

IDEOLOGY IN NEWS REPORTS: AL-JAZEERA REPORTERS AS REPRESENTATIVE: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT: *This paper adopts a critical discourse analysis approach to investigate the way reporters of Al-Jazeera English Satellite Channel use to convey events and actions during the Syrian crisis. The study aims to find out whether reporters are neutral in their coverage or they carry an ideology which accords with one of the warring parties of conflict. It also aims at finding out the ideological implications that reporters have in the news texts toward the parties of conflict in Syria. The study hypothesizes that news reporters of Al-Jazeera are not neutral, but rather they have a prejudiced and a one-sided ideology towards the conflicted parties. For the analysis of the data, the study follows Van Dijk's (1998) model of 'ideological square'. The analysis is limited to investigate some discourse features, among many others, for their importance and their abundance in the data under scrutiny. Finally, the study has come with some conclusions that validate the hypotheses.*

KEYWORDS: Ideology, Media, Crisis, CDA, Transparency, Topics, Contrasts, Modality

INTRODUCTION

In times of military struggle, the conflicted parties are divided at least into two main opposite extremes. They use all available means to win the field. Media represents one of the effective means during the struggle; it conveys what happens in a way that supports the position of the proponents, shows their legal actions and so on. In other words, media legitimizes the actions of the allies or proponents and at the same time sullies and de-legitimizes the actions of the opponents.

In what is called Arab Spring, the tumultuous situation in Syria represents one of the controversial cases. Most of Syrian people started their rebellion in 2011 against the official Syrian government of the president Bashar Al-Assad. Syrian rebellion began demanding political and social reform through cancelling emergency laws and reestablishing social justice in Syria. The first spark of rebellion took a form of demonstrations in Daraa, one of the Syrian cities. Later, the demonstrations' demands have been geared gradually to topple down the governing regime by the leadership of Baath Party. Finally, mere demonstrations have changed into military conflict between Syrian official army and what is called 'opposition fighters' (OppoFs henceforth). Each denies the legitimacy of the other to govern Syria. On the part of Syrian government, they consider opposition fighters as mercenaries who are supported by foreign antagonists. That is, OppoFs have adopted foreign agendas against Syrian regime. The Syrian opposition have the conviction that the official government in Damascus does not represent Syrian people since it exercises violence and excessive force against civilians, and it is a totalitarian and an autocratic states that follows one-party ruling system, and allies with historical shii' enemies like Iran.

Getting involved into the Syrian crisis, the media, namely Al-Jazeera Satellite Channel, plays a very effective and insidious role through using an inflammatory discourse in conveying the event. The English version of Al-Jazeera Satellite Channel (JESC henceforth) is one of Al-Jazeera Satellite Channels addresses speaking English Western populations. This study attempts to investigate the role of JESC during the Syrian crisis in terms of ideology by posing certain questions. Precisely, are reporters of JESC neutral in their news coverage or not? Are they coterminous with and committed to impartiality and self-distancing policy? Do they give clear picture of what is really going on in Syria?

Ideology

Van Dijk (1998, p. 69) states that the values and beliefs of groups and their relationships with other groups, i.e., opponents or enemies, are referred to as 'ideologies', i.e., those who have opposite interests and try to prevent the other party from an equal access to social resources and human rights. In other words, ideologies probably have the format of a group schema, or at least the format of a group schema that reflects fundamental social, economic, political or cultural interests of the group. According to van Dijk (1995, p. 248), ideologies are evaluative; "they provide the basis for judgments about what is good or bad, right or wrong, and thus also provide basic guidelines for social perception and interaction".

Ideologies may be seen as the basis of the positive self-image of a group, organized by fundamental categories such as the desired valued, preferred identity, actions, norms and values, resources and relations to other groups. Characteristic of such ideological structures is the polarization between 'positive' Us' or 'in-group' and negative 'Them' or 'out-group'. The current study tries to verify how Al-Jazeera reporters evaluate the parties of conflict ideologically; which party can be seen as an ally and which one can be seen as an antagonist and how we can evaluate objectively and transparently the stance these reporters have been taking as regards as the Syrian warring parties.

