourse. CDA contributes to the field of linguistic studies in media discourses either spoken or written as it is focused on discovering hidden meanings, the relationship between language and context, the power of language use in different disciplines, in addition to highlighting texts as reflecting ideological, social, cultural, and political ideologies (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1995).

According to CDA, the discourse is specified from the social practice and cultural representation through the use of linguistic structures to represent it. CDA proposes that the discourse is concerned with exploring issues related to social relations, group relation (power), identity, and ideology (Muqit, 2012). Currently, ideology has attracted researchers’ attention, especially in relation to newspaper discourse, to examine the linguistic structures used in representing various ideologies, such as social, political, economic, etc. van Dijk (2006b) believed that “there are no personal or individual ideologies, only personal or individual uses of ideologies” (p. 729). Hence, Taiow (2007, p. 221) defined ideology as “attitudes, set of beliefs, values and doctrines with reference to religious, political, social and economic life, which shape the individual's and group's perception and through which reality is constructed and interpreted”. Fairclough (2006) stated that “ideologies are representations which contribute to the constitution, reproduction, and transformation of social relations of power and domination” (P. 23). Fairclough (2006: p. 29) added that “if ideology is representations (discourses)”, it will be “(a) action and its social relations (and genres); (b) persons/subjects (and styles), as well as (c) the material world”. Additionally, “if ideology is a relation between texts (in meaning-making) and power, it is a relation between orders of discourse and power, and even languages and power, because meanings achieve relative stability and durability in social practices and social structures”. Ideology becomes important in the social and cultural representation due to its role in managing the society and its related activities. It guides the social activity within in-group and out-group members of the community (Muqit, 2012). The representation of in-group and outgroup members is enhanced by the use of pronouns.

The pronoun is defined as standing for a noun or as a substitute for a noun or a noun phrase (Wales, 1996). According to Wales (1996), there are eight types of pronoun, including personal, possessive, reflexive, reciprocal, relative, interrogative, demonstrative, and indefinite. As far as the personal and possessive pronouns are concerned in this paper, personal pronouns are classified into three types: 1st (I and we), 2nd (you), and 3rd (he, she, it, and they). Grammatically, these pronouns have two cases, including subjective and objective cases. Semantically, they are distinguished in terms of number, singular (Sg.) and plural (Pl.), and gender (masculine (Masc.), feminine (Fem.), and non-personal). Concerning the possessive pronouns, they perform two functions, namely as determiners (my, our, your, his, her, its, and their) and nominals (mine, ours, yours, his, hers, its, theirs). The personal and possessive pronouns are described in detail below in Table 1 (adapted from Wales, 1996, p. 13):

Table 1. Description of personal and possessive pronouns

Classification of pronouns	Number Case	Gender Case	Personal pronouns		Possessive pronouns	
			Subjective case	Objective case	Determiner function	Nominal function
1 st	Sg.		I	Me	My	Mine
	Pl.		We	Us	Our	Ours
2 nd	Sg. and Pl.		You		Your	Yours
3 rd	Sg.	Masc.	He	Him	His	
		Fem.	She	Her		Hers
		Non-personal	It		Its	
	Pl.		They	them	Their	Theirs

Pronouns comprise a varied class of closed-class words with nominal function. Here, 'nominal' means 'noun-like' or, more often, 'like a noun phrase' (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1985). The 1st PP and 2nd PP are characteristically used in the situational context, and refer normally to human beings, for instance, in a dialogue the speaker (I) and addressee (you) properly interpersonal pronouns. However, the use and function of 3rd PP can be seen as more stylistic than that of 1st PP and 2nd PP, since in the canonical speech situation (I) and (you) are normal/ (almost) obligatory. The pronoun (we) has two references; it refers either to the speaker and addressee (inclusive we), or to the speaker and another (exclusive we) (Wales, 1996). The 3rd person is anyone or anything else, who may or may not be present (he, she, it, they), but with a non-participatory role. The 3rd PP (he and she) are identified as singular pronouns referring to human beings; whereas (it) normally refers to non-humans (animals and objects) (Quirk et al., 1985). The 3rd PPI (they) refers to people in general. One of its sociolinguistic functions is in the distinguishing of in-groups from outsiders, 'us' from 'them' (Wales, 1996).

The context organizes the ideological discourse structures which control the social representations. Well-known ingroup–outgroup polarization that organizes ideologies may be coded in the text by the use of pronouns like *us* and *them*, and possessives like *our people* (van Dijk, 2006a). Pronouns have a crucial role in the representation of 'us' and 'them'. Besides their role in identifying the person, gender, and number, they have a referential and deictic function which must be examined in the interaction context and in terms of the identity work accomplished by them (Bramley, 2001). Function and meaning should be context-dependent. The strengthening of different referents is used to show antagonism to opponents or solidarity with an audience to get the approbation of the audience (Lee, 2011). Personal pronouns can indicate (or obscure) collectivity and individuality (Fairclough, 2003), or they can be used for 'self' or 'other' referencing or as a way to polarize representations of in-groups and outgroups (van Dijk, 2001). The meaning of personal pronouns is highly influenced by the social and political 'spaces' within which people and groups are positioned or position themselves (Chilton & Schäffner, 1997). Their choice and interpretation mediated by a number of different social and personal factors including (in)formality, status, solidarity, and power (Wilson, 1990). They can be located on a distancing scale: "a pronominal window into the thinking and attitude of politicians towards particular political topics and political personalities" (Wilson, 1990). 3rd person pronoun can indicate closeness and/or distance in relation to 'self' and 'other' referencing and its distance from the 'deictic centre' of the distancing scale (Chilton, 2004; Wilson, 1990). The flexibility of pronominal reference is exploited by politicians to represent various identities in relation to 'self' and 'other'. Politicians use such reference strategy to place themselves and others appropriately. Thus, are crucial in representing the reality that is produced and realized in the current discourse (Bramley, 2001). Accordingly, the current study focuses on revealing the way in which KG has employed personal and possessive pronouns to represent the U.S. government and its forces, the Iraqi politicians, as well as Iraqi people in relation to its ideological practices.

