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**Islamophobia in The Truth about Muhammad by Robert  
Spencer: A Critical Discourse Analysis**

**Abstract**

This paper is written out of an MA dissertation: Islamophobia in some Works by Robert Spencer: A critical Discourse Analysis, South Valley University, Faculty of Arts, English Department. This research aims to introduce critical discourse analysis (CDA) as an effective linguistic approach for analyzing the language of Islamophobia. Islamophobia is unreasonable fear of Muslims, in particular, and Arabs, in general. One of Spencer's works is selected to explain the linguistic aspects of the local meaning which indicates the islamophobic attitude of the writer applying the theoretical framework of Van Dijk. Van Dijk's theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis comprehensively analyses the racial discourse according to four steps: 1) macro-structure, 2) local meaning, 3) subtle formal structure, and 4) context and event models. In the local meaning, it is required to analyze various linguistic aspects including the syntactic, semantic, rhetorical, and stylistic aspects to explain the meaning of the discourse. The analysis of the local meaning of some passages in *The Truth About Muhammad: Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion* elucidates that misinterpretation, omission, the use of specific figures of speech, and negative lexicons illustrate the writer's view about Mohammed (PBUH) and Muslims. While Spencer denies the existence of Islamophobia in his writings, CDA indicates that *The Truth About Mohammed: Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion* exemplifies an Islamophobic discourse.

**Keywords:** Van Dijk's theory of CDA, Local meaning, The language of Islamophobia.

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### الإسلاموفوبيا في الحقيقة عن محمد بقلم روبرت سبنسر: تحليل نقدي للخطاب

#### مستخلص الدراسة

هذه الورقة مكتوبة على أساس أطروحة ماجستير: "إسلاموفوبيا في بعض أعمال روبرت سبنسر: تحليل نقدي للخطاب"، جامعة الوادي الجنوبي، كلية الآداب، قسم اللغة الإنجليزية. إن الهدف من هذا البحث هو تقديم تحليل نقدي للخطاب كأداة لغوية فعالة لتحليل لغة الإسلاموفوبيا. الإسلاموفوبيا هي الخوف غير المبرر من المسلمين بشكل خاص والعرب بشكل عام. وتم اختيار أحد أعمال سبنسر لشرح الجوانب اللغوية للمعنى المحلي الذي يدل على موقف معادٍ للإسلام وذلك باستخدام الإطار النظري لفان دايك. يحلل الإطار النظري للتحليل النقدي للخطاب بشكل شامل الخطاب العنصري وفقاً لأربع خطوات: (1) البنية الكبرى، (2) المعنى المحلي، (3) ملائمة البنية الشكلية الدقيقة، و (4) نماذج السياق ونماذج الحدث. ومن الضروري في المعنى المحلي تحليل العديد من الجوانب اللغوية بما في ذلك الجوانب النحوية والدلالية والبلاغية والأسلوبية لشرح معنى الخطاب. ويؤكد تحليل المعنى المحلي لبعض الفقرات في الحقيقة عن محمد: أكثر الديانات تعصبا في العالم على أن التفسير الخاطئ والحذف واستخدام صورة بلاغية بعينها والمفردات السلبية توضح موقف الكاتب من محمد (ص) والمسلمين. في حين ينفي سبنسر وجود الإسلاموفوبيا في كتاباته، يظهر التحليل النقدي للخطاب أن هذا الكتاب يمثل خطاباً إسلاموفوبياً.

الكلمات الرئيسية: نظرية فان دايك للتحليل النقدي للخطاب. المعنى المحلي،

لغة الإسلاموفوبيا.

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**Islamophobia in The Truth about Muhammad by Robert Spencer:****A Critical Discourse Analysis****Islamophobia**

Islamophobia consists of the prefix Islamo and the noun phobia. Islamo refers to Islam or Muslims. According to the Cambridge dictionary, Phobia is "an extreme fear or dislike of a particular thing or situation, especially one that cannot be reasonably explained". Islamophobia is fear of Muslims and Islam that leads to hostility towards Muslims. Islamophobia is a term used as a reference for a complicated phenomenon, which reflects the negative attitudes towards Muslims and Islam in non-Muslim countries. It relates to xenophobia and racism. It is xenophobia because the existence of Muslims as foreigners is rejected in some non-Muslim countries. It is racism because any person who looks like a Muslim suffers from dehumanization. "Islamophobia defines Islam as unacceptable in the modern state and Muslims as incapable of being true citizens" (w. Ernst, 2013, p. 14). Islamophobe writers depict Muslims as barbarians who cannot live in a civilized society, and so Islamophobia deprives Muslims of their rights as citizens in non-Muslim countries. For example, Muslims cannot practice free speech. "Islamophobia accurately reflects a social anxiety toward Islam and Muslim cultures" (Gottschalk & Greenberg, 2008, p. 4).

