Semantic Prosodies and Frame Semantics in Media Discourse: A Case Study of the Ubiquitous Mayhem in the Iraqi City of Kirkuk

Raith Zeher Abid[1] & Nidaa Hussain Fahmi Al Khazraji[1]

[1] Department of English Language, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Karbala, Karbala, Iraq

Correspondence: Raith Zeher Abid, Department of English Language, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Karbala, Karbala, Iraq. E-mail: raithzeher@gmail.com or nidaa62@gmail.com

Abstract

The study investigates the semantic prosodies and semantic framing of the Iraqi city of Kirkuk as depicted in the media. This research aims to supplement current critical research by investigating the issue of Kirkuk and the main reasons for its constant mayhem as presented in media discourse, which hitherto has never been investigated. Moreover, this study's synergy of semantic prosody and semantic framing is novel. The corpus consists of Eastern and Western news articles retrieved from 4 December 2012 to 23 December 2012. The results of the study indicated that Kirkuk is typically associated with negative prosodies that revolve around political unrest, military tension, and bomb attacks. The main reasons for this mayhem, as depicted in the media, are the city's most prominent features that is, its multi-ethnicity and oil wealth.

Keywords: Kirkuk, semantic prosody, frame semantic, corpus linguistics, concordance, Eastern media, Western media

1. Introduction

Before the war on Iraq which started in 2003, Iraq was divided into two regions, Iraqi Kurdistan, where the Kurds live, and the rest of Iraq where Arabs live. This division is due to an ever-present conflict that had engulfed the country for over five decades between the Iraqi government and the Kurdistan region which is started with Kurdistan's endeavours to gain regional autonomy. This decision resulted in both regions to fight with each other to the point that even chemical weapons were used as tools of genocide in the 1980s as a response to Iraqi Kurds who in the midst of the Iraq-Iran war helped Iran to strategically direct heavy blows to the central government forces. One of the zones that took its fair share of mayhem and destruction is the city of Kirkuk which is positioned exactly between the two conflicted regions. After the invasion of Iraq, Kurdistan became an important part of the newly organised central government and even the president of Iraq is now a Kurd. This major amendment in the Iraqi government, however, did not solve the constant turmoil in Kirkuk which reached its breaking point recently when the Iraqi government and the Kurdistan region assembled their armed forces against one another just to take control over the city.

In the midst of all the mayhem that Kirkuk experienced and is still experiencing, media play a fundamental role in reporting to the world about Kirkuk's situation. Media discourse, van Dijk (1996) argues, is a primary tool that has the capacity "to control to some extent the minds of readers or viewers" (10). To the best knowledge of the researchers, the issue of Kirkuk, as represented in media discourse, has never been examined critically by any researcher. Thus, the researchers believe that it is crucial to examine how media discourse constructs the issue of Kirkuk to the readers, specifically, examining the semantic frames that the media is endeavouring to instil in the mind of the readers regarding Kirkuk.

Semantic prosody and semantic framing will be used to examine the semantic profiles that Kirkuk has and the frames that media discourse is introducing to the readers. Semantic prosody is defined as the expression of the text producer's attitude toward a certain phenomenon (Stubbs, 2001). There are few studies which have used semantic prosody as an analytical tool. These include studies by Salama (2011) who investigated the ideological collocation and the recontexualization of Wahhabi-Saudi Islam after the 9/11 attacks, and Cotterill (2001) who examined the semantic prosodies in representations of marital violence in the O.J. Simpson trial. This rarity is due to the fact that semantic prosody is mostly used in non-critical research, those that focus on the linguistic

aspects of language. Hence, in order for researchers, such as Salama (2011) and Cotterill (2001), to use semantic prosody in critical research, critical discourse analysis (CDA) has also to be utilised in order to analyse the linguistic output of the prosodies.

Semantic framing is a theory that bases its idea on the notion that concepts evoke certain semantic frames in the readers' mind that function as guidelines for the readers to understand that particular concept. This theoretical framework is preponderantly used in studies of a critical nature that investigates how discourse is used to instil predetermined frames in the receivers' thought. For instance, Harmond & Muenchen (2006) who investigated the semantic framing in the build up to the Iraq war in FOX, CNN and other U.S. broadcast news programs, and Vliegenthart & Schröder (2010) who conducted a cross-national comparison of newspaper discourse, focusing on the semantic frames used to depict the Iraq war.

