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Representation of Major Religious Orientations in American Discourse: A Corpus-based Analysis

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This study outlines how the aid of both corpus-based sociolinguistics and principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can help expose the subtle value-laden ideological representations of major religious orientations in American discourse. To do this, COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English) and Van Dijk's Discursive Strategy Framework (2004) were employed. Results indicated that the most highly used strategy was Lexicalization. It was further revealed that this discursive strategy was utilized to convey certain positive or negative connotations in the audience's mind regarding different religious and belief systems. Accordingly, the most politicized religion was Islam, while Buddhism was the least politicized one. Its representation was also not as ideologically-loaded compared to other belief systems. Christianity was politicized, too, but mostly in terms of religious and historical-religious issues and events. Shifts in ideological representation of Judaism have been completely palpable. Finally, atheism has been depicted in COCA as a long-running belief system highly attributed to bona fide scientists, progressive-minded people, and the LGBTQ community.

Keywords: Corpus-Based Sociolinguistics, Corpus of Contemporary American English, Critical Discourse Analysis, Religious Orientations, Representation, American Discourse.

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Introduction

As one important aspect of human life, identity, and behavioral patterns (Arweck and Nesbitt, 2011; Lewis and Kashyap, 2013; Min and Kim, 2005), religion, in the course of history, has, at times, been the sole reason for maintaining peace, causing wars, creating unity, inciting disputes, encouraging the greatest acts of compassion, and inspiring the finest works of literature and philosophy (Ellwood, 2008). Nonetheless, religions have been represented differently and it has been approved by prominent scholars in the field that by the mere aid of language and its very lexical nuances and indexes, people can be manipulated and brainwashed towards a certain hidden agenda (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2018; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Wodak, 2001 Sorlin, 2016; Khodadady, Alavi and Khaghaninejad, 2012). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has hopefully provided the researchers with the necessary tools to unravel the hidden implications of language (Gee, 2004).

This study, thus, decided to reveal the representation of the world's major religions using a synergic methodological study of both CDA and corpus (Baker, et al., 2012; Khaghaninejad and Kaashef, 2014), and aiming to respond to the following questions:

1. How are *Islam*, *Christianity*, *Judaism*, *Buddhism*, and *atheism* represented in American discourse?
2. Using Van Dijk's framework, what ideological views do *Buddhism*, *Islam*, *Judaism*, *Christianity*, and *atheism* convey?

Literature review

The review presented below clarifies the role of language as a conduit of hidden ideologies (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2018) in general (section 2.1), and in terms of presenting religious orientations in particular (section 2.2).

1- Corpus-based evidence of manipulation:

Focusing on one event, although limited, is a good strategy to show the depth of the manipulation done using language. Benefiting from a narrow-scope, studies have been able to bring to surface some very great examples of subtle power plays. Subtirelu (2013), for example, analyzed the discourse of the US debate concerning the 2006 reauthorization of provisions of the Voting Rights Act, using a combination of corpus linguistics and CDA (i.e., Baker et al.'s (2008) approach). By analyzing the corpus data using AntConc freeware, and by specifically scrutinizing the keywords, concordances, and collocations, Subtirelu (2013) concluded that pro-minority leaders were subtly insinuating the non-English speakers as the recipients of discrimination and the beneficiaries of the new law. While, anti-minority leaders represented non-English speakers in an activated manner; therefore, conveying their responsibility in their own non-acquisition of English as well as their good or poor lifestyle.

To show the potentiality of language to distort reality, Gu (2018), by focusing on only one event, offered that in Chinese international governmental press conferences, interpreters transform the journalist questions on a range of topics to give them a sense of positive national ideology. The author supported this claim drawing on a corpus containing 19 years of press conference data between 1998 and 2017 (280 questions in total). With the aid of Van Dijk's ideological model (1998),

the author suggested that by doing so, interpreters emphasize and foreground the positive elements of China and at the same time mitigate the negative elements of the self (China). These studies, by analyzing a certain event, were able to prove the potentiality of language in being used (or misused) as a tool for injustice and manipulation. Moreover, benefiting from a synergic methodology and focusing on rich corpus, the findings of such research became even more compelling.

Over the years, certain groups of people, ethnicities and minorities have been the victims of discriminations and marginalization as the result of power play done via the medium of language, the fact which has been approved by research done specifically in this area. For instance, Alfajri (2017) analyzed discourses surrounding the word *immigrants* in *ukWac* corpus (Web as Corpus). Employing corpus linguistics as a methodological tool to carry out critical discourse analysis research i.e., collocation and concordance analyses, Alfajri proposed that the discourse used around them is more negative. They are predominantly depicted as illegal entities, victims and dangerous groups.

2- Corpus-based research on representation of religious orientations:

Baker et al. (2012), using the synergic method of CDA and corpus linguistics, analyzed the noun collocates of the adjective *Muslim* in the corpus of British newspaper articles published between 1998 and 2009. The analysis suggested that *Muslims* were represented as *violent*, *easily offended*, and *alienated*. This corpus of British newspaper articles also emphasized their sameness to each other and difference to the west. The findings of this study were in line with a number of other works on *Islam* and *Muslims* (Akbarzadeh and Smith, 2005; Awass, 1996; Dunn, 2001; Richardson, 2004; Poole and Richardson, 2006). For instance, Dunn (2001) focused on two Australian newspapers and showed that 75 % *Muslims* were presented as *fanatic*, *radical*, and *misogynist*, and only for 25% they were represented positively. More specifically, the representation of Muslim women was studied by Neelam (2017). The author reported how *Muslim women* are depicted in the US newspapers using COCA corpus and Van Leeuwen's model (1996) of social actors. According to the results, *Muslim women* were represented as suppressed victims and that they were almost never portrayed in a positive context. Neelam (2017) believed that this biased and partial view of *Muslim women* is the result of the conflicts between *Islam* and the west. The author also emphasized that readers must scrutinize the news to avoid being manipulated, especially the news about *others*. In another attempt by Samaie and Malmir (2017), the representation of Muslims in US media was probed using a synergy of critical discourse studies and corpus linguistics, and by studying the pervasive representation of *Islam* and *Muslims* in an approximate 670,000-word corpus of US news media stories in the Cable News Network (CNN), Newsweek and The New York Times (NYT) published between 2001 and 2015. Following collocation and concordance analysis, the Discourse-Historical Approach to critical discourse analysis was adopted to investigate how the discursive strategies of nomination and predication are used in US news media stories. The findings indicated that *Islam* and *Muslims* are associated with *violence*, *religious radicalism*, and *extremist militants*.

The representation of *Islam* and *Muslims* in French print media discourse (Le Mond and Le Figaro) was the topic of Abdeslam's (2019) study. With the use of corpus technology and CDA (Baker et al., 2008), Abdeslam gathered and analyzed the data. Based on the results, he suggested that both newspapers referred to *Muslims* as a collectivity sharing the same attitudes and beliefs incompatible with the French culture. *Muslims* were also viewed as the cause of clashes and terrorist attacks taking place in France. AlFajri (2019) investigated the construction of Indonesian *Muslims* in the American newspapers in two different periods (2002-2006 and 2012-2016). Using corpus-assisted discourse analysis framework, and AntConc as the analytical, the attained results corroborated and reinforced the findings regarding media depictions of Muslims as *terrorist*, *fundamentalists*, and *violent*. Ragozina (2020) examined how *Islam* is portrayed in the contemporary Russian print media. Based on critical discourse analysis (i.e., Fairclough's (2006) model) and corpus linguistics, the researcher analyzed a corpus containing 18,308 articles from six national Russian newspapers. Through an analysis of the lexical compatibility patterns of the lexeme *Islam*, the study identified the four most obvious discursive strategies aimed at creating a negative image of Islam: 1) defining correct Islam; 2) homogenizing Muslims via big numbers; 3) criminalizing neutral connotations, and 4) misunderstanding specific Islamic terms.

Having reviewed the literature, and to the best of the researchers' knowledge, it seemed that corpus-based sociolinguistics studies of major religious orientations are under-studied. Therefore, this study attempted to reveal the ideological collocation and representation of *Islam*, *Christianity*, *Judaism*, *Buddhism* and *atheism* in the corpus of COCA. The current study attempted to fill this lacuna using a synergic method of CDA and corpus linguistics, and by the aid of Van Dijk's (2004) framework and data gained from COCA.