3. Method

This paper is a qualitative research, since it deals with documents, not ordinal values (Maxwell, 1996; Patton, 2002), aiming to gather information and data following the content analysis in newspaper discourse with a critical flavor as it is related to examine a controversial event happened in Iraq after nine years of the 2003 war represented by AMFs' withdrawal and its depiction in the KG newspaper.

3.1 Procedures

The current study focused on examining how the personal and possessive pronouns are employed to present socio-political ideologies. Hence, data were selected from the KG newspaper tackling the event of AMFs' withdrawal from Iraq. The selection of data depends not only on the research question but also on the actual research situation and what will work most effectively in that situation to give the needed data (Maxwell, 1996) on the basis of the subject under investigation. In Franzosi's (1987) own expression "newspapers have been used systematically as sources of data" (p. 6) as they are trusted to satisfy criteria of reliability (Barranco & Wisler, 1999). Due to being related to the field of English applied linguistics, thus, this study was based on data collected from an Iraqi newspaper issued in the English Language as a hard copy along with its soft copy. Table 2 gives a detailed description of the selected newspaper:

Table 2. Description of the KG newspaper

Date of foundation	Place of issue		Language of issue	Type of issue	Publication frequency	Rate of readership	
	City	Country					
April 2005	Erbil	Iraq	English	Hard copy as well as soft copy	Weekly with a total of four issues	more than 40.000	per week

The reason behind selecting this newspaper is related to being the only Iraqi newspaper issued in the English Language as a hard copy, registered in the Arab Association of Press, and its highest readership which enhances the credibility of the collected data sample.

To conduct a content analysis in organizing the collected data of this study, the sample was organized in accordance with category and unit of analysis. The category was identified through the themes of the analyzed excerpts. The unit of

analysis was represented by excerpts, one or more sentences, containing personal and possessive pronouns as being the main focus of this study.

3.2 Sampling

The sample is represented by seven news excerpts containing personal and possessive pronouns from news stories. The selected data sample of the study indicates the use of purposive sampling since it meets the objective of this study (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). The period of the data sample is during one month, namely December 2011, representing the final and formal withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq which ends the American military existence and the nine years of occupation following the 2003 US-led war against Iraq. These excerpts were analysed using Fairclough's (1995) approach to CDA and Wales' (1996) paradigm of personal and possessive pronouns. Table 3 represents the detailed organization of the sample, as follows:

Table 3. Sample organization of the current study selected from the KG newspaper

No.	Headlines of News Stories	Type	Date of Issue
1	Biden assures Iraqi leaders of U.S. commitment	Article	December 03, 2011
2	U.S. ends its military presence in Iraq	Article	December 17, 2011
3	U.S. withdrawal: End or beginning of Iraq?	Editorial	December 24, 2011
Total number of selected Newspaper stories		3	

3.3 Coding the Data

The data represented by news excerpts selected from the KG newspaper were coded to document the news excerpts for abiding to the ethical issues when carrying out this study. As there were three news stories from which the excerpts were extracted to represent the sample of the study, thus these excerpts have to be coded in order to identify them in terms of their headlines, type and date of issue. Accordingly, the codes used under each excerpt are illustrated in Table 4:

Table 4. Coding method used to identify news excerpts

Headline of news story	Type of news story	Date of issue	Page	Paragraph
H.	A. (Article) E. (Editorial)	D.	Pg.	Pr.

4. Data Analysis

The selected excerpts were analysed following the three dimensions of Fairclough's (1995) approach to CDA, namely: description, interpretation, and explanation. Firstly, the excerpts are described in terms of personal and possessive pronouns employed in them syntactically and semantically, i.e. their grammatical role in the sentence and their references. The personal and possessive pronouns and their references found in the excerpts are identified in **bold form**. Following the syntactic and semantic description of personal and possessive pronouns, it is to interpret the relation between the use of the identified pronouns and the context in which they are employed. Finally, it is to explain how this relation is reproduced to enhance the ideological structures of the KG newspaper.

4.1 Trust in U.S. Government and its Forces

Among the main ideological practices that the KG newspaper emphasized on in its issues, more particularly in relation to the event of AMF's withdrawal from Iraq, is its trust in KRG, U.S. government and its forces. The trust ideology is based on a number of values that are enhanced through the use of personal and possessive pronouns. These values are clarified in the following subsections.

4.1.1 U.S. Government's Loyalty to its Promises

(1) "**We** kept **our** promise to withdraw from Iraq's cities in 2009. **We** kept **our** promise to end **our** combat mission in the summer of 2010," said **the U.S. vice president** [Biden]. "And now, **we** are keeping **our** promise **we** made back in 2008 to remove **our troops** from Iraq by the end of this year, and **they** will be removed".