The main reason for integrating the theories of semantic prosody and frame semantics is due to the fact that semantic prosody is typically used in non-critical and linguistically based studies while semantic framing is employed as a theory of critical analysis of discourse. Hence, as an alternative to CDA, semantic framing will be used to analyse the semantic prosodies which is a novel synergy. Consequently, the dynamics behind the study's framework is based on the notion that the theory of semantic framing will provide the critical analysis necessary for deciphering the linguistically empirical semantic profiles of the search term "Kirkuk" in the corpus.

2. Theoretical Framework

A combination of two models was employed to carry out the analysis of this study's corpus. The first model was the semantic prosody which was fundamental to acknowledge the semantic profiles of the diverse words that accompany the search term Kirkuk. The second model was semantic framing which was a crucial theoretical step to understand the resulted semantic prosodies of Kirkuk for the sake of grasping the media's outlook and attitude towards the ever-present mayhem in the city.

2.1 Semantic Prosody

The concept of semantic prosody revolves around the idea that words typically collocate with other words which influence its negative or positive understanding. Semantic prosody, according to Sinclair (2004, p. 34), is "attitudinal, and on the pragmatic side of the semantics/pragmatics continuum". This, in turn, increases the range of word meaning realizations as the usual semantic value of words is not necessarily interrelated. However, semantic prosody illuminates the supposed way a word should be understood as it "expresses something close to the "function" of the item", thus, "it shows how the rest of the item is to be interpreted functionally. Without it, the string of words just "means"—it is not put to use in a viable communication" (Sinclair, 2004, p. 34). For instance, the semantic prosody of "cause", as indicated by Stubbs (1994), has overwhelmingly negative prosodies, as in the following instances of the word "cause" retrieved from the corpus of contemporary American English (COCA):

> Filling these buffers would cause delay to increase,
>
> not yet become a widespread cause for concern.
>
> to respond to congestion can cause complete starvation.
>
> Oversized buffers fill and cause delay, destroying many uses of the Internet
>
> induced by buffer bloat may cause DNS lookup failure.

What is fundamental about semantic prosody is its constant reference to the use of corpus linguistics which is a computer-based method for analysing large bodies of textual data which cannot be handled manually (McEnery & Wilson, 2001). Thus, via the use of substantial data base of real life language use that corpus linguistics typically employ, the negative or positive value of a particular word can be derived. Consequently, it is fundamental for this research to use corpus linguistics as it will indicate the semantic prosody that is interrelated to the city of Kirkuk as depicted in the media.

2.2 Semantic Framing

The way media discourse influences the public view has been a point of interest for a large body of research that endeavours to examine the diverse techniques media writers utilise to achieve this consequence. Semantic framing is one of the diverse envisaged theories that are dedicated to examine the basis of media's influence on the public's thought. The notion of framing is defined by Entman (2003) as a process of "selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution" (5). Framing is one of the "central activities of contemporary, mediatized democracies in which the public can only meet itself through representation" (Coleman & Ross, 2010,

p. 3). Theoretically, according to Scheufele (1999), framing is part and parcel of agenda setting which is based on the premise that media discourse does not impose ideas on the public; however, it directs the public's frame of thoughts to examine and reflect on certain matters (Harmon & Muenchen, 2009). However, Lakoff (2004) argues that "framing matters" because when facts and frames cannot be assimilated by discourse receptors, the frames are kept and the facts are discarded, as a result, "frames once entrenched are hard to dispel" (73). This notion is further supported by Macdonald (2003) who stresses the seriousness of framing via linking it to ideology which has a major part in raising supplementary abstract ways of thinking via discourse as it is more "emphatically driven by a will to power, or a desire to establish a particular frame of thinking as at least the most valid or even, in its more fanatical forms, as "the truth"" (28).

The theory of semantic framing is subdivided into two levels, macro and micro. The macro level framing describes the "modes of presentation that journalists and other communicators use to present information in a way that resonates with existing underlying schemas among their audience" (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 12). A prominent example of this phenomenon is the way Iraq in 2002 and 2003 was depicted to the American public in Bush's discourse as a country with Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and connections to Al Qaeda. The micro level framing examines "how people use information and presentation features regarding issues as they form impressions" (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 12). Stemming from the last example, this level of framing fits well the way the American public reacted to Bush's discourse by dramatically increasing their support for the war as 87% of Americans believed that Iraq had WMD programme and 70% agreed that Iraq had direct connection to Al Qaeda (Kull et al., 2004). For the purpose of this study, the macro level framing will be the focus of this study as the writer is endeavouring to illuminate the way Kirkuk is depicted in media discourse.

