

The Representation of the Iraqi Protests in the New York Times: A CDA Analysis

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47175/rielsj.v4i3.758>

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ABSTRACT

The spark of the October revolution in Iraq ignited on the first day of October and persisted for forty days, interrupted only by religious occasions. It regained momentum on October 25, 2019, continuing as a significant sociopolitical event. From its inception, the revolution faced suppression by the Iraqi government, with the use of tear gas, live weapons, and hunting weapons against protesters. The Iraqi revolution captured global media attention, becoming a focal point of coverage worldwide. This research paper employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) using Teun van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model to investigate how The New York Times represents the Iraqi protests in its headlines. Data is collected from The New York Times' official website, with a focus on headlines related to the Iraqi demonstrations from October 2019 to the present time. The analysis comprises two levels: Micro Level Analysis scrutinizes linguistic features, while Macro Level Analysis explores broader sociocultural and cognitive contexts. The research aims to answer questions regarding the portrayal of the protests, linguistic strategies employed, framing of actors, and reflections of social and cognitive contexts. The study acknowledges limitations, including the exclusive use of headlines and the scope limited to The New York Times. However, the research contributes valuable insights into media discourse, biases, power dynamics, and the influence of language on shaping public understanding of complex sociopolitical events. The findings have implications for media studies and communication research, prompting critical engagement with media representations and the potential impact on public perceptions and discourses.

KEYWORDS

New York Times; discourse; discourse analysis; critical discourse analysis; protesters.

INTRODUCTION

How does the U.S. Press represent the Iraqi protest to the U.S. street? Do American newspapers give the Iraqi demonstrators improper characteristics?

Since the first days of October 2019, Iraq has witnessed some demonstrations in which thousands of people went out in the capital, Baghdad as well as in a number of other cities, protesting against widespread unemployment, corruption and poor public services. Though the security forces tried to break up this wave of demonstrations by using cannons of water and tear gas, after their escalation, they ended up firing rubber and live bullets, which caused more than a hundred deaths and thousands of casualties during the first six days of it. The New York Times covered the topic of the Iraqi demonstrations continuously from its inception to the present time, and because this newspaper has an echo read

internationally, and it is the largest urban newspaper in the United States and because of its great impact on the world level it was the focus of this research. This study focusses on the headlines of the newspaper because the headlines are more interesting for the audience than articles so long as all those who buy the paper will look at, if only fleetingly, the headlines. Furthermore, impact of the headlines is even wider than on those who actually buy the paper as headlines are often glimpsed on public transport, displayed on fliers etc.

In this paper, we try to show the reality of whether the New York Times newspaper gives a bad impression of the Iraqi demonstrations, blames the Iranian Republic for what is happening in Iraq, use violent words to represent the Iraqi demonstrations, and describes the demonstrators with characteristics that do not represent them.

The significance of media in the modern world is undeniable. The Various media impacts and dominates how we understand and know the world we live in while they use a specific language. According to Yahya (2012, 360) certainly, it possesses the indisputable power that can make our attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors which are supposed to change our behaviors in a society “Newspapers are not simply vehicles for delivering information. They guide the ideological stance of the reader”, (Reah, 2002:50).

The problem of this study is to investigate how the NYT represents Iraqi protests in the titles of its articles. The questions to be raised are: Why does U.S. Newspaper NYT use terms (such as, Battle Lines, Suppressed, Siege, Occupier, Iran and others) to represent the Iraqi protests? Are they against or with the Iraqi protest? How does the U.S. Press represent the Iraqi protest to the U.S. street? Does American newspaper, NYT, give the Iraqi demonstrators improper characteristics?

This study is aimed at (1) analyzing article headlines in NYT regarding Iraqi protests, (2) showing how the newspaper in question represents Iraqi protests, (3) showing which party or side the NYT blames, and (4) uncovering how the NYT wants the streets to perceive the Iraqi protests.

To achieve the objectives of this study, the following procedures are adopted: (a) Reviewing the literature about the Iraqi demonstration, (b) collecting the data from the official website of the NYT newspaper: <https://www.nytimes.com/>, (c) analyzing the headlines using Van Dijk’s CDA model, and (e) coming up with the discussion and conclusions.

Ethical Considerations:

This research adheres to ethical principles of academic research. The data used for analysis are publicly available headlines from The New York Times website. Proper attribution and citation will be maintained to ensure the integrity of the data and avoid any potential copyright infringement.

Limitations:

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The analysis is limited to headlines from The New York Times, and other media sources may have different representations of the Iraqi protests. Additionally, the analysis focuses on the headlines alone and does not include the full articles, which could provide additional context and insights into the newspaper's representation of the protests.

Significance and Contribution:

This research contributes to the fields of discourse analysis, media studies, and sociopolitical communication. By examining The New York Times' representation of the Iraqi protests, this study provides insights into how media narratives can influence public perceptions and understanding of complex sociopolitical events. The findings may inform discussions on media biases, power dynamics, and the impact of language on shaping

public discourse. Additionally, this study can be of value to linguistics students and researchers interested in CDA and its application to media representations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Background

In 2019, it has become clear that there has been a wave of popular revolt around the world, which has become clear in the recent period. However, when we look back, it is clear that the origins of this wave goes back to the end of 2018 and early 2019.