**Introduction**

Many writers write negative views about Islam. Spencer's views towards Islam can be represented as a clear example of Islamophobia. He denies the existence of Islamophobia in his writings. Spencer says "... "Islamophobia" is virtually useless as an analytical tool. To adopt it is to accept the most virulent form of theological equivalence." "The charge of "Islamophobia" is routinely used to shift attention away from jihad terrorists." (Spencer, 2005, p.199). But the methods of the critical discourse analysis will prove that his denial isn't true.

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He uses different linguistic devices in his books to inform his reader that Islam is a religion of intolerance and that the prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) is a leader of a group of terrorists.

### **Review of literature**

Dr. Jeremy Henzell-Thomas uses critical discourse analysis to analyze Islamophobic discourse. He says, "There is already an established academic tradition of unpicking such discourse in what is called Critical Discourse Analysis or CDA developed by such influential discourse analysts as Teun van Dijk, Professor of Discourse Studies at the University of Amsterdam." (2004). Dr. Jeremy Henzell-Thomas gives different examples to prove the existence of Islamophobia. For example, he refers to ridicule in the Western discourse. "Ridicule: "Islam Week brought us the wonders of mosques and Mecca.... Taking in – ho, ho, ho! – a Muslim football team...." (Julie Birchill, 2001)

Haja Mohideen and Shamimah Mohideen analyze the language of Islamophobia in internet articles. They mention "Robert Spencer, a prolific Islamophobic writer, has gravely offended Muslims by describing the Holy Qur'Ēn as the jihadists"(2008, p. 76). Spencer uses the word jihadist as a negative reference to Muslims but Haja Mohideen and Shamimah Mohideen indicate "a jihadist may be characterized as a patriot, resistance, independence, freedom fighter and so on. To the invaders and occupiers, jihadists may be insurgents, militants, extremists, and terrorists."( p.82). There are different linguistic expressions against Islam and Muslims. "The English language is continually being 'enriched' with many new expressions attacking Islam, Muslims, and Arabs worldwide." (p. 84).

Barry Van Driel is the editor of *Confronting Islamophobia in Educational Practice*.

This book refers to the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in different western societies. The book indicates that Islamophobia becomes increasingly apparent after the 9/11

attacks. This book shows this phenomenon in detail and presents different suggestions and strategies for facing it.

**Language of Islamophobia:**

Western discourse presents negative schema, stereotypes, symbols, and over – lexicalization towards Muslims and Islam to echo all of these negative attitudes towards Muslims and Islam. The stereotypes of Muslims can be listed as the following:

- 1- Muslim skin is brown.
- 2- Muslim women wear the veil, and Muslim men wear Turban.
- 3- Muslim men oppress their wives and their daughters.
- 4- Muslims are uncivilized: "Muslims are not only incapable of modernity but also resistant to it" (Bakali,2016, p.2)
- 5- Muslims are inferiors.
- 6- Muslims are terrorists.
- 7- All Arabs are Muslims.

They present these negative stereotypes of Muslims to enable their readers to create negative schemata against Islam and Muslims. These schemata enforce some Muslims and Arabs to hide their true identity for living in Western society. For instance, Muslim women must be unveiled, Muslim men must be without a beard, and they mustn't discuss any religious issue outside the mosques.

The drawings attached to the text clarify the writer's message. Some Western writers use cartoons, which show that Muslims have a large noses and facial hair. The large nose is a symbol of telling lies, the facial hair symbolizes that the Muslims are "unhygienic inhabitants of the bleak and waterless desert or foul and overcrowded cities." (Gottschalk and Greenberg, 2008, p.71). In some cartoons, there is a drawing of Satan to indicate " that demonic forces manipulated Muslims." (Gottschalk and Greenberg, 2008, p.53).

Hence, these discourses echo specific ideological construct that presents negative stereotypes, negative schema, and negative words as references for the other, Muslims. "Words like 'terrorism' and 'terrorist' in the aftermath of 9/11 have increasingly become subjective terms highlighting Arab and Muslim violence disproportionately to acts of violence committed by other religious and ethnic groups. (Bakali , 2016, pp. 71-72).

Spencer is one of those writers who use such negative words to refer to Muslims. For example, he depicts Muslims as Killers and thieves saying, "They decided ... to kill as many as they could of them and take what they had." Spencer wants to say that the main reason for Muslims' fighting was their greed to gain wealth.

