

The Study of Discourse-semantic Structures in Arabia Alhayat Newspaper with Emphasis on Van Dijk Schema

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Abstract

As two political and religious poles in the Middle East, Iran and Saudi Arabia are considered always the traditional competitors in expansion and stability of the regional power. The relationship between these two countries has faced ups and downs in different eras due to the different reasons. Their relationships are sometimes based on cooperation policy, sometimes competition and conflict and sometimes like recent years (since the beginning of the Syria crisis) based on direct argument between the authorities of both states, stopped relations and proxy conflicts in third countries.

Recognizing the discourse strategies of Saudi Arabia press which play a significant and inspiring role for the press of other Arabian countries can be a way to predict the political and discourse-based behavior of Saudi Arabia as a contradictory discourse against Iran. With regards to its antiquity, professional team and simultaneous publishing in several points across the world, Saudi Arabia Al-Hayat newspaper is from among the most influencing media of this country in managing the media war against Iran. Most often, something is published against Iran by the analysts of this newspaper in each volume which is taken into account as a role model for other Arabian newspapers in terms of representation modes.

In this study, 30 articles were selected to be reviewed and investigated so that the method of using the language strategies in the governing discourse is discussed. The present query answers this question: how is the ideology governing the author's mind reflected within the framework of discourse-based structures in the text and what are its language representations? The importance of the afore-mentioned question is that by achieving the answer, the gap existing in linguistic studies about

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the Arabic press is filled and explaining and elaborating the discourse strategies of this newspaper paves the way for more studies in the field of communications sciences for scholars and researchers .

The methodology used in this study is the discourse analysis based on the model presented by Teun Adrianus van Dijk (2008). To analyze the text, van Dijk has suggested two micro and macro levels each of which has its own special components. The macro level of text is, in fact, the abstract level by which the relationships between social actors and groups, institutes and organizations are described and analyzed within a society by incorporating the meta-language concepts including ideology, policy, power and dominance in discourse. The multilevel model of van Dijk allows the scholar to study his or her considered level without any interference with others. In other words, the capability to separate the strategies in six levels is another privilege which has driven the scholars toward choosing this model. Therefore, 30 selected articles were studied on the basis of van Dijk model so that the discourse strategies of authors of Al-Hayat newspaper are determined at the level of meaning.

Evaluating the findings of this study indicates the ideological performance of Al-Hayat newspaper authors in how to apply the text strategies to present the Iran issues. In accordance with van Dijk viewpoint, emphasizing and strengthening the positive performance of insider group, i.e., Saudi Arabia and negative representation of outsider group, i.e., Iran, in Al-Hayat newspaper, has been put in the authors' agenda as the macro-strategies of text. Many assumptions published within the news of this newspaper against Iran have generally introduced Iran as the threat for the security of region and on the contrary, Saudi Arabia as the country which tries to solve the problems and restore the security to the conflicted regions including Syria and Iraq .

High rates of distancing and polarization indicate the strong tendency of authors for creating and emphasizing the confrontation of both countries in various issues.

Most linguistic representations of discourse-based semantic structures in Al-Hayat newspaper are related to those strategies which clearly represent the positive role of insider and negative role of outsider and the authors do not show a high inclination to use the language structures like implication.

Therefore, this viewpoint of function-oriented linguistics can confirm that language form, structure and arrangement are at the service of the role undertaken by them. In all 30 articles investigated in the present study, the ideology governing the authors' minds has directly affected how to apply the text strategies. As van Dijk, in his ideological square mentioned, it is the macro-level of text that determines which subject matters of six micro levels are used by the author/speaker and with what quality.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Discourse-semantic structures, Ideology, Van Dijk, Al-Hayat newspaper