Ideology and News

Media institutions often claim objectivity and transparency in their reporting by purporting that they simply provide space for public debate and report on state of affairs without invested interest (Wodak, 2001, p. 6). These claims of objectivity and independency made by journalists should always be distrusted. No language use or discourse is free from ideology. In other words, discourse is shaped by ideology, and ideology is conversely shaped in discourse (Jäger, 2001: 50). The ideological perspectives that are taken by different writers in news articles can achieve different meanings and create divergent discourses (ibid., 49). The individual styles of reporters are often subordinated or merged with a shared institutional style of the news agency whose character is designed to meet the expectations of a perceived target audience (Bell, 1997, p. 243).

Van Dijk (1998, p. 21) suggests that the ideologies of journalists somehow influence their opinions, which in turn influence the discourse structures of the opinion articles. He goes on to explain that the ideologies and opinions in newspapers are social, institutional or political.

The statements made in news articles give us a particular kind of knowledge about the topic and the participants represented in the text. Any representation of an event in a news text implies representation from an ideological standpoint (Fowler, 1991, p. 66). Ideology and attitudes in discourses can be detected by the different ways whereby subjects and participants are shaped by the texts (Hall, 1997, p. 45). Categorizing participants by vocabulary in news

articles can carry with it strong judgment of them, and it plays an important part in conveying an ideological message to readers (Fowler 1991, p. 84). News structure analysis shows us where and how ideologies preferably manifest themselves in news reports (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 195).

Van Dijk's Ideological Square

Van Dijk (1998, p. 267) formulates a strategy that combines underlying social beliefs to their expression in discourse. It is a form of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation which is a general characteristic of group conflict and the ways people interact with opposed groups. It also characterizes the way people talk about themselves and others. This strategy enables a more subtle ideological analysis that also applies to others structures in the expression of ideology. This overall strategy of most ideological discourse is the following according to van Dijk (1998):

1. Express/emphasize information that is 'positive' about *us*.
2. Express/emphasize information that is 'negative' about *them*.
3. Suppress/de-emphasize information that is 'positive' about *them*.
4. Suppress/de-emphasize information that is 'negative' about *us*.

These possibilities form an 'ideological square' that may be applied to the analysis of all levels of discourse structures. The use of the opposing pairs 'emphasize' and 'de-emphasize' allows for many forms of structural variation (ibid., p. 44). In this study, van Dijk's ideological square will be adopted to help analyzing the discourse features of JESC news reports. It purports to show the hidden ideologies that underlie JESC news reports.

Model of Analysis

According to Van Dijk (1998, p. 192), discourse has a special status in reproducing ideologies. Certain features of discourse permit group members express or reproduce ideological beliefs or any other opinion related to such ideologies. As such, this section surveys some discourse features that are expected to articulate the ideologies of Al-Jazeera news reporters about the two extremes of conflict in the Syrian crisis. These features, among others, as presented by Van Dijk (1995, 1998), will serve as the model of analysis in this study coupled with the conception of 'ideological square' [see 4].

Topics: One discourse feature that embodies ideological implications is the use of 'topics' or 'themes' (Van Dijk, 1998, p. 44). They stand for the most important information of a discourse that tells what a discourse is about. Topics abstractly characterize the meaning of a whole discourse or of a larger fragment of discourse. In addition, they may also be concretely formulated in the text itself, for instance in summaries, abstracts, titles or headlines (ibid.).

Ideologically speaking, speakers emphasize their good things or other's bad things through topicalization of such information. Conversely, they de-emphasize their bad things and other's good things, then they tend to de-topicalize such information (ibid.).

Level of Description: Once a topic is being selected, language users have another option in the realization of their mental model. Giving many or few details about an event, entails to describe it at either an abstract, general level or at the level of specifics. In case of engaging in specifics, it is probable to include many or few details. It hardly needs much argumentation to believe that we will usually be more specific and more detailed about our good things and about

the bad things of the others, and vice versa (Van Dijk, 1998, p. 45; Bazzi, 2009, p. 49) They state that worthy victims can be perceived in this context via the generous details about them or /and about victims of allies or institutions or those who by consensus serve our “societal purpose”. Moreover, Bazzi (ibid., p. 51) points out that an exposure to the wealth of details, i.e., statistics, and pictures would ideologically contribute to form the common sense of the audience, namely detailing the damage inflicted on allies.

