BIAS AND PREJUDICE IN PRESS:
A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF NEWS STORIES IN SOME ARAB AND WESTERN NEWSPAPERS ON CLOSING AL-AQSA MOSQUE IN 2017

التحيز والتحامل في الصحافة ..... تحليل لغوي لقصص إخبارية في بعض الصحف العربية والغربية عن إغلاق المسجد الأقصى في عام2017

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التحيز والتحامل في الصحافة ..... تحليل لغوي لقصص إخبارية في بعض الصحف العربية والغربية عن إغلاق المسجد الأقصى في عام2017

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تحلل هذه الدراسة التنظيم التخطيطي الذي يميز بعض التقارير الإخبارية الصادرة في بلدان مختلفة باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية. تغطي هذه التقارير الإخبارية واقعة عنف خطيرة أطلق خلالها مسلحون فلسطينيون النار على شرطة الاحتلال في موقع المسجد الأقصى. ونتيجة لذلك ، قام الجانب الإسرائيلي بإغلاق المسجد وإلغاء صلاة الجمعة. تعتبر الدراسة مهمة لأنها تساعد في عرض كيف يعكس التنظيم التخطيطي للتقرير الإخباري تحيز الصحفي وتحيزه تجاه قضية معينة أو ضدها على أساس أيديولوجي. وفقًا لنموذج فان ديك (1986 ، 1988) ، أظهر تحليل التنظيم التخطيطي ، بالإضافة إلى العناصر المعجمية ، للقصص الإخبارية قيد الدراسة أن التحيز والتحيز يمارسان من كلا الجانبين من الصحفيين العرب والغربيين. يتم التلاعب ببعض فئات الأخبار مثل فئة التاريخ وفئة التفاعلات اللفظية بطريقة أو بأخرى. يتم تقديمها بناءً على الدافع الأيديولوجي للصحفي.
الكلمات المفتاحية: الخطاب الإعلامي ، القصة الإخبارية ، المسجد الأقصى ، فلسطين ، إسرائيل

Bias and Prejudice in Press:
A Linguistic Analysis of News Stories in Some Arab and Western Newspapers on Closing Al-Aqsa Mosque in 2017

Abstract

This study analyzes the schematic organization characterizing some news reports issued in different countries both in Arabic and in English. These news reports cover a serious incident of violence in which some Palestinian gunmen opened fire on the Israeli police on the site of Al-Aqsa Mosque. As a consequent action done by the Israeli side, the mosque was closed and Friday prayer was cancelled. The study is significant as it helps in displaying how the schematic organization of the news report reflects the journalist's bias and prejudice for or against a specific issue on an ideological basis. Following van Dijk's (1986, 1988) model, the analysis of the schematic organization, in addition to lexical items, of the news stories under examination revealed that bias and prejudice are practiced by both sides of the Arab and the western journalists. Some categories of the news stories such as the History category and the Verbal Reactions category are, in some way or another, manipulated. They are presented based on ideological motivation of the journalist.

Key words: media discourse, news story, Al-Aqsa Mosque, Palestine, Israel

Introduction

The Palestinian issue or, in other words, the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is the ongoing struggle between Palestinians and Israelis that started in the mid-20th century when some Palestinian lands were occupied by Israel. Violent clashes, between the Palestinians and the Israelis, are occasionally repetitive. On 14 July, 2017, a serious violent incident took place in which some Palestinian gunmen opened fire on the Israeli police on the

site. Two Israeli policemen were injured, which resulted in their deaths. The Palestinian attackers fled into Al-Aqsa Mosque, where they were killed through an exchange of fire. As a result, Israel closed Al-Aqsa Mosque and cancelled Friday prayer for the first time since 1967. The incident was internationally and nationally covered by different sorts of mass media. In this study, the researcher investigates the news articles, belonging to some Arab and western newspapers, that cover that incident.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to investigate the linguistic features that characterize the news reports covering the incident of violence that occurred in the yard of Al-Aqsa Mosque on14 July, 2017. This violent action resulted in closing the mosque and banning prayers, including Friday prayer. The current paper, however, primarily focuses on:

1. How the incident, in both the Arabic and western newspapers, was covered.
2. How the overall schematic organization of the news stories can be invested by the journalist to cover a specific ideological orientation.