Method

To clarify the representation of major religious orientations among the Americans, corpus of COCA was selected. Overall, corpora are computerized databases consisting of a large and structured set of texts electronically stored and processed. One main purpose of a corpus is to verify a hypothesis about language. Corpus of COCA, which contains more than one billion words from 8 genres (spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, academic texts, TV and movies subtitles, blogs, and web pages), has been last updated in 2020 (the version used in this study). Simply by visiting its webpage (i.e., <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>), one would automatically be able to use its latest version. It is available for free with a limited number of queries per day. Using this corpus, the profile of American society as well as their perspective over specific matters such as different belief systems can be seen from a more illuminating perspective. Corpus-based studies by focusing on what has been written or said, and why they have been said/written in the first place, provide the best procedure for unraveling the underlying ideologies (Baker et al., 2008). Moreover, by studying collocations in a corpus using a specific CDA framework (Baker et al., 2008), the discursive practices will bring to the surface the patterns of power and dominance reproduction (Kress, 1990, Van Dijk, 2001).

3- Data collection and analysis procedure:

Data attained from the corpus was then carefully studied. Also, to determine each religious orientation in terms of collocates, the frequencies of co-occurrences were analyzed followed by manual thematic development (Baker et al., 2012). Therefore, following Baker et al. (2008), the synergic methodology of corpus and CDA was chosen as a way to reduce the researcher's bias, reveal subtle agendas interwoven in the construction of a text, depict opposing views which is not feasible in smaller-scale studies, and ensure validation by the aid of triangulation.

As for the next step, following Baker et al. (2008), the nouns Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism as well as atheism were used to query their connotations in COCA. For Islam, 7661 instances were reported by COCA. As for Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and atheism, 4764, 2161, 1418, and 403 instances were found, respectively. To have a representative sample for each searched entry, Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table was consulted resulting in a sample size of 364 for Islam, 340 for Christianity, 322 for Judaism, 306 for Buddhism, as well as 196 for atheism. Then, each sample was analyzed using Van Dijk's (2004) framework. His framework consists of 25 detailed discursive strategies applying which will bring the underlying ideologies to the surface (Van Dijk, 2004). These strategies are defined below.

Actor description: The way we describe actors or members of a particular society either in a negative or positive way.

1. Authority: Mentioning authorities to support one's claims.
2. Categorization: Assigning people to different groups.
3. Consensus: Creating agreement and solidarity
4. Disclaimer: Presenting an idea as something positive and then rejecting it by the use of terms such as 'but' in the second sentence.
5. Evidentially: Using hard facts to support one's ideas.
6. Hyperbole: A device for enhancing and exaggerating meaning.
7. Implication: Deducing or inferring implicit information.
8. Irony: Saying something and meaning something else.
9. Lexicalization: an overall ideological strategy for negative other-representation through the semantic features of the words.
10. National Self-Glorification: A device to create good self-representation by glorifying a country.
11. Number Game: Using numbers and statistics to appear credible.
12. Polarization: Categorizing people as belonging to US with good attributes and THEM with bad attributes.
13. Presupposition: The common shared knowledge between people or the ideas taken for granted in a proposition.
14. Vagueness: Creating uncertainty and ambiguity.
15. Victimization: Telling bad stories about people who do not belong to US.

Results and discussion

4- Representation of *Islam* in COCA:

Among the 7661 stances of the word *Islam* in COCA, 364 cases, using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table, were randomly selected and studied in terms of Van Dijk's (2004) discursive strategies. Frequencies and percentages were measured and reported in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequencies of discursive strategies for *Islam*

Strategies	Frequency	percentage
Actor description	23	18%
Authority	11	8.4%
Categorization	53	43.13%
Disclaimer	9	6.59%
Consensus	6	4.3%
Evidentially	4	2.7%
Hyperbole	12	9%
Implication	57	41.71%
Irony	13	10.3%
Lexicalization	73	60.6%
Number Game	8	6.5%
Polarization	18	15%
Presupposition	25	20.6%
Victimization	52	43%

As depicted in Table 1, the highly used strategies for the word *Islam* are *implication*, *lexicalization*, *victimization* as well as *categorization*. In order to find out about the thematic representation of *Islam* in terms of collocates, *Islam* was searched in COCA, a portion of the results are depicted in Figure 1. The point must be borne in mind that only those word collocates with the meaningfulness value higher than three (i.e., the meaningfulness threshold for collocate analysis (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2012)) were considered for this study.

Figure 1. The frequency of co-occurrence for the word Islam in COCA

	CONTEXT	FREQ	ALL	%	MI
1	NATION	686	90194	0.76	5.41
2	RADICAL	635	17774	3.57	7.64
3	CHRISTIANITY	414	8672	4.77	8.06
4	RELIGION	338	33511	1.01	5.82
5	POLITICAL	310	205325	0.15	3.08
6	ISLAM	222	13363	1.66	6.54
7	JUDAISM	202	2442	8.27	8.86
8	CONVERTED	200	8434	2.37	7.05
9	MUSLIMS	188	13027	1.44	6.34
10	WEST	178	109038	0.16	3.19
11	MUSLIM	150	21986	0.68	5.26
12	MILITANT	148	4086	3.62	7.66
13	DEMOCRACY	139	31859	0.44	4.61
14	CONVERT	122	5883	2.07	6.86
15	INTERPRETATION	111	17775	0.62	5.13
16	HOLIEST	107	440	24.32	10.41
17	VERSION	104	45666	0.23	3.67
18	LEADER	103	59108	0.17	3.29
19	SUNNI	102	4586	2.22	6.96
20	FARRAKHAN	98	1164	8.42	8.88

To triangulate the analysis, the same procedure was done using Sketch Engine. This output is reported in Figure 2.

Figure 2. The frequency of co-occurrence for the word Islam (in Sketch Engine)

modifiers of "Islam"	nouns modified by "Islam"	verbs with "Islam" as object	verbs with "Islam" as subject	"Islam" and/or ...	prepositional phrases	adjective predicates of "Islam"
Sunni of Sunni Islam	Karimov President Islam Karimov	embrace embraced Islam	forbid Islam forbids	Christianity Christianity and Islam	... of "Islam"	violent Islam is violent
radical Islam	Hinduism Islam, Hinduism	insult insult Islam	spread Islam spread	Judaism Judaism and Islam	... to "Islam"	incompatible that Islam is incompatible with
Christianity Christianity, Islam	Judaism Islam, Judaism	renounce renounce Islam	teach Islam teaches that	Muslims Islam and Muslims	"Islam" in about "Islam"	peaceful Islam is peaceful
Shia of Shia Islam	Christianity Islam, Christianity	defame defaming Islam	prohibit Islam prohibits	Hinduism Islam, Hinduism	... on "Islam"	evil Islam is evil
militant militant Islam	Islam Islam Islam	criticize criticize Islam	preach Islam preaches	Buddhism Islam, Buddhism	... with "Islam"	tolerant Islam is tolerant
Judaism Judaism, Islam	Farrahkhan Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrahkhan	propagate to propagate Islam	conquer conquered by Islam	Islam Islam, No Peace-No Islam	... against "Islam"	dominant Islam is dominant
Islam Islam Islam	Buddhism Islam, Buddhism	preach preaching Islam	pose Islam poses	Muhammad Islam, Muhammad	... from "Islam"	intolerant Islam is intolerant
Nazrul Kazi Nazrul Islam	Stimani Islam Stimani	profess profess Islam	condemn Islam condemns	Quran Islam and the Quran	... by "Islam"	monotheistic Islam is not monotheistic
fundamentalist fundamentalist Islam	Muhammad of Islam, Muhammad	practice practice Islam	practice of Islam practiced	Catholicism Islam, Catholicism		punishable Islam is punishable by death
Hinduism Hinduism, Islam	Alamgir general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir	predates predates Islam	prescribe Islam prescribes	West between Islam and the West		monotheistic Islam is monotheistic
insulting insulting Islam	Peace	spread to spread Islam	enjoin Islam enjoins	religion religion, Islam		compatible Islam is compatible with
Yusuf Yusuf Islam	Muslims Islam, Muslims	reform to reform Islam	reject Islam rejects	Muslim Islam and Muslim		false that Islam is false

