

# **Critical Discourse Analysis of Political Editorials in Some Arabic Newspapers**

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This study shows particular discursive strategies that are followed by some Arabic newspapers to serve fundamentalists' goals and their hegemonic ideology in the Middle East. It is an attempt to show the reverse move to creating and sustaining a new wave of Occidentalism as opposed to Edward Said's Orientalism.

Some Arabic news papers do contribute to fanaticism through antagonistic rhetoric that glorifies Pan-Arab and Islamic fraternity, chauvinistic nationalism and martyrdom. By glorifying these demagogic mottoes, such newspapers try to create polarisation against the West. They actually try to win their readers' sympathy, control their emotions and deepen their nostalgic feelings for the great Arab past.

Religion has always been the main generator of meanings whether in The Muslim world or the Christian one. In the Arab world, some journalists try to use religion also to enrich their stories and to win sympathetic readers. It has become a habit by such journalists, even if they were ardent secularists, to draw their readers' attention always to differences between the 'West' and 'Us'. So, instead of benefiting from a similar cultural heritage, they try to pinpoint every single difference to serve their ideological aims. They rely on the ramifications of any religious word that may serve their agenda in deepening the abyss between the 'West' and 'Us'.

## **Introduction**

By adopting a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective, this study analyzes some of the main textual elements that contribute directly to discursal hegemony. Being part of Applied Linguistics, as Allan Davies remarks (Allan Davies, 1999), CDA takes application as its goal in legitimizing its agenda. Its main concern is to understand the interior mechanism of discourse and the reason for incorporating

certain linguistic structures, rather than others, in validating particular discursal stances (Aditi Bhatia, 2006).

My attempt in this paper is to explore the hidden strategies involved in conveying ideological messages to the chosen editorials' readers. I will investigate a number of ideological editorials that try to mobilize people against their will by relying on certain manipulative strategies, as Van Dijk describes them: "Because manipulation is usually discursive, and involves power abuse, it should be studied by Critical Discourse Analysis" (Van Dijk, 2005). It is therefore a premeditated discourse that is primarily meant to instigate people take certain actions that serve the writer's ideology. For Van Dijk (2005), manipulation is studied through a triangular approach the social, cognitive and discursive. It is for this purpose I have opted for a Critical Discourse Analytical approach that incorporates the social, cognitive and the discursive elements.

*"That consciousness of language in particular is a significant element of this 'first step' follows from the way domination works in modern society: it works, as I have been arguing increasingly through 'consent' rather than 'coercion', through ideology, and through language"*  
(Fairclough, 1989)

## **Corpus Construction and Methodology**

My analysis draws upon a thirty one article corpus taken randomly from 'Al-Thawra', Teshreen, which are both issued in Syria and 'Al-Quds Al-Arabi', issued in London and run by Abdul Bary Atwan, between 1998 and 2005. My paper's focus is upon editorials which, in my opinion, rely on the myth of 'difference'. If Huntington's clash of civilisation is inevitable, it is because of the writings of such newspapers, which instigate clashing and confrontation. The findings of this study reveal three crucial elements: the discursive tactics used by editors to create ideological polarization epitomized in 'Us' vs. 'Them'; the impact of lexical choices in subtle persuasion; and the importance of schematic organization of editorial discourse (Scollon, 1998). The study also shows the discursive components that reflect sociological norms, practices and beliefs that give rise to these fiery editorials.

Editorials that strive to mobilize people do actions which help in strengthening the political grip over them are in the first place ideological “At one level of analysis, opinions and ideologies involve beliefs or mental representations, and our approach therefore first takes a cognitive perspective. On the other hand, the ideologies and opinions of newspapers are usually not personal, but social, institutional or political” (Teun van Dijk, 2000) In this I mean that ideology plays a crucial role in bringing people to the same arena of national solidarity and of opposing, mocking and attacking the ‘Other’, being in this context The United States of America and its allies. Van Dijk’s model represents an interdisciplinary view of ideology, which I will adopt as a basis for the reproduction of racism and chauvinistic ethnic prejudices in the collected corpus of editorials (Fairclough, 1995).

