

A Discourse Historical Analysis of Selected Ministers' Resignations over Brexit Withdrawal Agreement Draft

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List of Abbreviations

DHA	Discourse Historical Approach
EU	European Union
Rt. Hon.	Right Honourable
UK	The United Kingdom

A Discourse Historical Analysis of Two British Ministers' Resignation over Brexit Withdrawal Agreement

المستخلص

قامت هذه الورقة البحثية بفحص استقالتين رسميتين من حكومة تيريزا ماي الثانية قدمهما معالي السيد ديفيد ديفيس والسيد بوريس جونسون. شغل السيد ديفيد ديفيس منصب وزير الدولة للخروج من الاتحاد الأوروبي بينما شغل السيد بوريس جونسون منصب وزير الدولة للشؤون الخارجية وشؤون الكومنولث. استقال الوزيران من منصبيهما الحكوميين بسبب مسودة اتفاقية الانسحاب من الاتحاد الأوروبي المقرر التصويت عليها في مجلس العموم في 15 يناير 2019. تم فحص الاستقالات المختارة باستخدام استراتيجية الجدل من المدخل التاريخي للخطاب (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). وسعت الدراسة بشكل أساسي إلى التحقيق في الوسائل التي استخدمها الوزراء المستقبليون للدفاع عن مواقفهم المعارضة بالإضافة إلى تبرير استقالاتهم. وكشفت الدراسة أن كلا الوزيرين مؤيدان لخروج بريطانيا من الاتحاد الأوروبي، لكن الرفض موجه بشكل أساسي نحو الشروط المقترحة لصيغة المغادرة. علاوة على ذلك، أظهر استخدام الوزيرين (Topoi) كاستراتيجية جدلية أساسية لكتابة وتبرير استقالاتهم منطقياً لضمان معقوليتهم وصحة مواقفهم المعارضة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: خطاب خروج بريطانيا من الاتحاد الأوروبي، خطاب المعارضة، استقالات الوزراء، المدخل التاريخي للخطاب، استراتيجيات الجدل

Abstract

This paper examined two official resignation letters from Theresa May's second government tendered by Rt. Hon. David Davis and Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson. Rt. Hon. David Davis served as the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union while Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson served as the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. The two ministers resigned from their government positions over Brexit Withdrawal Agreement Draft scheduled for voting in the House of Commons on 15th January 2019. The selected resignations were examined using the argumentation strategy from the Discourse Historical Approach (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). The study mainly sought to investigate the means the resigning ministers used to argue for their opposing stances in addition to justifying their resignations. The study revealed that both ministers are pro-Brexit, but the rejection is directed mainly towards the proposed terms of the departure's deal. Further, it showed the minister's use of topoi as the fundamental argumentation strategy to logically compose and justify their resignations ensuring their plausibility and the validity of their opposing stances.

Key words: Brexit Discourse, Opposition discourse, Ministers' resignations, the Discourse Historical Approach, Argumentation strategies

1. Introduction

Brexit is a combination of the two words “British” and “Exit” which refers to the UK’s decision to leave the European Union membership (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). The Brexit Referendum was held on 23rd June 2016 and the British electorate opted to leave. David Cameron the British Prime Minister at that time decided to resign, and Theresa May was assigned as the Prime Minister to lead the government negotiations with the European Union to finalise the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement which would outline the UK’s future relationship with the EU. Settling on the withdrawal terms was a major challenge and a disputing process which brought about a considerable number of resignations by parliamentary members who also served in the government as ministers or their aides. The resigning government members explained the grounds for their departures’ decisions in their resignation letters officially tendered to the Prime Minister. Investigating some of the submitted letters over Brexit negotiations allows the chance to explore the opposition discourse used in the resignations and the resigning members’ tendency to either intensify or mitigate their opposing tones.

