Systemic Analysis of News Tackling of Al Jazeera Arabic and Al Jazeera English: A Paradigmatic Dimension

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Abstract: *The controversial Al Jazeera Channel, which is considered as one of the news giants around the globe, raises a lot of queries regarding its news cast, news coverage and its debatable programs. Beside news channels, Al Jazeera also has its own news websites that add to its coverage of news. The news websites offer free access to its contents. Al Jazeera has two main websites that present news in Arabic and English languages. Therefore, I would like to compare the news that are provided in the Arabic website with same news in the English version.*

The two websites are directed to different audience totally culturally and ideologically. (Fowler,1991) stresses that "News-making is a practice that influences the social construction of reality".

This paper employs Systemic Functional Grammar of Halliday's approach to analyze texts of news websites linguistically. Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) focuses on how language is used to express meaning. Because Systemic Grammar is concerned with meaning and how the language is used in context, it is used as a powerful popular tool to investigate how linguistic items and grammatical patterns are used to express different semantic issues. The researcher will analyze lexicogrammatical system that is presented on both websites. The methods will be analytical and descriptive.

The main data will be some Arabic headlines and their English equivalents in addition to two news articles in both languages. They will be collected from <u>http://www.aljazeera.com/</u> and <u>http://www.aljazeera.net/portal</u>. This paper aims at uncovering the differences in both Arabic and English websites of Al Jazeera.net showing the language choice and lexicogrammatical representation of news.

Key words: Al Jazeera Channel, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), AlJazeera.net, News websites, Arabic and English language

1. Introduction

This study is aimed at providing a comparison of whether the English and Arabic versions of Aljazeera.net deliver the same message and to what extent bias is avoided. The analysis will focus on some headlines and news articles. The purpose is to address the question of whether the

two websites convey the same meaning and ideology because they have different target audience and in what ways the differences of ideology are presented.

One of the methods I am following in this paper is the use of the back translation and comprehensive analysis of the headlines and the articles in both English and Arabic websites of Aljazeera.

The data under consideration are ten headlines in Arabic and English as well as two English and Arabic news articles. The data are chosen from Aljazeera English website http://www.aljazeera.com/ and Aljazeera Arabic website http://www.aljazeera.net/portal. The paper compares the data and focuses largely on lexicogrammatical constructions of the articles and the choice of lexis in headlines and news articles.

2. Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic functional grammar can be used as a means of analyzing texts in general. It looks at language as a means of communication and it has to serve three functions. Systemic functional grammar is based on the paradigmatic notion of choice. It is composed of three layers: semantics (meaning), lexicogrammar (wording), and phonology (sound). Each stratum is organized paradigmatically.

Systemic functional linguistics is viewed as a multidimensional semiotic system, which has five principles:

1. Paradigmatic dimension

2. Stratification dimension

3. Metafunctional dimension

4. Syntagmatic dimension

5. Instantiation dimension

In this paper, I will select only the first principle (Paradigmatic dimension) since it deals with multiple choices of lexical terminologies that people use when in need. The Paradigmatic Dimension is an important feature of systemic functional linguistics. People select what they want to deliver in their utterance from many options in their environment. There are many alternatives they could opt for during the talks, dialogues, writings, lectures, etc.. M.K. Halliday (2003) clarified that "the power of language resides in its organisation as a huge network of interrelated choices… The power of language comes from its paradigmatic complexity".

Language is said to serve many different purposes through the linguistic structures that carry the meaning potential. Editors or writers select their expressions to address their audiences and

perhaps to convince them about some thoughts. They opt for the words of their interest and may convince others of their opinions. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014:23) stressed that "*A text is the product of ongoing selection in a very large network of systems – a system network..... A language is resource for making meaning, and meaning resides in systemic patterns of choice.*"

Discourse of any kind including news discourse is done in context that is culturally and linguistically intermixed. News discourse is part and parcel of today's politics and lives of people at large. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014:33) clarify that "*The context of culture is what the members of a community can mean in cultural terms; that is, we interpret culture as a system of higher-level meanings*". Therefore, writers select the type of words that are contextually related to a specific society. This paper finds many examples for this claim.

3. News Websites Headlines

The headlines in both websites: http://www.aljazeera.com/ and http://www.aljazeera.net/portal. ,though they look similar, differ in the way they present the messages. Systemic Functional Linguistics basically analyses the contents and the discourse of the headlines and the words' selection. They are not replica of one another but rather a rewriting of them. Andre Lefevre (1992:1) stressed that " *Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their information, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way*". Therefore, the translation or rewriting of headlines from Arabic to English and vice versa on Aljazeer.net is to be discussed in this paper.

Headlines offer an important information about the topic of the articles and describe the issues. They attract readers attention to focus on the essential part of the news articles. As Van Dijk (1987:221) puts it "*Research in mass communication and psychology has shown that headlines , just like title and prominent summary information , play a special role in information processing.... Headlines are the most prominent elements of news reports*". Headlines are usually expressed in a sensational manner to attract reader's curiosity. In addition, the headlines indicate the writer's attitude to the story, (Morley, 1998:31).