Figure 4. T-score and Log-likelihood of Islam collocates

	Word	Cooccurrences ?	Candidates ?	T-score	MI	Log likelihood	
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunni	7,740	158,069	87.97	13.64	131,640.31	***
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Nazrul	3,001	3,687	54.78	17.70	71,371.13	***
3	<input type="checkbox"/> radical	14,807	790,632	121.66	12.26	223,553.06	***
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Shia	4,120	100,994	64.18	13.38	68,444.44	***
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Radical	3,078	114,545	55.47	12.78	48,501.54	***
6	<input type="checkbox"/> militant	3,726	192,213	61.03	12.31	56,264.98	***
7	<input type="checkbox"/> Judaism	3,990	228,895	63.15	12.15	59,402.53	***
8	<input type="checkbox"/> extremist	1,781	7,020	42.20	16.02	36,494.64	***
9	<input type="checkbox"/> terrorist	2,370	103,645	48.67	12.54	36,560.85	***
10	<input type="checkbox"/> fundamentalist	2,003	84,630	44.75	12.59	31,034.59	***
11	<input type="checkbox"/> Peace-No	1,253	435	35.40	19.52	43,856.32	***
12	<input type="checkbox"/> threat	1,207	1,639	34.74	17.55	28,227.06	***
13	<input type="checkbox"/> Christianity	6,189	724,470	78.63	11.12	83,340.82	***
14	<input type="checkbox"/> sect	1,265	16,996	35.57	14.25	22,559.36	***

As for the next step, thematic development of noun collocates, were manually developed. In order to do this, following Baker et al. (2012), the context for each collocate was studied. Eventually, as shown in Table 2, the following categories were elicited.

Table 2. Categorized noun collocates of the word Islam

Category	Examples of noun collocates
Attributes	Radical, Extremist, terrorist, sect, strict, secular,
Religion	Christianity, Judaism, converted, religions, holy, faith, Shia, Sunni, conversion, Hinduism, orthodox,
Conflict	Taliban, violent, enemy, insulting, threat

Accordingly, three major thematic categories of *Attributes*, *Religion* and *Conflict* were developed for the word *Islam*.

5- Representation of Christianity in COCA:

According to the analysis, 340 cases of the entries in COCA regarding *Christianity* were randomly selected and studied in terms of Van Dijk's discursive strategies. Frequencies and percentages are reported in Table 3.

Table 3. *Frequencies of discursive strategies for Christianity*

Strategies	frequency	percentage
Actor description	18	6.7%
Authority	11	5%
Categorization	22	7.9%
Disclaimer	10	4.4%
Consensus	65	21%
Evidentially	6	3.2%
Hyperbole	7	3.5%
Implication	37	10.5%
Irony	6	4%
Lexicalization	58	16.7%
Number Game	7	3.23%
Polarization	6	4.1%
Presupposition	36	10.3%
Victimization	51	14.7%

According to the results presented in Table 3, *categorization, implication, lexicalization, polarization and victimization* were highly utilized to represent *Christianity* in COCA. Thematic representation of *Christianity* was probed by studying those words collocates with the meaningfulness value higher than three. Figure 5 reveals a portion of these collocates.

Figure 5. *The frequency of co-occurrence for the word Christianity*

	CONTEXT	FREQ	ALL	%	MI
1	ISLAM	415	13363	3.11	8.07
2	JUDAISM	404	2442	16.54	10.48
3	EARLY	225	188199	0.12	3.37
4	RELIGION	205	33511	0.61	5.72
5	CONVERTED	176	8434	2.09	7.49
6	EVANGELICAL	164	5128	3.20	8.11
7	CONVERSION	123	7370	1.67	7.17
8	CONVERT	112	5883	1.90	7.36
9	WESTERN	109	59106	0.18	3.99
10	RELIGIONS	103	5311	1.94	7.39
11	ORTHODOX	95	5895	1.61	7.12
12	CHRISTIANITY	84	8672	0.97	6.39
13	BUDDHISM	76	1616	4.70	8.67
14	TRADITIONAL	74	61277	0.12	3.38
15	RELIGIOUS	68	63569	0.11	3.21
16	CHRISTIAN	65	47489	0.14	3.56
17	GLOBAL	65	61766	0.11	3.18
18	PROTESTANT	62	5657	1.10	6.56
19	ATTITUDE	58	24790	0.23	4.34
20	CATHOLIC	58	37284	0.16	3.75

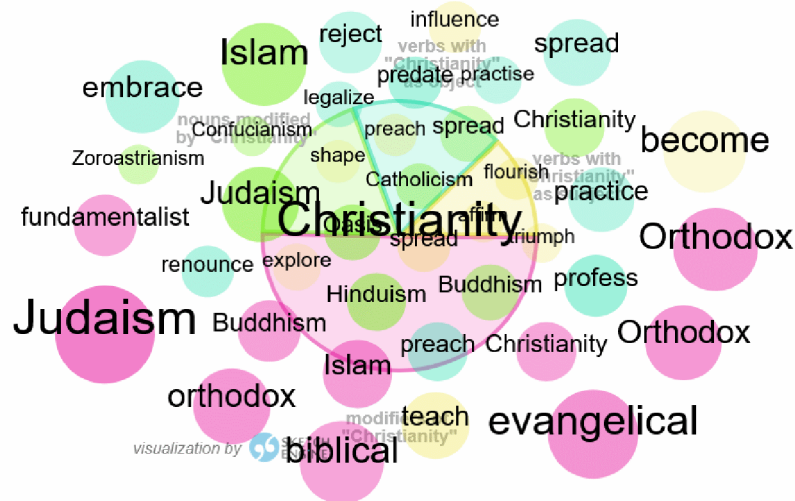
Also, in order to triangulate the analysis, same procedure was done using Sketch Engine. Results are reported in Figure 6.

Figure 6. The frequency of co-occurrence for the word Christianity (in Sketch Engine)

modifiers of "Christianity"	nouns modified by "Christianity"	verbs with "Christianity" as object	verbs with "Christianity" as subject	"Christianity" and/or ...	prepositional phrases	adjective predicates of "Christianity"
Judaism Judaism, Christianity, and Islam	Judaism Christianity, Judaism	profess profess Christianity	teach Christianity teaches that	Judaism Judaism and Christianity	... of "Christianity"	uncut Christianity Uncut
evangelical evangelical Christianity	Islam Christianity, Islam	predate predates Christianity	spread Christianity spread	Islam Christianity and Islam	... to "Christianity"	monotheistic Christianity is monotheistic
orthodox orthodox Christianity	Hinduism Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism	preach preach Christianity	flourish Christianity flourished	Buddhism Buddhism, Christianity	... in "Christianity"	incompatible Christianity is incompatible with
Orthodox (online) Orthodox Christianity	Oasis written permission from Christianity Oasis Online	embrace embraced Christianity	preach Christianity preaches	Hinduism Christianity, Hinduism	... on "Christianity"	false Christianity is false
Orthodox (non) Orthodox Christianity	Buddhism Christianity, Buddhism	renounce to renounce Christianity	influence influenced by Christianity	paganism paganism and Christianity	... for "Christianity"	true Christianity is true
Islam Islam, Christianity	Christianity Christianity Christianity	practice practised Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity	triumph Christianity triumphed	Catholicism Christianity and Catholicism	... about "Christianity"	mysterious Christianity not Mysterious
Buddhism Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism	Catholicism Christianity, Catholicism	spread to spread Christianity	affirm Christianity affirms	religion religion, Christianity	"Christianity" to ...	intolerant Christianity is intolerant
fundamentalist fundamentalist Christianity	Zoroastrianism Christianity, Zoroastrianism	legalize legalized Christianity	become Christianity became	Christianity Christianity, Christianity	... from "Christianity"	dominant Christianity was dominant
biblical Biblical Christianity	Confucianism Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism	practise practised Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity	explore Christianity Explored	Bible the Bible and Christianity	... between "Christianity"	palatable to make Christianity more palatable to
Christianity Christianity Christianity	spread Christianity spread	reject rejected Christianity	shape shaped by Christianity	civilization civilization and Christianity		Jewish Christianity is Jewish
Protestant of Protestant Christianity	Sikhism Islam, Christianity, Sikhism	propagate to propagate Christianity	emerge Christianity emerged	Christ Christ and Christianity		irreconcilable National Socialism and Christianity are irreconcilable
religion religion, Christianity	Ministry Christianity Oasis Ministry has provided you	persecute persecuted Christianity	borrow Christianity borrowed	Christian Christians and Christianity		rational Christianity is rational

Moreover, Sketch Engine was used for Cloud Graph visualization of Christianity collocates, (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Collocates of the word Christianity (visualization by Sketch Engine)



Afterwards, determining the significance of Christianity collocates was done by measuring T-score and Log-likelihood using Sketch Engine. Results are reported in Figure 8.