2. Previous Research on Brexit Discourse

Brexit discourse was scrutinised from many perspectives using different methods. Prominent among those investigations are the media campaigns of either pro-leave or pro-remain (Buckledee, 2018; Freedman, 2020; Parlington & Zuccato, 2018; Spencer & Oppermann, 2020; Zappettini, 2019a). Additionally, research was conducted on the discourse employed by political parties (Bennett, 2019a;

Cap, 2019), political leaders' discourse on Brexit (Brusenbauch Meislová, 2018; Wodak, 2018), political institutions' discourse (Wenzl, 2019), and voters' discourse (Miglbauer & Koller, 2019; Tolson, 2019). Moreover, the press coverage of the referendum in both paper and electronic formats (Maccaferri, 2019) as well as its representation on certain social media platforms e.g., Twitter (Zappavigna, 2019) and Facebook (Bossetta et al., 2018) were thoroughly examined. Furthermore, the representation of the UK-EU's future relation shared on media platforms (Henkel, 2018; Lutzky & Kehoe, 2019; Zappettini, 2020) received noticeable endeavours. Examining the conceptual metaphors descriptive of Brexit (Đurović & Silaški, 2018; Koller & Ryan, 2019; Musolff, 2017, 2019; Rodet, 2020; Tincheva, 2019a, 2019b, 2020). The investigation how Brexit is represented through the media outside the UK (Aiezza, 2021; Brusenbauch Meislová, 2021; Filardo-Llamas, 2021; Kopf, 2021; Knoblock, 2021; Miglbauer and Koller, 2021; Queraltó, 2021). Thus, Brexit discourse attracted the scope of researchers for different data except for Brexit resignations by government members over Brexit negotiations.

3. Objectives of the Study

The current research seeks to investigate selected official resignations letters submitted over Brexit Withdrawal Agreement's negotiations by British Ministers David Davis and Boris Johnson who served in Theresa May's second government. It seeks to contribute to the studies conducted on Brexit discourse by exploring an under researched area i.e., the discourse of resignations by government officials who also served as members of the British House of Commons.

4. Significance of the study

The current study explores a new strand of Brexit discourse i.e., the discourse of resignations by ministers from May's second ministry over Brexit proposed departure deal. It seeks to examine an untrodden area to examine the means used by opposing government officials to explicate and justify their opposition to the drafted deal.

5. Research Questions

To fulfill the study's objective, the study proposes the following research questions:

1. How do the resigning ministers justify their resignations and their opposition?
2. What functions do the selected resignations serve?

6. Research Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative method of analysis deploying the argumentation strategy from the Discourse Historical Approach-DHA (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001) to investigate the chosen data.

Reisigl and Wodak (2001) assert that persuasion is a significant aspect in shaping and influencing individuals' perception of a topic/ an issue. Additionally, Reisigl and Wodak (2001) stress that persuasion is likely to steer individuals' attitudes, direct their allegiance, and alter their behaviour/ thoughts. For Reisigl and Wodak (2001), one must follow certain rules to compose a logical and persuasive argument. These rules mandate the freedom to argue against these arguments, the necessity to provide reasons for adopting a stance, using facts, and maintaining clarity (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). Further, Reisigl and Wodak (2001) inherently emphasise that failure to adhere to these rules would result in a pragmatic fallacy instead of a logical argument. Hence, an argument could be either

fallacious or logical depending on the argumentation technique. Reisigl and Wodak (2001) identify a logical argument as the one which implements **topoi/ loci**. Reisigl and Wodak (2001, p.75) identify **topoi/ loci** as “content related warrants or conclusion rules” attainable through clear or inferable premises. Reisigl and Wodak (2001) itemized the following list of topoi to be used by speakers to make an argument logical and plausible. The list of topoi is as follows:

1. Topos of advantage/ usefulness
2. Topos of uselessness/disadvantage
3. Topos of definition/ name-interpretation
4. Topos of danger & threat
5. Topos of humanitarianism
6. Topos of justice
7. Topos of responsibility
8. Topos of burdening /weighing down
9. Topos of finances
10. Topos of reality
11. Topos of numbers
12. Topos of law /right
13. Topos of history
14. Topos of culture
15. Topos of abuse

Source: (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001)

The current study investigates the use of topoi by the resigning government ministers to justify their resignations while maintaining a logical voice.



7. Data Description

The current study examines two selected resignations officially tendered by ministers from Theresa May’s second

ministry: Rt Hon David Davis and Rt Hon Boris Johnson. There are certain selection criteria for particularly choosing those ministers to analyse.

1. Both ministers served in Theresa May's second ministry.
2. Both ministers tendered their resignations in opposition to Brexit's Withdrawal Agreement Draft.
3. Both ministers resigned from the government by submitting official resignation letters holding their signature.
4. Both ministers resigned in the same month; July 2018.

Table 1 gives brief information about the selected ministers.