Contrast: As a discourse feature, contrast is employed to articulate ideological readings. Ideologies often emerge when two or more groups have conflicting interests. Such opposition may be realized by various forms of polarization (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 45). The form of polarization is semantically implemented by contrast to emphasize 'our' good things and 'their' bad things. For instance, 'we work hard; they are lazy; they easily get, and we do not', serve here to illustrate the concept of polarization. It is precisely this kind of recurrent discursive contrast that suggests that the underlying attitudes and ideologies are probably represented in polarized terms, designating 'in groups' and 'outgroups' (ibid., p. 46).

As far as the Syrian crisis is concerned, this study endeavours to highlight which types of contrasts or polarizations created by JESC reporters to intentionally differentiate between the government forces (GovFs henceforth) and OppoFs. It also aims to show whether these contrasts have ideological implications or not.

Examples and Illustrations: Van Dijk (1998, p. 49) presents another important discourse feature that can diagnose ideological implication. It is the use of examples and illustrations. It often takes the form of stories about allies' good deeds and antagonists' bad behavior. For him (ibid.) these stories may serve as experiential evidence which prevents biased or negative evaluation by the hearer. As such, speakers usually feel obliged to give some example or illustration of a general statement.

Modality: Modality is defined as the term for a cluster of meanings centered on the notions of necessity and possibility; what must be or what merely might be (Griffiths, 2006). As Halliday explains, “modality represents the speaker’s angle, either on the validity of the assertion or on the rights and wrongs of the proposal” (Halliday, 1994, p. 362). When journalists interact with the audience in times of conflict, they usually position the listener or reader to receive facts and information. In other words, they create a specific mood in the text requiring something of the text receiver, i.e. to enact their own power, inflame feelings against the ideological enemy, or win consent from the targeted audience. And whilst the text producer is interacting with the targeted audience, she/he is simultaneously intruding by modifying her or his statements through the use of modal expressions (Bazzi, 2009, p. 82).

Halliday (1994, p. 148,176) states that clauses may either be a “proposition” (statement or question) or a “proposal” (offer or command). Propositions can be modalized when they indicate degrees of probability (certainly, probably, possibly) or degrees of usuality (always, usually, sometimes). In the same way, proposals can be modulated when they become imperative, either in the varying forms of obligation or inclination. According to Halliday (ibid, p. 173), modality have degrees: high, median and low. To round off the theoretical discussion, the following figure shows the adopted model for analyzing the data under scrutiny:

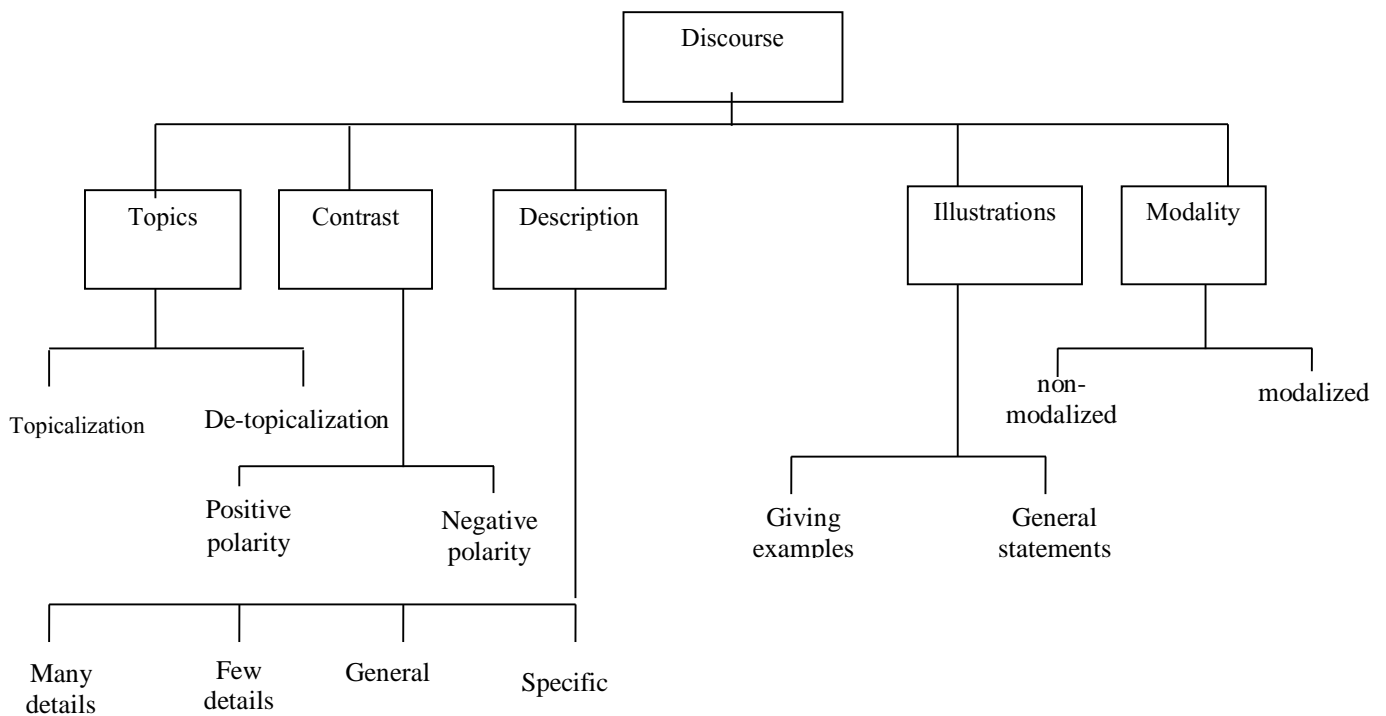


Figure (1): Model of Analyzing Discourse Features in JESC News Texts

DATA DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Data Description

The selected data represent news top stories reported by JESC reporters in Syria through the Syrian crisis. Three reports are chosen randomly for different periods from 2011 to 2013. These reports are taken from website YouTube of Al-Jazeera English Satellite Channel [the official site is www.youtube.com/user/AlJazeeraEnglish]. The study is a qualitative one in which some representative examples are selected because the data is huge and because number of fetishism leads usability studies astray by focusing on statistical analyses that are often false, biased, misleading or overly narrow. Better to emphasize insights and qualitative research.

Method of Analysis

The data under scrutiny will be analyzed according to the adopted model (see 5) .The analysis involves investigating five discourse features including 'topics, level of description, contrast, illustration or examples, and modality'.

DATA ANALYSIS

Topics

Overall Analysis of Topicalization: Topicalization appears an important ideological discourse feature of JESC reporters in their coverage of Syrian crisis. Generally, there are three main topics in the form of 'headlines'. Other types of topics such as tropicalized sentences are

beyond the scope of this study. The three headlines in the data under scrutiny are recognized as ideological structures according to the model [see 5.1]. Two of them reflect bad actions of the GovFs. Worded differently, they show and describe the GovFs military actions, bad actions against OppoFs or civilians. On the other hand, the third headline depicts a good action and an inspiring military victory of the OppoFs, over the GovFs. In addition, all the three headlines neither reflect any good actions, peaceful actions, of the GovFs nor indicate any bad actions of the OppoFs. The following table shows the ideological implications of the headlines in the selected data:

Table (1): Ideological Indications in Reports

	Topicalization	Good/Bad action of OppoFs/GovFs
R1	Conflict Moves Closer To the Capital	Good action of OppoFs
R2	Government Tanks Shell Deir AZzor	Bad action of GovFs
R3	Security Forces Open Fire On Protests	Bad action of GovFs

Illustrative Examples

In R2, the reporter chooses the headline "*Government Tanks Shell Deir AZzor*" as a topic of his report. This headline topicalizes an offensive or bad action of the GovFs waged against the city. GovFs are described cold blooded murderers who use excessive force and violence against the city. The headline also increases the degree of aggressiveness of the military action by showing the tools used to carry out the offensive, e.g. heavy artillery and tanks. Such an action certainly cannot be pictured friendly or good to the audience since it involves notions of killing and demolition

On the contrary, the headline blinks wittingly at another important related matters; it does not show the real reasons behind this attack since this attack may be driven by the military actions of the OppoFs against GovFs which in turn retaliate and return the same sort of the attack they have already received. Moreover, the headline does not show whether the city is inhabited by civilians at the time of the attack or it is occupied by OppoFs. See table (1) above for more headlines ideological indications.

