Media Discourse Analysis of News Reports in Lebanese Newspapers

Layla Youssef Itani and Rima Bahous*

Department of Education, School of Arts and Sciences, Lebanese American University, Beirut, Lebanon

*Corresponding author: Rima Bahous

✉ rbahous@lau.edu.lb

Department of Education, School of Arts and Sciences, Lebanese American University, Beirut, Lebanon

Tel: +961-1-786456

Abstract

Politics has proven to be a linguistic activity that utilizes language to mold people's beliefs. This study explores of the language of politics in two Lebanese newspapers - As-Safir and The Daily Star. Three different frameworks were chosen to carry out a critical discourse analysis. The frameworks used are that of Michael Halliday, Teun van Dijk, and Norman Fairclough. Findings show that the language of politics is never an impartial and objective one. It is structured in a way that supports respective political beliefs and sustains respective ideologies; hence, shaping the readers' thoughts into believing that the "enemy" is hateful. Nonetheless, future research could develop instruments that aim at analyzing the perceptions of the vast audiences to further objectify the act of critical discourse analysis.

Keywords: Ideology; Critical discourse analysis; Positive-self representation; Negative-other representation; Field; Tenor; Mode; Transitivity; Nominalization; Modality; Classification; Politics; Media; News; Language; Discourse

Introduction

Politics has been a key area of study, widely debatable with different points of view and, in most cases, a far-fetched consensus. Politicians market their ideas to the public using language. Consequently, language lies at the core of political acts. Without it, politics would lose its power to prompt consequences [1]. Being a linguistic activity, politics promotes certain ideologies over others. Chilton and Schaffner [2] stated:

• Politics cannot be conducted without language,… the use of language in the constitution of social groups leads to what we would call 'politics'; in a broad sense (p.303).

• Media has played a decisive role in delivering political information. It has manipulated the power of language to convey only what needs to be conveyed and not what should be conveyed.

• Fairclough, et al. [3] criticized how politicians with the help of media have easy access to large number of people, using strategic political language as a crucial stairway to success.

• This study was designed as a wake-up call for stakeholders to fully understand the power of language, responsible for molding their thoughts about the different events.

• The research involved two Lebanese newspapers; four articles from each were extracted through their online platforms. In-depth text analysis was carried. This study is an exploration of the language of politics in Lebanese newspapers. It aims at answering the following questions:

• How do the media use linguistic reconceptualization to cover different reports about the war on Syria? How do those linguistic devices reinforce ideologies represented by the media outlets?

Theoretical Framework

Ideology

Ideology is composed of shared ideas belonging to a certain group or community [4]. These ideas shape the group's perception of social events, situations, and discourse. Ideologies are characterized as "belief systems". They are a polarization between "US" as an in-group and "THEM" as an out-group [5].

Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

CDA explores the relationship between the actual text and the social and cultural contexts [6]. It implies that language is subject to ideological effects controlled by power.

Since language structures reality and its perception, Locke [7] iterates that discourse involves powerful relations. He explains how powerful discourse reinforces self-esteem in readers. Conversely, "non-powerful" discourse disempowers readers placing them at an inferior stance.

"CDA is concerned with the ways in which the power relations produced by discourse are maintained and/or challenged through texts and the practices which affect their production, reception, and dissemination" [7].

To maintain or challenge such power, writers use subtle ways to reinforce their respectful ideologies. Those ways include subliminal messages, which lie at the core of written texts. To uncover those messages, one needs to carry out the act of CDA.

Fairclough et al. [3] support Locke's notion of CDA. Discourse becomes a social practice composed of a dialectal relationship between the text and other social elements that shape discourse. Discourses are powerful tools to produce imbalanced power relations leading to major ideological effects.

News and Language

Reah [8] maintains that events happen daily in the world and cannot actually be covered in daily newspapers. She argues that readers are exposed to selected news reports that have certain ideological aspects. The news provided is specific; its specificity is ideologically related. News editors aim to guide the readers to certain ideological standpoints [8]. "It is easy to resist a particular viewpoint or ideology when you know it is being presented to you, but not so easy to resist when the viewpoint or ideology is concealed" [8].

Fowler [9] says that "news is a representation of the world in language… it is not a value-free reflection of facts" (p.4). Fowler [9] explains how language is not a "clear window"; it is a "refracting" medium. News, becomes a creation. It is created through journalistic and publishing processes.