(H. Biden assures Iraqi leaders of U.S. commitment/A./D. December 03, 2011/Pg. 4/Pr. 9)

This excerpt is a direct quotation of Biden's speech depicting the U.S. government as faithful in keeping its promises and accomplishing them on the planned date. In newspaper discourse, the quotations refer to the discursive practice of internal intertextuality. The direct quotation represents objectivity in reporting the source's statements that have a newsworthy value to strengthen and emphasize the message that the newspaper intends to convey and deliver to its readers (Richardson, 2007). This direct quotation is taken from a source involved in the reported event of AMFs' withdrawal from Iraq.

As far as the personal pronouns are concerned, it is clear that the exclusive pronoun represented by 1st PPI (*we*) referring to the U.S. government represents the subject of almost all sentences in this excerpt. Biden used the exclusive pronoun (*we*) standing for him and members of U.S. government to show his consistency with them and its possessive form (*our*) representing the American identity of the involved troops in the withdrawal event. The pronoun (*our*) occupies the object positions in this excerpt. The active voice represented in this excerpt is related to U.S. government represented by its vice president Joe Biden. The KG newspaper referred to Biden using his formal status to denote his powerful authority as a political member in the U.S. government. In addition, the last clause in this excerpt (**they** will be removed) contains 3rd PPI represented by (*they*). This pronoun occupies the subject position in this clause. It refers to the antecedent phrase (*our troops*) in this clause (we made back in 2008 to remove **our troops** from Iraq by the end of this year).

It is obvious that the exclusive pronoun (*we*) is allocated with this verb phrase (*kept **our** promise*) in all main sentences of this excerpt. The allocation of (*we*) with (*kept **our** promise*) denotes that the U.S. government is loyal to its promises and their realization. Hence, the KG newspaper emphasized on the positive representation of U.S. government by quoting Biden's statement in which he used 1st PPI (*we*) four times to strengthen the consistency and unity among the members of U.S. government on making decisions related to Iraq. This, in turn, enhances the socio-political ideology represented by trust in the U.S. government.

4.1.2 The Supportive Role of U.S. Government and its Forces

(2) **He** [Biden] said the committee [the U.S.-Iraq Higher Coordinating Committee] would be the centerpiece of **U.S. and Iraqi** efforts to build **their** relationship, notably in security issues such as training, intelligence and counter-terrorism.

(H. Biden assures Iraqi leaders of U.S. commitment/A./D. December 03, 2011/Pg. 4/Pr. 8)

This sentence is presented in the form of indirect quotation of Biden's statement concerning the future of U.S.-Iraq relationship, especially on security issues. The sentence consists of two pronouns. The first pronoun is 3rd PSg (*he*) in (**He** [Biden] said) referring to Biden who represents the U.S. government and functioning as the subject of the sentence. The second one is the possessive form of 3rd PPI (*they*) represented by (*their*) in (the centerpiece of **U.S. and Iraqi** efforts to build **their** relationship). This pronoun refers to the relationship of U.S. and Iraq forming the object of the verb (*build*).

In this sentence, Biden's name is substituted by 3rd PSg (*he*) without mentioning his formal status as U.S. vice president. Accordingly, the KG newspaper defined him as being an individual not a politician using informal reference. Based on this sentence, the U.S. government represented by Biden seeks to enhance its relationship with Iraq after withdrawing its forces, particularly in relation to security issues. This reveals that the U.S. government has the military power that enables Iraq to encounter the challenges that result from AMFs' withdrawal from Iraq. In addition, it denotes that the U.S. government has ended its military presence in Iraq, but it is still present politically. This, in turn, enhances the supportive role of U.S. government for Iraq. Consequently, the KG newspaper emphasized on presenting this positive role to ensure its trust in the U.S. government and its policies.

(3) "**They**'ll face challenges from terrorism; **they**'ll face challenges from those that would want to divide **their** country. **They**'ll face challenges from just the test of democracy, **a new democracy** and trying to make **it** work. But the fact is, **we** have given **them** the opportunity to be able to succeed," said U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta.

(H. U.S. ends its military presence in Iraq/A./D. December 17, 2011/Pg. 4/Pr. 9)

This direct quotation presents Panetta's statement regarding the reality of political and security situation in Iraq after AMFs' withdrawal. It is reported to reflect the objectivity practice of the KG newspaper in reporting news events and selecting politicians' statements that have a newsworthy value. In this quotation, 3rd PPI (*they*) in all sentences wherein it is included occupies the subject position and refers to Iraqis. Additionally, its possessive pronoun (*their*) refers to the country of Iraqis, i.e. Iraq. In this clause (**a new democracy** and trying to make **it** work), 3rd PSg (*it*) refers to (*a new democracy*) functioning as the object of this clause. The last sentence (**we** have given **them** the opportunity to be able to succeed) contains two types of pronouns. The first type is represented by 1st PPI (*we*) as the exclusive pronoun referring to the U.S. government and its members and forming the subject of the sentence. The second type is represented by 3rd PPI (*them*) referring to Iraqis and functioning as an object.

Obviously, the quotation enhances the powerful authority and supportive role of U.S. government through the use of personal pronouns in collocation with lexical structure. Iraqis will suffer from various challenges in the absence of U.S. forces represented by terrorism, regional interferences, and the test of democracy as presented in these sentences (*They'll face challenges from terrorism; they'll face challenges from those that would want to divide their country. They'll face challenges from just the test of democracy*). The U.S. government through the statement of its representative realizes the negative effects that will result from the withdrawal of their forces from Iraq, but it believes that Iraqis have to practice their role in controlling and securing their country; thus, it (the U.S. government) decided to withdraw its forces from Iraq. This is represented in this sentence (But the fact is, **we** have given **them** the opportunity to be able to succeed). So, the U.S. government has the power and authority over Iraq and its related issues. In addition, this sentence represented Iraqis as a beneficiary from the opportunity provided by the U.S. government to them to prove their ability in defending their country. This opportunity is represented by the withdrawal of its forces from Iraq.