In addition, there are places where major protests may or may not develop further. For example: Uruguay, Peru and Costa Rica, as well as global climate change protests (global climate change) by schoolchildren and the rebellion against extinction (Extinction Rebellion). It is an unbelievable rise in the last half century, except for the 1968 movements and those witnessed in 2011 when the Arab Spring extended to the indigenous movement against austerity policies in Spain (Indignados) and the occupation of the fields in the United States (Occupy movement).

Previous Studies

There are many studies on the topic of demonstrations and newspaper headlines, some of which will be briefly addressed:

In his paper “The Iraqi Protest Movement From Identity Politics To Issue Politics”, Jabar (2018) deals with Iraqi demonstrations that occurred in mid-July 2015. The paper includes the issue of demonstrations in all aspects (political, sectarian and also demonstrators) and also the cities that participated in these demonstrations and the percentages of participation in them.

The second work which is entitled “Media discourse and Iraqi Sectarian Violence: A Critical Discourse Analysis of U.S. Press” is written by Mohamad Yahya Abdullah (2015). The main purpose of this study is to examine the role of the U.S. press in indicating partisan viciousness among two fundamental factions of Iraqi communities which are Shiite faction and Sunni faction through utilizing manipulative devices based on the critical discourse analysis (CDA).

The third work is written by (Camilla Arundie Tabe and Njofie Isaac Fieze , 2018) this work is entitled as “A Critical Discourse Analysis Of Newspaper Headlines on The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon”. This research delves into both private and public newspaper headlines regarding the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon, employing a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework. The objective is to uncover the selection of vocabulary and the employment of rhetorical queries in conveying information about the crisis. Furthermore, the study seeks to elucidate how these linguistic choices not only reflect the perspectives of the journalists and newspaper ownership but also influence the way readers perceive and think about the situation.

The last work is for Mohammed Wesam Amer (2015). In his thesis “War Reporting in the International Press: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Gaza War of 2008-2009”, the examination involves evaluating how social actors are portrayed in articles covering the Gaza conflict of 2008-09 across four globally recognized newspapers: The Guardian, The Times London, The New York Times, and The Washington Post. This investigation utilizes three distinct analytical models derived from the field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). These models encompass Halliday's transitivity model (1985/1994), Van Leeuwen's socio-semantic inventory (1996), and Richardson's categorization of quotation patterns (2007).

This research studies how to present Iraqi demonstrations to the American people by the American newspaper NYT. Since the demonstrations that took place in Iraq started a short time ago from now, studies on them were very few. We have searched for studies that are identical to our studies, and no one has been found.

The October Revolution

The spark of the October revolution in Iraq started on the first day of October and stopped for a period of forty days, Imam Al-Hussein (PBUH), and then came back strongly on October 25, 2019, and continued for almost six months. Since its first day, the revolution has been subjected to suppression by the Iraqi government with tear gas, live weapons, and hunting weapons.

The government has also launched large campaigns of arrests of demonstrators and activists, and kidnapping has been observed for many activists. The revolution had been created to bring about change and political, economic and social reform. Its most important demands were (unemployment and poverty, loss and bad basic services, state corruption (sacking the prime minister, changing the government, demanding new elections and electing independent people not affiliated with political parties), energy crisis, sectarianism, opposing Iranian influence, limiting the movement of embassies and foreign figures, and removing foreign military forces.

Many questions revolve around the demonstrators and those who lead them. Who is behind these demonstrations? Who supports them? This is answered by observers and researchers, as "youth demonstrations" that have not received support from any specific party or group. According to Al-Ani (2019), the researcher in Iraqi political affairs from Erbil Shaho Al-Qurra Daghi confirms that "the protesters are a group of young people born and lived in the shadow of despair and corruption, and they no longer care about political slogans and partisan promises, and their goal is change".

Researchers and media believe that the demonstrations are an escalating popular movement, as the journalist from Baghdad, Ahmad al-Janabi, considered that the demonstrations are "popular anger", because they came out of youth groups without apparent leadership, and that they went out without religious, political or partisan direction. "The reasons for the demonstrations are complex between economic, services and political, as a result of the domination of parties and militias on the Iraqis," said Ahmed al-Mallah, a journalist in his interview with Al-Jazeera Net. As for the media researcher from Baghdad, Firas Al-Hamdani, he sees that "what happened in the street is closer to the popular anger than the movement or the revolution" (Al-Ani: 2019).

The demonstrators feel the curse of the ruling class, and they feel sorry for the quality of life they live, and this anger exploded at some point and went to the street in the form of groups. We note that the angry rebellious youth followed a set of methods of peaceful protest, including (protest, strike, sit-in, civil disobedience, activity on the Internet). It is worth noting that this revolution had many losses on both sides (the people and the riot police), according to what reported in Alsumaria.tv: "According to the statistics, the total number of martyrs was 394 civilians, while the number of martyrs from the security forces reached 5".