Methods of Analyzing Discourse

A widely used framework for analyzing discourse is that of Halliday [10] "Systemic Functional Linguistic". This approach explores how people utilize the power of language to reach goals in different contexts. Halliday distinguished between three aspects of context that affect language called features of the context: field, tenor, and mode. Field focuses on the topic or action that the language is portraying. It involves processes, participants, and circumstances. Tenor incorporates participants in a given situation. It talks about participants' statuses, roles, and relationships. Mode deals with how the text is portrayed; the channel through which communication is being put through.

Van Dijk's methods rely on cognitive processes to explain how discourse functions in ideology, racism, and knowledge [11]. Van Dijk [5] asserts that our discourse use expresses our ideologically based opinions. Consequently, analyzing discourse requires that we pay attention to certain properties of discourse use that clearly depict the ideological orientation [5]. Van Dijk [5] modified four general principles to simplify the process of analyzing and detecting subtle messages in political texts. Van Dijk [4] classifies these principles in "the ideological square" (p. 396) as follows:

• Emphasize Our good things - Emphasize Their bad things

• De-emphasize Our bad things - De-emphasize Their good things

Van Dijk [4] listed diverse structures and strategies.

• **Topics:** The topic chosen describes the out-group as a threat to the in-group;

• **Level of description and degree of completeness:** Describing the out-group's negative actions, the language used would be detailed whereas the in-group's would be less detailed;

• **Denomination:** Using labeling to differentiate groups;

• **Agency:** Holding the out-group responsible for negative actions;

• **Focus:** Giving special focus to different aspects of the text;

• **Syntactic structures of sentences:** Using active and passive sentences to determine degree of involvement of agent;

• **Actor description:** Descriptions of actors that might emphasize/de-emphasize positive characteristics and/or negative ones;

• **Disclaimer:** Beginning of discourse might deny adverse feelings about a specific group; however the next part may be full of negative things about others;

• **Dramatization:** Exaggeration of facts in favor of one's interests;

• **Evidentiality:** Presenting proof to the arguments being made to strengthen their ethos;

• **National self-glorification:** Praise of oneself;

• **Victimization:** Acting as the victim.

Fairclough [11] adopts a dialectical-relational version of CDA between language and society. Language shapes and is shaped by society. Fairclough's [6] model consists of three interrelated processes of analysis:

• Text analysis is concerned with the object under investigation Description of the properties of a text such as lexis and syntax occurs. Transitivity points out material processes, mental processes, relational processes, and verbal processes. Nominalization is the process of turning a verb or an adjective into a noun weakening the action and reducing bias (Zhang 2014). Classification is a process whereby journalists use naming and labeling. Modality is the mode in which the news reporter expresses his/her attitudes towards the story written. High affinity words such as the word "would" could depict how the writer entrusts a certain stance, whereas the use of words of low affinity such as "seem" might imply to the readers a negative notion.

• Processing analysis is concerned with the interpretation the texts by people. A relationship between the text and interaction with text is established.

• Social analysis is mainly concerned with an explanation of the socio-historical conditions of a text. It bridges media with authority.

History of Newspapers in Lebanon

The oldest means of communicating news in Lebanon's media sector is print media. Newspapers were first introduced in 1610 and created by a group of Maronite priests [12]. There are fourteen political newspapers published daily. The two most popular newspapers are As-Safir and An-Nahar. As-Safir issues 50,000 daily copies, whereas An-Nahar issues 45,000 [13].

Media in Lebanon

Lebanon is divided along several political parties that form two alliances: a Saudi-backed pro-western alliance and an Iranian-backed anti-western one [14]. This division affects all other aspects of Lebanon and its government including media. According to Dabbous [14], Lebanon's press is relatively a free one with respect to the Arab World. She states: "Lebanese media tend to be owned or supported by political personalities as well as parties and do not criticize or harm the hand that feeds them" (p.721). Newspapers in Lebanon are established with a clear ideological and political stance [13]. Accepting bribes is regarded as a normal act. Bribes either cover or uncover certain issues that deem to be of value [15].

Newspaper ownership, affiliations, division of shares, political stances are not public information. Uncovering media ownership information in Lebanon is intentionally made difficult.

Methodology

• This study is exploratory in nature. It aims at analyzing the discourse of news reports. It is a qualitative research that follows a naturalistic approach.

• The study took into account two opposing newspapers, As-Safir and The Daily Star, from different political sectors. Four articles about the same topic were extracted electronically from each newspaper's website and an in-depth discourse analysis was conducted. The newspapers have been selected based on whether or not they offer English reports and articles.

• As-Safir is a daily, political, and Arab newspaper founded by the journalist Talal Salman. It was first issued in March 26, 1974. The Daily Star was founded over 60 years ago in 1952 by Kamel Mroue. Mroue's vision is to introduce the Arab region to non-Arabic readers.