4.2 Distrust in the Iraqi Political and Economic Policy

Another ideology that is represented in the selected articles on the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq is its distrust in the political and economic policy of the Iraqi government. The distrust ideology is enhanced by a number of values identified through the use of personal pronouns. These values are clarified in the following subsections.

4.2.1 Internal Political, Ethnic and Sectarian Conflicts

(4) **Muhammad** said the invasion of Iraq was really liberation for Kurdish people. But **he** is worried about the U.S. withdrawal and **he** fears clashes between Kurds and Arabs over disputed areas.

(H. U.S. ends its military presence in Iraq/A./D. December 17, 2011/Pg. 4/Pr. 2)

This excerpt denotes the concerns of Kurdish people about their future after the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq and fears of ethnic conflicts. In relation to the use of personal pronouns, the second sentence (But **he** is worried about the U.S. withdrawal and **he** fears clashes between Kurds and Arabs over disputed areas) contains one type of pronoun represented by 3rd PSg (*he*) referring to (*Muhammad*) in the first sentence (**Muhammad** said...) who expressed his own opinion as a Kurdish person concerning the event of AMFs' withdrawal from Iraq. This pronoun is used two times in the sentence and functions as the subject in both positions.

The KG newspaper focused on representing its Kurdish identity through reporting opinions of Kurdish people. In fact, the Kurdish identity represents one of the social ideologies that the KG newspaper attempts to deepen in the minds of its readers since it is issued in KRG and organized by Kurdish journalists. The KG newspaper used 3rd PSg (*he*) two times in order to ascertain the identity of the person involved in this opinion as well as to reflect his objectivity in wording Muhammad's opinion. In spite of using 3rd PSg (*he*) referring to one Kurdish individual, but this opinion forms the negative attitude of most Kurdish people concerning the future of Iraq after AMFs' withdrawal. Accordingly, the KG newspaper emphasized on representing the real attitude of Kurdish people through the use of 3rd PSg (*he*). This attitude is embodied in that Kurdish people were anti-withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq believing that it would result in ethnic conflicts between (*Kurds and Arabs*) over disputed areas which KRG claims that they are related to the north region and must be under its control. Such ethnic conflicts are used to support KG's distrust in the political system that governs Iraq.

(5) A day later, Iraq become embroiled in a new sectarian and political crisis as an arrest warrant was issued for Iraq's Sunni Vice President, Tariq al-Hashemmi, and a number of other Sunni figures, on terror-related charges. This is in addition to controversy around **Deputy Prime Minister Saleh al-Mutlak**, whose criticism of Maliki's dictatorial tendencies left **him** clinging on to **his** position as Maliki sought a vote of no confidence against **him**.

(H. U.S. withdrawal: End or beginning of Iraq?/E./D. December 24, 2011/Pg. 2/Pr. 11)

This excerpt depicts the social and political situation in Iraq within a day after the withdrawal of U.S. forces. Concerning the personal pronouns, only 3rd PSg is employed in this excerpt represented by (*him*) and its possessive form (*his*). This pronoun (*him*) is used both times referring to (*Deputy Prime Minister Saleh al-Mutlak*), as well as (*his*) refers to the political position of (*Saleh al-Mutlak*). The pronoun (*him*) in the first position (...left **him** clinging...) functions as the object of the verb; while in the second position (...Maliki sought a vote of no confidence against **him**), it is the object of the preposition.

The KG newspaper emphasized on presenting the negative actions of Iraqi government following the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq to show its distrust in the Iraqi political system. The negative actions are symbolized by the sectarian and political conflicts between Sunni and Shiite powers. Reading through the excerpt, it is clear that the KG newspaper referred to Sunni politicians with their formal identity as politicians in the Iraqi government, whereas Maliki who represents Shiite power is written without his formal political identity as Prime Minister of Iraqi government then. This is clarified in these phrases related to Sunni politicians (*Iraq's Sunni Vice President, Tariq al-Hashemmi*) and (*Deputy Prime Minister Saleh al-Mutlak*); and Shiite politician (*as Maliki sought a vote of no confidence against him*). Therefore, the KG newspaper neglected the political identity of Maliki as a Prime Minister. For Iraqis, it is known that the socio-political relations between KRG and the central Iraqi government are unstable and facing various challenges, especially in relation to economic issues. Thus, Kurdish politicians distrust in the central government dominated by Shiite politicians affecting the way in which Arab politicians, especially Shiite ones, are depicted in the KG newspaper. Moreover, the KG newspaper focused more on the Sunni politician (*Saleh al-Mutlak*) in this excerpt through substituting his name by the use of 3rd PSg (*him*) and the possessive (*his*). This is because (*Saleh al-Mutlak*) has criticized (*Maliki*) as having (*dictatorial tendencies*), and his criticism has fuelled the sectarian and political crisis in the central government causing instability at all levels of Iraqi government. Such frequent conflicts enhance KG's distrust in the central Iraqi government.

4.2.2 Ineffective Economic Policy

(6) Iraq has ordered billions of dollars' worth of military equipment, including F-16 warplanes, but **it** will **take years** for **those supplies to arrive**, with Iraqis estimating that **it** would **take a full ten years** before **they're** fully assimilated into the military.