Data Collection

The corpus of the study is made up of five news reports covering closure of Al-Aqsa Mosque and the attack where it took place. They were published on five broadsheet daily newspapers in different five countries. The newspapers of *Al-Ahram, AlRiyadh and Albayan*, which are published in Egypt, KSA and UAE respectively, are issued in Arabic and the quoted sections are translated into English by the researcher. The newspapers of *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post* are issued in the UK and USA respectively.

News Stories

The examination of the schematic organization of the news stories is conducted according to the schema proposed by van Dijk (1986, 988). The notion of schema, according to Bartlett (1932), refers to the mental organization of our accumulated experiences. van Dijk (1986) postulates that a conventional news schema organizes news reports. He argues that social and cognitive factors control the structure of news reports. He elaborates that his model, the schematic structure of news reports, helps "the reader organize information in memory , which is a primary condition for better recall and use of that information" (van Dijk, 1985, p. 91).
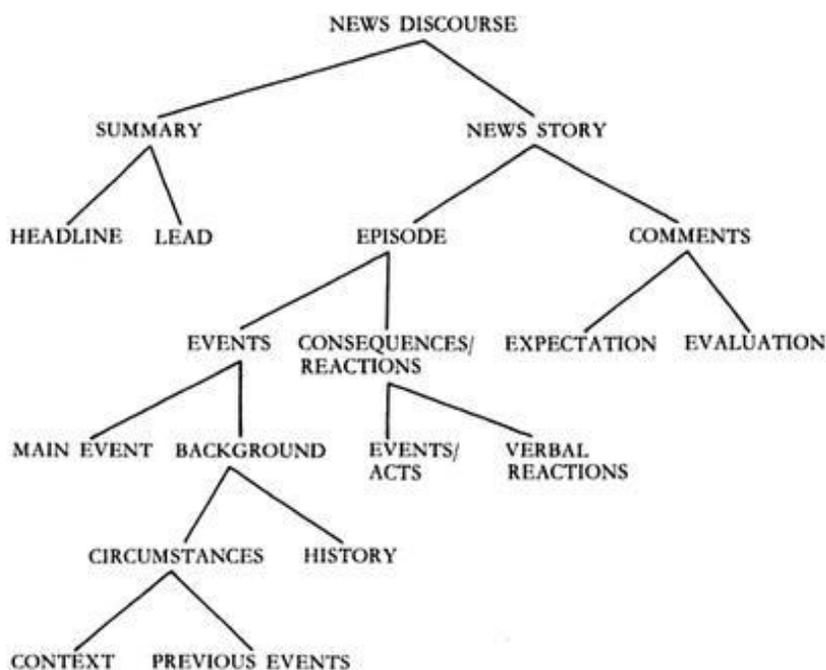
Figure 1: Superstructure Schema of News Discourse (reproduced from van Dijk, 1986, p. 189).

The Headline represents the first category, as shown above, which is a compulsory category in every news report. The Lead is the second category containing the basic outline of the news report. Both the Headline and the Lead grouped together under the higher level category the Summary

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which is filled by the highest level proposition or macroproposition of the news report. The Main Event category, which comes after the Summary category, crystallizes the main incident of the news story. This category regulates all information concerning the recent events that result in a news report.

According to van Dijk (1985), the Main Event category is "recursive", in the sense that more than one main event can be featured in a news story. Journalists ideologically make use of the History, Previous Events and Context categories to "activate their relevant situation model" (p.87). This category, the Background, makes news events intelligible and updates the reader's cognitive models of the world giving him a cue to interpret the Main Event from a certain perspective (van Dijk, 1986). Evaluation of media discourse, in general, "can only be correctly understood, interpreted and analysed when looking at its context" (Bednarek, 2006, p.8). van Dijk (1986) refers to the Context category as the present background, including information about the actual situation of the event taking place. It often contains simultaneity expressions such as "while" and "during" (van Dijk, 1988, p. 54). The Comments category contains "conclusions, expectations, speculations, and other information—often from the journalist" (van Dijk, 1985, p. 87).