### **The Social Context of This Study**

In choosing this particular subject and the collected editorials from the aforementioned newspapers, I want to investigate the main sources of hatred against the West in the Middle East. In a globalized world, misunderstanding and confrontation can definitely lead to destructive results (Hodg and Kress 1979). Thousands of people are being killed on a daily basis, especially in Iraq where fanatics and extremists find their alleged paradise of their deadly ideological agendas. The crux of the matter is that language is being mutilated by the hands of mass media manipulators. Manipulation of negative ideologies is practiced at its best in the Arab World, where the word has lost any sanctity and respect. For the mere purpose of keeping their regimes intact, leaders try anything in this world to export death and terror to their neighbours next door. They want to keep the perils away from themselves and their people, even if it is at the expense of their neighbour’s lives. I have chosen three influential newspapers that apply ideological mobilisation that the Syrian regime adopts to safeguard its control and its existence in the political Arab arena.

In a nationalised state where everything is owned by the government and any free word is sanctioned by its secret agents, the press stems as an effective tool to serve the regime’s ends. According to William A. Rugh, “The mobilization press

does not criticize the basic policies of the national government. The government's foreign policies are particularly unassailable, but the major lines of domestic policy, too, are never attacked" (Rugh, William A., 2004) 'Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio, And Television in Arab Politics' 2:28. The reason why I have chosen 'Al-Thawra' and 'Tishrin' is the fact that their estimated circulation in 1999 amounted to 40000 and 50000 copies respectively, according to Rugh William A. The mobilisation press tries not to involve any of the leading politicians in its daily events. It venerates such leaders and portrays them as the saviours of the nation. This act of sanctity, as Rugh calls it, paves the way for an unbreakable system whose main tool is the press. Rugh also expatiates on this alleged sanctification and the main role of mobilisation press as saying:

*The regimes in these four countries, pre 2003 Iraq; Syria; the Sudan and Libya, regard the press as a very important tool for the mobilisation of popular support for its political programs. These regimes tend to adhere to activist domestic and foreign policies that advocate social, economic, and political change, and their ideologies usually include elements of intense struggle against alleged hostile forces ranged against the national welfare. The ruling group seeks to use the press to advance its causes and help fight these battles.*

*The term "mobilization" has been applied to the political systems in which new values are being created and "political leaders are trying to work out a moral system of authority" in order to establish, as much as possible, different solidarities and identities," so that society will rapidly modernize and industrialize, and the new leadership will acquire legitimacy" ibid 31.*

It is evident then that mobilizing press is a very dangerous tool in the hands of some extremely perilous politicians in our modern world, the Ba'athis.

Al-Ba'ath party was founded in 1948 amidst subsequent turmoil of founding Israel. This radical Pan-Arab party, which was founded by some extremely radical Arab chauvinistic politicians, Michel Aflak and Shibly Al-Aysami, has been trying ever since to mobilise the Arab nation under the slogans of Liberty, Freedom and Socialism.

*Whereas the “Unionists” of fragmentation consider unity something automatic that can be reached by political unification when circumstances and opportunities become propitious and that unity needs only political preparation, to be conducted through negotiations and manoeuvres. As for ideological preparations this is, at best, nothing more than a generalised lip service to unity which is so wide that it includes all sorts of improvisations and incongruities, and whereas unity represents, in the eyes of regionalists parties with their well-known practices, a superficial thing which lacks seriousness and comes last in priorities when compared with regional preoccupations which practically dominate the interest of such parties, unity as seen by the “Arab Bath”, is a fundamental and living idea. It has a theory in the same way as freedom and socialism have theories. Like them it has its principled, organised daily and continuous struggle as well as its stages of application which enhance the power of that struggle and pave the way for the final victory.*

*Arab unity is an ideal and a standard. It is not the outcome or a consequence of the fight of the Arab people for liberty and socialism, it is a new ideal which should accompany and direct that fight.*

*“The revolutionary nature of the Arab unity, 2-February. 1953” Aflak, Michel (1953) in The Saddam Hussein Reader, edited by: Munthe, Turi (2002)*

Michel Aflak was the spiritual mentor of Ba'athism in Syria and Iraq, and he was the main player in the dictatorial web of the Iraqi regime. His chauvinistic ideas about Pan-Arab nationalism and radical Stalinist Socialism had paved the way for the creation of one of the most ruthless regimes in the world, the Saddami regime. This orientation of thinking opened the doors wide for radical, racial and ethnic prejudices. Arab unity was an ideological currency with which Aflak tried to

conquer the Arab world ideologically. He and the rest of his radical colleagues succeeded in disseminating their radical thought in the entire Arab world.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Because my aim behind this study relies on finding particular ideological patterns that mobilize people, I have opted for Teun Van Dijk's cognitive-oriented approach. I believe that this framework could definitely help in anchoring hidden discursual practices that contribute to the power of mobilization and to the manipulation of people. Dijk's triadic model, social cognition mediates between social structures and discourse structures, provides one with the most ideal tool to recognise Ba'athi ideological and polarising patterns in press discourse. Therefore, an interdisciplinary view of ideology could help in understanding the hidden mechanisms of Ba'athism in the press. In this study, four main discursual features that directly affect the formation of ideological patterning in editorials are investigated.