The American position on the Iraqi demonstrations since the first day of the Iraqi demonstrations is that the American government has indicated its support for the demonstrations, and as sited in Skynewsarabia.com the US State Department said, "It is monitoring the demonstrations in Iraq, expressing concern about reports of loss of life". "We believe that public demonstrations are an essential element in all democracies, but there is no place for violence in such phenomena, a foreign ministry spokesman told Sky

News Arabia on Tuesday". The United States expressed its disapproval of the use of violence, against protesters. The Assistant Secretary of State strongly criticized the assaults on demonstrators who are exercising their democratic right to freedom of speech and advocating for political and economic changes. They urged the government to take action to stop these unlawful acts and hold those responsible accountable, for their actions. as cited in (arabic.sputniknews.com). However, the visit of Mike Pence revealed the reality of the American position on the demonstrations from the viewpoint of some speakers of the political approach, according to the journalist Al-Awad (2019) Pence's visit "is the entry of the American vice president to Iraqi lands without the knowledge of the central government, indicating that he does not recognize it as if the lands were their land and they are the decision-makers."

However, the details of the visit and what took place in it give clear and irrefutable evidence of the Americans, Al-Awad (2019) states that "support to topple the rule of the Shi'ites and if they cannot do so due to the circumstances and the surrounding factors, they will cut the lands that are important to them in carrying out their project aimed at striking the axis of resistance. He also (ibid) adds that "Americans' support for the demonstrations in Iraq is not the rights of the people and reducing their suffering, but to destroy the axis of resistance". As for the slogans and support for the demonstrators in the media affiliated with America and its allies, only a human and political cover to deceive young men and women of the people of the center and south in order to be their tools in implementing their plans aimed at striking everything that supports the axis of resistance (such as the Marjaiya (Religious Authority), Iran, the popular crowd, and the factions it embraces) .

The American ideas about the Iraqi demonstrations and its representation are different, so in this research we will try to analyze the NYT newspaper Headlines in order to see how they represent the demonstrations to the American streets and the other readers from all over the world.

Discourse Analysis (DA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

In the realm of sociology, discourse is characterized as "any action (manifested in various forms) through which individuals invest reality with significance." Within the humanities and social sciences, it signifies a structured mode of thought that can be articulated through language; discourse serves as a societal demarcation that outlines the permissible statements regarding a particular subject. Several interpretations of discourse draw extensively from the insights of the French philosopher Michel Foucault.

The connection between discourse and politics, policymaking, along with various theories of authority and government is particularly strong, especially when considering that defining discourse essentially entails defining our perception of reality. Discourse has the capacity to shape an individual's viewpoint, and for any given subject, evading the influence of discourse is impractical. To illustrate, diverse discourses can be applied to describe different guerrilla movements, labeling them either as "freedom fighters" or "terrorists." In essence, the chosen mode of discourse not only furnishes the language, phrases, and conceivably even the manner of communication required but also establishes the framework for discussion.

A discourse-oriented perspective fundamentally challenges the conventional concerns of linguistics. In this approach, the emphasis lies on the contextual nature of language usage, acknowledging its inherently social and interactive characteristics, even within written forms of communication. From this standpoint, the traditional focus on analyzing sentences or clauses is fundamentally shifted, and the concept of "moving beyond the sentence" serves as a metaphorical critique of a long-standing philological tradition that

has often treated written language as the quintessential representation of language as a whole.

In this revised perspective, discourse analysis places language usage at the forefront as a form of social action and situated performance. It recognizes language as intricately connected to social relationships, identities, power dynamics, inequalities, and social conflicts. It views language as fundamentally rooted in practices rather than mere structural elements. Consequently, there comes a point where discourse analysis, while providing insights into social dynamics, can also become a theoretical framework somewhat detached from empirical engagement in the analysis of actual language use.

Discourse analysis, also referred to as discourse studies, constitutes an approach for scrutinizing the utilization of written, spoken, or sign language, as well as any significant semiotic occurrence. The subjects of examination in discourse analysis, such as discourse, written text, conversation, and communicative events, are defined diversely regarding the organization of cohesive sentence sequences, propositions, speech acts, or conversational exchanges. This contrasts with traditional linguistics, as discourse analysts delve into language usage that extends 'beyond the sentence boundary,' prioritizing the analysis of naturally transpiring language rather than contrived examples. A closely related field is text linguistics. The fundamental distinction between discourse analysis and text linguistics lies in the fact that discourse analysis aims to elucidate the socio-psychological attributes of an individual or individuals, rather than concentrating solely on the structural aspects of the text.

The examination of discourse has found its place in numerous fields within the humanities and social sciences. These encompass linguistics, education, sociology, anthropology, social work, cognitive psychology, social psychology, area studies, cultural studies, international relations, human geography, environmental science, communication studies, biblical studies, public relations, and translation studies. Each of these domains operates with its unique set of presuppositions, facets of analysis, and research approaches.

Luo (2019) emphasizes the significance of discourse analysis, stating that it involves the examination of how language operates and the manner in which meaning is constructed within various social contexts (p. 1). This approach is versatile and can be applied to a wide range of linguistic elements, encompassing both written and spoken language, in addition to non-verbal facets of communication like tone and gestures.

In discourse analysis, suitable materials for examination encompass a diverse array of sources, including but not limited to:

1. Printed publications such as books, newspapers, and periodicals.
2. Marketing collateral, exemplified by brochures and advertisements.
3. Official documents originating from business enterprises and government agencies.
4. Digital content, comprising websites, online forums, social media posts, and associated comments.
5. Verbal interactions, which encompass interviews and conversational exchanges.