(H. U.S. ends its military presence in Iraq/A./D. December 17, 2011/Pg. 4/Pr. 8)

This is a complex sentence consisting of more than one clause defining the ineffective economic planning in relation to military capacities and its related contracts that will take too long period to be implemented. Regarding the use of personal pronouns, the sentence includes three pronouns represented by 3rd PSg (*it*) and 3rd PPl (*they*). On the one hand, 3rd PSg (*it*) is used two times functioning as subject in both positions. In this sentence (**it will take years** for those supplies **to arrive**), it refers to the long period of supplies arrival. But in this sentence (**it would take a full ten years** before they're fully assimilated into the military), it refers to the definite time of supplies assimilation into the military. On the one hand, 3rd PPl (*they*) is used one time in this sentence (**they're** fully assimilated into the military) functioning as a subject. It refers to (**those supplies**) which, in turn, denotes (*military equipment, including F-16 warplanes*).

Through this long sentence on the economic policy of military equipment, the KG newspaper showed its negative attitude concerning the ineffectiveness of economic contracts related to military equipment as they will take too long period to be implemented. This period is indicated by the use of pronoun (*it*). Here, the KG newspaper represented the negative aspect of the economic policy, especially on military equipment, employed in Iraq which is devoted for expenditures regardless of its real implementation. This is supported by the last line of the sentence (*Iraqis estimating that it would take a full ten years*), which means that this belief is shared among Iraqis in general.

4.3 The U.S. Government vs. the Iraqi Government

(7) History will prove that **America** never really got the credit **it** deserved. **It** made huge sacrifices **whilst Iraqi politicians** have constantly failed to deliver. **It** pulled Iraq from the brink of all-out sectarian war in 2007 with the promise of thousands of more troops as part of the surge strategy, **but the Iraqi leaders** again failed to keep **their** promises and **their** end of the bargain.

(H. U.S. withdrawal: End or beginning of Iraq?/E./D. December 24, 2011/Pg. 2/Pr. 6)

This excerpt is presented in the form of comparison. It compares the roles of U.S. and Iraqi governments. It contains two forms of pronouns represented by 3rd PSg (*it*) and the possessive form of 3rd PPl (*they*) that is (*their*). In all sentences where it is included, 3rd PSg (*it*) refers to (*America*) and occupies the subject position. This is clarified in these sentences (**America** never really got the credit **it** deserved), (**It** made huge sacrifices), and (**It** pulled Iraq from the brink of all-out sectarian war in 2007). Hence, the way in which the KG newspaper has focused on the priority of U.S. government over Iraq can be interpreted in relation to its powerful and dominant authority. However, (*their*) occurs two times referring to (*the Iraqi leaders*) as shown in (**the Iraqi leaders** again failed to keep **their** promises and **their** end of the bargain).

Undoubtedly, the KG newspaper emphasized on the positive actions of U.S. government and its forces in supporting Iraq through presenting huge sacrifices and overcoming the sectarian conflicts. Accordingly, the KG newspaper is proud of U.S. government and its forces for their effective roles in Iraq. In contrast, it emphasized on showing the negative actions related to the Iraqi government. It presented the Iraqi government negatively as a failure and disloyal to its promises. The KG newspaper believed that the U.S. government deserves more appreciation for its supportive role in Iraq and this significant role will be proved by history which at the same time will prove the failure of the Iraqi government in the absence of U.S. forces. Consequently, the U.S. government is represented as faithful and supportive, whereas the Iraqi government is represented as a failure.

Furthermore, this comparison reveals the inequality between the U.S. government and the Iraqi government. This is related to the reality of U.S. government as being the powerful authority in the world. In addition, the positive attitude of the KG newspaper when depicting the U.S. government and its roles in Iraq reveals its bias toward the powerful authority. Thus, it represented the U.S. government positively to enhance its trust in it.

5. Results and discussion

This study focused on examining the role of personal and possessive pronouns in revealing hidden ideologies behind the representation of AMFs' withdrawal in the KG newspaper. The analysis of data was based on Fairclough's (1995a) approach to CDA in which pronouns are considered to be one of its devices. The data included excerpts from newspaper stories issued in the KG newspaper on the event of AMFs' withdrawal from Iraq which consisted of different types of personal and possessive pronouns. These excerpts were analyzed through identifying the different pronouns in the KG newspaper to be interpreted and explained according to Fairclough's three-dimensional model in order to reveal the hidden ideologies. According to Fairclough (2001), the ideological power can be presented in different forms of language and at various levels. One of these forms the analysis pointed out was using pronouns since they can be used to explain the ideology and power relation (Muqit, 2012).

The analysis of ideology was based on the concept of positive and negative representations of (*us*) and (*them*) concerning the event of AMFs' withdrawal from Iraq to reveal how the KG newspaper represented the U.S. government and its forces, on the one hand, and the Iraqi government and people, on the other hand; In other words, how the KG newspaper identified Iraqis and Americans through the use of pronouns to present its socio-political ideologies. The analysis revealed that personal and possessive pronouns had a role in identifying both groups.

It is noteworthy that the main ideologies of the KG newspaper were represented by pro-U.S. government, anti-withdrawal, and anti-political system and economic policy in Iraq. On the basis of these major ideologies, a number of values were presented in relation to Iraq and U.S. governments. To enhance its ideologies, the KG newspaper depicted the U.S. government positively by emphasizing on its positive actions; in contrast, it emphasized on presenting the negative actions related to the Iraqi government to represent it negatively. So, it can be said that through the use of

pronouns, the KG newspaper showed its bias towards the U.S. government and the extension of its forces' presence in Iraq for serving socio-political agendas of KRG.