1. Words, phrases and sentences that reflect Ba'athi and anti occidental ideology
2. Lexical choices that reflect "Us" vs. "Them"
3. Words, phrases and sentences that implicate extra meanings
4. Polarization patterns

## **Pinpointing the Ideological Categories that Affect the Formation of the Chosen Editorials**

I have observed that there is a particular patterning that runs through all the chosen editorials that form the corpus for this research. This patterning ranges from recurrent regularity to irregularity at times. The main axis around which most propositions revolve is definitely ideological. In the following section, I will mention some samples of words, phrases and sentences that clearly reflect Ba'athi ideology in my chosen corpus. In this analysis, I will adopt Teun Van Dijk's ideological square that clearly shows main ideological grounds that Ba'athism and anti Occidental thought are based upon.

Emphasize Your Good Properties/Action	Emphasize Their Bad Properties/Actions	Mitigate Our Bad Properties or Actions	Mitigate Their Good Properties or Actions
<p>Syria's concern for Iraqis' safety National Independence Political Ba'athi steadfast Stances Long history Syria's stances epitomize the Arab national forefront The Arabs' aspirations We are each other's depth (Iraq and Syria) The honour of this nation The President's usual disclosure of facts The President's transparency that characterize his appearances People who make history President Bashar Al-Asad appeared to the people, the nation and the whole world who were all waiting The manners of this people Your people have saluted you and sighed out of reverence Usual frankness-true openness-high transparency A true and vivid image of the Syrian stance President Bashar's frankness and his openness</p> <p>Lots of people were drifted whether willingly or in a predetermined way after the illusions of an international and regional deterioration</p> <p>The absolute belief in the ability to survive The right of people that is nourished by its natural right of sovereignty, national leadership and determination to obtain everything righteous</p> <p>The comprehensive sermon that was paid by Mr. President, Bashar Al-Asad Syria is fortified and rigid National resurrection Arab national and patriotic merits National optimism Do you know why the Syrian political performance is harmonized with the pulse of people, and what are betting?</p> <p>The real credit for Syria is its allegiance to its Arab brothers Occupation troops that give birth to legitimate resistance (legitimizing resistance) Whatever resistance it might be (legitimizing terrorism in Iraq) A varied generative resistance National necessity Unified Arab labour (Pan Arab dream) Peace is a will Syria's consistent stance Syrian stance that relies on merits International legitimacy The Syrian hand that is elongated to fair peace Platforms of pride Years of fruitful results in the difficult era Years of achievements in the era of Arab and international retreat Mr. President's penetrating outlook International mistiness</p>	<p>The degrading situation in Iraq Occupation Throwing neighbours(as with stones) Foreign troops Arab-Israeli conflict The fierce and concentrated campaign against Syria The roaring engine of Occidental mass media Yellow faces American freedom epitomized in Abu-Ghuraib jail Jails overcrowded with prisoners Sadist practices The civilized beast War crimes Everything concocted against our region, its people and countries Occidental claims are venomous Others' short-sidedness International and regional decadence The declining situation in Iraq and Palestine</p> <p>He who ignores the street and the pulse of its people anywhere in the world, including the Arab street and its people's pulse, will definitely pay the price sooner or later. Fabricated data Acquitting Prime Minister Tony Blair of the war's ramifications The gaudy discrepancy that was reflected by the sanctions The criminal way of dealing with humans A political cover-up by the Pentagon and its leaders Dragging the biggest military power in the world to occupy</p> <p>Iraq and steal its riches, kill its people and torture its sons</p> <p>Messengers of vandalism, delegates of discrepancies and marketers of flighty policies</p> <p>Their grotesque image before the Arab public opinion</p>	<p>Shaken Arab reality</p> <p>Our lost Arab dreams Arab march Peace is one of our options The Syrian hand that is elongated to fair peace</p>	<p>Scenarios The entanglement of stances and concepts American predicament in Iraq Occidental hubbub has deafened our ears Ranting about human rights and democracy A programmed American mass media bulldozer</p> <p>Can an administration like this (referring to the American administration) which perpetrates all kinds of intentional inhumane practices talk about human rights in any spot of this world?</p> <p>Which notions and concepts are they disseminating?!!! The glittering American dreams (reference to the</p>