3. Methodology

3.1 The Corpus

The main data were retrieved from Google Archives, a site that provides up-to-date news articles from around the world media sources. The corpus consisted of 98 news articles that were retrieved from diverse Western and Eastern mass media, including CNSNEWS, NBCNEWS, Pakistan Today, Conservative Crusader, The Voice of Russia, Iraq Updates, Reuters, Al Bawaba, Jerusalem Post, Press TV, Voice of America, China Daily, AntiWar, France24, Al Arabiya, FIRSTPOST, and so on. The retrieved articles were within the period of the 4th of December 2012 to the 23rd of December 2012. Although the corpus comprised 43278 words, which is small for a corpus-based study, the data for this particular investigation is believed by the researchers to be sufficient for understanding the way Kirkuk is depicted in the media. Before the title of each and every article, the word "title" was added so that all the titles of the diverse articles can be retrieved with ease via the use of the language processing programme. The corpus of contemporary American English (COCA), which consists of 450 million words from diverse genres of discourse, was used in this research to confirm and authenticate the results of the study.

3.2 Corpus Analysis

The created corpus was analysed via the use of Anthony's (2011) AntConc (version 3.2.4w). Although semantic prosodies framework typically utilises the collocation method, which is a "co-occurrence relationship between two words" (McEnery & Hardie, 2012, p. 240), this research used the concordance method, which is defined as a computer based methodology that provides the researcher with a "list of all the occurrences of a particular search term in a corpus, presented within the context that they occur in; usually a few words to the left and right of the search term" (Baker, 2006, p. 71). The fundamental reason for employing concordance rather than collocation is based on the belief that concordance analysis can supplement all the other methodological tools that corpus linguistics offer (Baker et al., 2008) and its technique of showing search terms in their context is crucial for the researchers to provide an accurate interpretation of the results. Baker's (2006) step-by-step guide to concordance analysis was used in this research. The following are the main points that Baker (2006, p. 92) proposed which are most applicable to this research:

1)   Build or obtain access to a corpus.

2)   Decide on the research term (e.g. refugee)-bearing in mind that search terms can be expanded to include plurals (refugees), euphemisms (aliens), anaphors (them, they) and proper nouns of relevant individuals.

3)   Obtain concordance of the search term(s).

4)   Clean concordance e.g., by removing repetitions or other lines which are not relevant-for example, references that refer to aliens from space than aliens as refugees.

5) Sort the concordance repeatedly on different words to the left and right while looking for evidence for grammatical, semantic or discourse patterns.

6) Look for further evidence of such patterns in the corpus.

4. Results and Discussion

This section of the article is subdivided into the analysis of the news headlines, to have a concrete understanding of the concordance lines, and the analysis of the search term Kirkuk via the use of the semantic profiles and the semantic frames that are interrelated with the search term Kirkuk.

4.1 The Major Headlines

To accurately decipher the retrieved data and to have a holistic understanding of the concordance lines, the researchers believe that examining the article's headlines is fundamental. Headlines, according to van Dijk (2006, p. 373), are "typically used to express topics and to signal the most important information of a text" to attract reader's attention and also providing them with the gist of what the article is all about. Moreover, headlines, according to Tankard (2001), are fundamental aspects of framing that media utilises in its discourse structure. Thus, the exploration of the major themes in the headings will create a concrete basis for the researchers' interpretation of the data. The following table represents a glimpse of the major articles headlines in the corpus.

