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Ideological Analysis of Controversy over Coronavirus in English and Arabic Media: A Contrastive Study

A B S T R A C T

This contrastive study investigates how the international press; the New York Times, and Al Jazeera TV news, portrays the impact of Covid 19 on the places that have been impacted. In this study, a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis is used in this comparison to discover media ideology. Meaning - making resources realised via visuals are also considered, in addition to linguistic characteristics. Headlines and articles containing Van Dijk's ideological square discourse are analysed using Halliday (2005) transitivity and imagery in the chosen articles and programmes utilising representational function of image. The findings demonstrate that both media depicted the world as a Self-group, but Covid was seen as a group that was distinct from the Self-representation. Self-representation was depicted in opposition to Other-representation as a victim and a warrior aiming to avoid a pandemic. Notably, the role of the media provides people with the information they need to be free and self-reliant, thus the consumption of news media anywhere in the world is essential to the exercise of citizen democracy.

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تحليل ايديولوجي للجدال حول فايروس كورونا في الاعلام الإنجليزي والعربي: دراسة مقارنة

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الملخص:

إن الغرض من هذه الدراسة المقارنة هو دراسة الكيفية التي صور بها الإعلام العالمي متمثلاً بالنيويورك تايمز وتلفزيون الجزيرة تأثير فايروس كورونا على الأماكن المتواجدة فيها. الدراسة الحالية أنموذج تحليل خطاب نقدي متعدد من أجل اكتشاف ايديولوجية الإعلام. أخذت الدراسة بنظر الاعتبار مبتكرات المعنى البصرية وكذلك الخصائص اللغوية. خلّلت العناوين والمقالات التي تحوي مربع النص الايديولوجي لفاندايك بأستخدام أنموذج هاليدي الانتقالي والتصويري (2005) في المقالات والبرامج المختارة للأستفادة من الوظيفة التمثيلية للصور. أظهرت النتائج إن كلتا الوسيطتين صورت العالم كمجموعة ذاتية أما كمجموعة بعيدة عن التمثيل الذاتي. صور التمثيل الذاتي بالمقارنة مع بقية التمثيلات على إنه ضحية ومحارب يهدف الى تجنب الجائحة .

1. Introduction

People use language to communicate and dominate one and others (Hodge & Kress,1993). The efforts are continually exposed to language that is filled with power as a method of exerting control over others. News coverage is heavily impacted by the writer's agenda, beliefs, or viewpoints since even fiction writers have been shown to utilise language to influence their (Thetela, 2001,p.6). The structure and form of a text are often forgotten by readers after they've finished reading it, and they intuitively divorce the text's ideas from its framework, believing them to be true (Hadidi et al., 2021,p.24). Thus, newspapers may be utilised to get insight into the underlying ideas and biases of specific groups.

It is widely accepted that the media is a constant source of political attitudes, ideas, and mind control, according to significant contributors like Van Dijk and Wodak (Rheindorf & Wodak, 2019; Van Dijk Wodak, 2006). Van Dijk (2006,p.732) asserts that "the media are politically influenced" in his essay as he puts it, "politics is the most ideological field of social life." In this approach, Critical Conversation Analysis (CDA) aims to shed light on what is behind the surface of conversation. According to Gee (2004,p.55), CDA is an approach that analyses language usage as part of social behaviours with political consequences.

Street (2010,p.12) states that media politics takes various forms. He also argues that the media must politicise health issues. By late 2019, the world has been struck by a Coronavirus pandemic, also known as Covid-19. Aside from the worldwide sadness, each country's reaction to the outbreak and government response was different.

These conflicting viewpoints were clearly seen in the media's close inspection. Using media discourse analysis, it is possible to identify inconsistencies in the media. Besides, it is noticeable that little attention has been paid to health issues. Politics' effect on people's daily lives, however, has long fascinated spectators before Covid 19, here was little attention paid to the health debate. Examining Al Jazeera TV news and New York Times newspaper headlines and articles concentrate on both health and political perspectives.