On the other hand, he describes crusades as a holy mission saying, "as an act of sacrifice rather than profit". He explains this act of sacrifice in detail mentioning that "the Crusaders sold their property to raise money for their long journey to the holy land, and did so knowing they might not return." (Spencer, 2005, p.130).

Spencer selects words that achieve positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. Therefore, he shows that

Islamophobia is not about innate or natural fear of Islam or Muslims. Rather, it is an ideological construct produced and reproduced at the nexus of a number of political and intellectual currents that need to be taken into consideration and assessed critically in each instance or event of Islamophobic discourse and practice. (Juliane Hammer, 2013, p.108)

In *Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam*, he shows a comparison between Muslims and Christians shedding light on the Crusades as an example of the Christian nobility during the war. This book presents an ideological strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation to justify Western colonization., he discusses many issues related to Muslim

women and their oppression in Islamic societies to show the inequality between men and women in Islam. Hence, Muslim countries are in a bad need to apply the principles of feminism to achieve liberty for women. The ideological attitude also affects the syntactic structure of the discourse. In *Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam*, Spencer uses the active voice in writing the sentences to show the agent. He wants to emphasize that the Crusaders' actions and leaders are good, so he mentions some Crusaders' names that represent ideal models for the Crusaders like Godfry.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis describes the discourse but critical discourse analysis describes the discourse and explains its objective. Although DA and CDA are the two major approaches that combine different disciplines to analyze the discourse, they tackle it differently. DA analyses various textual/ linguistic aspects to describe the discourse in detail without correlating to society, but CDA explains the social effects of composing it. DA analyses the microstructure, while CDA analyses the microstructure and macrostructure of the text. CDA sets the relation between discourse and the desire to impose specific trends on different social groups: it divides social groups into self and others. 'self group' represents the supporters of the discourse addresser, and others are the marginalized or neglected groups in society. The critical analysis of the discourse enables the audience to recognize the underlined meaning of discourse, and its ideological, social, or political aspects. It also clarifies the motifs of the addresser to compose his/her discourse.

There are various methods of critical discourse analysis. Wodak, Fairclough, and Dijk present the most prominent approaches in this field.

### **Wodak's Approach**

Wodak's approach is the discourse-historical approach. This approach links the historical and social context of the communicative event. "the discourse-historical approach



attempts to integrate a large quantity of available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of the social and political fields in which discursive 'events' are embedded." (Wodak, 2001, p. 65). Over time, discourse changes to express the recent events that impact various aspects of society. These events require appropriate interpretations: CDA approaches show diverse disciplines to tackle these events generating accurate interpretations. Consequently, Wodak says, "CDA...should try to make choices at each point in the research itself, and should make these choices transparent. It should also justify theoretically why certain interpretations of discursive events seem more valid than others." (Meyer and Wodak, 2009, p.65)

Discourse-historical approach (DHA) demonstrates that the writes/speaker employs specific discourse strategies to persuade their audience. Ruth Wodak divides these discursive strategies into five categories, and the following table presents a clear explanation of them.

Table1. Discursive strategies

Strategy	Objectives	Devices
Referential/nomination	Construction of in-groups and out-groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>membership, categorization</li> <li>biological, naturalizing and depersonalizing metaphors and metonymies</li> <li>synecdoches (pars pro toto, totum pro pars)</li> </ul>
Predication	Labelling social actors more or less positively or negatively, deprecatorily or appreciatively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits</li> <li>implicit or explicit predicates</li> </ul>
Argumentation	Justification of positive or negative attributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>topoi used to justify political inclusion or exclusion, discrimination or preferential treatment</li> </ul>
Perspectivation, framing or discourse representation	Expressing involvement Positioning speaker's point of view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reporting, description, narration or quotation of (discriminatory) events and utterances</li> </ul>
Intensification, mitigation	Modifying the epistemic status of a proposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>intensifying or mitigating the illocutionary force of (discriminatory) utterances</li> </ul>

(Wodak, 2001, p.73)

The referential/nomination strategy categorizes social actors into ingroups and outgroups using metaphors and metonymies, which present ingroup members positively, and present the outgroup members negatively. The prediction strategy labels the group with shared