Table 1. Major headlines in the corpus

Subject	Headlines
Violence	**20 die** as more **deadly bombings** hit Iraq
	Al-Qaeda surge: Iraq drowning in **terrorist attacks**
	At least **6 die** in **blasts** in Iraq
	Baghdad-Erbil Tensions Intensify Over New Kurdish Reference to Disputed Lands
	Blasts hit Iraq's Kirkuk, disputed territories
	Bomb blasts in Iraq threaten Shias and security forces
	Bombers, **gunmen attack** disputed Iraqi-Kurd areas
	Bombs strike disputed northern area
	Bombs, **blasts kills 11** in Iraq disputed areas
	Deaths in Iraq **bomb explosions**
	Eight killed, **55 injured** in series of **explosions** in Kirkuk
	International Forces for Kirkuk Would be a Big Mistake
	Iraq **Attacks Kill 26**, Many in Kurdish-Claimed Areas
	Iraq **attacks kill at least 12**
	Iraq **bombings kill seven** people
	Iraq: Series of **blasts kill 11** , **wound 50** in Kirkuk
	More than **2 dozen dead** in Iraq **violence**
	More than **two dozen killed** in Iraq
	No imminent **confrontation** between Kurds and Iraq central government
	Series of **blasts hits** Iraq's Kirkuk
	Series of **blasts hits** Iraq's Kirkuk, **6 killed** title series of **blasts strikes** Iraq's Kirkuk
	Series of **blasts strikes** Iraq's Kirkuk
	Students inspect a **damaged house** after **a bomb attack** in Kirkuk
	Turkish MFA condemns **bomb attacks** in Iraq
	Wave of **attacks kills 19** in Iraq
	Wave of **bombings hit** ethnically disputed northern area
	Wave Of **Deadly Violence** In Iraq **Claims Dozens Of Lives**
	Wave of **bombings kills** 25 in Iraq
	Wave of **attacks claims** 48 in Iraq
Oil	**Exxon Deal** Brings Iraq, Kurdistan to Brink of Civil War
	In Iraq, **Exxon oil deal** foments talk of civil war
	Iraq ups its **selling game** on course to **oil's** top tier total
	Letter From Kirkuk: How **Oil Riches** And Ethnic Divisions Threaten Fragile Peace In Iraq
	Oil Flow At Iraq's Kirkuk-Ceyhan **Pipeline** Resumes
Government	Arab, Turkmen ethnicities criticize **Kurdish government policies**
	Iraq in 2012 scrambles for hope amid **political spats, violence**
	Turkey and **Iraqi Kurdistan** are becoming **major partner's** in the region's oil trade, side-lining the **role of Iraq's central government** in the process.
	Iraq, **Kurds** reach deal on enclave

Note. [a] The highlighted words are indicator of the headline category.

The major thematic pattern that can be derived from the above headings revolves around violence which dominates the news when it comes to reporting about the city of Kirkuk. This violence is subdivided into attacks in Kirkuk and the sinister threat of confrontation between the central government of Iraq and the Kurdistan region. Moreover, even when media reports are writing about the topics of oil and government, their reports are predominantly negative because oil is dubbed as one of the main reason for unrest and confrontation between Kurdistan and the Iraqi central government. Moreover, topics about the government portray notions of insecurity, and political instability. This will be further investigated subsequently.

4.2 Kirkuk's Portrayal

Kirkuk in the news headlines, as mentioned in the above section, is associated preponderantly with aspects of violence, oil issues, and political struggle. These properties will provide a background for the analysis of the following concordance lines of the search term Kirkuk.

Table 2. Concordance lines for the word Kirkuk

11 explosions jolted different parts of the Iraqi city of	**Kirkuk**	including a Shiite mosque and a local radio station,
A **series of explosions rocked** the oil rich city of	**Kirkuk**	targeting four neighborhoods across the city. Accordi
anti-Qaeda militia checkpoint west of the north Iraq city of	**Kirkuk**	**killed one militiaman**, security and medical officials
as **Dijla Operations Command** and deployed it to Diyala,	**Kirkuk**	and Salahuddin, the disputed provinces claimed by
attacks struck yesterday, Sunday, December 1 6, the city of	**Kirkuk**	**causing nine deaths** (including 2 children) and more
been made as well? Ali: First of all, **Maliki's visit** this year to	**Kirkuk**	was the **start of the crisis**. That was provocative
begin with a single misfire. In some areas near the city of	**Kirkuk**	home of **a massive oil field** and the epicenter of
blasts on Sunday, which **targeted** Shia places of worship in	**Kirkuk**	and a local branch of the Patriotic Union of Kurdista
Cardinal Leonardo Sandri's visit to the largest mosque in	**Kirkuk**	a "**historic event**". The Prefect of the Congreg
Cardinal Sandri had visited the largest Sunni mosque in	**Kirkuk**	meeting a qualified delegation of Islamic
central government dismisses as illegal. **Bombings** in	**Kirkuk**	**Rattle** Iraqi Christians Kirkuk -- **Terrorist attacks**
city, and **a car bomb** and a **roadside bomb detonated** near a	**Kirkuk**	television channel, according to police officials. K
Clashes …erupted in November in and around	**Kirkuk**	province and the so-called disputed territories. Mar
east **25 people were killed** in **Monday attacks** near Mosul and	**Kirkuk**	in Iraq's north. Control over the oil-rich city is a
exploded in … Tuz Khurmatu, a town 70km south of	**Kirkuk**	**killing five people**. It is the second consecutive da
gunmen on an anti-Al Qaeda militia checkpoint west of	**Kirkuk**	**killed one militiaman**. Wave Of Deadly Violence
he **bomb and armed attacks** in Iraq, including in Baghdad and	**Kirkuk**	on Sunday and Monday which left **dozens dead** and
injured, both the Peshmerga and the Iraqi Army have ringed	**Kirkuk**	But the tensions are far greater than just a singe
Iraqi Army will not change this fact, but if they **tried to take**	**Kirkuk**	from Kurdistan…**US intervention** will definitely be
Kurds are the dominant ethnicity…**enhance their claim** to	**Kirkuk**	and its **oil riches**, has been repeatedly shelved after
moving from **tense posturing** in the area around	**Kirkuk**	into a **combat zone**. The **dispute** over the a
Kurds, then Arabs and then Turkmen." Omar Sideeq, head of	**Kirkuk's**	health department, said **six people were killed** and
roadside bombs exploded near a Shi'ite Muslim mosque in	**Kirkuk**	city, and **car bomb and a roadside bomb detonated**
roadside bombs exploded near two Shia mosques in the city of	**Kirkuk**	on Sunday. The reaction of the local officials in th
say Iraq's **former Sunni dictator Saddam Hussein "Arabised"**	**Kirkuk**	by **encouraging Arabs to move there in the 1980s**
series of attacks that occurred in Iraq's northern city of	**Kirkuk**	on Sunday … **killing at least 47 people** and **wound**
side bombs on Sunday **targeted** two Shia places of worship in	**Kirkuk**	one in the city's north and another in its south,
The **terrorists** want to create **chaos** and **strife** among	**Kirkuk's**	components," Kirkuk's Governor Najimeldin Kareem,