Level of Description

Overall Analysis of Level of Description: The feature of level of description plays an important role in reporting news about the Syrian crisis since it is heavily utilized by reporters. Generally speaking, many details and specifics are used to report bad actions of the GovFs against Syrian civilians. On the contrary, no detailed information or specifics are used to report any bad actions of the OppoFs. Many details and specifics are exploited to express the success of OppoFs (good action) against GovFs (bad actions). On the other side, no reports are detailed about the military victories won by GovFs. The following table shows the level of description in the selected data:

Table (2): Level of Description

	Text	Level of Description	Good/Bad action of Oppos/GovFs
R1	An airstrike by government forces in Homos province. These are guided through holes in below walls. It is the safest way to move from house to house in avoid of government snipers.	many details, specific	Bad action of Govfs
	This is Qassium mountain just for kilometers from areas under rebel control. It is the highest point overlooking the Syrian capital.	few details, general	overtly good action of Oppofs/ covertly bad action
R2	From the high ground outside the city, Syrian troops fire on Deir Azzor. The long grain shinning is covered for tanks and troops storming the north-east city. As Syrian army least siege one place, survivors in another grieve for their dead.	many details, specific	Bad action of Govfs
	In the capital, Damascus, a family says farewell to their younger son; another victim of the government's mission to wipe out dissent. Activists say he was killed by sniper's bullet in Maidan, a suburb in Damascus where residents have been outspoken against the regime.	many details, specific	Bad action of Govfs
R3	Daraa has been burying their dead's, demonstrators killed via clashing with security forces. Dozens are believed to have died. They claim that state security police used excessive force against protesters. we managed enter Friday morning with the help of some local residents. The government has been trying to contain the unrest. Authorities released all those detained on Thursday night.	many details, specific	Bad action of Govfs
	A word repeated time and time again in this city. Just like the words, freedom, justice, reform. No calls, however, for the downfall of the regime at least for now.	few details, general	overtly good action of Oppofs/ covertly bad action

Illustrative Examples

In R2, this piece of news emphasizes bad actions of GovFs:

"In the capital, Damascus, a family says farewell to their younger son; another victim of the government's mission to wipe out dissent. Activists say he was killed by sniper's bullet in Maidan, a suburb in Damascus where residents have been outspoken against the regime"

The reporter displays detailed description about military actions of GovFs against demonstrators. He indulges in mentioning details by inducing the audience to think of the alleged atrocities of the GovFs against the civilians.

On the contrary, in R1 this bit of news emphasizes good actions of OppoFs:

"This is Qassium Mountain just for kilometers from areas under rebel control. It is the highest point overlooking the Syrian capital."

The reporter sets a brief description of the victory won by OppoFs over GovFs. Two main points are mentioned here: first, the location where the military progress, i.e., 'Qassium mountain' near the Syrian capital to show that the OppoFs are marching forward to defeat the GovFs. The second point alludes to the strategic significance of this site since it overlooks the capital, which is the strong foothold of the GovFs. No accurate and detailed information is provided about the instruments or machinery used for achieving such a victory and not to mention the type of forces deployed and at the same time the reports goes without mentioning what costs, casualties or suffering of the civilians are as a result of the counter attack waged by the OpposFs against the GovFs.

Contrast

Overall Analysis of Contrast: The analysis shows that reporters make several contrasts between the parties of conflict in Syria. Some of these contrasts are explicitly expressed while others pass unnoticed. All of them assign positive values to OppoFs while the GovFs are vandalized and assailed by attributing to them negative values gratuitously. As with other discourse features, no positive values are attached to GovFs or negative values are attached to OppoFs by reporters. The following table clarifies the use and value of the contrasts attached to the parties of conflict in the selected data:

Table (3): Use and Value of Contrast

OppoFs	GovFs
Victims, rebels, players, peaceful demonstrators, seeking justice, reform, freedom	Killers, snipers, armed forces Against freedom, injustice

Illustrative Examples

The following quotations show different values assigned to the parties of conflict in Syria.

"an airstrike by government forces in Homs province; government attacks in several suburbs of Damascus; it is the safest way to move from house to house in avoid government snipers; Syrian troops fire on Deir Azzor; as Syrian army least siege one place, survivors in another grieve for their dead; a family says farewell to their younger son; another victim of the government's mission to wipe out dissent; activists call Friday to be a day of dignity. A word repeated time and time again in this city. Just like the words, freedom, justice, reform"

Again, one can easily infer from these contrasts that a negative value is an attribute of the GovFs. As a dire consequences, GovFs appear to be cold-blooded murderers, ruthless snipers and initiators of violence and predetermined killing. Meanwhile, the

OpposFs look like victims of the savage actions of GovFs .Those religious extremists are purposefully depicted as pathetic and peaceable.