Consequences category measures the relevance and the significance of events, since it provides "information about the actions and events that immediately follow the main news events" (van Dijk, 1986, p.165). Verbal Reactions category comes as consequences of the Main Event and it contains the direct and indirect quotes of the participants in the Main Event. This category is strategically valuable as it can be ideologically exploited. It can be used to hide the subjectivity of the journalist since the views and quotes are attributed to others such as witnesses. According to White (2005), a writer of the news report exploits the indirect

quotes "to strengthen and intensify the statements of the quoted source while at the same time appearing to remain within the bounds of attribution and hence to maintain the author's neutrality" (p. 138). This is could be a way of reliable and constant ideological reproduction, which media groups that have ideological positions manage to sell to their readers and their readers (Oyeleye and Osisanwo, 2013).

van Dijk (1991) argues that quotations have many functions in news reports. First, they are newsworthy since they "express the interpretation or opinions of important news actors" (van Dijk, 1991, p. 152). Moreover, quoting news actors makes the news story livelier and more credible. Quotations also enable the journalist to transcend the event at hand to predict future events and plans of news actors. Finally, they "allow the insertion of subjective interpretations, explanations, or opinions about current news events, without breaking the ideological rule that requires the separation of facts from opinions" (van Dijk, 1991, p. 152). This discursive strategy, according to Reyes (2011), supports the journalist's argument, and "therefore it is in his best interest to make sure the audience knows he is evoking someone else's words" (p. 801). In other words, quotations enable the journalist to negatively or positively evaluate social events and social actors without holding responsibility on the journalist.

Moreover, news sources and quotation patterns are a source of bias in producing news reports. Journalists are not usually direct eyewitnesses to the events they report, except in pre-planned events such as demonstrations. Instead, they depend on source texts such as interviews, press releases, eyewitness reports, other media texts and official reports. van Dijk (1991, p. 142) elaborates that "selection and summarization" are common strategies used by the journalists in dealing with the variable source texts. In

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other words, the source texts are selected to be included in the report and then summarized to construct a coherent news report. In addition, the source text used by a journalist can be a hybrid of facts and opinions. A factual source text is represented by an official report of a specific event; however, statements by news actors realized by direct and indirect quotations are evaluative statements concerning the event.

In media discourse, especially newspapers, the political objectives of their owners "are regarded as influencing discourses on a variety of topics, beyond party politics itself" (Macdonald, 2003, p. 22). Journalists' neutrality is substantial for good journalism. Broadly speaking, journalists or interviewers have to take a neutral, balanced, or impartial stance towards the statements and opinions of the interviewee (Huls and Varwijk, 2011).

According to van Dijk (1986), news reports are organized chronologically and in "a relevance ordering" (p. 170), in which the categories should be placed in their hierarchical schema (see Figure 1). The basic strategy of ordering information in news production is "top down: realize high level information of each category/topic first, working from left to right; and then express lower level information of each category/topic" (van Dijk, 1988. p. 57).

The primary themes are recognized first in Summary (Headlines and Lead), and then the major theme that defines the Main Event, after that the main theme defining the Backgrounds (van Dijk, 1986). However, other factors may affect the delivery of information such as relevance, recency, and value or worthiness which plays a role in "the moving of minor details to prominent positions" (van Dijk, 1988, p. 57).

Analysis

These news articles exemplify how the political or the ideological perspective of the newspaper has an influence on the news schemata and their realization. For easy

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reference, table forms are used to collect and gather the quotations, concerning a specific category, from the five reports altogether.