Figure 8. T-score and Log-likelihood of Islam collocates

	Word	Cooccurrences ?	Candidates ?	T-score	Log likelihood
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Judaism	26,401	228,895	162.46	418,140.59 ---
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Islam	29,774	937,132	172.46	392,326.27 ---
3	<input type="checkbox"/> converted	14,210	958,021	119.07	165,065.80 ---
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Orthodox	7,960	425,616	89.14	96,115.90 ---
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Christianity	7,995	724,470	89.28	88,051.82 ---
6	<input type="checkbox"/> Buddhism	5,356	278,413	73.12	64,959.23 ---
7	<input type="checkbox"/> religions	5,711	416,388	75.48	65,375.10 ---
8	<input type="checkbox"/> evangelical	4,229	140,970	64.99	55,085.86 ---
9	<input type="checkbox"/> convert	7,362	872,074	85.63	77,116.84 ---
10	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	10,795	1,879,016	103.60	104,808.05 ---
11	<input type="checkbox"/> orthodox	3,544	124,559	59.50	45,779.35 ---
12	<input type="checkbox"/> Hinduism	3,021	103,645	54.93	39,169.34 ---
13	<input type="checkbox"/> conversion	5,578	1,035,033	74.45	53,404.49 ---
14	<input type="checkbox"/> Mere	2,375	37,297	48.72	34,586.61 ---
15	<input type="checkbox"/> truth	9,805	2,551,663	98.59	87,305.43 ---

By examining the context of the collocates, thematic categorization of noun collocates was manually developed for the word Christianity (Table 4).

Table 4. Categorized noun collocates of Christianity

Category	Examples of noun collocates
Religion	Christian, Christ, Judaism, Islam, bible, orthodox, catholic, religious, Evangelicalism, conversion, protestant, faith, Jesus, Charismatic
Science	Scholar, philosophy, teachers, dialogue, civilization, Latin, historians, doctrines,
Attributes	muscular, tolerant, truth

The three thematic categories of *Religion*, *Science*, and *Attributes* that have been developed for the word *Christianity* after studying the context of this word's collocates have been shown in Table 4.

6- Representation of Judaism in COCA:

322 random instances of the word *Judaism* in COCA were studied based on Van Dijk's discursive strategies. Table 5 shows the frequencies and percentages.

Table 5. Frequencies of discursive strategies for Judaism

Strategies	frequency	percentage
Actor description	10	8%
Authority	8	6.5%
Categorization	25	20%
Disclaimer	5	3%
Consensus	8	7%
Evidentially	8	7%

Strategies	frequency	percentage
Hyperbole	8	7 %
Implication	71	42%
Irony	6	4%
Lexicalization	65	33%
Number Game	3	2%
Polarization	61	30%
Presupposition	6	4%
Victimization	38	27%

The most common Van Dijk's strategies used to portray *Judaism* according to the corpus of COCA were categorization, implication, lexicalization, polarization and victimization. Thematic representation of *Judaism* was investigated by studying word collocates with the meaningfulness value higher than three. A portion of these collocates is shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9. The frequency of co-occurrence for the word *Judaism*

	CONTEXT	FREQ	ALL	%	MI
1	CHRISTIANITY	404	8672	4.66	10.48
2	ISLAM	202	13363	1.51	8.86
3	JEWS	93	19612	0.47	7.19
4	RELIGION	71	33511	0.21	6.02
5	REFORM	67	44300	0.15	5.54
6	ORTHODOX	64	5895	1.09	8.38
7	CONVERTED	59	8434	0.70	7.75
8	WITHIN	48	176862	0.03	3.06
9	RELIGIONS	43	5311	0.81	7.96
10	CONVERT	40	5883	0.68	7.71
11	JEWISH	37	28374	0.13	5.32
12	CATHOLICISM	35	2829	1.24	8.57
13	TEMPLE	35	14231	0.25	6.24
14	CONSERVATIVE	35	37464	0.09	4.84
15	BUDDHISM	34	1616	2.10	9.34
16	MESSIANIC	32	593	5.40	10.69
17	RELIGIOUS	32	63569	0.05	3.95
18	TRADITIONAL	31	61277	0.05	3.96
19	ISRAEL	29	50114	0.06	4.15
20	HINDUISM	28	496	5.65	10.76

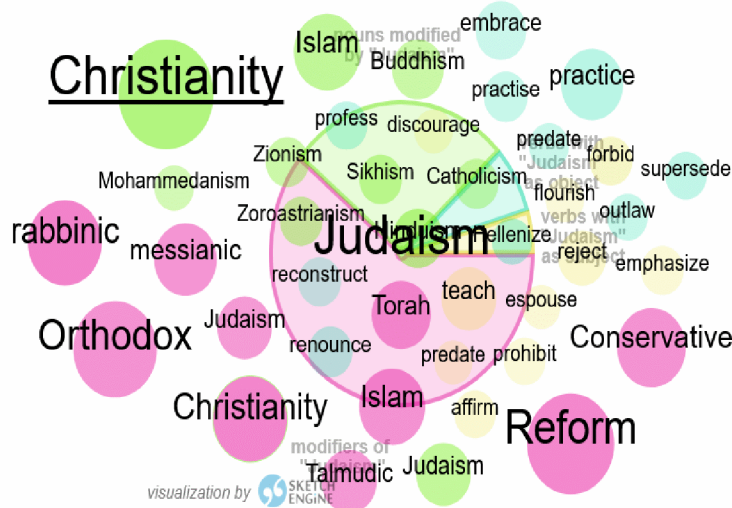
Judaism collocates were also probed using Sketch Engine. Results are reported in Figure 10.

Figure 10. The frequency of co-occurrence for the word Judaism (in Sketch Engine)

modifiers of "Judaism"	nouns modified by "Judaism"	verbs with "Judaism" as object	verbs with "Judaism" as subject	"Judaism" and/or ...	prepositional phrases	adjective predicates of "Judaism"	"Judaism" is a ...
rabbinic Rabbinic Judaism	Christianity Judaism, Christianity, and Islam	Hellenize Hellenized Judaism	forbid Judaism forbids	Christianity Judaism and Christianity	... of "Judaism"	monotheistic Judaism is monotheistic	religion Judaism is a religion
Christianity Christianity, Judaism	Hinduism Judaism, Hinduism	practice practice Judaism	teach Judaism teaches that	Islam Judaism and Islam	... to "Judaism"	monolithic Judaism is not monolithic	Judaism Judaism is Judaism
Reform of Reform Judaism	Islam Judaism, Islam	renounce renounced Judaism	reject Judaism rejects	Hinduism Judaism, Hinduism	... in "Judaism"	legalistic Judaism is not Zoroastrian	Zionism Judaism is not Zionism
Orthodox Orthodox Judaism	Judaism Judaism, Judaism	profess profess Judaism	affirm Judaism affirms	Buddhism Judaism, Buddhism	... from "Judaism"	Satanic Judaism is Satanic	faith Judaism is a faith
Islam Islam, Judaism	Sikhism Islam, Judaism, Sikhism	supersede superseded Judaism	espouse Judaism espouses	Zionism Judaism and Zionism	... with "Judaism"	egalitarian Judaism is egalitarian	Christianity Judaism is not Christianity
Conservative of Conservative Judaism	Zoroastrianism Judaism, Zoroastrianism	outlaw outlawed Judaism	emphasize Judaism emphasizes	Jews Jews and Judaism	... on "Judaism"	racist Judaism is racist	cult Judaism is a stanic cult
messianic Messianic Judaism	Buddhism Judaism, Buddhism	practise practising Judaism	predate Judaism predates	Judaism Judaism and Conservative Judaism	"Judaism" as ...	synonymous Judaism was synonymous	denomination Judaism is a Jewish denomination
Talmudic Talmudic Judaism	Zionism Judaism, Zionism	reconstruct Reconstructing Judaism	prohibit Judaism prohibits	Catholicism Catholicism, Judaism	... between "Judaism"	ancient Judaism is ancient	Pharisaism Pharisaism
Torah United Torah Judaism	Catholicism Judaism, Catholicism	predate predates Judaism	discourage Judaism discourages	Zoroastrianism Zoroastrianism, Judaism	... with "Judaism"	meaningful make Judaism meaningful	monotheism monotheism
Judaism Judaism, Judaism	Mohammedanism Judaism, Mohammedanism	embrace embraced Judaism	flourish Judaism flourished	paganism Judaism and paganism	incompatible Judaism is incompatible with	Jewish Judaism is Jewish	culture Judaism is a culture
rabbinical Rabbinical Judaism	Taoism Islam, Judaism, Taoism	repudiate repudiated Judaism and	view Judaism views	Sikhism Judaism, Sikhism	nationality Judaism is a nationality	civilization Judaism is a civilization	
Hellenistic of Hellenistic Judaism	Gnosticism Judaism, Gnosticism	reform to reform Judaism	stress Judaism stresses	Torah Torah and Judaism			