<p>The Syrian long purposeful role Exerting efforts and dedicating work Let's follow the example(the president) Belief in Allah, homeland and the President</p> <p>Syrian mass media did never adopt injurious policies against brothers or their mass media</p> <p>I would love to know the fate of an article that is fair to Syrian mass media and its national role, diction, battles and sincere stance Syrian mass media's transparent discourse, impartiality and its defense of Arab causes National merits Syrian mass media are involved in a war that represents all Arabs</p> <p>Syrian mass media confront the ferocious American – Israeli campaign that targets our Arab nation, its present and future. The best example is Palestine and Iraq Journalists who do not represent to the Arab stance</p> <p>Syrian space channel is al-Intifada channel at the peak of its performance Syrian stance is the right direction of the compass that guides all Arabs Syrian mass media is witnessing an auto propelling development in accordance with a moral, national and patriotic ideology. Facing Israeli greed Syria is the vivid example of Arab national honour It requires a different Lebanese regime and a different executive government The President, Al-Asad, took his political decision of withdrawing from Lebanon before the national assembly The Arab heart that embraces us all The pure blood that runs in our veins(Racist) The wombs that bore us (Arabs) all (Racist) Syria and Lebanon do fortify each other The recommendations adopted by A-Ba'ath conference The national conference propelled the multifaceted Syrian life The conference revived the ray of hope in bearing responsibility without fear or hesitation The conference presented a comprehensive picture (omnipresent party) The party's seriousness and its ability in enduring various external circumstances A conspicuous spot in the party's life Its declared motto is a vigorous vision and an ideology that embraces all</p> <p>Increasing hatred in the Islamic and Arab world The Palestinian cause constitutes the lungs through which Arabs breathe Arab countries should all milt in the pot of</p>	<p>Dumping hidden Zionist goals Those involved in the war in Iraq The American predicament in Iraq</p> <p>Two most heated spots in the world today are Iraq and Palestine</p> <p>Installing military bases Forces of pressure and hegemony Double standards in criteria and notions Failure of the American administration and occupation troops Mss media that marketed American delirium American soldiers are practicing their grudge, hatred and racism against naked Iraqis Sadist torture Bush-Sharon project Condemned Occupational practices American withdrawal from Iraq Targeted peoples The sole pole's political punches Throwing Syrian mass media with Arab stones for the sake of inspiring impartiality and objectivity Rhetorical mottoes that are used by critics to embarrass Syrian mass media are meant to oblige them change its national stances.</p> <p>Vicious plot (Conspiracy) Shaking peace and aggravating fraternal relations with Syria and pushing Lebanese society into divisions The American patron Finding puppets that adopt this malicious decision(1559) Lebanese choir Lebanese political prostitution Lebanon's alleged sons Tyranny-gliding-conspiratorial plot the American who is never detached from the Israeli Lebanese authority (no definite article-lack of respect) Arab traitorous platoon (America's allies) Israeli peril What is planned for this region (Conspiracy)</p>	<p>The President's decision has caused the American and the French to be fully confused The President's decision has incapacitated the misguiding campaign against Syria After Russia's disentanglement, we lost our external cover Time is not with us Abroad, we are in a bottle's neck</p>	<p>American dream- a sarcastic references)</p> <p>American intervention backed by the French Facilitating political opportunities for Israel to have the upper hand in the region What can the troubled bestow the strained? (What can America offer Iraq?)</p>
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<p>Arab nationalism  A national necessity  This was what the President uttered in the conference  The Israeli impact on American policy  Al-Ba'ath and its leadership will specify the right path and its responsibilities  The believers' will that espouses our national choice</p> <p>-----  -----</p> <p>Al-Quds Al-Arabi's Analysis  Our experiences tell us that Arabs, or some of them at least, do learn from their anterior mistakes  All Arabs are embracing the Iraqi leadership  This might be the explosive that will blow up Arab frustration  Arabs can coexist with the Iraqi regime even</p>	<p>theory)  Adopting resistance  The savage rampage through the region  Arabs do not observe what is being concocted against the region  With American guardianship, time is turning its back on us  Strategic goals of the