The highlighted words are indicator of the negative and positive semantic prosodies of the word Kirkuk.

Much like the subdivisions that titles have in the above section, Kirkuk is dichotomously depicted throughout the corpus of this study. The first and the most recurrent context that Kirkuk is related with is the context of aggression and trouble. This is depicted in the mentioning of explosions, military standoffs and the ubiquitous tension between the central government and Kurdistan for the sake of ruling Kirkuk. For instance, "another incident has occurred near Kirkuk underscoring how close a shooting war might be", "attacks struck yesterday, Sunday, December 16, the city of Kirkuk, causing nine deaths (including 2 children) and more", "attacks in Iraq, including in Baghdad and Kirkuk, on Sunday and Monday which left dozens dead", "attacks that occurred in Iraq's northern city of Kirkuk on Sunday night, killing at least 47". These instances about Kirkuk make up a substantial segment of news articles in this study's corpus.

The subject of Kirkuk's oil also constitutes a significant part of the corpus because oil is deemed a direct cause of the tension between Kurdistan and the central government of Iraq. This phenomenon is engendered when Kurdistan started exporting Kirkuk's oil without seeking permission from Iraq's central government. This is depicted in "Kurds are the dominant ethnicity, which would strengthen their claim to Kirkuk and its oil riches",

"first of all, Maliki's visit this year to Kirkuk was the start of the crisis", "fifty kilometres out of Kirkuk, an oil city in Northern Iraq, the main road from Baghdad is already lined with tanks".

Kirkuk in the corpus is typically associated with semantic profiles that are overwhelmingly negative which either discusses lack of security, depicted in the diverse attacks on civilians via bomb explosions and military and political unrest in the city that is caused by the central government and Kurdistan government. The only instance in the corpus that does not connote any negative doing is the visit of Leonardo Sandri's to the largest mosque in Kirkuk. Thus, showing the real scene that constitutes the fabric of the city where Kurds and Iraqi Arabs, Christians and Muslim live together without mayhem. This phenomenon is depicted via stating Iraqi Christians and Muslims are judging Cardinal Leonardo Sandri's visit to the largest mosque in Kirkuk a "historic event". This scene, as demonstrated in the corpus is a rare one.