Visual representation of Judaism collocates is depicted in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Collocates of the word Judaism (visualization by Sketch Engine)



Afterwards, T-score and Log-likelihood were measured for Judaism collates. Results are shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12. *T-score and Log-likelihood of Judaism collocates*

	word	Cooccurrences	Candidates	t-score	Log likelihood
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Rabbinic	2,264	12,889	47.58	48,994.27 ***
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Messianic	1,593	39,675	39.91	29,521.66 ***
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Reform	6,153	368,381	78.43	103,538.59 ***
4	<input type="checkbox"/> rabbinic	1,113	20,868	33.36	21,265.09 ***
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Orthodox	5,699	425,616	75.48	93,317.94 ***
6	<input type="checkbox"/> Talmudic	887	20,937	29.78	16,525.45 ***
7	<input type="checkbox"/> Christianity	6,857	724,470	82.79	107,626.06 ***
8	<input type="checkbox"/> Reconstructionist	614	5,903	24.78	12,579.45 ***
9	<input type="checkbox"/> wealth	2,344	228,895	48.41	36,990.89 ***
10	<input type="checkbox"/> Hasidic	614	15,654	24.78	11,340.05 ***
11	<input type="checkbox"/> Humanistic	573	10,834	23.94	10,933.09 ***
12	<input type="checkbox"/> Hellenistic	828	45,306	28.77	14,012.90 ***
13	<input type="checkbox"/> Conservative	3,457	397,319	58.79	53,484.62 ***
14	<input type="checkbox"/> science	516	11,175	22.71	9,701.36 ***
15	<input type="checkbox"/> Torah	2,129	259,185	46.13	32,647.72 ***

By studying the context of the collocates, thematic development of noun collocates was manually developed for the word *Judaism* (Table 6).

Table 6. *Categorized noun collocates of Judaism*

Category	Examples of noun collocates
Religion	converted, conversion, Torah, faith, rabbi, Christianity, Islam, Liturgical, devout, intermarry
Attributes	organized, gentle, greed, wealth, scapegoats, crooked, business, frugality, thriftiness, enemy, manipulative, masculinity, Jew face, powerful, red hair, venerable, philosophy, liturgy, science

As shown by Table 6, the two major themes of *Religion* and *Attributes* were developed for the word *Judaism* and its collocates.

Representation of Buddhism

452 random instances of the word *Buddhism* in COCA were analyzed using Van Dijk's discursive strategies. Results are reported in Table 7.

Table 7. *Frequencies of discursive strategies for Buddhism*

strategies	frequency	percentage
Actor description	46	33%
Authority	9	5.8%
Categorization	50	38%
Disclaimer	6	3.9%
Consensus	52	45%

strategies	frequency	percentage
Evidentially	7	5%
Hyperbole	9	5%
Implication	11	7.3%
Irony	10	7%
Lexicalization	46	33%
Number Game	6	4%
Polarization	42	30%
Presupposition	9	5%
Victimization	3	4%

According to Table 7, the most highly used discursive strategy for representing *Buddhism* in COCA has been *Consensus*. Categorized attributes of the word *Buddhism* have been provided in Table 8.

Table 8. Categorized noun collocates of *Buddhism*

Category	Examples of noun collocates
Religion	Hinduism, Zen, Taoism, Meditation, Practice, spiritual
Attributes	Renunciation, wisdom, truthful, diligence, kindness, Nirvana
Attitude	Kind, spiritual, patience, sharing, calm, loving, sage

Having studied the discursive strategies used for representing *Buddhism*, its thematic representation was investigated by studying its word collocates (Figure 13).

Figure 13. The frequency of co-occurrence for the word *Buddhism*

	CONTEXT	FREQ	ALL	%	MI
1	HINDUISM	127	496	25.60	13.53
2	TIBETAN	99	1511	6.55	11.57
3	ZEN	87	1695	5.13	11.22
4	CHRISTIANITY	76	8672	0.88	8.66
5	ISLAM	68	13363	0.51	7.88
6	TAOISM	47	113	41.59	14.23
7	RELIGION	42	33511	0.13	5.86
8	RELIGIONS	38	5311	0.72	8.37
9	BUDDHISM	36	1616	2.23	10.01
10	JUDAISM	34	2442	1.39	9.33
11	CONFUCIANISM	31	366	8.47	11.94
12	PRACTICE	28	85761	0.03	3.92
13	THERAVADA	22	49	44.90	14.34
14	MEDITATION	21	4494	0.47	7.76
15	JAPAN	18	38825	0.05	4.42
16	FORMS	18	40883	0.04	4.35
17	JAPANESE	17	37489	0.05	4.39
18	MAHAYANA	16	40	40.00	14.18
19	SPIRITUAL	16	22767	0.07	5.02
20	RELIGIOUS	14	63569	0.02	3.35

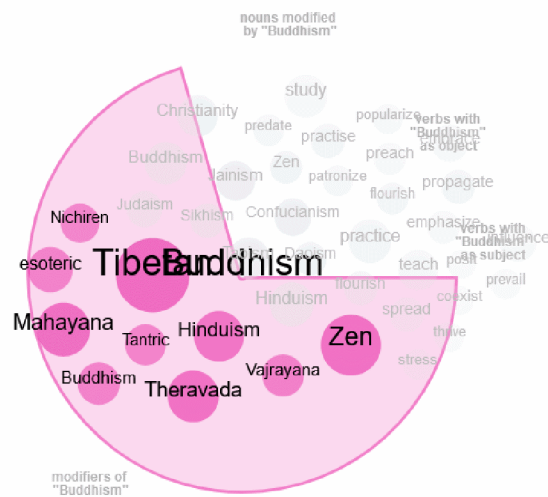
To triangulate the analysis, collocates of *Buddhism* were also searched using Sketch Engine (Figure 14).