Table (1): Analysis of Headline and Lead

	Al-Ahram (Egypt)	AlRiyadh (Saudi Arabia)	Albayan (Emirates)	The Guardian (UK)	The Washington Post (USA)
Date	15/7/2017	15/7/2017	15/7/2017	14/7/2017	14/7/2017
Length	578	299	174	846	768
Headline (Arabic)	إسرائيل تمنع صلاة الجمعة بالأقصى لأول مرة منذ ٤٨ عاما مصر تعرب عن قلقها تجاه تداعيات التصعيد	مقتـل ثلاثـة فلسـطينيين وجنديين للاحتلال.. واعتقال مفتي فلسطين الأقصى.. الشهيد	الامـارات تسـتنكر إغـلاق الاحـــتلال الاســرائيلي للمسجد الأقصى وتحذر من تداعياته		
Headline (English)	*Israel forbids Friday prayer at Al-Aqsa for the first time in 48 years* *Egypt expresses concern about the repercussions of the escalation*	*Three Palestinians and two soldiers of the occupation were killed .. and the Mufti of Palestine was arrested* *Al-Aqsa .. the martyr*	*The UAE condemns the closure of Al-Aqsa Mosque by the Israeli occupation and warns of its repercussions*	*Two Israeli police and three gunmen killed in shootout at holy site*	*Gunmen kill 2 Israeli police officers at entrance to Jerusalem mosque complex*
Lead (Arabic)	لأول مرة منذ 48 عاما، أغلقت سلطات الاحتلال الإسرائيلى المسجد الأقصى المبارك، أمس، ومنعت إقامة صلاة الجمعة على خلفية هجوم فلسطينى				

	مسلح وقع صباحاً، أسفر عن مقتل منفذيه الـ3 وعنصرين من شرطة الاحتلال الإسرائيلى وإصابة ثالث.				
Lead (English)	*For the first time in 48 years, the Israeli occupation authorities closed the Aqsa Mosque yesterday, and prevented the Friday prayers against the backdrop of an armed Palestinian attack in the morning, killing the three bombers, two policemen of the Israeli occupation and wounding a third.*			*Prayers cancelled at Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif complex in Jerusalem as attack threatens to raise Israeli-Palestinian tensions*	

As shown above, the headlines of, two out of five news reports, Al-Ahram and Albayan, covering the incident that took place on Friday, July 14th, 2017, mention the closure of Al-Aqsa mosque and banning the Friday prayer. The Headline category, as previously referred to, occupies a prominent position since it is filled with the highest level of macropropositions of the news report. Moreover, the large bulk of readers preview the newspaper by reading the headline first, then they decide which article to read in detail afterwards. The incident, in the Headline category, is summarized with a few more details in the Lead in Al-Ahram, which is absent in Albayan. However, the other three newspapers cover the incident from another angle. The headlines of Al-Riyadh, The Guardian and The Washington Post revolve around acts of riot and killing, while the incidents of prayers cancellation and closure of Al-Aqsa mosque is present neither in the headline nor in the lead except in the lead of The Guardian.

In a certain text, the various lexical choices "could show how social forces were pushing the text one way or another" (Matheson, 2005, p.20). The journalist's lexical choices of the headline in Al-Riyadh are much more objective than those in the headlines of the other articles. It refers to the killed people of both sides, the Palestinian and the Israeli. However, the headlines in The Guardian and The Washington Post are ideologically derived. In The Guardian, for example, the headline identifies the killed people only from the Israeli side such as "2 Israeli police", while those who belong to the Palestinian side are intentionally ignored since the killing of the Palestinian "gunmen" is internationally and nationally reported. The heading is lexically presented in such a way that it presents the incident as a terrorist attack against the Israeli police officers, as denoted by the lexical item "gunmen", rather than being occupying troops. This gives the connotation of innocence of the Israeli police represented as

victims who are killed and attacked by Palestinian terrorist gunmen.

Another significant point is that closure of Al-Aqsa mosque, which represents the nucleus incident and has harsh consequences, is mentioned or referred to neither in the Headline nor in the Lead of Al-Riyadh and The Washington Post. The selection of some lexical items in the Headlines of the five news reports is ideologically derived. In the Headline of Al-Riyadh, for example, Al-Aqsa mosque is identified as the "martyr", which attributes the noble connotations of the term to the killed Palestinian people, implying that they are killed in the course of struggling for a noble purpose. In the same vein, the Headline in The Guardian identifies Al-Aqsa mosque as "Temple Mount/ Haram al-Sharif", connoting that this sacred territory is a common shared holy site for both the Muslims and the Jews on equal terms. Moreover, by means of exclusion (van Leeuwen, 1996), the journalist deemphasizes the involvement of the Israeli police vis-à-vis the incident by pushing them to less prominent part of the text or removing them altogether by means of passivation. This is done to fit the journalist's purposes or interests, which may have primarily ideological motives.

The History category is clearly used in the news stories in Al-Ahram, The Guardian and The Washington Post to cue the reader to interpret the incident in the light of previous similar incidents committed by both sides, the Israeli and the Palestinian.