• All articles or reports discuss the war in Syria.

The articles chosen are the following:

Al Safir newspaper

• Aleppo's Bloody June

• Zabadani battle rages on

• Aleppo's battle rages on

• Syrian Army, Hezbollah advance in Zabadani

Daily Star newspaper

• Bomb, rockets kill 19 civilians in Syria's Aleppo: activists

• Hezbollah, Syrian army seize main entrance to Zabadani: Al-Manar

• Iran deal may make region more dangerous: Saudi official

• Hezbollah tightens the noose in Zabadani

CDA was used to analyze the articles. The focus was placed on content and language. Although this qualitative analysis may sound theoretical, it was made concrete through the utilization of three different frameworks of prominent figures in the field.

Findings

Halliday's framework

Article 1: In field, the author communicates how Aleppo has witnessed one of its worst months since the start of the crisis– hence the title 'bloody June'. The two main participants are Jabhat al Nusra and the Syrian Army. The processes taking place are related to fighting battles and attempts to take lead in battles. The circumstances depict the situation that the two participants are in and the brutality of the bombings. Tenor portrays how there was unequal power between participants, primarily because Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Qatar are backing Jabhat al Nusra. Also, Jabhat al Nusra has US-made missiles which render the idea that probably this movement is being backed up by the US. However, the Syrian Army is containing the attack to hit back. Although Jabhat al Nusra was backed, the Syrian Army was able to fight back. The participants were in direct contact and were involved in a war zone. For mode, this text is a written, not improvised, text.

Article 2: For field, the article discusses the battles happening in Zabadani and how the Syrian Army alongside Hezbollah are advancing and taking. The processes used are verbs that signal conquering and successfully taking over Zabadani. The author mainly talks about the Zabadani state and the events happening in this area. The participants are Hezbollah and the Syrian Army opposing the militants. Circumstances illustrate the battles happening in Zabadani, some information about it, and the measurement of success by the two allies. For tenor, the opposing teams are of unequal power because the author iterates Hezbollah and the Syrian Army's successful endeavors in fighting against the 'takfiri' factions. The participants are in direct contact as they take on a fight. The mode of the text is a written and deliberately planned one.

Article 3: The author conveys the clashes in and around Aleppo between the different forces. Different anti-regime groups, not allies though, have been carrying out these battles, and the Syrian army is setting up ambushes and plans to fight back. The processes included illustrate the happenings. The circumstances picture a hopeless situation where the efforts and attempts of the anti-regime groups go to no avail every time. In tenor, the participants are the Syrian army and the different anti-regime groups. Because of their failed attempts to take over any area, the author depicts the Syrian army as having more power than the other groups because the Syrian army fights back and establishes an efficacious breakout. Consequently, the participants are in a direct interaction. As for mode, this text is a written one.

Article 4: In field, the article discusses Hezbollah's and the Syrian Army's advance in Zabadani. So, Hezbollah and the Syrian Army have achieved a 'strategic progress' in Zabadani. The processes used are words such advanced and blocking entrance. The participants involved are Hezbollah and the Syrian Army against the Islamic State militants. The circumstances render the achievement that the allies have accomplished and their careful study of plans. As for tenor, the title portrays an unequal power. It highlights how the Syrian Army and Hezbollah are ahead. All those participants are in direct contact and are a huge part of the crisis in Syria. This article is extracted from a newspaper, i.e., a written and planned text.

Article 5: In field, the article provides the readers with information about the victims of the Syrian war mentioning that both the Syrian regime and the rebels are held responsible for the attacks. The processes used are related to killing and attacking. The participants are the Syrian regime, the rebels as identified by the author, and the victims who are being killed due to the attacks. The circumstances further explain how and when those victims were killed. As for tenor, it is obvious that the participants are of unequal power. The Syrian regime and the rebels possess more power than the civilians. Although the civilians are not involved in the war, they are not initiating battles or fights; they are in direct contact with the other participants who have a conflict of interest. For mode, this article has undergone the processes of revising and editing before publishing.

Article 6: The field of the article informs the readers that Hezbollah and the Syrian army has overtaken the main entrance to Zabadani. It illustrates scenes of those allies firing rockets, using gunfire, and throwing grenades on residential areas. The processes included are verbs such as swarming, firing, and trapped. The participants are Hezbollah and the Syrian army as allies and the rebels. The circumstances depict the situation Zabadani is in especially through describing the footage that was released; it shows how Hezbollah fighters are attacking the city. The tenor shows Hezbollah and the Syrian army as main participants possessing the power. Although the rebels were mentioned, they didn't play an active role. They were trapped and besieged. The participants are in direct contact due to their involvement in the war. This article is prudently designed.