Through the analysis of these discourse varieties, researchers aim to acquire insights into social groups and their methods of communication.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) stands as an interdisciplinary approach to the examination of discourse, encompassing spoken and written language, and it perceives language as a manifestation of social conduct.

Hall (2012) delineates five key characteristics of CDA, as outlined by Phillips and Jorgensen (2006: 61-65):

1. Discursive practices play a pivotal role in shaping social identities and relationships.

2. Discourse both shapes and is shaped by various social activities, collectively constructing the social milieu.
3. Language analysis is contingent upon the social environment in which it occurs.
4. Discursive practices are instrumental in the creation and perpetuation of imbalanced power dynamics, and CDA endeavors to expose these inequities.
5. CDA aims to uncover the role of discourse in sustaining social connections while simultaneously striving for positive societal change.

Van Dijk, Fairclough, and Wodak are prominent scholars closely associated with the critical discourse analysis (CDA) field. They have explored CDA from various theoretical perspectives and analytical methodologies.

In his 'Socio-cognitive Model,' Teun van Dijk (1998b) proposes that CDA, as an interdisciplinary discipline, is rooted in his concept, which he identifies as "socio-cognitive discourse analysis." He acknowledges that while he is somewhat reluctant to categorize his approach, this label underscores the crucial role of cognitive investigation within CDA, communication, and interaction analysis. However, it is essential to note that this does not imply that CDA should confine itself solely to cognitive and social analysis. Instead, due to the multifaceted nature of real-world issues, their intricate dynamics, and societal demands, CDA should also incorporate historical, cultural, socio-economic, philosophical, logical, and neurological perspectives (Van Dijk, 1998b).

His analysis is performed at two levels: microstructure and macrostructure. At the former, the analysis is focused on the semantic relations between propositions, syntactic, lexical and other rhetorical elements that give coherence to the text. The analysis of latter, on the other hand, has to do with power relation, such as dominance and inequality (van Dijk, 2002:203-4). CDA plans to mix these two levels, since in actual interaction one cannot separate them from each other. Besides he proposes three levels of analysis: social analysis (which examines the overall societal structures; hence this type of analysis is context based), discourse analysis (which examines the actual text as far as syntax, lexicon, local semantics, topics, etc. hence this analysis is text based). The third type of analysis is van Dijk's new gift that distinguishes his approach from other approaches in CDA: it is the cognitive analysis (van Dijk, 1995). Van Dijk adopts a 'socio-cognitive' approach in which he stresses the way in which the context is mediated through cognition; the way in which individuals relate text and context through 'subjective mental models ongoingly constructed by the participants of the current communicative events' (van Dijk, 2005: 95). He gives the definition of the cognition as "the system of mental representations and processes of group members".

According to van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach, social structures and discourse structures are indirectly related to each other through personal and social cognition. Therefore, he proposed the triangle of society, cognition and discourse in which discourse is a communicative event that includes both speech and text as well as body movements, pictures and other semiotic signifiers. While cognition is considered as personal and social beliefs, values, emotions, and other mental structures while society includes local micro structures and political, social and universal macro structures which are defined in terms of groups and their relationships such as dominance and inequality (Van Dijk, 2015: 64-5).

Van Dijk has introduced two concepts of the cognitive models that can affect and control people's minds; context model which is something between society and discourse according to socio-cognitive approach. This model implies the way in which discourse constructs and controls people's behaviors and actions by controlling their minds, i.e., discourse is not directly connected to social structures (van Dijk, 2001). Van Dijk has proposed his second cognitive model, which is Mental models which are identified as

people's experiences, events, acts ... etc., i.e., memories in people's minds. A mental model is defined as "a partial and subjective cognitive representation of reality" (van Dijk, 1985: 67).

Van Dijk (2001) contends that existing discourse research has consistently demonstrated the presence of ideologies in polarized modes of thinking, viewpoints, behaviors, or discourse. Prejudiced discourse, as highlighted, is typified by the favorable depiction of one's own group (referred to as the "in-group" or "Us") concomitant with a concurrent unfavorable characterization of others (the "out-group" or "Them"). The depictions of social status, distinctions between in-groups and out-groups, and their alignment with definitions of good and bad are pivotal in this context. One method for unveiling these ideological constructs within discourse involves identifying specific structures and strategies that entail a positive presentation of the self (in-group) juxtaposed with a negative portrayal of the other (out-group) (Van Dijk, 2001).

Van Dijk (1998) provides a definition of ideologies as "social beliefs that find consensus among the members of a society" (p. 8). Notably, van Dijk places ideology within a triangular framework, connecting cognition, society, and discourse. Consequently, he characterizes his theory as 'multidisciplinary.' In his own words, van Dijk emphasizes that ideologies are not restricted to cognitive aspects alone but encompass considerations related to social groups, interpersonal dynamics, institutions on a macro-level, and societal behaviors on a micro-level (p. 9).

Consequently, in order to understand his notion of 'ideology', Van Dijk (1998, 2004, and 2007) says that ideology is of three levels: cognitive, social and discursal.