ونبهـت مصـادر مقدسـية إلـى أن قـرار إسـرائيل منـع المصـلين مـن أداء صـلاة الجمعة فى المسجد الأقصى إلى أنها سابقة، مشيرين إلى أنه ولأول مرة منذ عام 1969، حين تم حرق أجزاء من المسجد، تتجرأ على اتخاذ قرار كهذا، ومشيرين إلى أنها تسعى أيضا لإجراءات جديدة تهدف لتقسيم المسجد مثلما هو حاصل فى الحرم الابراهيمى الشريف بالخليل. (الأهرام، المقطع الرابع).

Jerusalem sources warned that Israel's decision to prevent worshippers from performing Friday prayers at Al Aqsa Mosque is a precedent. They point out that Israel, for the first time since 1969 when parts of the mosque were burned, dares to make such a decision, noting that it is also seeking new measures aiming to split the mosque, as is the case in The Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron. (Al-Ahram, Para. 4).

The incident was among the most serious in Jerusalem in recent years and threatened to raise Israeli-Palestinian tensions. (The Guardian. Para. 4)

The last time the complex was closed off to Muslims was after the 2014 shooting of Jewish prayer rights activist Yehuda Glick, now a Knesset member for the Likud, while the last time Friday prayers were cancelled was in 1990. (The Guardian. Para. 17)

The news reports in The Guardian and The Washington Post further reinforce the negative representation of the Palestinian side through repetitive references to previous assaults by Palestinian attackers, who kill Israelis through mass shootings or targeting persons of interest. This coincides with Kim's (2014) findings that the USA media divide "the world into specific sets of countries, based on those countries' political position towards the USA rather than on any geographical or historical relations among the countries themselves" (p. 241).

A wave of Palestinian street attacks that began in 2015 has slowed but not stopped. Since September 2015, Palestinian attackers have killed 43 Israelis, two visiting Americans and a British tourist. (The Guardian. Para. 24)

In that time, Israeli forces have killed more than 254 Palestinians, most of them said by Israel to be attackers. (The Guardian. Para. 25)

The History category in Al-Ahram and Albayan completely ignore mentioning previous attacks committed by the Palestinians against the Israelis. On the contrary, the journalists of those news reports identify the Israeli police as

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"the police of the occupation" or the "occupying forces", which attributes to them the negative connotations of the term.

… وأطلقوا النـار علـى أفراد شرطة الاحتلال فى المكان،… (الأهرام، المقطـع الأول).

…., they opened fire on the police of the occupation on the site, … (Al-Ahram, Para. 1).

أعربت دولـة الإمارات العربيـة المتحدة عن إدانتها واستنكارها الشـديدين لإغـلاق قوات الاحتلال المسجد الأقصـى المبارك ، … (البيان، المقطع الأول)

The United Arab Emirates expressed its condemnation and denunciation of closing the Holy Aqsa Mosque by the occupation forces (Albayan, Para. 1)

… لوقف مثل هذه الاعتداءات الإسـرائيلية المتكـررة ضـد المقدسـات الإسـلامية والمسيحية في القدس المحتلة. (البيان، المقطع الرابع)

… to stop such repeated Israeli attacks against the Islamic and the Christian holy places in Jerusalem. (Albayan, Para. 4)

The journalists in Al-Ahram, The Washington Post and The Guardian keep the news stories appealing and engaging to the readers. They make use of the story telling genre, describing in detail how the incident of assassination was carried on, and chasing the attackers inside the holy site of Al-Aqsa mosque till they have been killed by the Israeli police.

The Verbal Reactions category is of a strategic value in the analysis of the current 5 news reports. As shown in the following table, representing the verbal reactions from the news reports in Al-Ahram, AlRiyadh and Albayan, the Arab sources that are directly or indirectly quoted represent the highest proportion, roughly 79% of the total number of quotes. However, the Israeli quoted sources constitute 14%, representing less than fifth of the Arab quoted sources.