Based on the excerpts, the major participants involved in the event of AMFs' withdrawal were political members from both Iraq and U.S. governments, U.S. forces, and Iraqis. This section focused on the ideological representation of those participants in the KG newspaper. Accordingly, the identification of pronouns was related to two groups: U.S. and Iraq. Pronouns of each group were described, interpreted, and explained one by one. The description of pronouns was tabulated and then followed by paragraphs to interpret and explain them in relation to the ideology represented by them. Firstly, Table 5 shows the description of pronouns related to U.S. as follows:

Table 5. Description of pronouns related to U.S.

Excerpt No.	Pronouns	Type	Grammatical role	Reference
1	We	1 st PPl	Subject	Exclusive pronoun refers to the members of U.S. government
	our	possessive		Relating the noun (<i>promises</i>) to the U.S. government and determining the close relation between Biden and U.S. troops
	They	3 rd PPl	Subject of a passive sentence	U.S. troops
2	He	3 rd PSg	Subject	U.S. vice president Joe Biden
3	We	1 st PPl	Subject	Exclusive pronoun refers to the members of U.S. government
7	It	3 rd PSg	Subject	America (The U.S. government)

Based on Table 5, it is obvious that three types of personal pronouns were used to identify the members of U.S. government and its forces including 1st PPl (*we*), and 3rd PPl (*they*), and 3rd PSg (*he* and *it*) functioning as the subject of sentences that included them. This can be interpreted as that the U.S. government and its forces have the power that prioritizes their role in the sentence and hence, they occupy the subject position. This reveals the effect of political practices on the way in which powerful actors have to be categorized and represented. Consequently, the KG newspaper focused on representing the U.S. government and its forces positively and this is enhanced through collocating positive actions with pronouns related to U.S. So, the KG newspaper manipulated the position of the U.S. government and its forces and represented them as supporters.

In the excerpt (1), the direct quotation of Biden's statement on the decision of withdrawal contained 1st PPl (*we*) functioning as exclusive pronoun since Biden represented his government U.S. in a meeting held in Erbil so that he was speaking about the loyalty of U.S. government in keeping its promises; thus, Iraqi audience were not included in this pronoun. As stated by Pennycook (1994) and Wales (1996), pronoun (*we*) has different references; it refers either to the speaker and addressee (inclusive *we*), or to the speaker and another (exclusive *we*). Besides creating groupings, pronoun (*we*) is used to serve political purposes of earning trust.

In addition, the possessive pronoun (*our*) was used to relate the noun (*promises*) to the U.S. government and determining the close relation between Biden and U.S. troops, and 3rd PPl (*they*) referred to the U.S. troops and hence, it functioned as inclusive as these troops are related to U.S. and Biden referred to them as being related to U.S. not to Iraq. The frequent use of pronoun (*we*) in Biden's statement showed the solidarity among the members of U.S. government as well as authority and communality. In the excerpt (2), 3rd PSg (*he*) is used to refer to the U.S. vice president Joe Biden. Using such pronoun, the KG newspaper identified Biden as an individual having the political authority whose statement is of newsworthy value to be reported; therefore, the indirect quotation is related to Biden, who is representative of the U.S. government.

Of importance is that the excerpt (3) is a direct quotation of Leon Panetta, who represented the U.S. Defense Secretary, in which two types of personal pronouns were used, namely 3rd PPl (*they*) which refers to Iraqis and 1st PPl (*we*) which is exclusive pronoun refers to the members of U.S. government. In this excerpt, the use of these two different types of personal pronouns is to make a contrast between both groups, i.e. Iraqis and Americans, as well as stressing a fact that the U.S. government had a clearer view than Iraqis on their future after the withdrawal of U.S. forces. Finally, pronoun (*it*) is used in the excerpt (7) to identify the positive actions and roles of America (the U.S. government) in comparison to the negative actions and roles of the Iraqi government. Through this comparison, the KG newspaper wanted to convey a message to its audience saying that the U.S. government has done its best to keep Iraq secure, but the Iraqi government is ineligible to control Iraq and keep it secure. So, the KG newspaper attempted to hide its socio-political ideologies represented by anti-withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq and pro-U.S. government behind its real attitude which was biased towards the powerful authority, i.e. the U.S. government and its forces.

Next, Table 6 describes pronouns used to identify the Iraqi government.

Table 6. Description of pronouns related to Iraq

Excerpt No.	Pronouns	Type	Grammatical role	Reference
3	They	3 rd PPI	Subject	Iraqis
	It	3 rd PSg	Object	A new democracy in Iraq
	Them	3 rd PPI	Object	Iraqis
4	He	3 rd PSg	Subject	A Kurdish person
5	Him	3 rd PSg	Object	Iraqi Sunni politician (Saleh al-Mutlak)
	his	Possessive		Determining the position of Saleh al-Mutlak
6	It	3 rd PSg	Subject	The required period for implementing military contracts
	They	3 rd PPI	Subject	Military equipment
7	Their	possessive		Determining the identity of actors involved in the negative actions (i.e. the negative actions of the Iraqi leaders)

Table 6 clarifies that the grammatical roles of personal pronouns that refer to the members of the Iraqi government are represented by subject and object positions. Additionally, the personal pronouns used to refer to Iraq, its politicians, people, and issues are of 3rd PSg (*he* and *it*) and 3rd PPI (*they*) along with their possessive forms (*its*, *his*, and *their*). It is believed that the use of 3rd PP can indicate closeness and/or distance in relation to 'self' and 'other' referencing and its distance from the 'deictic centre' of the distancing scale (Chilton, 2004; Wilson, 1990). It is obvious that when referring to the Iraqi politicians and actions related to them, they were identified through the use of 3rd PP.