The cognitive dimension encompasses what are known as 'social representations,' which comprise collectively held convictions, principles, attitudes, and viewpoints. In accordance with van Dijk (2007:116), ideology constitutes a form of "belief systems." Illustrations of these social representations encompass religious convictions, communism, feminism, and racism. Concepts intertwined with the cognitive and mental facets of ideology encompass notions of truth, falsehood, 'false consciousness,' and conventional wisdom.

The social dimension, or the macro-level, of ideology pertains to the societal structures within a given community, such as social groupings, group dynamics, societal strata, establishments, and institutions, such as educational institutions, healthcare, places of worship, or media outlets. The societal purposes of ideology encompass issues of authority and command, among others. Van Dijk chooses to employ the term 'beliefs' instead of 'ideas,' as beliefs can be either accurate or erroneous, whereas ideas typically relate to original thoughts or knowledge, hegemony, indoctrination, and imposition. He posits that "these belief systems are collectively embraced by members of a community of social actors" (ibid: 117).

At the discursive level, often referred to as the micro-level, the concept of ideology encompasses language usage and discourse, among various other modes of interpersonal engagement, such as discursive practices. According to Van Dijk (2007), ideology serves not only to uphold societal norms but also to govern social conduct while either justifying or obscuring power dynamics and instances of dominance. This role is chiefly evident within discourse, where discursive practices serve as vehicles for articulating, generating, and perpetuating ideologies via language (Van Dijk, 2007, p. 118).

The formulation or alteration of ideologies can also be accomplished through social activities, meaning that individuals within society, including social actors and members, engage actively in the creation or resistance of specific ideologies. In accordance with Van Dijk (1998), the definition of ideology utilized in this research encompasses three dimensions: cognitive, societal, and discursive. Ideological representations pertain to the

commonly held societal convictions, principles, and viewpoints that manifest across the textual, structural, and linguistic aspects of Discourse Analysis (DA) (Van Dijk, 1998).

Norman Fairclough (1995) proposed a 'three-dimensional Model,' wherein Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is envisioned as a method for examining societal and cultural transformations that can be harnessed to challenge the dominance and authority of an elite faction over others (Fairclough, 1995).

Fairclough (1995) posits that every occurrence of language utilization constitutes a communicative episode comprising three components: text (the entities subjected to linguistic scrutiny), interaction or discursive practice (the creation, dissemination, and reception of texts), and social practice (the power dynamics, ideologies, and contests for dominance that discourses perpetuate, contest, or reconfigure). In essence, discourse is a multifaceted concept involving these three dimensions (p. 56). Fairclough proposes three stages of analysis in correspondence to the three dimensions of discourse. The first stage, 'description,' pertains to the formal properties of the text. The second stage, 'interpretation,' deals with the connection between the text and interaction, viewing the text as both the product of the production process and a resource in the process of interpretation. Lastly, the third stage, 'explanation,' focuses on the relationship between interaction and social context. It considers the social determination of the production and interpretation processes, as well as their social consequences. This approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) emphasizes two dialectical relationships: one between structure, particularly social practices as an intermediary level of structuring, and events (or between structure and action, structure and strategy), and the other within each relationship, concerning semiotic elements and other components.

According to Ruth Wodaks work, on an historical approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) CDA is a field that views written and spoken language as a form of social behavior. Wodak distinguishes, between discourse and text stating that discourse encompasses linguistic acts found in genres and texts. In this perspective text is seen as the result of constructing these acts.

Since Wodak's theory is a historical approach to CDA', so it does not serve the research requirements. So, in this paper, we will rely on Van Dijk's theory because it differs from Fairclough's that it takes the social and mental aspect and gives an opportunity for the researcher to express his point of view on the topic of the research questions and aims.