Article 7: The field of the article discusses how Iran's nuclear deal is a good idea if it stops the country from gaining additional weapons. However, the deal would be a bad idea if it spreads destruction. A process used to describe this destruction is the use of the verb destabilize. The main participants are Iran and its nuclear deal. There are no specific circumstances that depict the destabilization if Iran decides to spread havoc. The tenor shows that Iran possesses a greater power than other countries in the Middle East because of the nuclear program. Iran is involved in this program and will be in direct contact with the region if it decides to inflict disorder. This article is planned beforehand.

Article 8: The field describes how Hezbollah has pushed deeper into Zabadani and how it took over the city with the Syrian army. It discusses some of the battles that have happened with a count of the number of people killed. The processes utilized are verbs such as pushed deeper, tightening the noose, besieged, and fire. The participants are the Hezbollah, the Syrian army, and the rebels. Although Hezbollah is pushing deeper into the city of Zabadani, there are not circumstances that depict the situation as an achievement for Hezbollah. The tenor portrays Hezbollah and the Syrian army having more power than the rebels. The participants are in direct contact due to their involvement in the war. This is a newspaper article carefully written.

Van Dijk's framework

Van Dijk's framework is described in **Tables 1-8.**

Fairclough's framework

Articles 1 to 4: Fairclough [6], and according to the descriptors chosen by Zhang [16], has divided his text analysis into four parts. As-Safir reports mainly covered material processes that are the processes of doing. A lot of examples were drawn for this type of process such as:

• The city falls under total suppressive control (Article 2);

• Gave militants the ability to disrupt the Damascus highway (Article 2);

• Syrian army continues to fortify the shield around Aleppo (Article 3);

• The Syrian army and Hezbollah fighters yesterday achieved strategic progress in the city of Zabadani (Article 4).

Table 1 Article 1.

Positive Representations		Negative Representations	
Category	Evidence	Category	Evidence
Agency	However, the army forces contained the attack and hit back	Denomination	Jihadist and extremist factions
Evidentiality	A military source confirmed that the Syrian army and the supporting factions have deterred attacks and contained the situation.	Syntactic structure of sentences	Jihadist and extremist factions have launched rocket attacks, mostly reaching the government-controlled neighborhoods
Level of Description and degree of completeness	Syrian army and the supporting factions have deterred the attacks and contained the situation. Syrian air forces have intensified airstrikes on the missiles launching locations toward the city, managing to destroy several bases. Syrian army has reinforced its presence on several contact points and sent reinforcements to different axes.	Evidentiality	A pro-opposition told As-Safir that the armed factions began to unite… The countries supporting the factions, namely Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia started to send weapons and equipment needed…
		Level of Description and degree of completeness	Urgent orders made to the factions affiliated with the Aleppo Conquest Operation Room… Jabhat-al-Nusra-affiliated factions moved closer to the contact points… The Aleppo Conquest Operations Room launched a few violent attacks on al-Rashidin axes…

Table 2 Article 2.

Positive Representations		Negative Representations	
Category	**Evidence**	**Category**	**Evidence**
Dramatization	the push by Syrian army units and Hezbollah forces… was deeper than anticipated, leading so far to losses that were lower than expected the city falls under total suppressive control (Syrian army)… following their successful breakthrough	Agency	armed factions that threaten Damascus, Beirut and beyond
Syntactic structure of sentences	Dozens of terrorists had been killed or wounded in the attack	Denomination	armed and takfiri factions insurgents
Evidentiality	According to battlefield sources	Dramatization + agency	(gunmen) not only greatly contributed to threating the Syrian capital, but also the Lebanese border strip, as well as the vital international highway that links the two countries
	Reuters quoted		
	Reminiscing about the battle fought, in 1982		
Victimization	… put an end to extortion practiced by insurgents who cut off the water supply of Damascus residents		
	Displacement of its 50,000 residents to neighboring areas		

Table 3 Article 3.