Figure 14. The frequency of co-occurrence for the word Judaism (in Sketch Engine)

modifiers of "Buddhism"	nouns modified by "Buddhism"	verbs with "Buddhism" as object	verbs with "Buddhism" as subject	"Buddhism" and/or ...	prepositional phrases	adjective predicates of "Buddhism"	"Buddhism" is a ...
Tibetan of Tibetan Buddhism	Hinduism Buddhism, Hinduism	propagate to propagate Buddhism	flourish Buddhism flourished	Hinduism Hinduism, Buddhism	of "Buddhism"	atheistic Buddhism is atheistic	religion Buddhism is a religion
Mahayana of Mahayana Buddhism	Taoism Buddhism, Taoism	practice practice Buddhism	teach Buddhism teaches that	Jainism Buddhism and Jainism	in "Buddhism"	non-theistic Buddhism is non-theistic	philosophy Buddhism is a philosophy
Zen Zen Buddhism	Jainism Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism	flourish Buddhism flourished in	influence influenced by Buddhism	Taoism Buddhism, Taoism	to "Buddhism"	flourishing Buddhism was flourishing	Buddhism Buddhism is Buddhism
Theravada of Theravada Buddhism	Confucianism Buddhism, Confucianism	practise practising Buddhism	spread Buddhism spread	Confucianism Buddhism, Confucianism	with "Buddhism"	pessimistic Buddhism is pessimistic	teaching Buddhism is a teaching
Hinduism Hinduism, Buddhism	Buddhism Buddhism, Buddhism	patronize patronized Buddhism	emphasize Buddhism emphasizes the	Christianity Buddhism, Christianity	about "Buddhism"	theistic Buddhism is theistic	faith Buddhism is a faith
Vajrayana of Vajrayana Buddhism	Sikhism Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism	predate predates Buddhism	coexist and Buddhism coexist	Buddhism Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism	"Buddhism" to ...	predominant Buddhism is predominant	buddha Buddhism is the Buddha
Buddhism Buddhism, Buddhism	Daoism Buddhism, Daoism, and	embrace embraced Buddhism	prevail Buddhism prevailed	Islam Islam, Buddhism	as "Buddhism"	esoteric Buddhism is esoteric	tradition Buddhism is a tradition
esoteric Esoteric Buddhism	Christianity Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism	study study Buddhism	posit Buddhism posits	Sikhism Buddhism, Sikhism	from "Buddhism"	scientific Buddhism is scientific	offshoot Buddhism is an offshoot of
Tantric of Tantric Buddhism	Judaism Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism	popularize populized Buddhism	stress Buddhism stresses the	Judaism Judaism, Buddhism	by "Buddhism"	extinct Buddhism was virtually extinct	meditation Buddhism is meditation
Nichiren of Nichiren Buddhism	Zen Buddhism, Zen	preach to preach Buddhism	thrive Buddhism thrived	Daoism Buddhism, Daoism		prevalent Buddhism is prevalent	nirvana goal of Buddhism is nirvana
Mahāyāna of Mahāyāna Buddhism	Sufism Buddhism, Sufism	originate Buddhism originated in India	permeate Buddhism permeates	Shinto Shinto and Buddhism		influential Buddhism was influential	sect Buddhism is not a sect
Islam Islam, Buddhism	Zoroastrianism Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism	patronize patronized Buddhism	reject Buddhism rejects	Zen Buddhism and Zen		widespread Buddhism was widespread	path Buddhism is a path

Sketch Engine was also used to provide visual representation of Buddhism collocates (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Collocates of the word Buddhism (visualization by Sketch Engine)



T-score and Log-likelihood were measured for Buddhism collates. Results are shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16. *T-score and Log-likelihood of Buddhism collocates*

1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tibetan	17,999	236,054	134.16	344,653.52	---
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mahayana	6,287	23,496	79.29	136,736.12	---
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	Theravada	5,141	15,737	71.70	114,184.55	---
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	Zen	9,696	185,535	98.46	177,209.50	---
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hinduism	5,681	103,645	75.37	104,146.23	---
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vajrayana	2,031	9,693	45.07	42,949.54	---
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	Esoteric	2,069	17,515	45.49	41,169.60	---
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jainism	1,875	16,151	43.30	37,236.33	---
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taoism	1,872	21,881	43.27	35,972.58	---
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tantric	1,803	19,256	42.46	34,986.32	---
11	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nichiren	1,278	8,138	35.75	26,202.47	---
12	<input type="checkbox"/>	Buddhism	4,301	278,413	65.57	67,720.12	---
13	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pure	3,750	246,992	61.23	58,892.30	---
14	<input type="checkbox"/>	Confucianism	1,249	20,803	35.34	23,074.98	---
15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mahāyāna	878	4,469	29.63	18,430.48	---

7- Representation of *atheism* in COCA:

Among the 403 stances of the word *atheism* in COCA, 403 cases, using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table, were randomly selected and studied in terms of Van Dijk's discursive strategies. Frequencies and percentages were measured and reported in Table 9.

Table 9. *Frequencies of discursive strategies for atheism*

strategies	frequency	percentage
Authority	9	2.6%
Consensus	32	11.5%
Disclaimer	11	3.1%
Evidentially	9	2.6%
Hyperbole	12	3.5%
Implication	73	25%
Irony	24	9%
Lexicalization	114	36%
Number Game	11	3%
Polarization	29	10%
Presupposition	21	6%
Victimization	58	17%

As depicted in Table 9, the highly used discursive strategies are *Lexicalization*, *Implication*, and *Victimization*.

In order to find out about the thematic representation of atheism in terms of word collocates, the term “atheism” was searched in COCA and about 100 entries were randomly selected and studied, a portion of which has been depicted in Figure 17.

Figure 17. The frequency of co-occurrence for the word *atheism*

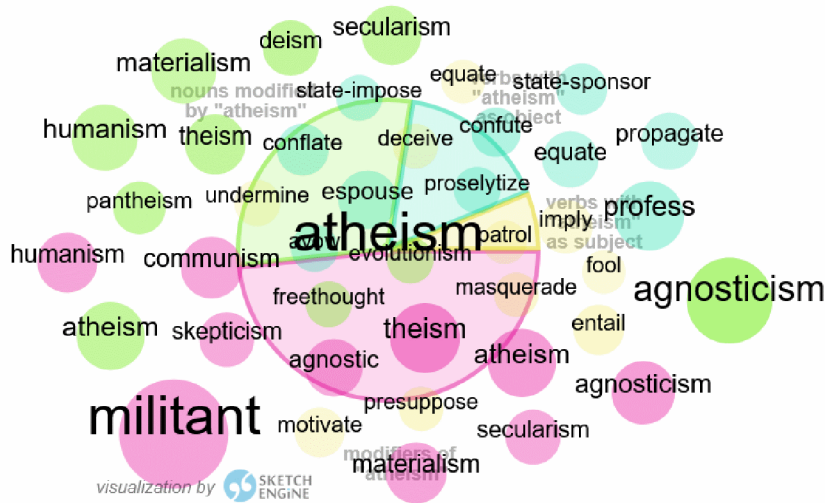
	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTEXT	FREQ	ALL	%	MI	
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	RELIGION	33	33511	0.10	6.85	
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	AGNOSTICISM	15	131	11.45	13.71	
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	MILITANT	14	4086	0.34	8.64	
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	MODERN	14	56041	0.02	4.87	
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	RELIGIOUS	11	63569	0.02	4.34	
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	MATERIALISM	10	1330	0.75	9.78	
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	SECULARISM	9	890	1.01	10.21	
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	BELIEF	8	22333	0.04	5.39	
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	OFFICIAL	8	50993	0.02	4.20	
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	MARXISM	7	1064	0.66	9.59	
11	<input type="checkbox"/>	CATHOLICISM	7	2829	0.25	8.17	
12	<input type="checkbox"/>	CHRISTIANITY	7	8672	0.08	6.56	
13	<input type="checkbox"/>	SECULAR	7	8862	0.08	6.53	
14	<input type="checkbox"/>	HUMANISM	6	1015	0.59	9.43	
15	<input type="checkbox"/>	SOCIALISM	6	3951	0.15	7.47	
16	<input type="checkbox"/>	COMMUNISM	6	5286	0.11	7.05	
17	<input type="checkbox"/>	RENAISSANCE	6	6628	0.09	6.72	
18	<input type="checkbox"/>	PROMOTE	6	21404	0.03	5.03	
19	<input type="checkbox"/>	PRACTICAL	6	22346	0.03	4.97	
20	<input type="checkbox"/>	FAITH	5	41924	0.01	3.80	
21	<input type="checkbox"/>	RISE	5	44802	0.01	3.70	

Sketch Engine was also used to triangulate collocates of atheism (Figure 18).