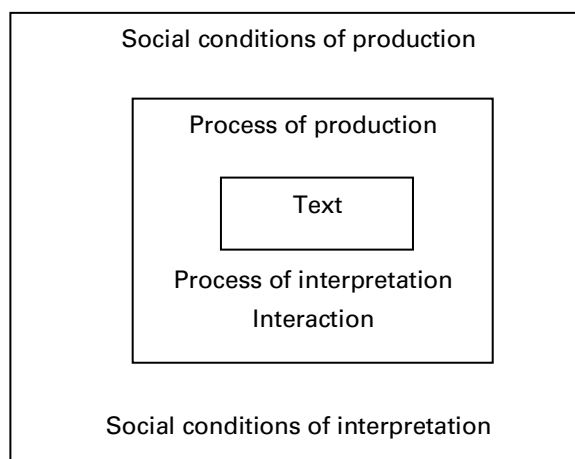


characteristics negatively or positively. Stereotypes are one of the most common devices which show the predication strategy, for example, Arabs are attributed as terrorists in some Western countries because of the 9/11 attacks, so the Arabs are suffering from racism in the Western countries. The argumentation justifies the positive or negative attributions using topoi. The text includes macro-topic branches into different sub-topics connected and arranged to correspond to specific topoi. For instance, " 'unemployment' covers sub-topics like 'market', 'trade unions', 'social warfare, 'global market', 'hire and fire policies' and many more." (Meyer and Wodak, 2009, p66). Topoi is a distinguished term in DHA that affects the continuity and coherence of discourse. Topos means the content-related scheme of argumentation. "the topos of culture is based on the following argumentation scheme: because the culture of a specific group of people is as it is, specific problems arise in specific situations." (Meyer and Wodak, 2009, p. 76). Topoi echo different stereotypes. In addition to the discourse structure, the analysts must examine fields of action that indicate their situational background. Quotation is a salient device of the discourse representation. The quotations are usually used to verify a discourse, but it is sometimes used out of its context to mislead the audience. The last strategy of Wodak's theory, intensification or mitigation, indicates the contextual meaning of the discourse referring to its implied illocutionary force.

### **Fairclough's Approach**

Fairclough's approach considers the discourse as a domain reflecting social relations. It demonstrates that "linguistic phenomena are social in the sense that whenever people speak or listen or write or read, they do so in ways which are determined socially and have social effects." (Fairclough, 1989, p. 19). Fairclough's approach is divided into three stages as the following:

Figure1. Fairclough's approach



(Fairclough, 1995, p. 25).

This figure summarizes Fairclough's approach to critical discourse.

Description is the stage that is concerned with the formal properties of the text. Interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction by seeing the text as the product of the process of production and as a resource in the process of interpretation. Explanation is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context, with the social determination of the process of production and interpretation, and their social effects. Consequently, This approach shows

a 'three-dimensional' framework where the aim is to map three separate forms of analysis onto one another: analysis of (spoken or written) language texts, analysis of discourse practice (the process of text production, distribution, and consumption), and analysis of discursive events as instances of sociocultural practice. (Fairclough, 1995, p. 2) .

### **Van Dijk's approach**

The third salient approach in critical discourse analysis is Van Dijk's socio-cognitive discourse analysis. Socio-Cognitive Discourse analysis relates to society, discourse, and cognition. Cognition is an important psychological aspect. Cognition is the mental process that links a person's knowledge with his (her) reaction. Van Dijk defines Critical discourse analysis as "a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context." (2001, p.352).

Wodak, Fairclough, and Van Dijk agree that:

1. The critical discourse analysis approach should be interdisciplinary.
1. This approach should be problem or issue oriented.
2. Discourse is a direct link between language and society. Discourse expresses the social reality.
3. Selecting the suitable approach for the research depends upon the examined problem or issue.
4. Critical discourse analysis presents solutions for the oriented problems.

### **The Methodology**

#### **Van Dijk's approach**

Van Dijk's approach to critical discourse analysis is known as socio-cognitive discourse analysis. Socio-Cognitive Discourse analysis relates to society, discourse, and cognition. Cognition is an important psychological aspect. Cognition is the mental process that links a person's knowledge with his (or her) reaction.

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Van Dijk also presents the main characteristics of critical discourse analysis as the following:

- It is problem-or issue-oriented, rather than paradigm-oriented. (1995, p. 17)
- CDA is not only a scholarly practice, but also a scholarly program of research. ( p. 19)
- To study social problems or issues adequately, CDA work ... focuses on the relations between discourse and society ( including social cognition, politics, and culture). ( p. 17)
- When studying the role of discourse in society, CDA especially focuses on (group) relations of power, dominance, and inequality and the ways these are reproduced or resisted by social group members through text and talk. ( p. 18)

Van Dijk's also states

- CDA studies (may) pay attention to all levels and dimensions, viz those of grammar (phonology, syntax, semantics), style, rhetoric, schematic organization, speech acts, pragmatic strategies, and interaction, among others. ( 1995, p.18)

These Characteristics indicate that CDA is a major discipline for different linguistic areas. Studying CDA enables the researcher to have great knowledge about different linguistic approaches because CDA research must examine the micro and macro levels of the discourse. "CDA has to theoretically bridge the well-known "gap" between micro and macro approaches" (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 354). For example, "language use, discourse, verbal interaction, and communication belong to the micro-level of the social order. Power, dominance, and inequality between social groups are typically terms that belong to a macro level of analysis." (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 354). The text meaning also is a production of the macro and microstructure.