These two media sources signify two different ideological discourses, making them easier to understand. The media has become a major player in balancing the two competing discourses. The media, which is typically supported by major political parties, must simultaneously promote politicians and public health. There seems to be a discrepancy in the reports from the various news organisations. Deciphering and identifying underlying ideological or political inclinations is a comparable goal.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Mass Media

Messages that are written or seen on televisions by people and sent to the audience at the same time via some transmission devices are referred to as mass media. Mass media could be forms as visual mass communication through signal carriers which may include language, design, facial expressions, print, radio, television, mobile phones, billboards, and percussive instruments (Subba, 2019,p. 22). Because of the media, public acculturation may now extend beyond one's own social circle to include those with whom one has never met in person. The availability of technological instruments is essential for the extensive dissemination of messages (Ells, 2019,p.123).

As a result, young people's thinking is negatively impacted by this practice. To boost a model's attractiveness, the role of the media in determining and enforcing realities about perfect creatures is essential (Keswani et al., 2018,p.146). A journalistic endeavour is conveyed to the public through the media. News sources are known as "the mass media" by our community. According to a journalistic work, the media publishes its worthless to tell a story if no one hears about it.

In other words, the media serves as a source of news information; it must use communication channel known as media to disseminate their stories. The term " News" is used often in the media. Changes, implementation, and consequences are covered by the media. The primary role of the media is to inform and promote products and services (Saragih et.al. 2019,p. 33).

2.1.1 Major News Sources

The role of the news media is to provide people with the information they need to be free and self-reliant, and the consumption of news media in the United States is therefore considered essential to the practice of citizen democracy. This is particularly true of the news media. A feeling of belonging to one's community is also associated with local news, according to a recent study.

Furthermore, news consumption promotes a sense of belonging to one's community (Bergström 2020,p.29). However, although it is more generally thought that the media has an impact on public opinion, this is not always true.

It does not matter whether or if there is some evidence to support this claim. A major effect on public opinion may be exerted by media coverage. Selective information seeking, as well as a media business that is growing more fragmented, are all factors contributing to this trend. The usage of technology may restrict the power of some media outlets to influence public opinions. Too much information has been made available to the public as a limited power to affect public perceptions of the circumstances (Couldry et al., 2003,p.46).

2.1.2 Coronavirus' Main Stream: New York Times and Al Jazeera TV.

Public perception and behaviour may be influenced by the media's ability to "unscrupulous dissemination of falsehoods." in the case of Covid 19, media reporting has previously been examined by researchers. After President Trump declared a national emergency on March 13, 2020, New York Times accounts to support the general argument. The New York Times reported about the coronavirus in a way that emphasized on the virus' role in the outbreak of covid-19 pandemic (Mitchell et al., 2011,p.201). In August of 2020, The New York Times, when the covid-19 outbreak was raging, it was the fifth most popular news site to provide all its abilities to rise people's awareness against this virus.

In Arabic region, many international news organisations focused on examples from countries outside of the Arab world, such as China and South Korea. By the end of February, there were just a few confirmed cases in the region, thus the coronavirus was first handled as a minor story on Al Jazeera TV. In sharp contrast to online rumors, particularly on social media regarding the virus. This was the case in the first month of the pandemic, over 15 publications addressed coronavirus, warning and advising people about how to live in this horrible situation.

2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

Many different concepts, techniques and research problems may be found in critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA focuses on the relationship between language and social forces. Critical discourse analysts argue that CDA is rather than summarizing textual patterns or rules, but the textual meaning is constructed through interactions between producers, texts, and consumers rather than simply being read off the page by all readers in the same manner.

There are several linguistic circumstances where CDA may be used, such as when considering transitivity (Halliday 2011,p.6) as a method for analysing conversation and Van Dijk et.al (2000, p.85) Positive Self-Presentation and Negative Other-Presentation).

2.2.1 Halliday's Transitivity (1985)

If one is interested in understanding the ideational function of language, "transitiveness" is the word that can be used to describe it (Fairclough, 2009,p.177). As a result, the word "transitivity" is distinct from the more familiar "transitive." It is possible to say that grammar is not just dependent on the rules of grammar but also on the underlying significance to which they are being applied by (Halliday, 2006, p.106).