Table (2): Representation of quotes in Arab news stories

Quotes Source	Al-Ahram (Egypt)	AlRiyadh (Saudi Arabia)	Albayan (Emirates)
Arab	•*The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem* •*Jerusalem sources* •*The Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas* •*Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt* •*Spokesman of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Egypt)* •*Al-Azhar AL-Sharif* •*The Grand Mufti of Egypt* •*General Secretariat for Fatwa Authorities Worldwide*	•*The Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas* •*The Palestinian Fatwa Authority* •*The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem*	•*Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (Emirates)*
Israeli	•*The Israeli Prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu*	•*Spokesman of the Israeli police*	
Others		•*Agence France-Presse (AFP) reporter*	

This indicates that the journalists do not give the chance to the Israeli side to express their views on equal terms. It also gives the connotation that the Arab journalists have ideological limitations as reinforced by their lexical choices and selecting specific sources to quote from rather than others. Accordingly, the journalists appear to "objectively measure the political implications and evaluations of an event without themselves having to formulate them" (van Dijk, 1986, p.186). In Al-Ahram, for example, all of the speakers or the quoted sources are identified either by their names or their

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allocated roles or both of them, which intensifies their authority and credibility.

وأعرب الرئيس الفلسطينى محمود عباس، ... (الأهرام، المقطع السادس)

The Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas expressed … (Al-Ahram, Para. 6)

وحذر   المتحدث الرسمي باسم وزارة الخارجية ، من خطورة تداعيات مثل تلك الاحداث ... (الأهرام، المقطع الثامن)

The official (Egyptian) spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs warned of the serious consequences of such events … (Al-Ahram, Para. 8)

وطلب عباس من نتانياهو "الغاء الاجراءات الاسرائيلية باغلاق المسجد الاقصى ... " (الرياض، المقطع التاسع)

Abbas asked Netanyahu "to cancel the Israeli measures to close the Al-Aqsa Mosque …" (AlRiyadh, Para. nine)

و حذرت وزارة الخارجية والتعاون الدولي في بيان لها اليوم من تداعيات مثل هذا العمل الخطير ... (البيان، المقطع الثانى)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation warned, in a statement today, of the consequences of such serious action … (Albayan, Para. 2) However condemnatory are the quotes, to the attack in all of the above quotations, all of the quoted politicians, except the Palestinian President Abbas, ignore or do not condemn the closure of Al-Aqsa mosque and cancellation of the Friday prayers. The news report of Albayan is the only one to include such reference. In the same vein, closing Al-Aqsa mosque is condemned by some of the Islamic authorities and key Islamic figures such as Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, the Mufti of Egypt, the Mufti of Palestine and the General Secretariat for Fatwa Authorities Worldwide.

أدان الأزهر الشريف ، ومفتى الجمهورية واستنكرا بشدة ما أقدمت عليه سلطات الاحتلال الصهيوني امس من إغلاق للمسجد الأقصى المبارك ومنع إقامة شعائر صلاة الجمعة ... (الأهرام، المقطع الحادى عشر)

Al Azhar Al Sharif and the mufti of the Republic strongly condemned the Zionist occupation authorities for closing Al Aqsa Mosque yesterday and preventing the rites of Friday Prayer. (Al-Ahram, Para. 11)

كما أعربت الأمانة العامة لدور وهيئات الإفتاء فى العالم عن قلها البالغ إزاء ممارسات الاحتلال الإسرائيلى... (الأهرام، المقطع الحادى عشر)

The General Secretariat for Fatwa Authorities Worldwide also expressed deep concern at the practices of the Israeli occupation … (Al-Ahram, Para. 11)

وحذرت دار الإفتاء الفلسطينية في بيان لها... (الرياض، المقطع الحادى عشر)

The Palestinian Fatwa Bureau warned in a statement … (AlRiyadh, Para. 11)

وكان المفتي دان إغلاق المسجد أمام المصلين... (الرياض، المقطع الثانى عشر)

The Mufti condemned closing Al-Aqsa Mosque in front of the worshippers… (AlRiyadh, Para. 12)

The following table summarizes the verbal reactions represented in the news reports in The Guardian and The Washington Post.