Dijk's socio-cognitive approach tackles the discourse following a specific theoretical framework. This framework analyses:

local meaning, Macrostructure, subtle formal structure, and context and event models.

Micro- and macrostructure concern the text content ... The microstructure is a network of propositions like these that represent the textual information in a bottom-up fashion: sentence-by-sentence. Based on such a microstructure or text base, a macrostructure can be built: an abstract representation of the global meaning structure, which would reflect the gist of the text. (MacArthur et al., 2008, p. 387).

**Local meaning (Microstructure):**

In the analysis of the text microstructure, the researcher analyses the semantic, rhetorical, syntactic, and pragmatic aspects of the text. "The term microstructure has been introduced for the structure of individual text sentences and their relations." (Glowalla & Colonus, 1982, p. 111)

The local meaning analysis aims at analyzing the discourse microstructure referring to its semantic, syntactic, stylistic, and rhetorical aspects. The semantic analysis indicates the meaning of the text. The syntactic analysis investigates the sentence structure. The stylistic analysis clarifies the purpose of using specific words and expressions. The rhetorical analysis shows the effectiveness of the figures of speech explaining the writer's/speaker's ideas.

Hence, the local meaning analysis presents a comprehensive analysis including all aspects of the discourse.

Presupposition and implicatures are examples of the semantic aspects which the writer/speaker can use to express his idea briefly depending on the shared knowledge between him/her and the audience. Presupposition and implicature are two types of inference. For example, the Lexical presupposition using the verb claim in "Muhammad claimed one further miracle in connection with the Night Journey" (Spencer,2006,p.86) shows that Mohammed's speech was not true. Repetition is a stylistic aspect that the writer/speaker uses to emphasize his ideas. For example, there is a repetition of using specific words like fundamentalism, and jihad as equal alternatives of the word terrorism to assert that Muslims are terrorists and they attack innocent

people to spread Islam. Metonymy, metaphor, rhetorical questions, and irony are examples of the rhetorical aspects which the writer/speaker uses to clarify his/her discourse. "Metonymy is a rhetorical device that enables speakers to refer to one thing by the name of another that is connected with it." (Szilágyi,p.8). For example, "The vast majority of peaceful Muslims show no signs of resisting or condemning the global Islamic jihad that is being fought in their name"(Spencer, p.2) is a metonymy of Muslims' unanimous acceptance of violence. "Metaphors help us to describe one kind of experience in terms of another" (Szilagy, 2018b). For example, "It will be death for a free society"(Spencer, 2006,p14) includes a metaphor in which the author describes the free society as a person who dies if it becomes without free expression. The rhetorical question has not required an answer. It is used to get the audience's attention and persuade them. For example, The rhetorical question, "Will tourists in Paris in the year 2105 take a moment to visit the "mosque of Notre Dame" and the 'Eiffel Minaret'?" (Spencer, 2005,p. 221), warns the Western reader that they may not be able to visit their lovely monuments in the future because of Muslims' conquer.

### **Analysis and discussions**

The analysis of the local meaning of *The Truth About Muhammad: Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion* analyze the linguistic aspects which reflects the writer's attitude towards Muslims and Islam.

### **Difficulties with the Quraysh**

Muhammad preached to people privately at the beginning of his prophethood. His wife Khadija was the first Muslim, then Ali, and a few others. After three years, Muhammad called his tribe to preach to them and guide them to worship Allah. He thought they would believe him depending on his reputation as a "truthful honest". The matter was different because it was related to the creed. His uncle, Abu Lahab, was furious because of his speech. Abu Lahab and his wife tortured the prophet, Mohamed (*PBUH*), because they rejected his call to Islam.