Figure 18. The frequency of co-occurrence for the word atheism (in Sketch Engine)

modifiers of "atheism"	nouns modified by "atheism"	verbs with "atheism" as object	verbs with "atheism" as subject	"atheism" and/or ...	prepositional phrases	adjective predicates of "atheism"	"atheism" is a ...
theism Theism, Atheism, and Big	agnosticism atheism, agnosticism	profess profess atheism	entail atheism entails	agnosticism atheism and agnosticism	... of "atheism" ... to "atheism"	dogmatic atheism is dogmatic	religion atheism is a religion
atheism Atheism, Atheism	deism atheism, deism	confute and philosophy of atheism is confuted, and to	presuppose masquerade	theism theism and atheism	... for "atheism"	illogical atheism is illogical	worldview Atheism is a worldview
agnosticism agnosticism, atheism	atheism Atheism, Atheism	espouse espouse atheism	deceive motivate	materialism materialism and atheism	"atheism" in with "atheism"	senseless in practice, Atheism is so senseless and devoid to	disbelief Atheism is the disbelief
militant militant atheism	theism Atheism, Theism	conflate to conflate atheism with	equate atheism implies	humanism atheism and humanism	... on "atheism" ... about "atheism"	irrational atheism is irrational	belief atheism is a belief
materialism materialism, atheism	pantheism atheism, pantheism	evow avow atheism	imply atheism implies	secularism secularism and atheism	... in "atheism" ... at ...	respectable atheism intellectually respectable	rejection atheism is the rejection
humanism humanism, atheism	secularism atheism, secularism	state-sponsor of state-sponsored atheism	fool atheism undermines	deism deism and atheism	"atheism" to ... "atheism" of ...	rational Atheism rational	denial atheism is the denial
communism communism, atheism	humanism atheism, humanism	proselytize proselytizing atheism	undermine atheism undermines	atheism atheism, atheism		arrogant atheism is arrogant	position atheism is the default position
secularism secularism, atheism	materialism atheism, materialism	state-impose of state-imposed atheism	patrol atheism prevails	skepticism skepticism and atheism		absent atheism is absent	absence Atheism is the absence of
skepticism scepticism, atheism, and	freethought agnosticism, atheism, freethought, humanism	equate equates atheism with	prevail atheism prevails	pantheism atheism, pantheism		untenable atheism is untenable	non-belief atheism is a non-belief
agnostic agnostic atheism	evolutionism atheism, evolutionism	propagate propagate atheism	deny Atheism denies	naturalism naturalism and atheism		true atheism is true	stance atheism is a rational stance
Leninist of Marxist - Leninist atheism	scientism atheism, scientism	refute refute atheism		rationalism rationalism and atheism		scientific atheism is scientific	philosophy Atheism is not a philosophy
avowed avowed atheism	heathenism renounced atheism	renounce renounced atheism		polytheism polytheism and atheism		immoral atheism is immoral	atheism atheism is explicit atheism

Visual representation of Buddhism collocates is also provided in Figure 19. Figure 19. Collocates of the word atheism (visualization by Sketch Engine)



T-score and Log-likelihood were measured for atheism collates. Results are shown in Figure 20.

Figure 20. T-score and Log-likelihood of atheism collocates

1	<input type="checkbox"/>	agnosticism	315	10,328	17.75	6,570.05	...
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	thinker	117	4,854	10.82	2,382.94	...
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	scientist	198	20,218	14.07	3,674.20	...
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	proud	141	18,742	11.87	2,541.27	...
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	rationalist	853	192,213	29.20	14,511.23	...
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	evolutionist	322	63,633	17.94	5,551.13	...
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agnosticism	62	2,238	7.87	1,280.02	...
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	skeptic	124	24,706	11.13	2,134.05	...
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	humanism	137	40,824	11.70	2,247.39	...
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	materialism	199	75,268	14.10	3,170.22	...
11	<input type="checkbox"/>	secularism	113	39,386	10.63	1,818.03	...
12	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leninist	63	15,339	7.94	1,058.66	...
13	<input type="checkbox"/>	deism	37	4,446	6.08	674.10	...
14	<input type="checkbox"/>	avowed	67	28,412	8.18	1,051.44	...
15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marxist-Leninist	52	18,993	7.21	831.53	...

Thematic development of noun collocates were manually developed. In order to do this, following Baker et al. (2012), the context for each collocate was studied. Eventually, as shown in Table 10, the following categories were elicited.

Table 10. Categorized noun collocates of atheism

Category	Examples of noun collocates
Religion	Agnostic, Christian, Jew, Muslim, theist, god, evil, heaven, hell, deity, preacher, pagan, church catholic, afterlife
Attributes	Scientist, philosopher, scientist, evolution, tradition, being, idiot, academia, gay, hardcore, lesbian, closet, homosexual
Attitude	Proud, believer, skeptic, freethinker, rationalist, liberal, naturalist, humanist, evolutionist, ignorance, thinker, hypocrite, prejudice, stereotype, Darwinist,

Table 10, thus, sheds light on the thematic categorization of *atheism* (i.e., Religion, Attributes, and Attitude) as it occurs in concordance with certain words. The purpose here was to clarify the indexes which *atheism* conveys through the frequent use of a specific pair of collocations.

Discussion:

Islam:

According to the results and drawing on Van Dijk's framework (2004), the highly used strategies for the word *Islam* were *Implication*, *Lexicalization*,

Victimization, and Categorization; all of which, have given *Islam* a negative connotation; such as *fanaticism, extremism, and radicalism*. The instance below is excerpted from COCA corpus.

We need to be tougher on immigration. We need to vet our immigrants and instill the ban that stops immigration from those six majority Muslim countries. "

Islam is also depicted as responsible for *unrest, violent extremism, and many full-scale wars* in the course of history. The example below highlights this theme.

executive orders on Friday, effectively barring immigrants from seven majority-Muslim countries, harks back to an era when holy wars were the currency for mass mobilization by the ruler.

Such findings were in line with studies such as Baker' et al. (2012), Akbarzadeh and Smith (2005). Pew Research center (2013, 2015), however, concluded that while *Islam* has a more or less negative status in COCA, the American people themselves hold a rather positive attitude towards this religion.

Christianity:

Contrary to *Islam*, representation of *Christianity* in COCA was not as political. Although value-laden, *Christianity* has a more mitigated ideological representation which is mostly concerned with a range of religious and historical-religious matters. As a result, *Victimization, Lexicalization, Implication* and *Consensus* were highly utilized to show the superiority of *Christianity* over other religions, especially *Islam*; hence, the sharp contrast between *Christianity* as a religion of *peace and unity*, and *Islam* as a form of *violence and conflict* is hard to miss. As examples, excerpts are provided below.

Yet, the majority of the Mongols did not convert to Christianity. They preferred to become Muslims!

Using discursive strategies such as *Lexicalization, Implication, Victimization, Actor description, and Categorization*, it can be inferred from the above-mentioned example that the savage people, are *Muslims*, and that refusing to convert to *Christianity* is only something expected from such people. This further justifies why the rate of political innuendos is considerably lower for *Christianity* in contrast to *Islam*.

Thematic categorization of word collocates for *Christianity* (i.e., *Religion, Attributes and Science*) also revealed that, like the word *Islam*, *Christianity*, too, has been highly associated with the names of other religions. Unlike *Islam*, however, these connotations were positive. For instance, the excerpt below implies the supremacy of *Christianity* by juxtaposing it to *Judaism*.

each of these traditions needs to acknowledge the theological legitimacy of the other in order to make sense of God's universal goodness and sovereignty. In the case of Judaism, embrace of Christianity, would secure the universal goodness and sovereignty of God.

Judaism:

Discursive strategies used to represent *Judaism* were *Categorization, Implication, Lexicalization, Polarization* and *Victimization*. All of which intended to depict *Judaism* as a long-running ancient religion which is also a common attribute of intelligent people. Using *Implication* and *Lexicalization*, the example below, for

instance, shows that *Judaism* is highly associated with knowledge; as the persona in the example likes and appreciates the intellectual side of *Judaism* and wants to end up in Harvard University.

Professor Dan was blond, he was cute and he was rambunctious and wild. He had a very serious commitment to his Jewish heritage. Danny was very involved in the rituals of Judaism. He also likes the intellectual parts of it. Torah, the Talmud. He liked the argumentative side of it.: He was extremely smart. His goal was to go to Harvard.