Table (3): Representation of quotes in western news stories

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Quotes Source	The Guardian (UK)	The Washington Post (USA)
Arab	•*The Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas* •*The grand mufti of Jerusalem, Sheikh Muhammad Hussein*	•*the gunmen* •*Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas* •*Wafa, the official Palestinian news agency* •*Jerusalem's grand mufti, Sheikh Mohammed Hussein*
Israeli	•*the chief of the Israeli police, Roni Alsheich* •*Israel's Shin Bet security service* •*A police spokesman* •*Netanyahu* •*The deputy defence minister, Eli Ben-Dahan* •*Jewish Home MP, Moti Yogev* •*Israel's public security minister, Gilad Erdan*	•*Israel's domestic security service, Shin Bet* •*Police* •*Israeli officials* •*Jerusalem's police chief , Yoram Halevi* •*Netanyahu* •*Israeli reporters*
Others		•*The Associated Press* •*The U.S. ambassador to Israel, David Friedman*

Similarly, all of the Israeli quoted sources are indicated by their names and the roles allocated to them which intensifies the credibility and the authority of the news reports. The difference between the quoted Arabs and Israelis is clearly remarkable, in which the Israeli quoted sources constitute 13 out of 21, representing roughly 62% of the total number. However, the Arab sources represent roughly 28% only, which minimizes the space or the chance for the Arab side to express their views on equal terms. This discrepancy can be ideologically manipulated, in the sense that the journalist quotes, directly or indirectly, from different Israeli official

sources such as the chief of the Israeli police, Roni Alsheich, the deputy defence minister, Eli Ben-Daha and Israel's public security minister, Gilad Erdan.

The journalists of both of the Arab and western newspapers manipulate a number of strategies, as proposed by van Dijk (1988, p.84), in order to reinforce their persuasive power and emphasize the factual nature of the news reports. First, the journalists directly provided a detailed description of the ongoing event, elaborating when and how the gunmen attacked the Israeli policemen.

... وقع اشتباك مسلح داخل باحات المسجد الأقصى المبارك، بعدما اقتحم 3 مسلحين فلسطينيين على دراجة نارية باب حطة «أحد أبواب المسجد الأقصي» وأطلقوا النار على أفراد شرطة الاحتلال فى المكان، مما أدى إلى إصابة شرطيين إسرائيليين بجروح أسفرت عن مقتلهما، ثم هرب منفذو الهجوم إلى داخل المسجد الأقصى حيث وقع تبادل لإطلاق نار أسفر عن مقتل الشبان الثلاثة وإصابة شرطى إسرائيلى ثالث. (الأهرام، المقطع الأول)

An armed clash took place inside the courtyards of Al-Aqsa Mosque, after three Palestinian gunmen, on a motorcycle, broke into the door of Hitta, "one of the doors of Al-Aqsa Mosque" and opened fire on the occupation police on the site. Two Israeli policemen were injured, which resulted in their deaths and the attackers fled into Al-Aqsa Mosque, where an exchange of fire resulted in the killing of three young men and injury of a third Israeli policeman. (Al-Ahram, Para. 1)

According to police, the three men – residents of the Israeli Arab town of Umm al-Fahm who were armed with home-made Carlo machine guns and a pistol – opened fire on police near the gate before fleeing back into the heart of the compound which houses the al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock. (The Guardian. Para.5)

…three Arab Israelis armed with a pistol and homemade machine guns shot and killed two Israeli police officers early

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Friday at the entrance to the al-Aqsa Mosque compound. (The Washington Post, Para. 1)

The three assailants were then chased into the courtyard of the mosque complex, where they were shot and killed by Israeli security forces (The Washington Post, Para. 2)

Another strategy repeatedly used by the journalists is getting "evidence from other reliable sources (authorities, respectable people, professionals) (van Dijk, 1988, p.84). The Arab journalists, for example, compared to the western journalists reinforce condemnation of the closure of Al-Aqsa Mosque by quoting prominent Islamic figures and entities such as Al-Azhar AL-Sharif, The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, The Grand Mufti of Egypt and the General Secretariat for Fatwa Authorities Worldwide.

The journalists of both sides add some fine details, which indicate precision and exactness. They use "signals that indicate precision and exactness such as numbers for persons, time, events, etc." (p.84). They mention the exact day and time in which the incident took place, the number of the killed Palestinian and Israeli people in addition to their names, ages and marital status. Some journalists accurately describe the actions occurred inside Al-Aqsa throughout and after shootout.