Really, these reports are violating the media norms of objectivity and transparency .The choice of certain lexical items with negative connotations and the repetitive use of short sentences aims at imposing and reproducing an impression on the audience to side with one party at the expense of another. That is, they have the intention to picture negatively the GovFs. Van Dijk believes that a discourse may involve different modes of discourse – power relations as the more or less overt support, enactment, representation, legislation, denial, mitigation or concealment. (1993, p. 250)

Examples or Illustrations

Overall Analysis of Examples: In the selected data, the discourse feature 'examples or illustrations' is realized by the structures of interviews, storytelling, quotations and reported speech. In all the reports, these structures bear evidences to emphasize the negative side of GovFs as well as emphasize the positive side of OppoFs. As with the other features, JESC reporters do not utilize this technique to emphasize any positive actions of the GovFs or to emphasize the negative actions of the OppoFs. In addition, these examples of events serve to justify and legitimize some of undesirable actions of the OppoFs. These and many other, sometimes very subtle, structures may be interpreted as managing the process of understanding in such a way that preferred models are being built by the readers. The following table shows the use of this discourse feature:

Table (4): Use of Illustrations

	Text	Type	good/bad action of Govfs/OppoFs
R1	They say these pictures from Dawma show the effect of an airstrike there and this is said to be what happened when fight jets hit Muadhamiat Alsham suburb.	Reported Speech	bad action of Govfs
	"when we play, there are other guys on the high way. This is a form of exercise for us. So we can stay sharp"	Quotation	bad action of Govfs
	"we managed to liberate 95% of Al-Ghota alsharqya, a region of Damascus suburbs"	Quotation	good action of Govfs
	"we've taken control of several military checkpoints and captured a number of airforce bases in the area"	Quotation	good action of Govfs
R2	"promise changes need to be made quickly of patience is running out. Therefore, I am sending the Turkish foreign minister to Syria to hold all necessary talks there or messages will be conveyed to them clearly <u>join</u> this visit and upcoming processes and steps that would be taken according to their response"	Quotation	bad action of Govfs

	Bouthaina Shaban said Syria response to Turkey will be harsher than the message plans to deliver on Tuesday	Reported Speech	bad action of Govfs
	"Syria has always welcomed consultation among friends, but it categorically rejects all regional or international attempts of interference in its internal affairs"	Quotation	bad action of Govfs
	"to deal with outlaws who cut off roads, seal towns and terrorise residents is a duty of the state which must defend security and protect the lives of civilians".	Quotation	bad action of Govfs
	Activists say he was killed by sniper's bullet in Maidan, a suburb in Damascus where residents have been outspoken against the regime.	Reported Speech	bad action of Govfs
R3	Reporter: the president said yesterday he is going to improve... Activist: we want these steps to be done not only promises. There is a lot of promises, but nothing has been done. Reporter: is this a revolution against the regime? Activist: no, no. Reporter: what is it? Activist: changing some rules, some unjustifying rules. Reporter: like what? Activist: emergency laws.	Interview	good action of Oppos and bad action of Govfs

Illustrative Examples

We have already seen how JESC deals with partially with the Syrian crisis in order to persuade the audience of the negative 'other-representation'. Such process of persuasion involves not only persuasive argumentation and rhetoric or congenial opinion but also the authority with which politicians and media are able to present these models. The media have their own rich repertoire of means to further enhance and popularize the sometimes abstract and technical language and opinions of the politicians, i.e., by spreading scare stories about the GovFs.

In R2, an interview is held with one of the demonstrators whose main demand is to achieve reform and the repealing of the emergency laws in the country. The interview is obtained after covering a huge demonstration which seeks reform and freedom. As such, the interview stands for an evidence of peaceful activities of the demonstrators. By this illustration, the reporter emphasizes a good move of Oppos, i.e. a peaceful drive calling for the entitlement of human rights. At the same time, this illustration emphasizes the bad actions of the GovFs realized by over-powering and ruling unjustly and cruelly.

Modality

Overall Analysis of Modality: Through the analysis of data, it is observed that reports are given either in the form of propositions/proposals or modalized propositions/modulated

proposals. According to the model [see 5.5], non-modalized propositions express affirmed propositions. In other words, they express factual assertions. In the case of modalized propositions, reports intrude their judgments on the events involved.