allies  American-British duet  Occupied Iraq  Confiscated Iraq's sovereignty (Iraq is not Ba'athi any more)  Confiscated Iraq's national decisions  Direct occupation (instead of liberation)  Climactic aftermath consequences  Iraqi government that is being cooked now  America's main aim behind occupying Iraq is to control oil wells and levels of international development  Running blood in Iraq  Black suffering of Abu-Ghuraib's prisoners  The failure of American campaign in Iraq  Aspirations of Israeli lobby in Iraq  The image of a civilized country has been destroyed  America's principles are analogous now to occupation, exploitation, fear and death  Imposing hegemony over the globe in its entirety  Alleged victories  The fall of Baghdad was a failure  America's constitution has been breached by the new conservatives  Militarizing the space  Threatening the earth  A bunch of new conservatives  Haughtiness  Ignoring the situation in the region  Slaughtering Palestinians  Infanticide  Carnages  Daily massacres in Palestine as analogous to daily massacres in Iraq (This espouses the conspiracy theory)  The unification of hatred and grudge against the arabs  The poisonous wind coming on the wings of Iraq's occupation (afraid of being the next target)  The American</p>		
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<p>it owned chemical and biological weapons Iraq can sacrifice hundred of millions of its sons, but the Americans cannot endure the loss of 1000 soldier</p> <p>Arabs should help the Iraqi people We should take revenge on the Americans We should take revenge on American and Israeli haughtiness In the past, Arab masses used to lead their countries. Now, Arab masses should be led This strike might explode Arab frustration at American haughtiness</p> <p>We espouse authentic Christianity We oppose this barbaric and racial concept simply because we are Muslims</p>	<p>administration has killed its role in the region with its bare hands The American president's punch on the Palestinian's face was the strongest The roaring hubbub of traitorous mass media Scattered choices, gullible caprices and difficult decisions Al-Hareeri's own mass media are revolting his own precepts and stances</p> <p>Lying Americans Syrian extremists follow the renowned Nazi saying: "Lie and lie until you find who believes you" There are some pushy people who claim that Syria is responsible for the instability in the Middle East A programmed anti Syrian campaign Arabs are not that naïve as the Americans tend to believe People of the region are the best to know its paths Even the Arab layman knows what happens in the region (Conspiracy theory) What happens in Iraq is because of the American occupation and nothing else except that in spite all spurious allegations The Americans fully adopt Israeli ideology American extremists pledge allegiance to Israel more than to their own homeland</p> <p>----- -----</p> <p>The American dead end in Iraq You are after snatching President saddam Hussein's head You have to pay too high a price to accomplish the job America and its spies Blood shed American and Israeli haughtiness Mrs. Madeline Albright, who coincidentally discovered her Jewish ancestry Jewish carnage International cover-up The American administration has already planned a strike against</p>	<p>-----</p> <p>Arabs in general and Iraqis in particular do not have anything more to lose.</p>	
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<p>Forming human shields to defend Iraq Moving traitorous Arab rotten corpses</p>	<p>famished Iraq that is under siege American Provocation The most dangerous wars in the region</p> <p>The practical dividing conspiracy plotted by the Americans and their allies</p> <p>The Americans and their allies, who are the guardians of Kuwait's treasures</p> <p>The Americans who slaughtered Iraqi soldiers in one of the most unforgettable genocides in the history of mankind</p> <p>Americans are morally naked Leaking President Saddam's pictures in his cell cannot be morally justified This malpractice opposes any moral principle or international treaty American discourse on freedom and respecting human rights are definitely rubbish A great power that intends to show a president of a country in this humiliating, disgusting and repulsive manner Taliban did not treat Occidental prisoners in this ignoble way Witness for yourselves the defenders of international legitimacy breaching the basic human rights American losses are increasing in an unimaginable pace It seems that Arab leaders have lost any feelings It seems that Netanyahu is the sole controller of the Middle East The inevitable war that Madame Albright and her APOSTLES</p>		<p>A new wave of sweeping change will hit the region.</p>
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Based on the above mentioned ideological analysis, I have come up with the following conclusions:

1	Veneration of Syria (The last Ba'athi stronghold in the region)	18
2	Veneration of President Asad	9
3	Veneration of the Ba'ath party and its ideology	32
4	Veneration of our patriotic deeds and actions	32
	Total of ideological words, phrases or sentences	86

The above table shows that 37 % of ideological words, phrases and sentences definitely venerate the Ba'ath party; a similar percentage goes to venerating the deeds and actions of the party; 20.9% of ideological words, phrases and sentences venerate Syria, being the last stronghold of Ba'athism in the region; and finally 10.46% of ideological words, phrases and sentences venerate President Bashar al-Asad. It is clear then that the analyzed editorials are loaded with ideological messages that affect, modify and manipulate their readers' mentalities. Ideological words, phrases and sentences are injected with hidden messages that highly depend on the background knowledge of this particular discourse in the Arab world. Manipulation is practiced heavily to buttress deep-rooted ideas that might invoke substantial actions by the readers. As Van Dijk says "We also have assumed that such control is first of all a control of the mind, that is, of the beliefs of recipients, and indirectly a control of the actions of recipients based on such manipulated beliefs." Van Dijk (Discourse and manipulation: 2005). Journalists like Faez Al-Sayegh, editorialist in Al-Thawra newspaper, and Abdul Bary Atwan are two important manipulators whose main role is to create animosity, hatred and mobilization. Their sole aim is to feed the terrorist machine that kills everyone without mercy. Public discourse is a powerful tool that mobilizes masses for the sake of serving Ba'athi and anti-occidental agendas;

*Trivially, in order to be able to manipulate many others through text and talk, one needs to have access to some form of public discourse, such as parliamentary debates, news, opinion articles, textbooks, scientific articles, novels, TV shows, advertising, internet, and so on. And since such access and control in turn depend on, as well as constitute, the Power of a group (institution, profession, etc.), public discourse is at the same Time a means of the social reproduction of such power. For instance, politicians can exercise their political power also through public discourse, and through such public discourse they at the same time confirm and reproduce their Political power. The same is true for journalists and professors, and their respective institutions – the media, the universities, etc. (Van Dijk 2005)*

Talking about the other element in the ideological square, one finds that the focus in most of the analyzed articles is upon putting the West and its allies in a very bad

position to the Arab readers. Messages that are conveyed in these editorials solidify terrorist aims in justifying their acts in the Arabs' eyes. They try their best to create a very negative and horrific image of the other, the Occident and its allies, in order to win people's sympathy, and enforce the conspiracy theory in the Middle East. Words, phrases and sentences that emphasize Occidental bad properties or actions amount to 175 items. This large number of absolutely negative ideological encapsulations contributes undoubtedly to modern terrorism in the Arab world. I will analyze some of these ideological capsules that are loaded with negative meanings.

degrading, occupation, Arab-Israeli conflict, fierce and concentrated campaign against Syria, roaring engine of occidental mass media, yellow faces, American freedom epitomized in Abu-Ghuraib jail, jails overcrowded with prisoners, sadist practices, the civilized beast, war crimes, Occidental claims are venomous, international and regional decadence, declining situation is Iraq and Palestine, fabricated data, to occupy Iraq and steal its riches, messengers of vandalism, delegates of discrepancies and marketers of flighty policies, their grotesque image before the Arab public opinion, hidden Zionist goals, the American predicament in Iraq, international retreat, forces of pressure and hegemony, mass media that marketed American delirium, American soldiers are practicing their grudge, hatred and racism against naked Iraqis, sadist torture, Bush-sharon project, vicious plot(conspiracy theory), Lebanese choir, Lebanese political prostitution, Lebanese alleged sons, tyranny, conspiratorial plot, the American who is never detached from the Israeli, Arab traitorous platoon(America's allies), **What is planned for this region, adopting resistance, the savage rampage through the region**, Arabs do not observe what is being concocted against the region, American-British duet, occupied Iraq, running blood in Iraq, confiscated Iraq's sovereignty (Iraq is not Ba'athi anymore), Iraqi government that is being cooked now, the failure of American campaign in Iraq, a bunch of new conservatives, slaughtering Palestinians, America and its spies, Jewish carnage, international cover-up, the American president has already planned a strike against famished Iraq, the practical dividing conspiracy plotted by the Americans and their allies, The Americans and their allies, who are the guardians of Kuwaiti treasures, Americans are morally naked, American discourse on freedom and respecting human rights are definitely rubbish, barbaric American Crusade, hostile occidental civilization, full Americanization or utter humiliation, Americans want to drastically brainwash the Arabs, the Quran has also to be modified and purged from any Jihadi implications, the hidden and announced war against Islam, spurious Iraqi elections, electoral forgery, big American lie, this is Falluja fighting until the very last day of elections, America chose a particular sect(Shiites) and put it on the other end(they are traitors, because they cooperate with the Americans).