Minister's Name		Position & Office	Date of resignation
	Rt.Hon. David Davis	Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union	8 th July 2018
	Rt.Hon. Boris Johnson	Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs	9 th July 2018

Original copies of the selected resignation letters were obtained from the resigning ministers' website- David Davis- and Twitter account- Boris Johnson. Figures 1 and 2 below show authentic copies of the ministers' resignations.

Figure 1

David Davis's Official Resignation Letter



Department
for Exiting the
European Union

8th July 2018

Dear Prime Minister

As you know there have been a significant number of occasions in the last year or so on which I have disagreed with the Number 10 policy line, ranging from accepting the Commission's sequencing of negotiations through to the language on Northern Ireland in the December Joint Report. At each stage I have accepted collective responsibility because it is part of my task to find workable compromises, and because I considered it was still possible to deliver on the mandate of the referendum, and on our manifesto commitment to leave the Customs Union and the Single Market.

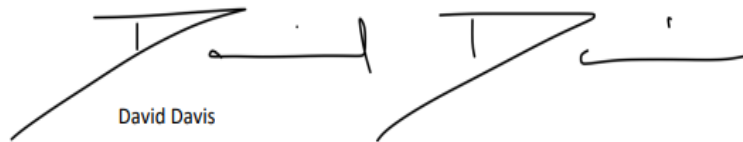
I am afraid that I think the current trend of policy and tactics is making that look less and less likely. Whether it is the progressive dilution of what I thought was a firm Chequers agreement in February on right to diverge, or the unnecessary delays of the start of the White Paper, or the presentation of a backstop proposal that omitted the strict conditions that I requested and believed that we had agreed, the general direction of policy will leave us in at best a weak negotiating position, and possibly an inescapable one.

The Cabinet decision on Friday crystallised this problem. In my view the inevitable consequence of the proposed policies will be to make the supposed control by Parliament illusory rather than real. As I said at Cabinet, the "common rule book" policy hands control of large swathes of our economy to the EU and is certainly not returning control of our laws in any real sense.

I am also unpersuaded that our negotiating approach will not just lead to further demands for concessions.

Of course this is a complex area of judgement and it is possible that you are right and I am wrong. However, even in that event it seems to me that the national interest requires a Secretary of State in my Department that is an enthusiastic believer in your approach, and not merely a reluctant conscript. While I have been grateful to you for the opportunity to serve, it is with great regret that I tender my resignation from the Cabinet with immediate effect.

Yours ever



David Davis

Figure 2

Boris Johnson's Official Resignation Letter



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Secretary of State

9 July 2018

The Rt Hon Theresa May
Prime Minister

Dear Theresa

It is more than two years since the British people voted to leave the European Union on an unambiguous and categorical promise that if they did so they would be taking back control of their democracy.

They were told that they would be able to manage their own immigration policy, repatriate the sums of UK cash currently spent by the EU, and, above all, that they would be able to pass laws independently and in the interests of the people of this country.

Brexit should be about opportunity and hope. It should be a chance to do things differently, to be more nimble and dynamic, and to maximise the particular advantages of the UK as an open, outward-looking global economy.

That dream is dying, suffocated by needless self-doubt.

We have postponed crucial decisions – including the preparations for no deal, as I argued in my letter to you of last November – with the result that we appear to be heading for a semi-Brexit, with large parts of the economy still locked in the EU system, but with no UK control over that system.

It now seems that the opening bid of our negotiations involves accepting that we are not actually going to be able to make our own laws. Indeed we seem to have gone backwards since the last Chequers meeting in February, when I described my frustrations, as Mayor of London, in trying to protect cyclists from juggernauts. We had wanted to lower the cabin windows to improve visibility; and even though such designs were already on the market, and even though there had been a horrific spate of deaths, mainly of female cyclists, we were told that we had to wait for the EU to legislate on the matter.

So at the previous Chequers session we thrashed out an elaborate procedure for divergence from EU rules. But even that now seems to have been taken off the table, and there is in fact no easy UK right of initiative. Yet if Brexit is to mean anything, it must surely give Ministers and Parliament the chance to do things differently to protect the public. If a country cannot pass a law to save the lives of female cyclists – when that proposal is supported at every level of UK Government – then I don't see how that country can truly be called independent.

Conversely, the British Government has spent decades arguing against this or that EU directive, on the grounds that it was too burdensome or ill-thought out. We are now in the ludicrous position of asserting that we must accept huge amounts of

precisely such EU law, without changing an iota, because it is essential for our economic health – and when we no longer have any ability to influence these laws as they are made.