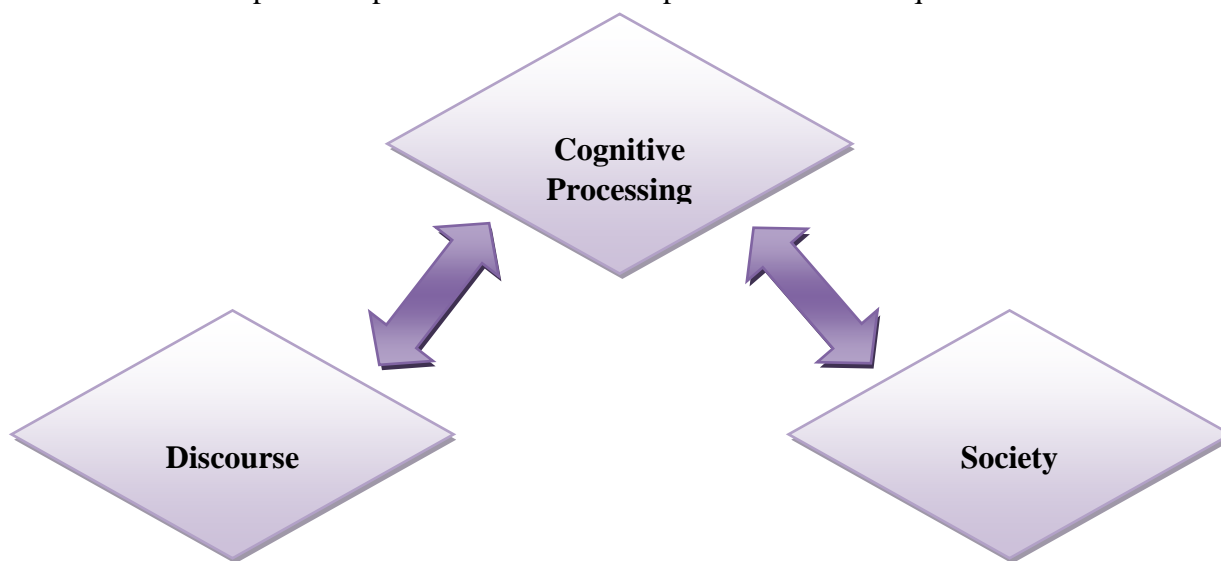


Figure 1. Discourse-Society Relationship
(Quoted from Van Dijk, 1998: 162)

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study employs a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach to analyze the headlines from The New York Times related to the Iraqi protests. CDA is chosen as the research design because it allows for a detailed examination of the language used in media representations, uncovering underlying ideologies, power relations, and social implications.

Data Collection

The data for this study is collected from The New York Times official website (<https://www.nytimes.com/>). Headlines related to the Iraqi protests from the beginning of the protests in October 2019 until the present time are extracted and compiled for analysis. The selection of headlines is based on their relevance to the protests and their potential to provide insights into the newspaper's representation of the events.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the headlines is conducted using Teun van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model. The data analysis involves two levels of examination:

- a. **Micro Level Analysis:** The linguistic features of each headline are examined, including lexical choices, syntax, and rhetorical devices. This level of analysis aims to understand how specific language elements contribute to the framing of the protests in the headlines.
- b. **Macro Level Analysis:** The broader sociocultural and cognitive contexts surrounding the headlines are explored. This level of analysis considers how the headlines position the protests in relation to other actors, events, and social issues, shaping readers' perceptions of the demonstrations.

In conclusion, the methodology of this research employs a CDA approach to analyze the headlines from The New York Times related to the Iraqi protests. Through a detailed examination of linguistic features and broader sociocognitive contexts, this study aims to uncover the newspaper's representation of the protests and its potential influence on public discourse.

Research Design:

This study employs a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach to analyze the headlines from

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Headlines

We should highlight news headlines of their importance and direct impact on the reader, especially the headlines of the New York Times.

Headlines hold a special allure for readers, often captivating them more than the full articles. This fascination arises from the fact that virtually all newspaper buyers, even if briefly, skim through the headlines. Furthermore, their influence extends beyond those who purchase the paper, as headlines frequently catch the eye of commuters and appear on flyers, enhancing their reach. This phenomenon is especially pronounced with front-page headlines, as they entice passersby to acknowledge the significance of the featured topic. Headlines wield a profound impact on readers, primarily due to specific linguistic elements that render them exceptionally memorable and potent. Editors intentionally seek to create

impact, a strategy prevalent not only in the popular press but also elsewhere, through techniques like puns, alliteration, the selection of emotionally charged language, and other rhetorical devices. We will delve into these linguistic elements in greater detail later on.

As Maria K. (2014: 1) aptly puts it, "A headline transforms the way people engage with an article and how they retain its essence. The headline essentially shapes the entire reading experience. It provides insight into the type of article you're about to delve into — whether it's news, opinion, research, or even something as lighthearted as 'LOL cats.' Additionally, it establishes the mood and expectations for what follows."

Data Collection

The data of the current work includes Six online American Newspaper headlines that have been collected to achieve the aims of this study. The following Headlines discuss the same event that happened in Iraq during the period between 25th Oct. 2019 to 10 March 2020 .

The data is selected purposefully, according to Creswell (2011:206) "purposeful sampling is the process of selecting people or sites who can best help us understand our phenomenon". An American newspaper has been chosen because of America's interference and a clear presence in Iraqi affairs. There are many military bases as well as American embassies and consulates inside Iraq. One of the demands of the demonstrators in the October Revolution was determining the movement of foreign embassies and personalities and removing foreign military forces from Iraq. These two demands had a major impact on the US government and the American people, which led to highlighting the Iraqi demonstrations in their daily newspapers. The New York Times has been chosen because it is the largest urban newspaper in the United States and because of its great impact on the world level, and this newspaper "The New York Times Company" is one of the largest media organizations in the world, with more than 20 newspapers in various parts of the United States, including the International Herald Tribune and the Boston Globe. In addition to eight television stations in different states, including Discovery Channel. It has won 113 of the famous Pulitzer Prizes." As stated in Aljazeera.net, besides as sited in marefa.com "New York Times is spread in many US states, including Florida, California, Louisiana, Alabama, North Carolina and South Carolina". As it depends very much on it, such as the main and documented reference to events, because it is issued every day of the week except Sunday, this means that the news is broadcast every day to the American street and readers will have direct access to events first-hand, which has a great and direct impact on the reader. So, the headlines data is chosen specifically.

The headlines in its written form have been collected from the official website of the NYT newspaper: <https://www.nytimes.com/>

Data Analysis

Headline 1:

“As Deaths Mount in Iraq Protests, a Rocket Attack Raises New Questions”

1. Micro Level Analysis (Text Structure):

The headline begins with "As Deaths Mount in Iraq Protests," drawing attention to the increasing casualties during the protests in Iraq.