In relation to 3rd PPI (*they*), it refers to people in general. One of its sociolinguistic functions is in the distinguishing of in-groups from outsiders, 'us' from 'them' (Wales, 1996). In the excerpt (3), pronouns (*they*) and (*them*) were presented in the direct quotation of Panetta's statement referring to Iraqis. They were used by Panetta along with 1st PPI (*we*), which refers to the U.S. government, to serve certain purposes including differentiate between groups, Iraqis and the U.S. government; show that the U.S. government has supported Iraqis by giving them democratic regime and helped them to be able to secure themselves in the absence of the U.S. forces; stress the fact that the U.S. government has a clear vision concerning Iraq's future without the U.S. forces; as well as showing the consistency among the members of U.S. government on foreign policy concerning Iraq and its affairs.

In the excerpt (4), the KG newspaper tried to show its Kurdish identity through involving Kurdish people to be interviewed as it is asserted by the use of noun phrase (Kurdish people) expressed by the interviewee named *Muhammad* and then substituted by 3rd PSg (*he*) to avoid redundancy. While in the excerpt (5), it focused on the representation of sectarian conflicts between Sunnis and Shiites through identifying two Iraqi politicians each related to a different sectarian group, namely one was related to Sunnis represented by *Saleh al-Mutlak* and the second one related to Shiites represented by *Maliki*. It is noteworthy to say that the KG newspaper focused more on identifying Sunni group through the use of 3rd PSg (*him*) in the objective case and its possessive form (*his*) which identified the Sunni politician *Saleh al-Mutlak*. In addition, the KG newspaper referred to the Sunni politician using his full name along with his political status, whereas the name of the Shiite politician was mentioned using his surname without referring to his political status. This can be interpreted in relation to the Iraqi political context. In other words, Kurds have socio-economic and political problems with the central government dominated by Shiite power whose Prime Minister was *Maliki* at the time of U.S. forces' withdrawal from Iraq. Consequently, the KG newspaper biased towards identifying Sunni group than Shiite group through the frequent use of personal pronoun related to Sunni politician.

In fact, the KG newspaper emphasized on presenting the issue of political and sectarian conflicts evolved after AMFs' withdrawal in order to show that the Iraqi politicians cannot control Iraq as they could not control their internal conflicts. Additionally, the economic policy in relation to military issues was under focus. This policy on military capacities which were identified by 3rd PPI (*they*) was represented by making ineffective contracts due to taking too long time to be implemented. This long period was identified through the verb phrases (*will take years*) and (*would take a full ten years*) both were preceded by (*it*) in the excerpt (6). Finally, the excerpt (7) included 3rd PSg (*it*) referring to America and possessive pronoun (*their*) relating the negative actions to Iraqi politicians. This excerpt compared between the positive role of the U.S. government in supporting Iraq and the negative actions of the Iraqi government. Through this comparison, it becomes clear that the KG newspaper manipulated the reality of the U.S. government and its forces in Iraq representing them as supporters not occupiers. In addition, it showed its distrust in the members of the Iraqi government to control the situation in Iraq.

Based on the detailed description of pronouns related to both groups, it is clear that there was no reference to 1st PSg, 2nd PP, and 3rd PSg represented by *I*, *you*, and *she* respectively. In relation to *I*, it can be said that the KG newspaper was

not concerned with presenting individual activities since the implementation of the event in question involved the participation of both groups. Thus, both groups have a role in that event. The absence of *you* indicates that there is no explicit appeal to a specific group as addressee of the newspaper discourse. Therefore, it can be assumed that the primary goal of the KG newspaper is to define and represent the role of a particular group and not to appeal to other groups. Based on this view, it is possible to conclude that the newspaper discourse is addressed to all groups. Finally, the personal pronoun (*she*) was not indicated in the KG newspaper in relation to the event in question. This can be interpreted as that the newspaper did not focus on a specific gender when presenting the event. Though the pronoun (*he*) was used, but the context in which it was used denoted a shared attitude among Iraqis in general and Kurds in particular. So, it was not used to indicate the preference of a specific gender over another.

In short, the KG newspaper revealed the inequality between the U.S. government and the Iraqi government in terms of power, domination, policy making, and positive actions undertaken by the U.S. administration. This inequality is symbolized by its trust in the U.S. government, its policies and its actions concerning Iraq through the use of personal and possessive pronouns. These pronouns were used in association with lexical items identifying the positive role of the U.S. government and its forces in Iraq. In contrast, it represented the members of the Iraqi government and Iraqi issues negatively and this is enhanced through collocating negative actions with pronouns related to Iraq. The members of the Iraqi government and its related issues were identified with negative actions represented by sectarian and political conflicts on power. It can be said that pronouns related to U.S. and Iraq were used to:

1. Identify the powerful group.
2. Show the solidarity among the members of the U.S. government and their political authority in policy making concerning Iraq.
3. Show the disagreement among Iraqi politicians.
4. Serve political purposes such as earning trust in the policy of U.S. government.
5. Differentiate between the U.S. government and the Iraqi government in terms of policy and actions.
6. Persuade the audience of the positive role of the U.S. government in Iraq.
7. Reveal the reality of the Iraqi economic and political systems.