It is apparent in the above box that most of the words used by manipulating editorialists send a one-directional ideological message which is hatred and animosity against America and its allies. The stress is mainly on lexical choices that enhance the ideological impact on readers of these fiery editorials. This antagonistic discourse is characterized with certain features that give it the legitimacy to

manipulate masses. This legitimacy is based on words that have their deep psychological effect upon the recipients of this complex discourse. For Van Dijk, “Discourse is very complex, featuring many levels of structures, each with their own categories and elements, which may be combined in innumerable ways. As we have seen, ideologies may be expressed explicitly and then are easy to detect, but this may also happen very indirectly, implicitly, concealed or in less obvious structures of discourse, such as an intonation, a hesitation or a pronoun.” Van Dijk, *Ideology and Discourse*(2003:5). It is therefore very difficult to nail down any ideological meaning without properly analyzing the ideological messages hidden behind the arsenal of words that such discourse is loaded with. The main elements of meaning that I am going to investigate in this paper draw upon Van Dijk’s analysis of discourse, which are as follows: topics, implications and presuppositions, local coherence, and contrast. The aim behind this list of features relies on the idea that ideology is manifested in words, and in order to disclose it, one has to delve into these particularities that are lexical for the most part(Hutchby, *Media Talk*:2006).

### **Topics**

Discourse is not the product of sudden interaction that is born at the spur of the moment; on the contrary, it is a long history of forming and encapsulating ideas in words and phrases( Beciu Camelia, *Politica Discursiva*: 2000). As Van Dijk points out, if we want to emphasize our positive side and deemphasize theirs, we should topicalize that in discourse. Therefore, it is evident in the aforementioned analysis of the chosen editorials that topicality mainly relies on occupation of Arab lands, showing utmost hatred towards the West and its allies, racial occidental practices, international collusion against Arabs and Muslims, conspiracy theory, slaughtering Arabs and Muslims in the name of democracy the return of the Crusade. These are the main topics around whose axis all the editorials revolve. These topics are based on a long history of conflict between the Occident and the East. The memory of old Crusades still cling to the memories of millions of Muslims. The very word “Occidental” connotes so many negative things in the Arab mind. “Occidental” modifies everything bad, morally decadent, aggressive and atheistic. The word “Crusade” again reminds every Arab of aggression, oppression and occupation. All of such associations are deep-rooted in Arab-Muslim mentality and are very

difficult to eradicate. Manipulators in mass media use these associations to further serve and fulfil their ideological agendas by exploiting them.

## **Implications and Presuppositions**

By depending on background knowledge of the world, discourse manipulators depend on implicating information, which is the fourth element in the ideological square, so as to bring their readers into their interactional arena.

*“Moving to the pragmatic side of Grice’s view of utterance meaning involves a move to conversational implicature. The crucial features of these aspects of speaker meaning is that they are dependent on the assumption that the conversational maxims, or at least the cooperative principle(CP), are being observed” (Carston,2002)*

Readers have to decode implicated messages that add a lot to the ideological message “Codes organize signs into meaningful systems which correlate signifiers and signifieds” (Chandler, 2002)

In our case, the editorialists use so many implicated meanings to fulfil this interactional end. “Occidental claims are venomous” such a sentence, for instance, draws upon a long history of East-West conflict. It revives the memories of Arab-Israeli conflict, Balfore’s promise to the Jews in creating a Jewish state in Palestine, and British manipulative strategies in defeating the Arabs. Another example is “Arab traitorous platoon” as referring to all Arabs who swear allegiance to the Americans. “Vicious plot” is another phrase that espouses the very famous *conspiracy theory* in the Middle East. This theory is the only one adopted by so many Arab politicians and political analysts; it refers to America’s involvement in any problem, disaster, calamity, or war that happens in the Middle East. Another element that makes meaning is presupposition. A sentence like “We espouse authentic Christianity” sheds light upon our stance that is not fully anti Western, but also moderate in a way. We do support Christianity that is against America and the West. This definitely presupposes the fact that America’s Christianity is corrupt and not authentic. These are hidden messages, but they are fully understood and are easily recuperated by any Arab or Muslim reader. The dependence on this wealth of