Positive Representations		Negative Representations	
Category	**Evidence**	**Category**	**Evidence**
Focus	Syrian army forces and supporting factions continued with their advance… announcing full control over the eastern Nashwa neighborhood… this is in addition to advancements…	Actor description	Huge defeat befell Fateh Halab
	Syrian army continues to fortify the shield around Aleppo through mobilizing reinforcements		
	The forces were capable of absorbing the attack and achieving victory in direct confrontations, despite the fact that the enemy used heat-seeking missiles		
	Syrian army imposed control on four new villages		
Actor description	Syrian army set up an ambush for armed fighters	Syntactic Structure	Ansar al-Sharia, led by Jabhat al-Nusra, failed to achieve an infiltration
National self-glorification	The ambush set up by the Syrian army was of high impact, lifting the already-high morale of the Syrian army and discouraging the enemy who thought that Aleppo was up for grabs.	Disclaimer	Although Ansar al-Sharia did not announce the failure or dissolution of its command center, a field source believes that the fate of the center, as for its predecessors, was a failure.
Syntactic structure of sentence	During clashes, different weaponry was used and a tunnel was blown up.	Denomination	Al-Qaeda-affiliated organization
			Terrorists

Mental processes, relational processes, and verbal processes weren't that evident. Verbal processes were only used to relay different information that was said by a certain source. Nominalization was present throughout the different news reports and the most patent example was the use of the word "control" and "attack". Classification was evident throughout the articles. Authors used naming to relay certain attitudes about the anti-regime movement. Some of those name-callings were: terrorists, takfiri factions, insurgents, jihadi extremists, and militants. While labeling the pro-regime movements, the authors used names such as fighters, army forces, and the allies. In modality, authors have used high-affinity words, especially the word "would" to describe the importance of what the Syrian army and Hezbollah are doing in terms of advancements and successes and to describe the effects of what the anti-regime factions are doing in terms of destruction. Some examples of those include Syrian army's total control over the city of Zabadani would mean the total collapse of the supply route used by insurgents (Zabadani battle rages on) and Jabhat al-Nusra had dragged itself into a dilemma in Aleppo, as the city would constitute a turning point for the worse for the

Table 4 Article 4.

Positive Representations		Negative Representations	
Category	**Evidence**	**Category**	**Evidence**
Topic	Syrian army, Hezbollah advance in Zabadani	Denomination	Militants, terrorists
Dramatization	achieved strategic progress	Actor Description	State of confusion that plagues the armed group
			Pushed IS (Islamic State) to expand its engagement circle in a bid to find a way to relieve the pressure that it is facing
Evidentiality	A military source told the Syrian News Agency	Syntactic Structures of Sentences	Source said that militants launched a violent attack in an attempt to control the hill.
	The Facebook page of Harbi Press		
Actor Description	Syrian army is slowly progressing	Level of description and degree of completeness	After controlling the Althias village, IS gunmen set Grad missile launchers and targeted the fourth station housing as they tried to target the T4 airport before warplanes launched a series of airstrikes on the airport perimeter. These also targeted rocket launchers then launched a small military operation to restore the village and further fortify the airport perimeter.
Syntactic structures of sentences	He (Hammoud al-Hardan – one of the top commanders in IS) was killed in the battle of Hasakah.	Disclaimer	The organization is attacking the airport perimeter to alleviate pressure on Palmyra, although it is well aware it cannot break through to the airport
	30 fighters affliated with Jaish al-Fatah, led by Jabhat al-Nusra, were killed in an attempt to control the strategic Khattab hill.		

Table 5 Article 5.

Positive Representations		Negative Representations	
Category	**Evidence**	**Category**	**Evidence**
Denomination	Rebels	Focus	Bomb, rockets kill 19 civilians in Syria
Victimization	19 civilians, including five children were killed	Agency	… came in the barrel bomb strike on a rebel-held district
	Fifteen of the dead, among them four of the children		
	The children were under the age of 10		
	A pregnant woman was also among Wednesday's dead		
	As residents were sitting down at the iftar meal		
Syntactic structures of sentences and agency	The conflict began with anti-government protests in March 2011 that were met with a bloody crackdown.		

Table 6 Article 6.

Positive Representations		Negative Representations	
Category	**Evidence**	**Category**	**Evidence**
Victimization	Hezbollah fighters firing rocket-propelled grenades and automotive weapons from inside and on top of residential buildings	Topic	Hezbollah, Syrian army seize main entrance to Zabadani
	Rebels had been trapped and their escape routes have been cut off		
Denomination	Rebels	Evidentiality	Al-Manar reported – the Hezbollah-run station
Syntactic structures of a sentence	At least 16 Syrian army soldiers and 200 militants have been killed in the battle	Actor description	Footage also showed Hezbollah fighters swarming an area of the city with the sound of heavy gunfire in the background.

al-Qaeda-affiliated organization, drunk on its victories in Idlib (Aleppo's battle rages on)

For processing analysis, the authors tailored how the subject was portrayed using certain methods. Those methods entail certain quotations from different sources that did not act as proving ethos. The decision was made to quote certain military

Table 7 Article 7.