In the data under scrutiny, most of the propositions are reported in the form of non-modalized propositions while there are rare modalized ones. Most of the propositions about GovFs' actions are non-modalized. By employing this discursial feature, reporters try to affect their audience's perception. They attempt to convince audience that these events and actions are factual and assertive. In all these cases, reporters use high degree of modality expressing the certainty of the occurrence and gruesome and brutal actions of the GovFs against citizens and OppoFs as well.

These reports seem to contribute to the reproduction of these events in order to tailor them to their political and social benefits, i.e. to control and influence the audience. The reports are mostly cognitive and enacted by persuasion, dissimulation or manipulation among other strategic way to change the mind of others in one's own interest.

Consequently, ideology is present heavily in this use of this discourse feature. In all these cases, non-modalized propositions and modalized ones are used to emphasize negative actions of GovFs.

Illustrative Examples

Two examples will be offered here. The first displays a non-modalized proposition while the second exhibits modalized one.

In R3, this bit of news has two propositions:

"For the past weeks, Daraa has been burying their dead's, demonstrators killed via clashing with security forces"

These propositions are non-modalized ones indicating bad actions of GovFs that cause killing of unarmed people (demonstrators). Encoding them as non-modalized means that they appear to be factual and assertive actions and not a single doubt swirling around their validity. As such, bad actions of GovFs are emphasized by non-modalized propositions.

Another example represents a modalized proposition which contain the forms such as (may&heavily). They are deployed cunningly here to herald the good action of OppoFs :

"The rebels may be heavily out gun in their fights against Assad army."

Here, the reporter combines a modal verb with a mood adjunct to emphasize a good thing of OppoFs. The modal 'may' expresses the probability of lacking munitions and at the same time this probability is reinforced by the adjunct 'heavy' to express high degree of this probability. Thus, the reporter succeeds to create sympathetic mood with OppoFs.

CONCLUSIONS

It is apparent that managing the mind of others is essentially a function of text and talk (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 254). Though such mind control and management is not always obviously manipulative, the influence may be enacted and reproduced by subtle routine, everyday forms

of text and talk that appear natural and acceptable and intact. They consist in the use of certain intonational contours, lexical or syntactic styles, rhetorical figures, local semantic structures, presence or absence of hedges, interruptions, doubt or certainty markers, specific forms of address, pronoun use and so on (ibid., p. 261). By doing so, these structures are being expressed and persuasively conveyed that contrasts 'Us' with 'Them', e.g. by emphasizing 'Us' tolerance, help or sympathy and by focusing on negative social or cultural differences, deviance or threats attributed to 'Them'. That is, such contrasts in general are signaled sometimes by propositional structures of clauses and sentences (i.e. implications, presuppositions, vagueness, indirectness and so on) to realize positive self-representation and negative other-representation or derogation. We may expect, therefore, that various semantic modes of meaning also reflect such overall strategy, i.e. by concealing negative properties of the 'own group' and emphasizing or inventing those of the 'others'. Moreover, reporters make full use of the usual tricks from the rhetorical bag: rhetorical questions, parallelism and contrasts between 'Us' and 'them'. These rhetorical features emphasize what has been expressed and formulated at the semantic, syntactic and lexical (stylistic) levels of their reports, namely the positive presentation of the OppFs on the one hand and the negative presentation of the GovFs, on the other. For more information of these features, see (Erickson et al., p. 1978).

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APPENDIX**Report****Conflict Moves Closer to the Capital**

These pictures shown by activists. They show an airstrike by government forces in Homs province. Opposition activists also report government attacks in several suburbs of Damascus. They say these pictures from Dawma show the effect of an airstrike there and this is said to be what happened when fight jets hit Muadhamiat Alsham suburb. And Al-Jazeera team has reached the out gates of Damascus. Kamal Al-Shami reports some of what is found 'on the face of it, this is not another game of street football, but the truth is these players' life are far from ordinary. These are some of opposition Syrian rebels taken a break from fighting government forces in suburbs of Damascus, but even this seeming normal pass time is a chance to keep their bodies fit'. " when we play, there are other guys on the high way. This is a form of exercise for us. So we can stay sharp" *a fighter said*. A few kilometers away in the bombardment by president Bashar Al-Assad airforce is relentless. The rebels here those seem unface encourage by the territorial gains they have made in recent week "we managed to liberate 95% of Al-Ghotaa alsharqya, a region of Damascus suburbs" *one of the opposition leaders said*. "we've taken control of several military checkpoints and captured a number of airforce bases in the area" *the leader added*.