Halliday also confirms that "the transitivity system constructs the universe of experience into process types that can be easily controlled." An important component of the transitivity system is the manner in which grammar generates representation we encounter is called the "flow of events" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2006,p.66).

As shown in Table 1 below, there are six sorts of processes in transitivity which encompass material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioural and existential processes.

Table 1

Six Types of Transitivity Processes Adopted from Halliday, 1985)

Process type	Category Meaning	Participants
material: action event	'doing' 'doing' 'happening'	Actor, Goal
behavioral	'behaving'	Behaver
mental: perception affection cognition	'sensing' 'seeing' 'feeling' 'thinking'	Senser, Phenomenon
Verbal	'saying'	Sayer, Target
relational: attribution identification	'being' 'attributing' 'identifying'	Token, Value Carrier, Attribute Identified, Identifier
Existential	'existing'	Existent

(Halliday, 1985: 131)

2.2.2 Van Disk's Strategy of Positive Self-presentation and Negative -presentation

Negative self-presentation and positive self-presentation are two complementary strategies (Van Dijk, 1993,p.34). Instead of targeting individuals, these two methods focus on social groups (Van Dijk, 2009,p.109). In terms of social representation of us vs them, it is a "determinant factor" in the organisation of speech (Oktar, 2001,p.89) where the ideological square's four motions are analysed (Oktar, 2001,p.319). This strategy Focuses on the positive and negative aspects of target speech\text and highlight them.

According to Van Dijk (2009,p. 78), there is a need to "connect discourse properties with these underlying, socially shared representations"; and this strategy involves two things:

1. Suppressing or minimizing positive information in the light of the speaker's intention and the context.
2. There has to be a reduction in the amount of negative information about a specific context that is publicised.

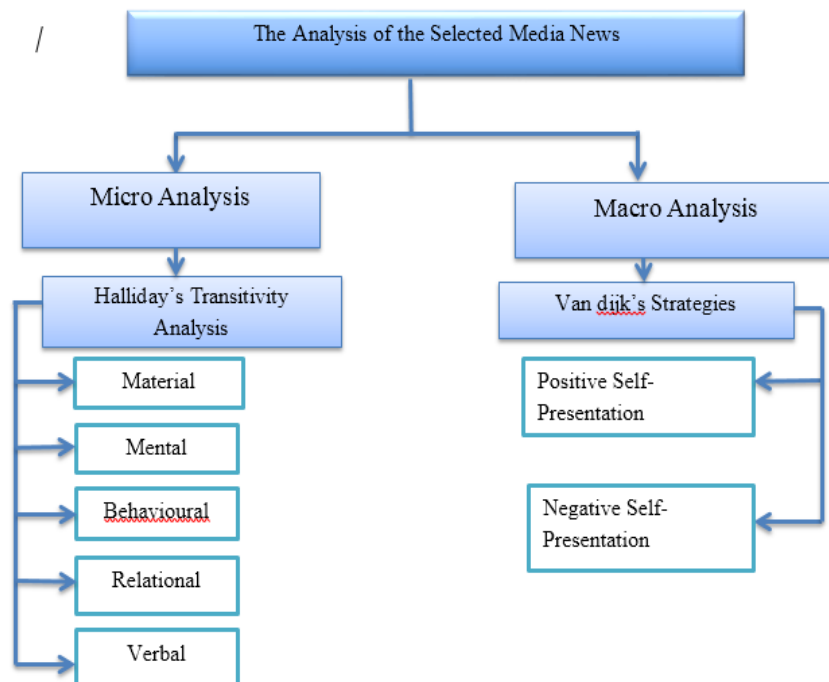
Accordingly, a CDA examines the contents of the New York Times and Aljazeera TV news in relation to positive-self and negative-other representations. It tries to expose the ideological underpinnings of the media. Semiotic resources realised via visuals are also considered, in addition to linguistic aspects. For the purpose of this study, Halliday's theory of transitivity (1985) and pictures in chosen texts were used involving Van Dijk's self-representation (2005, 2009).