The phrase "a Rocket Attack Raises New Questions" forms the second part of the headline, highlighting a specific incident involving a rocket attack and its implications, introducing an element of uncertainty and new concerns.

2. Macro Level Analysis (Social and Cognitive Context):

The headline reflects the ongoing protests in Iraq, indicating that they have resulted in mounting deaths. This framing may evoke feelings of concern, tragedy, and instability in the reader.

The inclusion of the phrase "Raises New Questions" suggests that the rocket attack has brought about fresh uncertainties and complexities to the situation, possibly raising doubts about the motives behind the attack and its potential impact on the protests.

3. Social Cognition:

The headline might influence readers' perceptions of the protests by emphasizing the casualties, potentially shaping their views on the severity and impact of the demonstrations.

The use of the word "Questions" may prompt readers to engage in critical thinking about the causes, consequences, and potential perpetrators of the rocket attack, thereby influencing their understanding of the ongoing situation in Iraq.

Overall, this headline uses language to highlight the increasing death toll in the Iraqi protests and introduces a specific incident that adds complexity to the situation. The headline may evoke emotions and questions in readers, shaping their perception of the protests and the broader implications of the rocket attack.

Headline 2:

“Iraq Protesters Burn Down Iran Consulate in Night of Anger”

1. Micro Level Analysis (Text Structure):

The headline begins with "Iraq Protesters Burn Down Iran Consulate," emphasizing a specific incident where protesters target and set fire to the Iranian consulate in Iraq.

The phrase "in Night of Anger" provides additional context, indicating that the burning down of the consulate occurred during a night of intense emotion and frustration.

2. Macro Level Analysis (Social and Cognitive Context):

The headline reflects an event of intense protest and destruction, framing the protesters' actions as an act of defiance or anger towards Iran.

The use of the word "Anger" signals a strong emotional reaction, potentially suggesting that the protesters' actions were driven by heightened emotions and frustration.

3. Social Cognition:

The headline may shape readers' perceptions of the protesters' motivations and actions, framing them as individuals driven by strong emotions and discontent towards Iran.

The mention of the consulate being "burned down" could evoke notions of violence and chaos, potentially influencing readers' views on the protesters and the overall situation in Iraq.

In a broader way portrays the protesters' action of burning down the Iranian consulate as an expression of anger during a night of heightened emotions. The language used in the headline could shape readers' interpretations of the protesters' motivations and actions, potentially influencing their perception of the broader dynamics between Iraq and Iran.

Headline 3:

“Iraqis Rise Against a Reviled Occupier: Iran”

1. Micro Level Analysis (Text Structure):

The headline begins with "Iraqis Rise Against," emphasizing the collective action of the Iraqi people, indicating a widespread response or resistance.

The phrase "a Reviled Occupier: Iran" provides the object of the rising, indicating that the Iraqi people are expressing opposition or hostility towards Iran, whom they view as an occupying force.

2. Macro Level Analysis (Social and Cognitive Context):

The headline reflects a significant sociopolitical event where the Iraqi people rise up against Iran, indicating an act of resistance against perceived foreign occupation.

The use of the word "Reviled" suggests a strong negative sentiment or disdain towards Iran, emphasizing the intensity of the sentiment held by the Iraqi people.

3. Social Cognition:

The headline may shape readers' perceptions of the relationship between Iraq and Iran, portraying Iran as an occupier seen unfavorably by the Iraqi population.

The mention of the Iraqis rising against Iran frames the event as an expression of resistance and dissent, potentially influencing readers' views on the dynamics of power and opposition in the region.

The analysis of the headline "Iraqis Rise Against a Reviled Occupier: Iran" highlights the collective action of the Iraqi people in opposing Iran, framing it as an act of resistance against a perceived occupying force. The language used in the headline may influence readers' understanding of the relationship between the two countries and shape their perception of the dynamics at play in the region.

Headline 4:

“Pro-Iranian Protesters End Siege of U.S. Embassy in Baghdad”

1. Micro Level Analysis (Text Structure):

The headline starts with "Pro-Iranian Protesters End Siege," highlighting the actions of protesters who identify themselves as pro-Iranian.

The phrase "of U.S. Embassy in Baghdad" specifies the target of the siege, indicating that the protesters had surrounded and held the U.S. Embassy in the capital city of Iraq.

2. Macro Level Analysis (Social and Cognitive Context):

The headline reflects a significant event involving protesters with a pro-Iranian stance, suggesting an alignment with Iran's interests or ideology.

The mention of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad indicates a high-profile and sensitive target, potentially framing the event as a challenge to U.S. interests in the region.

3. Social Cognition:

The headline may influence readers' perceptions of the protesters' motivations and affiliations, portraying them as individuals supporting Iran and its policies.

The reference to the U.S. Embassy being under siege could evoke notions of conflict and tension between Iran and the U.S., potentially shaping readers' views on the geopolitical situation in the region.