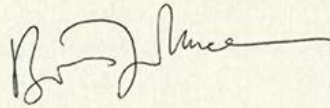
In that respect we are truly headed for the status of colony – and many will struggle to see the economic or political advantages of that particular arrangement.

It is also clear that by surrendering control over our rulebook for goods and agrifoods (and much else besides) we will make it much more difficult to do free trade deals. And then there is the further impediment of having to argue for an impractical and undeliverable customs arrangement unlike any other in existence.

What is even more disturbing is that this is our opening bid. This is already how we see the end state for the UK – before the other side has made its counter-offer. It is as though we are sending our vanguard into battle with the white flags fluttering above them. Indeed, I was concerned, looking at Friday's document, that there might be further concessions on immigration, or that we might end up effectively paying for access to the single market.

On Friday I acknowledged that my side of the argument were too few to prevail, and congratulated you on at least reaching a Cabinet decision on the way forward. As I said then, the Government now has a song to sing. The trouble is that I have practised the words over the weekend and find that they stick in the throat. We must have collective responsibility. Since I cannot in all conscience champion these proposals, I have sadly concluded that I must go.

I am proud to have served as Foreign Secretary in your Government. As I step down, I would like first to thank the patient officers of the Metropolitan Police who have looked after me and my family, at times in demanding circumstances. I am proud too of the extraordinary men and women of our diplomatic service. Over the last few months they have shown how many friends this country has around the world, as 28 governments expelled Russian spies in an unprecedented protest at the attempted assassination of the Skripals. They have organised a highly successful Commonwealth summit and secured record international support for this Government's campaign for 12 years of quality education for every girl, and much more besides. As I leave office, the FCO now has the largest and by far the most effective diplomatic network of any country in Europe – a continent which we will never leave.



THE RT HON BORIS JOHNSON MP

8. Analysis and Discussion

The pathway to finalising the Brexit deal was rather bumpy; the negotiations of PM Theresa May with her Cabinet were splitting and exhibited different perspectives of May's cabinet members significantly lead to a torrent of resignations opposing to the government's Brexit approach and proposed Withdrawal Agreement draft. By submitting their resignations from their positions, the two ministers Davis and Johnson sought to serve certain aims **a)** to show their robust rejection the Withdrawal Agreement Draft, **b)** to expound reasons for voting against the Withdrawal Agreement Draft, and **c)** to delegitimise the Withdrawal Agreement Draft due to its inconsistency with their election agenda and the Referendum's manifesto. Thus, a logical elaboration of their reasons and stances is mandatory to gain support for their stances in the first meaningful vote. To ensure their arguments are strong and credible, the resigning ministers are expected to use topoi and abstain from using pragmatic fallacies (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001).

8.1 Argumentation Strategies in Rt.Hon. David Davis's Resignation Letter

Rt Hon David Davis, the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union in May's second ministry, submitted his resignation notice with immediate effect on 8th July 2018. In his letter, Davis overtly criticized May's approach to Brexit and the composed Withdrawal Agreement Draft. For Davis, the proposed deal is far-fetched and diluted and is not beneficial in actualizing the Brexit mandate. Davis letter shows putting **topos of responsibility**, **topos of disadvantage/ uselessness**, **topos of threat**, and **topos of reality** in use.

Topos of responsibility which means individuals/institutions in charge should settle the problems within their capacity. Davis (2018) wrote **“there have been a significant number of occasions in the last year or so on which I have disagreed with the Number 10 policy line”** followed by the identified warrants as he wrote, **“ranging from accepting the Commission's sequencing of negotiations through to the language on Northern Ireland in the December Joint Report”** (Davis, 2018). Davis (2018) further highlighted his fundamental role to fulfil the objectives of Brexit writing:

At each stage I have accepted collective responsibility because it is part of my task to find workable compromises, and because I considered it was still possible to deliver on the mandate of the referendum, and on our manifesto commitment to leave the Customs Union and the Single Market (Davis, 2018).

Hence, Davis's opposing stance is strongly expressed using topos of responsibility.

Topos of disadvantage/uselessness meaning political decisions should only be made if their outcomes are the expected ones. Davis (2018) wrote **“I am afraid that I think the current trend of policy and tactics is making that look less and less likely”** that he justified as follows: **Whether it is the progressive dilution of what I thought was a firm Chequers agreement in February on right to diverge, or the unnecessary delays of the start of the White Paper, or the presentation of a backstop proposal that omitted the strict conditions that I requested and believed that we had agreed** (Davis, 2018).