Positive Representations		Negative Representations	
Category	Evidence	Category	Evidence
Evidentiality	Saudi Official	Agency	Iran deal may make region more dangerous
			Iran had destabilized the whole Middle East through its activities in Iraq, Syrian, Lebanon, and Yemen
Victimization	If the deal allowed it concessions, the region would become more dangerous	Disclaimer	Iran's nuclear deal with world powers will mean "a happy day" if it stops the country from gaining a nuclear arsenal, but the agreement would prove bad if it allowed Tehran to "wreak havoc in the region"

Table 8 Article 8.

Positive Representations		Negative Representations	
Category	Evidence	Category	Evidence
Denomination	Rebels	Topic/Focus	Hezbollah tightens the noose in Zabadani
	Rebel factions		
Victimization	Rebel fighter succumbed to his wounds	Syntactic structures of sentences and actor description	Allied forces destroyed a militant convoy using rocket fire in the Al-Zahra neighborhood.
	43 rebels had surrendered, according to the source, with a further nine surrendering Tuesday.		The attack killed all passengers on the vehicle.
			The allied forces issued an ultimatum to Syrian rebels over the weekend to either surrender or die.
Evidentiality	The Syrian Observatory's Report		
National Self-glorification	Add to Hezbollah's recent victories in Lebanon's eastern mountain range		

sources guided by the pro-regime group; they also quoted 'knowledgeable' sources about the battlefield, the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA), and field sources. Although the above-mentioned sources are all pro-regime, the authors did manage to include some that are actually anti-regime. They have done so by labeling those sources as 'pro-opposition sources' which gave a negative outlook on the situation.

In social analysis, according to Trombetta's article in the European Journalism Centre, the Shiite Muslim owner of As-Safir is a high advocate of the Hezbollah-led resistance against Israel and the US. Those facts depicted that As-Safir sides with the pro-regime factions.

Articles 5 to 8: The most evident process is related to the material between the participants where a certain stance is inflicting an action on the other. Some of those examples include:

• The crude explosive-filled container hit a building (Article 5)

• 19 civilians, including five children, were killed by a Syrian regime barrel bomb (Article 5)

• Showed Hezbollah fighters firing rocket-propelled grenades (Article 6)

• The rebels had been trapped inside Zabadani (Article 6)

Different examples emerge out of this process. The other three processes were not that transparent throughout the text. Nominalization was not evident. In classification the Daily Star chose to label the anti-regime sanctions as rebels or rebel fighters. The labeling for the advocates of the Syrian regime were

described as troops or their standard names. Modality was not depicted.

In processing analysis, the Daily Star chose to quote different sources that portrayed the events. In one of the articles, the author decided to quote Al-Manar, a Hezbollah-run station. In the other articles, they quoted Saudi officials, activists, and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an activist group.

As for the social analysis, the Daily Star was sold to news investors in 2010 who were affiliated to the Hariri Group. "This may be partly due to the Daily Star's original tone which leaned towards the March 14 Alliance, but also because the acquisition has been too recent to produce any tangible outcomes" [13].

However, in social analysis, other updated information about newspaper ownership might not have been put into the public yet.

Discussion

Halliday's framework

Unequal power was evident throughout the eight articles. The newspapers agree with the happenings in Syria. The fields discussed are the battles occurring around Syria: namely, Zabadani and Aleppo. The processes include a war-related jargon with heavy emphasis on killings and battle techniques. As for tenor, in As-Safir, the participants were always divided into two parties. One incorporated the Syrian Army as either standalone fighters or as the Syrian Army alongside Hezbollah. The other was constituted of the 'takfiri' factions, anti-regime groups, Islamic

State, and Jabhat al-Nusra. Those anti-regime groups seemed to be of less power than that of the Syrian Army and Hezbollah. The authors clearly depicted this inequality of powers through their choice of words and processes. As-Safir seems to be siding with those of more power against those of less power.

The Daily Star also depicted unequal power relations. However, in this newspaper, the parties were different. There were no specific, targeted parties throughout the four articles. Even when Hezbollah and the Syrian Army conveyed more power than the 'rebels,' in "Hezbollah tightens the noose on Zabadani," there was no noted achievement that the allies have accomplished unlike the articles in As-Safir, where the allies' endeavors were constantly described as successful advancements. Although there is depiction of power relations in the Daily Star where pro-regime group have more power than other anti-regime groups, the manifestation was not as clear and evident as those in the As-Safir. This does not condemn that the Daily Star is with or against the pro-regime group.

As for the mode, all eight articles are carefully written and planned being newspaper articles. They underwent publication processes for achieving a careful, precise selection. Busa [17] explains how the processes of publishing are actually based on the partnership and cooperation of different stakeholders in a newspaper industry.