3. Research Methodology

This study is qualitative in nature, which includes primary and secondary sources of data. Six headlines with Covid 19 from the New York Times and Al-Jazeera TV news were employed to be under scrutiny depending on the ideological strategies of positive self-presentation and negative-presentation. They were obtained from the websites of online publication (<https://www.nytimes.com/news-event /coronavirus>) and Aljazeera TV news (<https://www.youtube.com/user/AlJazeeraEnglish>). The theoretical framework selected for this study is presented in the following figure:

Figure 1

The Proposed Multimodal of Data Analysis [adapted from Halliday, 1985-1999 ; van Dijk, 2005-2009]



4. Data Analysis

The current research, which follows Halliday's transitivity and Van Dijk's representational function of image, presents a textual analysis that focuses not only on the written text but also on semiotic resources realised via picture. There are micro and macro levels of analysis carried out by this approach. Each text is broken down into its constituent processes and actors in a micro level examination called transitivity. In addition, the pictures are analysed for their representational purpose. Based on the context, the results of each verbal and visual analysis are evaluated. As a result of this investigation, we can see how images are used in a variety of ways. At the macro level, these findings are compared to the social environment to illustrate how the newspaper's and TV channel's ideologies are reflected in presenting positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation.

4.1 Transitivity Analysis of New York Headlines

Datum 1

"Coronavirus tore into regions previously spared" June.4

This datum involves the material process of doing, which includes the word 'tore.' Covid 19's influence, which may travel quickly over the whole map and assault any location it chooses, it is focused on the doers in this datum. Covid 19 is shown as a hostile entity actively assaulting its targets. On the other hand, the phrase "regions previously spared" refers to the players who attempt to postpone the entrance of Covid 19. The media's strategy for portraying citizens as victims of the epidemic is to use techniques that have a negative sense.

In this regard, material process has the big role to influence the meaning.

Datum 2

Jen Psaki, the White House press secretary, has tested positive for the coronavirus. Oct 31

This datum includes the mental process as mentioned in 'has tested positive,' which is part of the process of inference. The fact that Covid 19 is described by the media as the major obstacle the world faces and vaccination is the solution to getting rid of it. In the same milieu, the coronavirus is described as a virus that causes death and damage, and vaccination is the only way to avoid it. Hence, the mental process has the greatest effect in this text.

Datum3

The Coronavirus Is Threatening a Comeback. Here's How to Stop It. 22 Apr 2021

In order to back up the prior claim, this headline is advised. Being and having are encoded via the relational process 'is', which is often used in speech conveying facts, due to the fact that it implies a degree of certainty about what is being stated (Butt et al., 2003). An example of a correlation between coronavirus and preventative measures, such as heeding health advice, may be seen here. Because of this, the Covid 19 outbreak is unambiguously referred to as 'hazardous' by the mainstream media. To delivering facts, the writer focuses on employing the attributive relational process.

4.2 Visual Analysis of Al Jazeera TV News

NEWS 1

"فقد مليون شخص حياتهم: العالم يحصي تكاليف جائحة كوفيد-19"



Many corpses are shown in this news, and the ashes of those who have been affected by the coronavirus are among them. As part of a relationship process, this news may convey the message that people must adhere to a strict regimen in order to prevent deteriorating Corona various conditions.... The selected objects (corpses and hearse) that featured in this news all contribute to depicting the horrifying impact of covid 19 on the human body. The image represents Covid 19 as the imminent death of all humanity unless they prepare themselves to still live despite the odds. This image is used by the news media to stress the fact that individuals are in serious danger.

For short, this depiction portrays the positive role of Aljazeera TV news self-representation and negative other representation of Covid 19.

NEWS 2

"كوبا ترسل أطباء حول العالم لمكافحة فيروس كورونا"



News 2 has another image that demonstrates a sense of togetherness and collaboration. Doctors who believe they are the first line of defence share their thoughts and ideas in this news. There are three components to this strategy: physicians as actors, a mission to preserve the globe, and medical equipment as a vector. this news focuses on the 'Actors' role that doctors play as a team, as Aljazeera News highlights (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). It is said in the media that Covid 19 is the enemy, while doctors are the warriors that are battling this type of threat. It suggests that the media portrays the health institutions as warriors and fighters, whereas the Coronavirus pandemic is shown as the adversary and threat by the media.