These results are further validated via the use of concordance lines of the search term Kirkuk in the corpus of contemporary American English (COCA) which is a monitor corpus (i.e., constantly growing) that span from 1990-2012+. The concordance lines are presented in the following table:

Table 3. Concordance lines for the word Kirkuk in the corpus of contemporary American English.

the Kurds both Kurds and Arabs claim the oil-rich city	**Kirkuk**	and disputed provinces stretching from Syria to Iran. # If
the militia forces, block the Kurds from trying to seize	**Kirkuk**	and Iraq's northern oil fields, rebuild Iraq's shattered
brigade made a parachute assault into the area around	**Kirkuk**	and operated independently from, but in conjunction with,
the holy city of Karbala, set cars on fire in	**Kirkuk**	and targeted security forces and government officials in
war breaks out and the Turks want to get Monsul and	**Kirkuk**	and that the whole Iraq is breaking up, that may be
y belonging to an electricity company traveling between	**Kirkuk**	and Tikrit was ambushed by insurgents firing machine guns
tuation of the city's Turkomans grew more precarious as	**Kirkuk**	became a flash point in the struggle between the Iraqi centr
to take advantage of the Sunni-Shiite civil war to seize	**Kirkuk**	by force. Either way, most Kurds know that a Kurdish-co
a from southern Iraq. Muqtada al-Sadrs representative in	**Kirkuk**	denies the Shia militia is on standby to kill Kurds if the
AMP AS SALIYAH, Qatar - The northern Iraqi city of	**Kirkuk**	fell, and opposition forces were close to collapse in nearby
ors that theyre readying themselves for the fight to stop	**Kirkuk**	going Kurdish. So the police, with U.S. backup, have
to shift. The late historian Hanna Batatu explains: "	**Kirkuk**	had been Turkish through and through in the not too distant
driving Arabs from their homes. # "I'm amazed	**Kirkuk**	Hasn't flared up yet, "says a Western diplomat in
Abdullah, had moved into the house after the fall of	**Kirkuk**	in April, his original home nearby having been destroyed
be shared equally by all Iraqis. Resolving the problem	**Kirkuk**	is likely to take considerable time, especially since any rap
reconciliation can never be reached unless the status of	**Kirkuk**	is resolved, "Qubad Talabani , Kurdistan's representative
homas Wise, political counselor for the U.S. Embassy 's	**Kirkuk**	regional office, which has been tracking militia activity.
reigners, and wounding three others, a police official in	**Kirkuk**	said. # In Basra, a car bomb killed two civilians
and Kifri. It stipulated that Iraqi officials assigned to	**Kirkuk**	should not only speak Arabic but also have competency in
tural gas pipeline in northern Iraq. The deputy mayor of	**Kirkuk**	tells CNN that saboteurs planted a bomb along the pipeline
chunks of territory in the north, the oil fields around	**Kirkuk**	that were claimed by the Turks. # The British, however
to Iraqis , the private corporate army that stretches from	**Kirkuk**	to Basra will continue to grow. More and more, the
Iraq's diverse communitis. To do otherwise , and allow	**Kirkuk**	to fester, will undercut Iraq's stability, provoke ethnic
ombings marked a brutal day in the northern Iraqi city of	**Kirkuk**	where at least 80 people are dead, 170 wounded after
shot down an Iraqi plane near the northern oil city of	**Kirkuk**	The rebels say the Iraqi troops have been using those planes
zing overhead, swarmed a quiet neighborhood in central	**Kirkuk**	kicking down doors and rummaging through a half-dozen
days, both sides have claimed control over the city of	**Kirkuk**	but for now fierce fighting continues. ABC News correspon
of sectarian violence, resolution of the disputed status of	**Kirkuk**	and efforts to demobilize and co-opt the Shiite militias
y of Peshamir guerrillas heading south toward the city of	**Kirkuk**	a city the Kurds are going to fight hard to hold

Virtually, the same patterns of negative semantic profiles that are observed in the context of the word Kirkuk in the corpus of this study can be viewed in COCA. However, a more sinister outlook on Kirkuk is presented over the years in COCA which is the ever-present struggle between Kurdistan and the Iraqi government over Kirkuk, before and after the invasion of Iraq. This is presented in the never-ending hostility, bloodshed, fierce fighting and aggressiveness of both governments which typically manifest itself in the city of Kirkuk.