Fairclough et al. [3] have established that discourse incorporates power relations that are in accordance with the underpinning ideology that the newspaper reinforces. As-Safir clearly depicted power relations that favor Hezbollah and the Syrian Army over the other anti-regime groups. This signals that As-Safir is siding with the formers. Conversely, the Daily Star did not present such a clear, evident distinction. The power it gave the pro-Syrian regime was minimal; thus, valid and reliable conclusions could not be reached.

Van Dijk's framework

In As-Safir, the positive representations, which fall under van Dijk's positive self-representation class, were only concerned in describing the positive doings of the pro-regime. The negative representations that incorporated a description of what the anti-regime movement was doing fall under van Dijk's negative other-representation. This further implies and supports the claim mentioned in Halliday's framework.

The Daily Star also used some of the categories proposed by van Dijk to positively represent a certain group and negatively represent the other. However, the categories were not as many as those utilized by As-Safir primarily because the Daily Star article is shorter and less detailed. However, throughout this analysis, the Daily Star is siding with the rebels against the pro-regime allies. This was apparent in some of the positive representations of the rebels and the negative representations of the allies.

Those positive and negative representations could be placed in van Dijk's ideological square where the positive ones could be related to the self-representations and the negative ones could be related to the other-representations. Consequently, As-Safir has positively represented itself by siding with pro-regime factions,

and negatively represented others through its opposition to the anti-regime factions. Conversely, the Daily Star has positively represented itself by siding with the anti-regime factions, and negatively represented others through its opposition to the pro-regime factions.

Fairclough's framework

As-Safir presented various markers that further reinforced a pro-regime ideology. As-Safir used material processes to convey certain happenings that occurred by or to a specific party. To reduce the bias, nominalization was used too. For example, instead of using 'attack' as a verb, authors used it as a noun. Nonetheless, both actions are portrayals of what the pro-regime movement is doing. Classification was evident through labeling the opposing party as terrorists, jihadi extremist, and takfiri factions, clearly showing that the authors are against those movements. In modality, with the use of high-affinity words, As-Safir portrayed such a distinction between pro and anti-regime movements. They have positively used different high affinity words to render the positive actions taken by the pro-regime, and they have negatively used the high-affinity words to render the negative actions taken by the anti-regime movements. Additionally, the processing analysis yielded similar results. Authors used pro-regime sources to discuss positive actions done by the Syrian army and Hezbollah such as their advancements and successes. They also used anti-regime sources to further reinforce that the anti- Syrian regime are up to no good. To bridge media and authority, research has concluded that As-Safir is a strong advocate of the Hezbollah-led resistance, highly against Israel and the US. This supplements the fact that the newspaper reinforces that As-Safir is siding with the pro-regime party against the other 'takfiri' factions.

In the Daily Star, material processes were most evident. Those processes focused on the description of the wrongdoings of the pro-regime factions. Conversely, material processes for describing anti-regime factions were not evident. Nominalization was not evident as well because an active role of the anti-regime group was not that apparent. The classification of the opposing groups was the label 'rebels' or 'rebel fighters'. In context, rebel does not serve a negative connotation. Rebels are people who want to alter the social, political, or economic system. Modality was not evident. There were some examples where the Daily Star authors used high affinity to describe the negative actions of the pro-regime groups, yet in one of the cases, they used a high-affinity word to describe one of the victories of Hezbollah. In their processing analysis, the authors drew on various sources from different parties. However, once they mentioned Al-Manar, they followed it by a Hezbollah-led station. This implies that there was a negative attitude expressed towards this station. Through the social analysis, the Daily Star had an inclination towards the March 14 alliance, known to be anti-regime. Nonetheless, the Hariri Group has also invested in the newspaper. Even though the analysis does not show an apparent, yet subliminal inclination towards the pro-opposition factions, this social analysis and bridging media with authority further reinforces and makes visible this inclination.

Fairlcough's analysis supplemented the conclusions reached in Halliday's and van Dijk's frameworks. As-Safir has again proven

to have a positive inclination towards the pro-regime alliance through the different descriptors discussed. In turn, the Daily Star has also proven to have a less intense, less apparent inclination to the anti-regime alliance. The Daily Star's opposition to the pro-regime factions was more evident.

Synthesis

The newspapers reinforce certain ideological beliefs, namely ones that belong to pro-Syrian regime and the anti-Syrian regime. The intensity of such portrayal differs. As-Safir has a more intense, more apparent inclination towards the pro-regime while the Daily Star has more vague, subliminal inclination toward the anti-regime, mainly against the pro-regime alliance. The linguistic features used helped in uncovering the underpinning ideologies of the different newspapers and have unconsciously reinforced them.