Further, it's becoming a common theme in the media to speculate that the destiny of all people on our planet may be the same, which might inspire a feeling of unity to defend our planet from an uninvited invasion.

NEWS 3

فيروس كورونا: هل يكشف العنصرية الخفية؟



Here, we're talking about the mental process known as 'revealing' **تكشف**. When someone uses the word "revealing," they intend "to show" something (Cambridge dictionary). As stated above, this news focuses on a problem related to the accusation of Asia (particularly China) in

manufacturing this pandemic, which is highlighted in this news. The selected objects (Asian girl, #Iam not Virus) featured on aljazeera news, and this message was clearly conveyed. The editors' use of mental processes reveals their perspective.

Finally, it seems important to signify the results as follows:

1. In this research, the primary focus was on comparing and contrasting the American and Arabian press. It's an effort to see how the coronavirus pandemic is covered by these two news organisations. Because of the distinctive tactics and ideologies used by these two languages, the listed media seem to be distinguished as follows:

A. A Comparison of words involved in "news reports"

In the Time's reports on COVID-19, various terms like "tore", 'tested' and 'threatened' were used. Al Jazeera's usage of terms like "reveal يكشف" "defense يكافح" " " and "account يحصي" are more impartial and unbiased. Using the term "tore" in English to indicate the pandemic's risk has been coined. The language used by the New York Times may assist individuals in making sensible and accurate assessments of the event's development. The New York Times overestimated the risk of the virus and the implications of its propagation, according to the writer. The New York Times, for example, often employs the term "tore" to indicate panic or the spread of a virus.

Al Jazeera, on the other hand, uses the term "reveal يكشف" to denote the focus on a single goal: slowing the spread of the illness. Al Jazeera seeks to explain the risk and infection of COVID-19 in its newsletters by using the right words and images.

B. Comparison in Attitudes and Personality Traits

According to the data, various attitudes will be covered as follows:

1. Coronavirus has been identified as the target of a different campaign by Al-Jazeera TV news. According to this technique, this TV news channel uses Arabic heritage and Islam to emphasize that direct exposure to Covid 19 is banned based on Islam principles.
2. The results reveal that in textual analysis, the New York Times newspaper employs transitivity and the representation of images, ideas, and thoughts to convey Covid 19 and its effect in a number of ways. In transitivity analysis, this study found that the negative behaviours are framed in a bipolar approach, i.e., Self and Other. A multitude of reasons may be given for the adoption of negative material processing procedures by the media in order to represent the case. When it comes to representing Covid 19 as a hostile entity that actively attacks its victims, the Self-presentation group is responsible (in Datum 1).The media portrays the spread of the coronavirus as a stimulant for violence, while infected areas are shown as the source of victimisation.
3. While Covid 19 is portrayed as the perpetrator of offence in the visual analysis findings, people are shown as the victims. The media uses narrative processes, such as responsibility and method or reaction-based, to depict the activities of participants. Those living in the affected areas and the bad health of Covid 19 are highly valued by the media, according to the data. Two groups are depicted by the media in an oblique manner. Those who have been affected by the outbreak are portrayed by the media as helpless victims.

4. Studies have shown inconsistencies in the way people and Covid_19 are represented in the media. According to Martono and Nurhayati (2014), if an individual or organisation fabricates a fact, then it is not an objective fact, Furthermore, the media's production of information is confined since it is selectively selected based on the media's stance and point of view (Adawiyah et.al 2020,p.25). Because of this, it is essential to look at the media and how they exploit their position of power to sway public opinion on the importance of the "Self -group."
5. In terms of English-language media, the New York Times and Al-Jazeera TV News are two of the most widely-visual and print media. Aljazeera is a Middle Eastern television network while the New York Times is America's most read newspaper. Politics is an area in which the United States and Qatar have quite divergent views. It is worth noting that newspaper readers and TV news watchers are largely unique persons with different perspectives on the world around them.