The analysis of the headline "Pro-Iranian Protesters End Siege of U.S. Embassy in Baghdad" shows that the headline highlights the actions of protesters who identify as pro-Iranian and their decision to end the siege of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. The language used in the headline may shape readers' interpretations of the protesters' motivations, affiliations, and the significance of the event in the broader context of Iran-U.S. relations and geopolitical dynamics in the region.

Headline 5:

“Iraqi Antigovernment Protests Grow, Part Battle Lines and Carnival”

1. Micro Level Analysis (Text Structure):

The headline begins with "Iraqi Antigovernment Protests Grow," indicating an ongoing escalation in protests against the government in Iraq.

The phrase "Part Battle Lines and Carnival" follows, suggesting that the protests encompass elements of conflict and confrontation as well as elements of celebration and festivity.

2. Macro Level Analysis (Social and Cognitive Context):

The headline reflects a significant sociopolitical event, portraying the antigovernment protests in Iraq as growing in intensity and scope.

The mention of "Battle Lines" suggests a confrontational aspect of the protests, potentially evoking notions of conflict, resistance, and opposition.

The reference to "Carnival" introduces a contrasting element, potentially implying that the protests also involve celebratory and festive aspects, reflecting the diversity of activities and emotions within the protests.

3. Social Cognition:

The headline may shape readers' perceptions of the protests in Iraq as a dynamic and multifaceted movement, incorporating both contentious and festive elements.

The mention of "Battle Lines" might evoke feelings of tension and struggle, potentially influencing readers' views on the gravity of the social and political issues being addressed by the protesters.

The reference to "Carnival" could evoke notions of unity, joy, and collective expression, possibly shaping readers' understanding of the protests as a site of diverse actions and emotions.

The analysis of the headline "Iraqi Antigovernment Protests Grow, Part Battle Lines and Carnival" reveals that the headline portrays the escalating nature of the antigovernment protests in Iraq and highlights the presence of both confrontational and celebratory elements within the movement. The language used in the headline may influence readers' interpretations of the complexity and significance of the protests, framing them as a multifaceted and evolving sociopolitical phenomenon.

Discussion

The present study aimed to analyze how The New York Times represents the Iraqi protests through a discourse analysis using Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model. The headlines from The New York Times were examined to understand the linguistic and discursive strategies employed in the portrayal of the Iraqi protests. The research questions focused on the use of language and the underlying social and cognitive factors influencing the representation of the protests.

The analysis of the headlines provided significant insights into how The New York Times frames and constructs the narrative surrounding the Iraqi protests. The headlines were found to emphasize different aspects of the protests, including the mounting death toll, acts of violence, expressions of resistance, and the emergence of art amidst the demonstrations. The use of specific language, such as "mounting deaths," "rocket attack," "end siege," "pro-Iranian protesters," "beauty was long suppressed," and "battle lines and carnival," played a crucial role in shaping readers' perceptions of the protests.

Through the Socio-Cognitive Model, the analysis uncovered the interplay between language and social cognition in The New York Times' representation of the protests. The language used in the headlines influenced readers' understanding of the events, evoking emotions, and shaping their views on the motivations, identities, and actions of the protesters. Moreover, the headlines often positioned the Iraqi protesters in relation to other actors, such as Iran and the U.S., influencing readers' perceptions of geopolitical dynamics in the region.

The research findings indicated that The New York Times' portrayal of the Iraqi protests was complex and multifaceted, reflecting a range of social and cognitive processes. The headlines exhibited a tendency to frame the protests in terms of conflict, resistance, and emotional intensity, while also highlighting elements of celebration, art, and sociopolitical change.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study sheds light on how The New York Times represents the Iraqi protests through its headlines. The application of Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model allowed for a comprehensive analysis, revealing the linguistic choices and discursive strategies employed by the newspaper. The headlines played a crucial role in shaping readers' perceptions of the protests, influencing their understanding of the events, and framing the demonstrations within broader social and political contexts.

The research findings suggest that The New York Times' representation of the Iraqi protests is not monolithic but rather multifaceted, encompassing various aspects of the ongoing demonstrations. While some headlines highlighted the escalating violence and mounting death toll, others focused on the expressions of resistance and the emergence of art amidst the protests. This diversity of representations reflects the complexity of the protests and the multiplicity of voices and actions involved.

The study also revealed the influence of social cognition on the representation of the protests. The language used in the headlines evoked emotional responses, shaped perceptions of the protesters' motivations and affiliations, and framed the demonstrations in relation to other actors and geopolitical dynamics.

Overall, this research contributes to the understanding of media discourse and its impact on public perceptions of sociopolitical events. The findings highlight the importance of critically examining media representations, as headlines can significantly shape readers' understanding and interpretations of complex issues like the Iraqi protests.

It is essential to acknowledge that this study's scope was limited to the analysis of headlines from The New York Times. Further research could explore how other media outlets and sources represent the Iraqi protests and how the public perceives these representations. Additionally, a deeper analysis of the articles accompanying these headlines could provide more nuanced insights into the discursive strategies employed by the newspaper in its coverage of the protests.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the broader field of discourse analysis and media studies, emphasizing the significance of language and social cognition in shaping public understanding and discourse surrounding sociopolitical events like the Iraqi protests. It underscores the need for media consumers to engage critically with news representations and narratives, considering the potential impact of language and framing on their perceptions and attitudes.

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