historical and ideological arsenal paves the way for a highly complex discourse whose web of lexical relations practices a very evident role in manipulating Arab and Muslim masses. “Arabs do not observe what is being concocted against the region” This sentence presupposes the ongoing process of conspiracy against the Middle East. This of course contributes to the conspiracy theory that most Middle Easterners believe in. “Iraqi government that is being cooked now” This is a hint to all Arabs that a government that is backed by The United States of America is definitely a petticoat one that merits no respect or support. It is a hidden move by the editorialist to disqualify this government or any similar government that represents America in the region. As one can observe, manipulating editorials insist upon hidden ideological elements that support the negative stances against the Occident in a very aggressive way.

### Contrast

In order to show binary oppositional distinction between “Us” and “Them”, Arab editorialists try to write their paragraphs in a triadic fashion so that to support their ideological agendas in their editorials. In the thirty one editorials that I analyzed, I have observed that evident triadic patterns of “Us” versus “Them” do exist. Some of these patterns are entirely polarized in the sense that they are fully against “Them” or fully support “Us”. The following table shows how these binary distinctions can create a web of relations that support the ideological orientation of the editorials.

## Polarization Patterns

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
B	A	A	B	A	B	B	A	B	A	A	A	B	A	A	B	B	B	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	A	B	A	A
A	A	B	B	A	B	B	B	A	B	A	A	B	B	A	A	B	B	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	A	B	B	B	B	A
B	A	A	B	A	A	B	B	A	B	A	A	A	B	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	A
A	B	B	B	B	A	B	B	B	A	B	B	A	B	B	A	B	B	B	A	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	A	B	B	B
B		B	B	A	A	B	B		B	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	B	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
B		B	B	A	A	A	B		A	B	A	A	A	B	A	B	B	B	A	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	A	B	B	B
A		A	B	A	A		B		A	A	A	B	B	A	A	B	B	A	A	B	B	A	B	B	B	B	A	B	B	B
		A	B	B	A		B		A	B	A	A	B	A	B	B	B	A			B	A	B	B	A	B	B	B	B	





ideological impact that editorialists try to practice on their readers. The most predominant pattern is Them-Them-Them. This pattern clearly reflects the editorialists' tendency to emphasize the demerits of the West and its allies. The percentage of Us-Us-Us is less than half the number of Them-Them-Them pattern. This emphasis sheds light on the ideological message that we are always victimized and it is because of the Occident and its allies.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, I have shown that ideology has a very crucial role in mobilizing editorials. In investigating some ideological features in thirty one editorials, I have pinpointed that there exist conspicuous triadic patterns that reflect particular antagonistic messages. These patterns run through paragraphs such that they reflect the editorialist's ideological inclination. Ba'athi and anti Occidental ideology is deep-rooted in Arab journalism, and it is for the sake of this antagonistic ideology that editorialists try to mobilize Arab masses by residing to historical background that ignites feelings of hatred and animosity. Mobilizing journalism is predominant in dictatorial states where language is used as a main protector of ruling regimes. Manipulating language is used through certain ideological ways such as using words, phrases and sentences that reflect Ba'athi and anti Occidental ideology, lexical choices that reflect "Us" vs. "Them" and polarization patterns. My analysis shows that by using particular lexical items, editorialists succeed in venerating their regimes, their deeds and their ideology. This veneration is practiced as an ideological stratagem to mobilize masses against the Occident and its allies. The way to manifest this veneration is through creating a coherent web of propositions in discourse. This coherent line of propositions thoroughly relies upon the main premises of this antagonistic discourse. Another element that contributes to the coherence of this manipulative discourse is contrasted distinction between "Us" and "Them". This ideological distinction is used to further emphasize every thing good that characterizes "Us" and every thing bad that characterizes "Them". My attempt to study hidden ideological strategies that mobilize readers to carryout actions against the West and its allies is an attempt to understand current terrorist actions

and their motivations. It is the beginning of a new wave of Occidentalism that tries to explain the enigma of modern anti Occidental movements which strive to achieve their diabolic goals at the expenses of the lives of innocent people. Understanding the particularities of phraseology and ideological patterning can definitely pave the way for understanding discursual strategies that have the power to goad ardent fanatics into achieving their destructive satanic agendas.

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