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Consequently, some Quran verses indicate their punishment in Hell. The author tells his reader these verses without referring to Abu Lahab's maltreatment of Mohamed (*PBUH*) and his followers. He also comments on one of Mohamed's hadith without quoting its text to allude to Muslim violence. He doesn't tell his reader the real reason for his death, which was a skin disease. There is another allusion to Muslim violence: "The hadith does not record the manner of his death, but one possible cause may be ruled out: at this point, the Muslims were not targeting their enemies for violent attacks." (Spencer,2006,p 74). Spencer asserts his allusions by saying "Violence connected with the new religion began early "(Spencer,2006,p 75). This altered the truth. according to the story Spencer states, the prayers did not attack polytheists, but "a band of polytheists came upon them while they were praying and rudely interrupted them." (Spencer,2006,p.76). And so, Sa'ad defended himself. "In any civilized court of law, this is an incident of self-defense" (Zayed,2010, p 127). Spencer describes Muslims as violent, while he is describing polytheists as rude, which means that Muslims intentionally attacked polytheists, but polytheists unintentionally attacked them. He disregards polytheists who tortured Muslims to abandon their belief in Islam. For example, The Quraysh idolaters tortured Belal, the Ethiopian slave of Umayya bin Khalaf, because he converted to Islam. "Much more would come in due course" is a metonymy of repeated violent incidents in Islam. Muhammad was a good warrior, but he did not fight his tribe to convert to Islam. That is clear-cut evidence that Islam is a religion of peace. Muhammad asks his followers to migrate to Abyssinia. Zayed says, "The author ... intentionally omits that the prophet Muhammed (PBUH) chose because it was ruled by "a righteous Christian king" (Al-Najashy)" (2010,p.128) because he wants to show Muslims' hostility towards Christians.

### **The Satanic Verses**

Muhammad was depressed because he couldn't attract his tribesmen to be Muslims. So, the devil led him astray adding verses praising the gods of the Quraysh. Salman Roshdy refers to



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this incident in his novel "Satanic Verses". According to Spencer's view, Muslims deny these verses and so, "Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa, ordering Muslims to kill Rushdie." (Spencer,2006,p.78). Spencer affirms the reality of these verses using the conventional implicature "According to Islamic tradition, Satan, not Allah, once actually spoke through Muhammad's mouth." (Spencer,2006,p.78). But he didn't name the source of this Islamic tradition which affects the reliability of the previous quotation. He repeated the adjective frustrated to assert Muhammad's failure to call the Quraysh to Islam. He says that the Quraysh wanted to offer a deal to persuade Muhammad to stop calling people to Allah. This deal was evidence of Muhammad's success as a messenger to Islam, and the Quraysh fear of this success. Hence, they asked him to accept their deal. Spencer shows Muhammad declaring himself God's messenger longing for his tribe's wealth as this is clear in this metonymy, "the apostle was anxious for the welfare of his people, wishing to attract them as far as he could." (2006,p 74). Although Mohamed (*PBUH*) declined the deal, the Quraysh didn't stop calling him to worship their gods and share their wealth as compensation.

Spencer states that Muhammad allowed Muslims to worship Al-lat, Al-Uzza, and Munat, but Zayed denied this story. He said that Spencer presents a fabricated story to prove Muhammad changed his message for his interests. "[N]one of the companions of Prophet Muhammad (*PBUH*), or any credible Islamic reference had even mentioned a hint of this ever Happening" (2010, p 137). Moreover, Ali Gomaa, an Egyptian Islami scholar, denies it indicating that Satan recites such verses to lead astray Muslims.

Spencer is portraying Islam as a fabricated story by Muhammad. He uses the metaphor "one principal player in the drama" (Spencer,2006,p. 80) for referring to that Gabriel is an imaginary character created by Mohamed (*PBUH*) to persuade people. He uses a rhetorical question preceded by an if clause to allude to the Satanic effect on Mohamed (*PBUH*) raising doubts about Qur'an.

### **Nakhla Raid**

Spencer speaks about "**The Nakhla raid**" in detail to show that it was a very horrible incident. He shows that "Muhammad sent one of his most trusted lieutenants, Abdullah bin Jahsh, along with eight of the emigrants"( 2006, p. 98) to gather information about Quraysh caravans in Rajab. Those emigrants made a great mistake and fought innocent people in a sacred month. Then, they gathered the booty and kept the prophet's portion of the booty. Finally, Spencer refers to that Allah justifies this mistake . The examination of his choice of the words indicates the implied meaning of his books. He uses the noun phrase "the prophet of Islam" as a reference for Muhammad (peace be upon him) in "...where the Prophet of Islam hoped to meet and overpower a Quraysh caravan." (Spencer,2006, p. 97) which indicates that the prophet of Islam is a terrorist, so Islam is a religion of terrorism. The implied meaning in "The Muslims began raiding Quraysh caravans, with Muhammad himself leading many of these raids. Muhammad's first raid was at a site known as Al-Abwa or Waddan, where the Prophet of Islam hoped to meet and overpower a Quraysh caravan." (Spencer,2006, p. 97) is that Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his followers are bandits. Spencer uses the verbs which reflect cruelty as "kill, overpower, and slay". There is a metonymy in "From then on, innocent non-Muslim women and children could legitimately suffer the fate of male unbelievers." This metonymy shows that Muslims are cruel. The following metonymy "They decided ... to kill as many as they could of them and take what they had." indicates that Muslims are killers and thieves. Spencer wants to say that the main reason for Muslims' fighting was their greedy for gain. Therefore, he uses the following metonymy "They served a key economic purpose, keeping the Muslim movement solvent."(Spencer,2006, p. 98). Thus, Spencer uses the metonymy to focus on incorrect information about Muslims.

