Chapter 7
The Discourse of Turkish Press on 2016 U.S. Presidential Elections and the Inauguration of Donald Trump

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ABSTRACT

Academic studies that form the basis of critical paradigm are collected around the theme of “ideological mediation of texts in the media.” These studies focus on the news reports as the most influential products of the media. The aforementioned studies emphasize that objectivity, which is the leading notion in traditional journalism, is shaped in favor of the involved parties, and therefore examine the discourse of the news with the aim of revealing these aspects by utilizing a number of methods. This study analyzed how the week following the U.S. Presidential election held on November 8, 2016 and won by Donald Trump; and the week after Trump’s inauguration and taking of office after President Barack Obama on January 20, 2017 were portrayed in Turkish newspapers holding different ideological stances. The study utilized van Dijk’s Critical Discourse Analysis Method. The front pages of newspapers with different ideological stances such as Sözcü, Sabah and Hüriyet newspapers were taken as the samples of the study. The study results pointed that newspapers shaped their news in line with their ideological expectations as was the case in Sabah newspaper sample. It was also observed that Trump was reported as the boss of the world, the richest US president, racist, Islamophobic and nationalist in other two newspapers included in the study.

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INTRODUCTION

Today, it is a known fact that the media is a politically and ideologically multidimensional arena. Both countries and governments effectively use the media in their domestic and foreign policies. In addition, media outlets can act as spokespersons on behalf of their countries by means of “news” when their countries need to be a party to other countries or when it comes to the interests of the country. However, this again takes place in line with these media outlets’ own ideological mediations.

In such an international news arena, elections in different countries become significant when prior close relations have been established with these countries. When this situation is assessed in regards to Turkey, developments in other countries and especially in the United States (US) are considerably important. In addition to the alliance which has been generated from being members of the NATO, the US has a highly sensitive and specific position for Turkey. This specific position is related to the fact that Gülen Movement (FETÖ) leader Fetullah Gülen resides in Pennsylvania, US as a fugitive. Therefore, US Presidential Elections had extra significance and vital importance since whether Gülen would be extradited to Turkey would be determined in regards to the course of these elections. Moreover, the fact that presidential candidate Donald Trump’s political advisor Peter Navarro brought forward the relationship between Hillary Clinton, another presidential candidate and the Gülen Movement during the election period it made the US elections more significant for Turkey.

BACKGROUND

After gaining victory in World War I with its allies, the United States of America withdrew into itself as a result of being ineffective in the politics of constructing the new world in the post-war era due to Britain and France’s dominance. During this period, the United States focused on the production and consumption markets and concentrated on its own social structure, production and consumption.

The US was involved in World War II when its former allies confirmed their need for US. Having learned from previous war negotiations, the US took the lead as the winner of the war in the process of designing the post-war world politics. Since the end of the World War II, the US has been the leader of world politics in the modern western world and has been able to continue this leadership until today. The US represented the West as the undisputed leader of democratic Western societies during the Cold War period after the Second World War (Bektaş, 2002). This post-war supremacy of the US has manifested itself in all international political organizations and other international organizations.
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