Regarding the representation of *Judaism* in COCA, a smooth transition is hard to miss. The early instances of *Judaism* and *Jew* were that of crooked greedy people, but the more recent entries in COCA show a positive portray of the Jew, gentle, organized, and even the scapegoats of many unfair historical incidents.

-Yet Judaism and the Jewish swindle is easily distinguished. For the jaw can always be exposed by their Jew-noses, Jew-ears, their crooked Jew legs and their flat Jew feet.

- On the one hand, Jewish immigrants and their descendants have perpetuated Jewish traditions that celebrate gentleness, mildness, patience, and scholarship as positive masculine traits

Overall, the thematic depiction of *Judaism* shows a shift in the ideological representation of this belief system. Compared to the early ages, and according to COCA, *Judaism* has found a more positive image and has become more widely accepted by the mass. These findings are in line with Goldberg's (2017) and Parham's (2019), where the same representational transition regarding the Jew was recognized.

Buddhism:

Using *Consensus* as one major discursive strategy to represent *Buddhism*, *Buddhists* have been portrayed as the united people who are after *justice*, *(inner) peace*, *enlightenment*, and *happiness* in life, and, as a result, away from the sufferings of the world. *Buddhism* is after mystical silence and communion with *the one*. In terms of its collocation with other certain words, *Buddhism*, too, has been highly associated with the names of other major religions such as *Islam*, and *Christianity*.

with Christianity, one may ask if are there signs of similarity between Christianity and Buddhism that are to be engaged in the dialogue of love and peace in the world. There are many similarities that call for a very interesting dialogue.

Another theme regarding the concordances of the word *Buddhism* was that of *meditation* which refers to the very essence of *Buddhism*.

Buddhist meditation is the practice of meditation in Buddhism. The closest words for meditation and mental training resulting in a calm and luminous mind.

In fact, it could be said that the least ideologically represented belief system was *Buddhism*. Its representation is in line with its very doctrines of inner peace (Kelly, 2020).

Atheism:

As for the case of *atheism*, one of the highly used discursive strategies was *Lexicalization*. Instances using *Lexicalization* suggest that *atheism* is a smarter

choice by attempting to convey that religions are a thing of past, hypocrite, illogical, violent and biased. The *Implication* and *Lexicalization* strategies also revealed that *atheism* is mostly associated to *homosexuals*. As examples, excerpts are provided below.

although atheism might have been logically tenable before Darwin, Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist.

The above-mentioned excerpt contains a number of strategies such as *Authority*, *Lexicalization*, and *Implication*. Referencing to Darwin as an atheist conveys the fact that *atheism* is not a new phenomenon and goes back in history, just like any other religion, *atheism* is what intelligent people follow, and Darwin provided enough proof as an *atheist* himself and a researcher, that *atheism* is a suitable orientation for the people who value knowledge. However, the overall rate of the *Authority* strategy was rather low as shown in Table 8 (10%). The next excerpt provided shows the traces of *Polarization*, as another highly used strategy.

The atheists, on the other hand, grow impatient with the way in which the God of the theists appears to be a master of disguises. One conclusion from that observation is that the theists themselves have no idea what they believe in.

In this excerpt the main ideological view of *atheism* is polarized and justified by claiming that *atheists* are doing the right thing, and that no god really exists, because even though the *theists* are so adamant about the presence of a god figure in the universe, in reality they do not exactly know who their God is; so, in a sense, they are nothing more than *atheist* themselves. Moreover, by using *Lexicalization*, negative feeling towards the *theist* god has been provoked in the phrase *master of disguises*.

humanists who identify as LGBTQ¹ and their families; Luckily, there is a plethora of resources available for LGBTQ individuals, their friends, and families who come from an atheist or humanist perspective.

Overall, in the corpus, using *Victimization*, *Polarization*, *Consensus* and *Lexicalization* as the dominant strategies, it was understood that *atheism* is being justified as a more modern more scientific ideological orientation. Religious people and the *theist* are on the other hand depicted as biased, suppressive, outdated, and confused. This is while *atheists* themselves were represented as reasonable knowledgeable scientists and lenient humanistic individuals who are proud of their *LGBTQ* sexual orientations.

In the case of *atheism*, its collocations were used in a way to attribute a fact- and science-oriented nature to it. *Atheists*, according to COCA, were among the many scientists, philosophers and academia who were contrasted with the hypercritical, prejudiced traditional and not so bright religious people. *Atheism* also seemed to be the kind of orientations most accepted by the gay community, thus, pride (as in one's sexual orientations), freedom, and modernity were among its other indexes.

The findings are in sharp contrast with the bulk of research (e.g., Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2018; Gervais et al., 2011, 2017, Moss et al., 2020) suggesting that the atheist are not trusted or liked by many Americans. However, corpus-based

analysis of COCA has revealed that not only are the atheist not despised, they are even celebrated.

Conclusion

The current study, using a methodological synergy of CDA and corpus linguistics,

was able to first apply the discursive strategies on data attained from COCA, and find out about the highly used strategy in representing information according to the American ideology. As the result of using Van Dijk's framework (2004), the most highly used strategy for portraying various belief systems turned out to be Lexicalization. The most ideologically value laden of all major religions was *Islam*, and then *atheism*. *Buddhism* was the most apolitical one. While such claims may sound convincing at the first glance, the lack of *Authority*, *Evidentially* and *Number game* strategies for backing up the many claims regarding all these orientations.

1 LGTBQ: an initialism that stands for lesbian, gay, transgender bisexual, and queer.

The present study has, however, focused only on the major religious orientations, which considering its scope, in-depth analysis of each orientation was not really applicable. Therefore, future more in-depth empirical analyses are required to help shed light on these belief systems as well as their specific categories (such as Islam's Shia/Sunna category, Catholics and protestants Christianity, etc.). Moreover, investigating different aspects of contemporary American Christianity would be a fruitful area for future inquiry.

The findings of the present study reiterate that atheist and Jew have been positively accepted by the society, Islam, on the other hand, is still suffering from its bleak representation ever since 9/11. It was also further approved that social/historical context plays a fundamental role in the acceptance of a belief system, as Buddhism, never turned into a fully-fledged religion in the U.S. due to particular social/historical events. These findings also emphasize the important role of corpus-based sociolinguistic analysis in revealing underlying ideological viewpoints (Sorlin, 2016; Khodadady, et al., 2012). As depicted in the literature, many social groups, races, and belief systems have been wronged by the biased presentation of data either in media or the press; therefore, awareness of these power plays (Van Dijk, 2004) is crucial.

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نمود مذاهب بزرگ در گفتمان آمریکایی: تحلیلی مبتنی بر زبان‌شناسی پیکره‌ای

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در این مطالعه سعی شد با کمک زبان‌شناسی پیکره‌ای و اصول تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی، نحوه نمود ادیان بزرگ در گفتمان آمریکایی مشخص شود. برای این کار از مجموعه انگلیسی معاصر آمریکایی و چارچوب استراتژی گفتمانی ون دایک (۲۰۰۴) استفاده شد. نتایج نشان داد که بیشترین استفاده از استراتژی واژگانی سازی بود. همچنین مشخص شد که از این راهبرد گفتمانی برای انتقال معانی مثبت یا منفی خاصی در ذهن مخاطب در رابطه با نظام‌های مذهبی و اعتقادی مختلف استفاده شده است. بر این اساس، مشخص شد که دین اسلام بسیار سیاسی شده است در حالی که بودیسم کمترین حضور در جامعه سیاسی را داشت. مسیحیت نیز سیاسی شده بود، اما بیشتر از نظر مسائل و رویدادهای دینی و تاریخی - مذهبی. تغییرات در بازنمایی ایدئولوژیک یهودیت کاملاً محسوس بوده است. در نهایت، مشخص شد که الحاد در مجموعه انگلیسی معاصر آمریکایی به عنوان یک سیستم اعتقادی طولانی نمایان شده است و دانشمندان برجسته، افراد موفق و جامعه دگرباشان جنسی بدان روی آورده‌اند.

واژه‌های کلیدی: زبان‌شناسی پیکره‌ای، مجموعه انگلیسی معاصر آمریکایی، تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی‌های مذهبی، نمود ادیان بزرگ، گفتمان آمریکایی.

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