This is crucial and critical because individuals, as Van Dijk [4] proposed, might unconsciously acquire the ideology through this discourse. Once this ideology is acquired, it is very hard to let go off. Reah [8] even mentions how difficult it is to resist a subliminal, hidden ideology. Language is thus being socially constructed [6].

Conclusion

The study aimed at exploring the language of politics in two opposing newspapers. The language of politics is never a neutral one. Fowler [9] agrees with that notion and adds that newspapers do not actually serve the purpose of delivering facts. Reports are actually published because they follow certain criteria guided by ideologies. Hence, reports are highly affected by the supporting ideologies and political groups. It is, as Van Dijk [5] described, a polarization between two parties; the out-group and the in-group.

Limitations

Hodge [18] proposes challenges for CDA starting with the name itself. With regards to the word critical, Hodge [18] raised a concern of who criticizes whom and for what reasons.

Poole [19] also expressed his concerns on Fairclough's perspective to CDA. He argued that discourse has no set definition, and sometimes it overlaps with language. In addition, CDA is affected by a variety of influences that have not been addressed. There is also the concern of differences people have. Poole [19] argues that different people read texts differently.

Philo [20] attempted to find an answer to whether or not discourse analysis can successfully explain the content of journalistic reports. Even though Van Dijk's framework is a widely used one, Philo [20] elucidates that the framework is still text-based. He argues that text-based frameworks fail to show the origins of competing discourses and their relations to different social interests. They also fail to show how social and external factors affect the discourse, and how different audience perceives discourse. According to Philo [20] reports cannot be analyzed unless the social context and the audience's perception of reports are taken into account.

Finally, Fowler [9] highly advocates discourse linguistics to use discourse-related moments other than the text.

Suggestions for Further Research

Due to the concerns of researchers regarding CDA as a subjective discipline, attempting to objectify it more could be area of potential growth. Although one needs to look at texts with a critical eye, one needs to keep in mind that the act of criticism in itself is subjective. Another potential area of growth for further research could regard audiences' interpretation of the news reports through developing an instrument that aims at analyzing the perceptions of the vast audience.

References

1 Zglobiu OR (2011) Approaches to political discourse analysis. Journal of Media Research 3: 19-27.

2 Chilton P, Schaffner C (2011) Discourse and politics. In: Van Dijk TA (ed.) Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction. London: Sage, pp: 303-330.

3 Fairclough N, Mulderrig J, Wodak R (2011) Critical discourse analysis. In: Van Dijk TA (ed.) Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction. London: Sage pp: 357-358.

4 Van Dijk TA (2011) Discourse and ideology. In: Van Dijk TA (ed.) Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction. London: Sage pp: 379-407.

5 Van Dijk TA (2000) Ideology and discourse. A Multidisciplinary Introduction. Pompeu Fabra University: Barcelona.

6 Fairclough N (1995) Critical discourse analysis. London: Longman.

7 Locke T (2004) Critical discourse analysis. London: Continuum.

8 Reah D (2002) The language of newspapers. London: Routledge.

9 Fowler R (1991) Language in the news. London: Routledge.

10 Halliday MAK (1985) An introduction into functional grammar. London: Edward Arnold.

11 Fairclough N (2009) A dialectical-relational approach to critical discourse analysis in social research. In: Wodak R, Meyer M (eds.) Methods of critical discourse analysis. London: Sage, pp: 162-186.

12 Dabbous-Sensing D (2007) ACRLI 2007 country report: Media in Lebanon. Arab Center for the Development of the Rule law and Integrity.

13 Mapping Digital Media: Lebanon (2012) The Open Society Foundation.

14 Dabbous YT (2010) Media with a mission: Why fairness and balance are not priorities in Lebanon's journalistic codes. International Journal of Communication 4: 719-737.

15 Dajani N (2013) The myth of media freedom in Lebanon. Arab Media and Society.

16 Zhang M (2014) A critical discourse analysis of political news reports. Theory and Practice in Language Studies 4: 2273.

17 Busa MG (2014) Introducing the language of the news. London: Routledge.

18 Hodge B (2012) Ideology, identity, interaction: Contradictions and challenges for critical discourse analysis. Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines 5: 1-18.

19 Poole B (2010) Commitment and criticality: Fairclough's critical discourse analysis evaluated. International Journal of Applied Linguistic 20: 137-155.

20 Philo G (2007) Can discourse analysis successfully explain the content of media and journalistic practice? Journalism Studies 8: 175-196.