The city of Kirkuk, as depicted in the analysis above, is a troubled place. Although the cause behind this constant disorder can be traced to various diverse reasons, to the media reports, two factors are the main reasons for Kirkuk's disorder, being an oil-rich city and being ethnically-mixed. This is depicted in the way the media predominantly position the adjectives "oil-rich" and "ethnically-mixed" before the noun Kirkuk (also referred to it in the corpus as city, province, region, territories, and area) as in the following concordance lists in the tables below:

Table 4. Kirkuk's depiction as an oil-rich city

last month sent troops to disputed areas in the	**oil-rich**	region. Kurdistan officials said they
ave been targeted. Kirkuk and Jalula are in the	**oil-rich**	territories claimed by both the Arab-
and Kirkuk in Iraq's north. Control over the	**oil-rich**	city is a matter of contention betwee
iolence included a series of bomb blasts in the	**oil-rich**	province of Kirkuk. Located in north
Iraqi Shi'ites killed at least six people in the	**oil-rich**	city of Kirkuk, home to a mix of eth
central government of Iraq over the disputed	**oil-rich**	city of Kirkuk. In another area unde
la. Kirkuk is part of the ethnically mixed and	**oil-rich**	area that Kurds want to incorporate i
ys been rife here since the 2003 Iraq war. The	**oil-rich**	city has been the center of contentio
om Kirkuk general hospital confirmed the toll.	**Oil-rich**	and ethnically mixed Kirkuk is part
rkomen who all have competing claims to the	**oil-rich**	area. Bombings targeting Shiite
kuk on Sunday, killing at least six people. The	**oil-rich**	and ethnically mixed city has long
green camouflage-clad troops near Kirkuk, an	**oil-rich**	city outside the Kurds' autonomous
Turkomen. All have competing claims to the	**oil-rich**	area. The Kurds want to incorporate
the ethnic groups has competing claims to the	**oil-rich**	area. The Kurds want to incorporate
in parked cars exploded simultaneously in the	**oil-rich**	city of Kirkuk, the largest city in the
rkomen, who all have competing claims to the	**oil-rich**	area. The attacks came a day after
new military command, covering the disputed	**oil-rich**	province of Kirkuk. The future of
green camouflage-clad troops near Kirkuk, an	**oil-rich**	city outside the Kurds' autonomous
children and two men -- and wounded 55.	**Oil-rich**	and ethnically mixed Kirkuk is part
's attempt to take greater control of security in	**oil-rich**	territory around the city of Kirkuk,
central government and the semi-autonomous	**oil-rich**	Kurdish state over a territorial disput
on Both Kurds and Arabs claim ownership of	**oil-rich**	Kirkuk city where Kurdish forces
iolence included a series of bomb blasts in the	**oil-rich**	province of Kirkuk. The attacks in

Table 5. Kirkuk's depiction as an ethnically-mixed city

the overall dispute over the swath of	**ethnically mixed**	territory separating the Kurdish rul
y fired on the helicopter north of the	**ethnically mixed**	city of Kirkuk to prevent surveillan
is the second consecutive day in which	**ethnically mixed**	disputed areas in the north have
A string of bombings hit Kirkuk, an	**ethnically mixed**	city at the heart of a dispute betwe
hdad and autonomous Kurdistan. The	**ethnically mixed**	"Disputed Territories" - the swath
people were killed in attacks in the	**ethnically mixed**	city of Kirkuk on Sunday, authoriti
left the country a year ago. The	**ethnically mixed**	disputed territories are a swath o
kuk and Jalula. Kirkuk is part of the	**ethnically mixed**	and oil-rich area that Kurds want
confirmed the toll. Oil-rich and	**ethnically mixed**	Kirkuk is part of a swathe of territo
3 killed and 57 wounded. Oil-rich and	**ethnically mixed**	Kirkuk is part of a swathe of territo
ns more in neighbourhoods across the	**ethnically mixed**	city, security and hospital sources
at least six people. The oil-rich and	**ethnically mixed**	city has long been at the heart of a
ns more in neighbourhoods across the	**ethnically mixed**	city, security and hospital sources
25 more in neighbourhoods across the	**ethnically mixed**	city, security and hospital sources
confirmed the toll. Oil-rich and	**ethnically mixed**	Kirkuk is part of a swathe of territo
hdad and autonomous Kurdistan. The	**ethnically mixed**	"Disputed Territories" - the
1 people were killed in attacks in the	**ethnically mixed**	city of Kirkuk on Sunday, authoriti
men -- and wounded 55. Oil-rich and	**ethnically mixed**	Kirkuk is part of a swathe of territo
o men - and wounded 55. Oil-rich and	**ethnically mixed**	Kirkuk is part of a swathe of
r near Sikanyan town just north of the	**ethnically mixed**	city of Kirkuk, to keep the aircraft
The explosions struck predominantly	**ethnically mixed**	areas, said BBC News. A blast in
e deadliest of the attacks occurred in	**ethnically mixed**	areas in the country's north. On

These results are depicted also in COCA whereby the most frequent modifier to the search term Kirkuk is the term "oil-rich". Interestingly, COCA also presents a dilemma in categorizing the city of Kirkuk because on one instance Kirkuk is perceived as "Iraqi-controlled" while in other instances it is "Kurdish-controlled". These instances are but an assertion of Kirkuk's struggle and its ambivalence of its own identity.