The analysis of the pronouns used concedes with Fairclough's (2001) viewpoint that ideological power can be presented by pronouns. They can be used to explain the ideology and power relation (Muqit, 2012). It is revealed that personal and possessive pronouns had a role in identifying social groups. This concedes with van Dijk's (2006a) point of view that groups polarization organizing ideologies may be coded in the text by the use of pronouns like *us* and *them*, and possessives like *our people*. Through the use of pronouns, the KG newspaper showed its bias towards the U.S. government and the extension of its forces' presence in Iraq for serving socio-political agendas of KRG. This concedes with Bello's (2013) interpretation that the use of pronouns is not a mere anaphoric or deictic reference, but they are used to position self and others within the purview of political interests and associations.

In addition, pronoun (*we*) was used to serve political purposes of earning trust. This stands for Bello's (2013) and David & Dumanig's (2011) results that the use of 'we' creates multi-faceted dimensions and groupings all serving different political purposes such as earning trust. The KG newspaper focused on presenting direct quotations of the members of U.S. government which consist of the frequent use of pronoun (*we*) to show the solidarity and consistency among them as well as authority and communality. This interpretation is enhanced by Pennycook's (1994) study on the politics of pronouns concluding that pronoun (*we*) is used in different forms of discourses to denote authority and communality. In addition, the study of Sotillo & Wang-Gempp (2004) on ideology in online political discussions showed that pronoun (*we*) is generally used to display solidarity.

Furthermore, pronouns (*they*) and (*we*) were used to make a contrast between social groups as well as stressing a fact that the U.S. government had a clearer view than Iraqis on their future after the withdrawal of U.S. forces. This, in turn, stands for De Fina's (1995) result showing that the use of these two different types of personal pronouns can be seen as encoding the contrast between in-group and out-group and this contrast could be a rhetoric device to stress a fact. Additionally, it is obvious that pronouns like (*she*) and (*you*) were not frequently used in the KG newspaper as it aimed at defining and representing the role of a particular group and not to appeal to other groups. Based on this view, it is possible to conclude that the newspaper discourse is addressed to all groups. This coincides with De Fina's (1995) result concerning the absence of pronoun (*you*) in the political speeches that it denotes generalization.

6. Conclusions and future research

The current study aimed at revealing the way in which the KG newspaper employed personal and possessive pronouns to present its hidden socio-political ideologies. It is clear that the KG newspaper emphasized on the positive representation of actions related to the U.S. government and its forces, whereas actions related to the Iraqi government were represented in a negative way. This representation of *us* and *them* involved the use of personal and possessive pronouns. Through the use of these pronouns, the KG newspaper presented its socio-political ideologies. These ideologies were related to groups' identity, comparing groups in terms of policy and actions, as well as serving political purposes. The KG newspaper revealed the inequality between the U.S. government and the Iraqi government in terms of power, domination, policy making, and positive actions undertaken by the U.S. administration. This inequality is symbolized by its trust in the U.S. government, its policies and its actions concerning Iraq through the use of personal and possessive pronouns. Remarkably, the KG newspaper manipulated the real political role behind the existence of U.S. government and its forces in Iraq through the use of pronouns. On the one hand, it used personal and possessive pronouns associated with the positive representation of the U.S. government and its forces to show its trust in them. On

the other hand, personal and possessive pronouns related to the Iraqi politicians were associated with negative representation to enhance its distrust in the Iraqi government. Based on this diverged presentation from the real purpose of positive/ negative presentation of US/ THEM, it can be said that the KG newspaper presented the U.S. government and its forces as in-group, whereas the Iraqi government and its members as outgroup. This can be interpreted in relation to the influence of deep political relations between the U.S. government and its ally KRG on the newspaper organization.

It is found that the KG newspaper made use of direct quotation of American politicians' statements which contain plural personal and possessive pronouns when referring to their actions. This has served two aspects; firstly, it showed its objectivity in conveying the news event using quotations of newsworthy value. Secondly, it enhanced its trust in the U.S. government and its forces through these direct quotations of American politicians whose government has a powerful authority over Iraq. Of importance is Biden's statement which is composed of 1st PPI (we) referring to the U.S. government to show the unity and consistency among the members of U.S. government and their loyalty to the promises undertaken by the U.S. government. In contrast, the KG newspaper emphasized on presenting the negative actions of the Iraqi government and the negative attitudes of Iraqis on the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq to show its distrust in the Iraqi politicians. Concerning personal pronouns, the KG newspaper used 3rd PSg and 3rd PPI to identify Iraqis and Iraqi politicians. This implies that the KG newspaper attempted to hide its real attitude represented by anti-withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq behind its socio-political ideologies which were biased to the powerful authority, i.e. the U.S. government and its forces.

Along with the analysis, the newspaper discourse has extensive power which can be utilized not only in the context of news production, but in shaping public opinion as well. The newspaper discourse creates and provides sense to social interactions. Consequently, appropriately applied discursive strategies for encouraging social acceptance are a strong promotional tool for media organizations and their practices. It is a fact that this study was confined to examine the use of personal and possessive pronouns as an ideological linguistic structure in one Iraqi English newspaper; however, researchers pursuing such type of study can utilize the same methodology in future works to compare the use of these pronouns in two or more newspapers. Thus, they can provide new socio-political ideologies hidden under the use of those pronouns in relation to different cultures and media organizations.

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