The two dead Israeli Border Police officers were members of Israel's small Druze community. Kamil Shnaan, 22, was the son of a former member of parliament. Hael Sathawi, 30, left behind a wife and a 3-week-old son. (The Washington Post, Para. 6)

وقالت المتحدثة باسم الشرطة الاسرائيلية لوبا السمري إن منفذي الهجوم من فلسطينيي الداخل من مدينة أم الفحم العربية الإسرائيلية ومن عائلة واحدة وليست لهم أية سوابق أمنية، وهم محمد احمد محمد جبارين (29 عاماً) ومحمد حامد

عبداللطيف جبـارين (19 عامـا) ومحمـد احمـد مفضـل جبـارين (19 عامـا).
(الرياض، المقطع الرابع)

Israeli police spokeswoman Luba Al-Samri said that the perpetrators of the attack have Palestinians origin, from the Arab-Israeli city of Umm al-Fahm. They belong to one family and do not have any security precedents; they are Muhammad Ahmed Muhammad Gabareen (29 years old), Muhammad Hamed Abdul Latif Gabareen (19 years old) and Muhammad Ahmed Mufadal Gabareen (19 years old) . (AlRiyadh, Para. 4)

.... اقتحم 3 مسـلحين فلسطينيين علـى دراجـة ناريـة بـاب حطـة «أحـد أبـواب المسجد الأقصى» ....   (الأهرام، المقطع الأول)

…. three Palestinian gunmen, on a motorcycle, broke into the door of Hitta, "one of the doors of Al-Aqsa Mosque"…. (Al-Ahram, Para. 1)

Conclusion

Analysis of the five news reports about the closure of Al-Aqsa mosque and banning the Friday prayer has revealed bias and prejudice are practiced by both sides of the Arab and the western journalists. The Headlines in the western newspapers helped to establish a negative association between the Palestinians and the ongoing terrorist actions in that area of the world. However, the Headlines in the Arab newspapers focus on the closure of Al-Aqsa mosque and their countries concerns and condemnation to that action.

Both sides of journalists ideologically invest another two schematic functions; namely, the History category and the Verbal Reactions category. The History category is used by the western journalists to help the readers interpret their news accounts in the light of other negative violent behavior practiced by the Palestinian people. The news report of *The Guardian*, for example, cues the readers to interpret the incident as a violent action that is frequently takes place by

Palestinian attackers, even when the closure of the mosque is referred to; it associates violence and terrorism with the Palestinians as a behavior, which represents a pro-Israeli bias. On the other hand, the Arab journalists ignore mentioning previous attacks committed by the Palestinians against the Israelis. Furthermore, the Arab journalists, in *Al-Ahram and Albayan* for example, guide the reader to read and understand the news report bearing in mind the repetitive closure of Al-Aqsa mosque and the Israeli attacks against the Palestinian people, which represents a pro-Palestinian bias.

Journalists, of both sides, skillfully utilize the Verbal Reactions category. In [The Washington Post](#) and The Guardian, the Verbal Reactions represented in the news story are almost given to Israeli sources only, which cue the reader to create a consensus that the Palestinians are terrorists and attackers. Moreover, all of the Israeli quoted sources are indicated by their names and the roles allocated to them which intensifies the credibility and the authority of the Verbal Reactions. In the same vein, the Verbal Reactions appeared in the Arabic news stories belong largely to Arab sources and key Islamic figures condemning closure of Al-Aqsa, presenting the incident of closing the mosque as the core incident. The Verbal Reactions of the speakers are accompanied by their names and prestigious roles to increase both their authority and credibility. Moreover, Arab journalists, by quoting many Islamic symbols, is ideologically motivated and can have a great effect on public opinion of their countries in which Muslims represent the highest majority.

Limitation of the study and recommendation for further research

The study is focuses only on one genre of media discourse: news reporting. Other genres of media discourse such, as talk shows, were not analyzed in the study. It is not also possible

to include a comprehensive analysis of all textual features observed in the corpus due to constraints on space of the research paper.

Future research should also complement this study by studying the representation of other groups such as the Palestinian and Israeli political figures in media discourse concerning the Palestinian issue. Other approaches to discourse analysis are also needed to better understand the representation of the Palestinian issue in western and Arab media discourse.

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