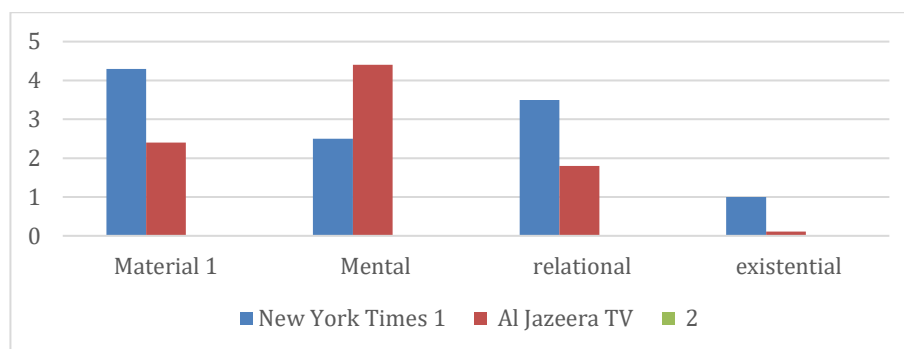
5. Findings and Discussion

The analysis comprises both textual and visual study of chosen materials. Using textual analysis, only four process categories were found in six articles (material, mental, relational, and verbal) in New York Times. Material processes (verbs of action) are the first of a total of 24 process kinds. These procedures are the responsibility of the actor (New York Times), with Covid 19 serving as the object of the action. In most cases, these procedures have a positive connotation, demonstrating a favourable self-presentation to the other party.

The second step of the textual process (verbs of writing) involves drawing Covid 19 as the process's motivator, but this process also portrays Covid's negative presentation of others and his positive presentation of himself. A pandemic effect may be felt in the articles' mental processes (verbs of emotion, attachment, and want). The same is true for the material processes. Additionally, it focuses on the negative portrayal of the other. Negative other-presentation, on the other hand, is exclusively shown through the relational process (verbs of attributes/having). The results are employed through the next figure.

Figure 2

Frequency of the Involvement of Transitivity Types



A total of six types may be gleaned from the chosen news for visual analysis. Five pictures employ the material process, while the rest use the other processes, according to their representational role. Most of Covid's effects are described using the storytelling method. An

actor who wants to extend his power and control by all means is shown as the pandemic's protagonist. Al Jazeera TV aims to highlight the corona-harmful virus's impact on the planet, as well. In addition, the creative method is employed exclusively to represent the pandemic's lethal effects and how it might bring death in whatever region it can come. Those images are used in the news stories to convey a bad impression of the other.

It is found that both media aired all the good aspects of the purpose of raising people's awareness of the pandemic and all the bad aspects of it. In the selection of the headlines and news programmes, the media's participation in this game and the pandemic's effects are often mentioned. As a consequence, the findings are divided into two categories: (1) guidance and suggestion, and (2) danger and death. On the basis of what is being discussed in news items, these categories are created.

The media focuses on how to avoid the negative effects of a pandemic and the pains that may be avoided if people ignored all health guidelines. News reports on Covid 19's harmful actions, as well as the world's issues, are almost universal. Media coverage of the pandemic focuses on how the Other-representations groups have harmed the Self-group. Examples of textual and visual analyses that demonstrate the epidemic are provided:

6. Conclusions

By using van Dijk's self-representation and Halliday's transitivity, various details are introduced. Self-representation (either positive or negative) refers to those who have been afflicted by the pandemic, while other-group refers to those who have not been impacted and are considered initiators of the pandemic. Textual and visual analyses reveal the producer's ideological viewpoints, pointing to a strategy of positive-self and negative-other presentation.

It may be inferred that the political and ideological environment of the media greatly influences this discursive technique. Therefore, the goal of this research is to make readers and listeners aware that what they read, hear, and see does not simply reflect the truth, but that there are factors that affect the news creation. Readers and listeners are urged to read attentively in order to get trustworthy information.

Furthermore, it must be realised that the current study's data are restricted, and it may be worthwhile to continue this research if the epidemic does not come to a stop soon.

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