Additionally, he wrote clearly about the unfavourable results of the policies if continued to proceed **“the general direction of policy will leave us in at best a weak negotiating position, and possibly an inescapable one”** (Davis, 2018). Davis (2018) further added **“The Cabinet decision on Friday crystallised this problem. In my view the inevitable consequence of the proposed policies will be to make the supposed control by Parliament illusory rather than real.”** Therefore, Davis rigorously discredited the proposed Withdrawal Draft.

Topos of danger and threat definable as menacing political decisions should not be taken was used by Davis to warn against the adverse consequences if the proposed deal was ratified. Davis (2018) wrote **“the "common rule book" policy hands control of large swathes of our economy to the EU and is certainly not returning control of our laws in any real sense.”** Davis (2018) added **“I am also unpersuaded that our negotiating approach will not just lead to further demands for concessions”** to warn against approving the proposed deal.

In concluding his resignation letter, **topos of reality** was used by to disclaim the PM’s tactics Davis (2018) wrote **“it seems to me that the national interest requires a Secretary of State in my Department that is an enthusiastic believer in your approach, and not merely a reluctant conscript.”** Thus, the primary argumentation scheme used by Rt Hon David Davis was the use of topoi throughout his resignation letter to explicate the hazards the proposed deal posed to UK’s future.

8.2 Argumentation Strategies in Rt.Hon. Boris Johnson’s Resignation Letter

Rt Hon Boris Johnson, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, resigned from May's second ministry on 9th July 2018. In his resignation letter, Johnson pensively censured the PM's proposed Withdrawal Agreement because it would stifle achieving the aims of Brexit. The resignation anchored Johnson's positive perception and support of Brexit in addition to rejecting the Withdrawal Agreement Draft. Johnson employed **topos of advantage, topos of danger and threat, topos of disadvantage, topos of burdening, topos of name-interpretation/ definition, and topos of responsibility.**

Topos of advantage explained as confirmed advantages are a must prior to an action/ decision becoming effective. Johnson used the subtype **topos of pro bono publico** meaning to the advantage of all to illustrate the aspired outcomes of Brexit on the political, financial, and legislative levels. Johnson (2018) wrote:

Since the British people voted to leave the European Union on an unambiguous and categorical promise that if they did so they would be taking back control of their democracy. They were told that they would be able to manage their own immigration policy, repatriate the sums of UK cash currently spent by the EU, and, above all, that they would be able to pass laws independently and in the interests of the people of this country.

Johnson further explains that the essential target of Brexit is attaining the UK's optimum benefit. Johnson (2018) wrote **"Brexit should be about opportunity and hope. It should be a chance to do things differently, to be more nimble and dynamic, and to maximise the particular advantages**

of the UK.” Thus, Rt. Hon. Johnson used topos of advantage to highlight the expected benefits of Brexit.

Johnson was cynical about the realisation of Brexit agenda because of the proposed deal and the PM’s negotiation procedure with the EU. Johnson’s letter prognosticated the Withdrawal Agreement Draft would extend the restrictions of the EU imposed over the UK. He employed **topos of danger and threat** to enunciate the constraints on the UK’s economy and law making. Johnson (2018) wrote,

We appear to be heading for a semi-Brexit, with large parts of the economy still locked in the EU system, but with no UK control over that system... we are not actually going to be able to make our own laws... and there is in fact no easy UK right of initiative...In that respect we are truly headed for the status of colony

Johnson further expressed his concerns that the EU might request further restrictive demands in relation to immigration policies and trading. Johnson (2018) highlighted **“there might be further concessions on immigration, or that we might end up effectively paying for access to the single market.”** Therefore, using topos of danger and threat enabled Johnson to manifest in detail the unpleasant consequences the UK would be compelled to deal with in case the Withdrawal Agreement Draft was approved.

Topos of disadvantage was implemented to elucidate the negative ramifications of the proposed Withdrawal Agreement. Johnson (2018) explained:

We thrashed out an elaborate procedure for divergence from EU rules. But even that now seems to have been taken off the table, and there is in fact no easy UK right of initiative... we no longer have any ability to influence these laws as they are made... and many will struggle to see the economic or political advantages of that particular arrangement.