There are numbers of front lines in the battle of the suburbs of Damascus. Al-Jazeera team accompanied some of the rebel fighters, those are guided through holes in below walls. It is the safest way to move from house to house in avoid government snipers. The rebels may be heavily out gun in their fights against Assad army, but they plan each attack is in checkably possible. This Qassium mountain just for kilometers from areas under rebel control. It is the highest point overlooking the Syrian capital. For that reason Assad military has massed there in huge numbers. For them, it is far valuable to lose.

Report 2**Government Tanks Shell Deir Azzor**

From the high ground outside the city, Syrian troops fire on Deir Azzor. The long grain shinning is covered for tanks and troops storming the north-east city. As Syrian army least siege one place, survivors in another grieve for their dead. In the capital, Damascus, a family says farewell to their younger son; another victim of the government's mission to wipe out dissent. Activists say he was killed by sniper's bullet in Maidan, a suburb in Damascus where residents have been outspoken against the regime.

For Muslims, Ramadan is the time of fasting and prayer of peace and spiritual reflection, but for many Syrians nothing has changed, the regime continues to kill its people. The Syrian authorities insist the country on the path to reform, but those promises are for years away from protesters' demand of complete regime change, but the bloodshed is not going unnoticed and international condemnation is mounting. In a phone call to Syrian president, UN secretary general Ban Ki Moon told him to stop shooting at civilians. The prime minister of longtime ally Turkey also spoken out saying "promise changes need to be made quickly of patience is running out. Therefore, I am sending the Turkish foreign minister to Syria to hold all necessary talks there or messages will be conveyed to them clearly join this visit and upcoming processes and steps that would be taken according to their response", but Turkey's efforts were quickly met with defense of statement from president Al-Assad advisor, Bouthaina Shaban said Syria

response to Turkey will be harsher than the message plans to deliver on Tuesday and that "Syria has always welcomed consultation among friends, but it categorically rejects all regional or international attempts of interference in its internal affairs"

For Syrian president, Bashar Al-Assad, the deadly crackdown on the protesters is to protect Syrian civilians. Assad was quoted by the state news agency SANA and saying "to deal with outlaws who cut off roads, seal towns and terrorise residents is a duty of the state which must defend security and protect the lives of civilians".

After almost five months of brutal suppression by the Syrian government and then underestimated two thousand dead protesters still asking why the world waited so long. Although international pressure on Al-Assad regime is building, many countries still have reservations about supporting a stronger action for a move pave the way for international intervention that could stop bloodshed in Syria and as more time passes the concerns of Syrian neighbors about the region security keep growing.

Report 3

Security Forces Open Fire On Protests

For the past weeks, Daraa has been burying their dead's, demonstrators killed via clashing with security forces. Dozens are believed to have died. People here *say* at least one hundred and fifty far more in the figure of thirty seven provided by the state. This woman lost her son, she couldn't tell her story, but others talk theirs. They claim that state security police used excessive force against protesters. Thousands took the street to demand those responsible for the killing brought to justice.

The old city of Daraa has been in continuous to be off limited to journalists since the clashes began over a week ago. we managed enter Friday morning with the help of some local residents. The government has been trying to contain the unrest. Authorities released all those detained on Thursday night. Unpromised to lift the emergency laws. Concessions that did little to come attention here. People remain scared to afraid to speak freely

Reporter: the president said yesterday he is going to improve...

Activist: we want these steps to be done not only promises. There is a lot of promises, but nothing be done.

Reporter: is this a revolution against the regime?

Activist: no, no.

Reporter: what is it?

Activist: changing some rules, some unjustifying rules.

Reporter: like what?

Activist: emergency laws.

The authorities said there was no coincidence the unrest began in this city. They point to blame at what they call foreign elements smuggling weapons across the borders. A claim people here dismiss. Activists call Friday to be a day of dignity. A word repeated time and time again in this city. Just like the words, freedom, justice, reform. No calls, however, for the downfall of the regime at least for now.