### **Battle of Badr**

In this passage, the author represents Muhammad as a cruel man who cannot forgive others. He also depicts the Battle of Badr as a terroristic attack on Quraysh infidels. He uses diverse metonyms to illustrate Mohamed's cruelty: "Who would care for Ugba's children? "Hell," Muhammad declared and ordered Uqba killed "(Spencer,2006,p.106), and "when he was pulled, the parts of his body got separated before he was thrown into the well." (Spencer,2006,p.106). The use of the word murders instead of warriors shows that Muslims are criminals. He also uses various lexicons which clarify Muslims' cruelty and harshness. For example, he uses the adverb fiercely to describe Muslims' fight in Badr, and he uses negative verbs like beheads, avenge, and kill.

Spencer describes Abu Jahl's death and Uqba's execution to illustrate that Muslims committed war crimes. Muhammad also provokes them to fight innocent non-Muslims to enter paradise. Spencer demonstrates that Muhammad took subjective decisions to achieve his interests. Furthermore, He depicts Muhammad as a crowd man using the metonymy " others that it was more likely that he exhorted his followers from the sidelines. " (Spencer,2006,p.105). but Zayed negates this depiction by stating an account of Ali Ibn Abi Talib

"When the battles were at a climax, and the eyes reddened, we used to hide behind Prophet Muhammad, and always no one was closer to the enemy than Prophet Muhammad himself"(Ansaee). The omission is a distinctive characteristic of Spencer's writing style. He omits to persuade his reader. For example, He does not mention the real reason for Uqba's execution and depicts it as an act of personal revenge. It is not mentioned that Uqba tortured many Muslims.

### **The Qaynuqa Jews**

The author starts this passage by narrating an incident between the prophet Muhammad and an infidel, but he does not tell the incident completely. When the infidel rejected

saying the Shahada, Prophet Mohamed gave him another chance to be safe, "if the man gave the prophet a pledge that he will never under any circumstances attack Muslims again or participate against them in battle. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) set free a man that was trying to kill him in cold blood a few minutes earlier." (Zayed, 2010, p. 186). Spencer intentionally omits this part to alter the meaning and persuade his reader that Islam spread by the sword, and Mohamed was aggressive.

The author blames Muhammad because he laid siege to the Qurayzah. He depicts Muslims as racial people who use offensive language to describe Jews: " Muhammad addressed them in terms that have become familiar usage for Islamic jihadists when speaking of Jews today " (Spencer, 2006, p. 128).

The person who disobeys God deserves God's punishment. God rewards the righteous person and gives a chance to the sinful one. This is clear in the following Quranic verse "We broke them up into passages on this earth. There are among them some that are the righteous and some that are the opposite. We have tried them with both prosperity and adversity: so that they might turn (to us)." (Ali, Al Ara'f: 168 ). Spencer demonstrates that the battle with The Qurayzah was an unprovoked one. He does not refer to the alliance between the Qurayzah and Quraysh. The Qurayzah alliance with Quraysh is treason because they broke their treaty with Muslims. It is known in the political system that there must be punishment for the traitors. For example, in the united states of America

Whoever, owing allegiance to the United States, levies war against them or adheres to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort within the United States or elsewhere, is guilty of treason and shall suffer death, or shall be imprisoned not less than five years and fined under this title but not less than \$10,000; and shall be incapable of holding any office under the United States. (*18 USC Ch.*

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In this incident, the author uses verbs and nouns portraying Muslims as terrorists seeking to take over others' properties, kill their men, and captivate their women. The following examples show the brutality of Muslims: (stuck off their heads in those trenches, the number of those massacred, the massacre, and this mass killing).