Topos of burdening was used to showcase the encumbrance the EU's membership brings to the UK. Johnson's letter (2018) elaborated:

The British government has spent decades arguing against this or that EU directive...We are now in the ludicrous position of asserting that we must accept huge amounts of precisely such EU law, without changing an iota.

Further, Johnson expounded the possibility for future obstructions by the EU preventing the UK from trading and accessing the single market Johnson (2018) wrote:

By surrendering control over our rule book for goods and agrifoods, we will make it much more difficult to do free trade deals...there is the further impediment of having to argue for an impractical and undeliverable customs arrangement...there might be further concessions on immigration, or that we might end up effectively paying for access to the single market.

Thus, **topos of burdening** allowed Johnson to list the prospective hindrances the UK would inevitably deal with if the Withdrawal Agreement was approved.

Topos of name-interpretation/ definition was used by Johnson to emphasise the UK's failure to become an

independent country because of its membership in the EU. Johnson (2018) wrote **“If a country cannot pass a law to save the lives of female cyclists ... then I don't see how that country can truly be called independent.”** So, Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson's perceived the Withdrawal Draft as an obstruction to the UK's independence.

Topos of responsibility enabled Johnson to convey his perception of Brexit as a gateway to escape the EU's dominance. Additionally, Johnson employed topos of responsibility to accentuate the members of the House of Commons' collective responsibility towards their electorate. Johnson (2018) wrote, **“if Brexit is to mean anything, it must surely give ministers and Parliament the chance to do things differently to protect the public.”**

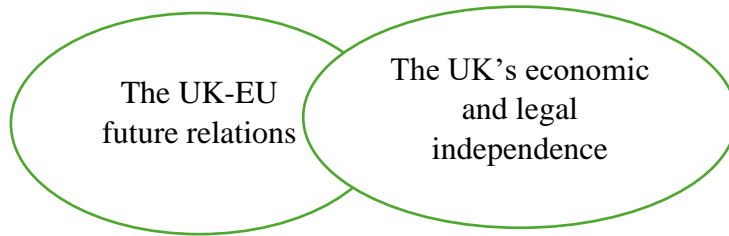
Further, using topos of responsibility assisted Johnson to emphasize his opposition to the Withdrawal Agreement draft **“we must have collective responsibility. Since I cannot in all conscience champion these proposals, I have sadly concluded that I must go.”** Hence, Rt.Hon. Johnson's letter used different topoi to highlight the prospective chances of Brexit, the perils of the Withdrawal Agreement draft, and his rejecting stance to the proposed Withdrawal Agreement.

9. Findings

The analysis of the selected letters using the DHA allows a thorough exploration of the resigning ministers' perceptions of Brexit, their rejecting stances, and the logical justification of their opposition. Therefore, the findings could be summarised as follows:

- 1- The main discourse topics in Davis and Johnson's resignations are:





- 2- Both ministers used topos to logically express their opposing stances. Both Davis and Johnson used: topos of disadvantages, topos of danger and threat, and topos of responsibility to expound their fears and trepidation of the EU requesting further demands to be added during negotiating the deal for ratification.
- 3- Johnson used topos of name-interpretation/ definition to highlight the restrictions imposed on the UK's freedom to make laws and to denounce the EU's dominance over the process of legislating laws within the UK due to its membership in the EU.
- 4- Davis's letter shows putting topos of reality in use to fundamentally express his opposition to the PM's tactics and Brexit approach.
- 5- The letters reveal the ideology of both ministers as pro-Brexit; Davis and Johnson's letters are carefully crafted revealing their positive stances towards Brexit. Additionally, the letters highlight their utter rejection of the Withdrawal Agreement Draft.

10. Conclusion

To conclude, the study attempts to explore an untrodden area of Brexit discourse i.e., the discourse of government members' resignation from May's second ministry over the Withdrawal Agreement Draft. Brexit negotiations were

difficult and disuniting because of the proposed terms of the departure. The selected resignations were examined using the argumentation strategy from the Discourse Historical Approach (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001) to explore the justifications the resigning government members provided to explain and justify their stances and resignations. The analysis revealed the use of topos to ensure the validity and plausibility of their rejecting stances. The study contributes to enriching the research done on Brexit discourse by exploring the discourse of ministers' resignations over Brexit negotiations and the Withdrawal Agreement Draft.

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