Furthermore, there are instances in the corpus whereby the Kurdish government is perceived in the media to be blaming Iraq's former president Saddam Hussein for Kirkuk's mayhem. For instance, "Iraq's former Sunni dictator Saddam Hussein "Arabised" Kirkuk by encouraging Arabs to move there in the 1980s' and "During Saddam Hussein's regime, thousands of the original inhabitants—mainly Kurds—were displaced and replaced by Arab families brought in from the south". The rationale behind these accusations is based on the notion that

Saddam Hussein is accused to be the one that resulted in the vast exodus of Iraqi Arabs to Kirkuk, thus, hindering Kurdistan from taking control over the city. The motivation behind these instances, the researchers believe, is but another technique to highlight Kirkuk's conundrum as these instances imply Kurdistan Government's resentment of the Iraqi Arabs that perceived Kirkuk as their home for decades, ironically, by emphasizing that they are illegally displaced in Kirkuk by a former dictator even though Kirkuk is part and parcel of Iraq.

Despite the common sense that multi-ethnicity and wealth are two of the most important factors which constitute the building stones for every great city or country in the world, in Iraq it is rather contradictory. The notion of being oil-rich resulted in both the Kurdistan region and the central government to endeavour to take control of the city and reap the benefits from its substantial oil reserves. The multi-ethnicity aspect of Kirkuk, however, is an excuse for both sides to decide who should control the city, the central government insists that they should control the city because of the Iraqi Arabs' existence, but Kurdistan wants to take over the city because of the Kurds living in it and that the Arabs are only in Kirkuk because of Saddam Hussein's actions against the Kurdistan region.

According to Zethsen (2006, p. 284), the semantic prosody of a given word "could be used as the basis for investigating our perception/the status of objects or concepts in a social or political context, either generally speaking or within specific discourses". Consequently, based on the corpus analysis results, Kirkuk is perceived in the media to be a tormented place as it is typically associated with words that carry a negative outlook on the city. The discourse of the media frequently correlates Kirkuk's disorder with its most important features, oil and multi-ethnicity. Therefore, the frame that reporters are endeavouring to incorporate in the reader's thought is the idea of a troubled country not only a city. This, the researchers believe, is resulted from that fact that for the last decade Iraq is distressed by violent political unrest and Kirkuk is a vivid manifestation of this disorder. Both the central government and the Iraq Kurdistan region want Kirkuk not because of their affection to the city itself but because of its oil reserves, thus, depicting a very cynical and avaricious viewpoint of both governments. Accentuating this pessimistic view is the media's stress on the fact that Kirkuk is a multi-ethnic city whereby Kurds and Iraqi Arabs live. Instead of taking the notion of being cosmopolitan positively, both governments are using this attribute as a technique to rule out each other's allegations of having the right to take over the city. Consequently, bomb attacks, military standoffs and the constant mayhem are the results of political unrest that Iraq is experiencing to this date.

5. Conclusion

Theoretically, the city of Kirkuk with its multicultural and multi-ethnic society that is blessed with tremendous wealth should be conceived as an exceptional place in Iraq where Kurds and Arabs, Christians and Muslims live together in an organization. The reality, however, is far from the theory, as Kirkuk is one of the most troubled cities in Iraq. This notion was evidently present in the negative semantic prosodies that Kirkuk is typically associated with, such as bombs, military tension between the central government and Kurdistan, and so on. Based on the corpus of the study, the main reason for this mayhem, ironically, is its wealth of oil and mixed-ethnicity which is deemed as a consequence of Saddam Hussein's actions. This finding is depicted throughout the corpus because even when the article is reporting a blast or an oil deal, the idea of being multi-ethnic and oil-rich persists. These results are also confirmed via the use of COCA that depicted the same negativity that is associated with Kirkuk if not more sinister outlook to the city. The main frame of thought that reporters are endeavouring to instil in the reader is the general view of a disturbed country as a whole and Kirkuk is a great example of this view as both the central government and Kurdistan want Kirkuk because of its oil wealth and the notion of being multi-ethnic is just an excuse for both sides to decide who should control the city. Therefore, Kirkuk is cursed by its substantial oil reserves and its multi-ethnic society rather than being blessed by them.

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