**The Tabuk raid**

"After commanding his follower to make wars against Christians" (Spencer,2006, p. 154): These words indicate there was an enmity between Muslims and Christians. The author does not mention the real reasons for this raid: *Suhaimi MHD Sarif* (2016) explains that the Byzantine ruler killed the Muslim ambassador, so the prophet Muhammad decided to prepare his army to protect Muslims from the Byzantines. Spencer also refers to that the Byzantine troops were gathered to fight Muslims. "They found that the Byzantine troops had withdrawn rather than engaged them." Hence, Muslims didn't assault the Byzantine troops, and they even did not meet them. Islamic law allows the use of force in self-defense and in defense of those who are oppressed and unable to Defend themselves. "In contrast, the offensive theory of Jihad is untenable ... only the head of Muslim state (a ruler or caliph) is allowed to declare Jihad" (Niaz A .shah, 2013, p. 343). Consequently, any other declaration of Jihad is not acceptable. "[T]hese declarations thus have no vitality under Islamic law and, indeed, Muslim states are fighting these armed groups". (Niaz A .shah, 2013, p. 343) .

The author usually argues trying to prove that Muhammad incites Muslims to fight Jews and Christians. He repeated the story of the Bany Qurayza to describe Muslims as cruel murderers. In this story, the author does not show the Bany Qurayza traitors, who broke the treatment of the prophet and supported his enemy to fight him, to show the Bany Qurayza as innocent victims. He described jihad warriors attacking Christian rulers to take over his wealth. He concealed the real reason for capturing this ruler."The reason why the prophet sent Khalid

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Ibn El Waleed (ra) to the king, was because this king was in alliance with the Byzantine (Roman) Empire. The Byzantine (Roman) Empire had declared war against the Muslim community" (Discover The Truth, 2015, King or Prince of Dumatul Jandal innocent?). Those Muslims who built the mosque were allies of Muhammad's enemy, Abu Amir the Rahib. "He virtually tried to induce the Byzantine ruler to attack Madinah and expel Muslims from there" . (Maarif-UI-Quran, 2022, 9:107). Spencer explains that verse 9:41 provokes Muslims "to establish the hegemony of the Islamic social order" (Spencer, 2006, p.157). On the contrary, there is not any reference to such hegemony in Yusuf Ali's interpretation of this verse. collecting the Jizyah.

Spencer refers to that Mohammad (*PBUH*) enslaved the people of Arabia to become their master. This is clear in the metonymy "Muhammad was now the undisputed master of Arabia". The author uses the metaphor "He sent the fear to describe his message to al – Harith as a scary one.

There is a clear contradiction between Jews and Christians must pay taxes to Muslims if they don't want to convert to Islam and what he mentioned at the end of the previous passage "if they do not become Muslims, their blood and riches are not guaranteed any protection from the Muslims" (Spencer,2006, p.158), and what he is stating in this passage about those who wouldn't accept Islam "I would throw your heads beneath your feet". Therefore, if non-Muslims reject converting to Islam they could pay the tax to Muslims to protect them from any danger. Non-Muslims aren't enforced to be Muslims. Jizyah "is imposed on men who can carry a weapon and fight" (Zayed,2010, p309 ).

Spencer changes this condition of Jizyah and says that it is imposed on every adult to show how Muslims are greedy for money regardless of poor people like slaves and women. He also refers to how Jizyah formed Muslims' income. The author does not refer to

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the Zakah tax which Muslims are paying. "The Zakah tax is two and a half percent of your unspent assets at the end of the year." Above all, tax is legal all over the world.

"Muslims are paying more than Non-Muslims because Non-Muslims tax was just one dear annually which "equates" less than a hundred dollars today" (Zayed,2010, p 309)

Spencer misinterprets a passage of the farewell sermon of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to show that the prophet provokes men to maltreat their wives when they disobey them: "[G]od allows you to put them in separate rooms and to beat them but not with severity."

(2006,p.160). In his interpretation, he omits the first step of correcting the wife. He also uses the coordinating conjunction 'and', which shows that the two procedures are happening simultaneously. The prophet mentioned them as two separate steps after advising the wife.

Spencer also describes Muslim wives as prisoners. They are not guilty of being prisoners, but the prophet described them as captives to motivate men to be kind to their wives. Hence, Spencer raises two issues in this passage: 1) the domestic violence in Islam, and 2) Islam violates women's right to freedom. He misinterprets the speech to depict Islam as a male-dominated religion.

### **Conclusion**

The research indicates that Robert Spencer also portrays Muslims negatively, denying his Islamophobic attitude towards them. Various linguistic devices clarify the aspects of Islamophobia in Spencer's language. There are different negative lexicons used to refer to Muslims and to describe their defensive acts as assaulting innocent people. When he tells the events of Muslims' battles with the non-believers and their reactions towards Quraysh, are tackled in brief without referring to Muslims' suffering from the persecution. Omission, misinterpretation, irony, metaphor, metonymy, and presupposition are used to prove the reliability of the writer's discourse. The Quranic verses are frequently used outside of their



contexts, and they were misinterpreted to support the writer's views against Muslims, which is a reference of the writer's biased language towards Muslims.

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