4. Analysis
4.1. Headlines Analysis

As discussed above, headlines on both sites belong to the same channel, yet they are mostly expressed differently. Consider the following headlines:

Aljazeera English:

"Erdogan lashes out at Netherlands for barring minister" 12/03/2017

Aljazeera Arabic:

"تركيا تصف تصرفات هولندا بالفضيحة و تتوعد برد اقوى" 12/03/2017

Back Translation :

> **"Turkey describes Dutch Actions as a shameful (disgraceful) act and threatens a stronger retaliation"**

A keen look at the above two headlines might suggest they are similar but a deeper one would show them differently. One of the differences is the lexical choice of the words in both headlines. As can be seen in the above, headlines have been tailored to suit the target readers. In the English version, the phrase '**Erdogan lashes out at Netherlands"** has been quoted in order to show the degree of the anger of Erdogan , the Turkish President, from the acts of the Dutch authorities that banned his party from organizing referendum festivals in Netherlands. The selection of the phrase '**lashes out "** supports what Systemic Functional Linguist M.K. Halliday (2014:23) explains" *a language is a resource for making meaning, and meaning resides in systemic patterns of choice*". In the Arabic version, the words selected were different. As can be noticed on the back translation, 'lashes out' was not mentioned; instead, another phrase ' disgraceful acts' was used. Obviously, the two headlines were ideologically selected for different readers. The editors considered the cultural background of their readers and hence selected terms that are notorious to them. In English, the information is provided dissimilarly. Both English and Arabic headlines convey almost similar message but in a different presentation.

Another difference noted in the headlines in Aljazeera English and Aljazeera Arabic is the addition or the omission of some headline words. Observe the following headlines:

12/03/2017 Aljazeera English website:

 " US 'invaders' in Syria not helpful: Assad says"

12/03/2017 Aljazeera Arabic website:

"الأسد: القوات الامريكية و التركية في سوريا غازية"

Back translation " Assad: American and Turkish troops in Syria are invaders"

In these two headlines, the English version addresses mostly the western readers with lexical choice of '**US invaders'** inside quotation to highlight the role of the American intervention in Syria. In the Arabic website, in the headline the word '**Turkey'** was added as another invader as quoted by the president Assad. Why was Turkey not mentioned in the English headline and highlighted in the Arabic one?? It might be mentioned because Turkey is regionally bordering some Arab countries and hence its role is controversial whereas in the West the US power is superior. Aljazeera English website mentioned the US alone in the headline because the readers in the west care a lot for American than they do for Turkey. Also, Arabic headline is little bit more informative than its English counterpart.

13/03/2017 Aljazeera English website: "Egypt's Hosni Mubarak to walk free in coming days"

13/03/2017 Aljazeera Arabic website "النائب العام يخلي سبيل حسني مبارك"

Back translation : " The Attorney General orders the release of Hosni Mubarak"

Looking at the two headlines, they are structured in two different manners. In the English version **' the attorney general'** was not mentioned. The **freedom** of Hosni Mubarak was stressed because it is more important than one who released him. In the Aljazeera Arabic headline, the authorized person, the Attorney General, was pointed at to indicate who gave the order of release. Between these two headlines, English headline referred to timing of release " **coming days**" while in the Arabic version it was neglected.

13/03/2017 Aljazeera English website: " Syria rebels agree to evacuate final bastion in Homs"

Later altered to

"Syria rebels agree to leave Homs' besieged al-Waer"

13/03/2017 Aljazeera Arabic website: "النظام و المعارضة يوقعان اتفاق حي الوعر برعاية روسية"

Back Translation: " The (Syrian) regime and the opposition signing Al Waer District deal via Russian Patronage"

The two headlines reveal many dissimilarities which in way or another target the audiences for both. In English version, the Syrian fighters are called 'rebels' to depict pro-westerners perspective which views the Syrian revolutionary fighters as rebels who are breaking the laws and in turn can bring together terrorist groups within their factions. The word 'rebels' was not identified as a specific group which might suggest any military anti-regime division can be included within it. In the Aljazeera Arabic headline, the tone is massively not the same. As the back translation shows, the word 'rebels' has not been mentioned. Instead, the word ' the opposition' replaced it. Additionally, the word ' regime' was also added to show the parties of the conflict. The use of the words ' **opposition'** and the '**regime'** is neutral; unlike the use of the '**rebels'** which portrays the western views of the opposition militants.

13/03/2017 Aljazeera English website: " calls for Trump to back up wiretapping claim"

13/03/2017 Aljazeera Arabic website: "ماكين يدعو ترمب لسحب اتهام أوباما بالتنصت"

Back translation "McCain calls Trump to withdraw Obama wiretapping accusation case"

English headline mentioned only calls in general whereas Arabic headlines specifically remarked McCain as calling Trump to withdraw and quit his accusations.

As can be discussed in the headlines above, the ideological viewpoints that are moulded into cultural contexts are shown in the rewriting of the same headlines in different languages using special lexical choices.

The contradiction between 'back up' and 'withdraw' shows the demarcation line between the two presentations of the same case.

4.2. Article analysis

There are two articles to be discussed here in this paper to show the differences in displaying the ideologies in both websites; Aljazeera Arabic and Aljazeera English versions.

Starting with headlines of the two articles, we can clearly notice the differences in words selection. In the Arabic version, the headline is this: both on **17.02.2017.**

English version :"US immigrants stay at home to demonstrate their value"

 Arabic version:

"يوم بلا مهاجرين في أمريكا احتجاجا على ترمب"

Which has this back translation:

 " A day without immigrants in America protesting Trump's order".

The headline in the Arabic version focused on the protest conducted by the immigrants against Trump order. The selection of the name of the USA President name and not his country in order to denounce his order only and to highlight that order impact on their lives and that the disobedience is not against the US government. On the other hand, the headline of Aljazeera English website headline did not mention Trump or his order , instead, it touched upon the esteem and honour of the immigrants and that immigrants took to streets to defend their livelihood. The two headlines exhibit a complete contrast. Obviously the Arabic website of Aljazeera did attack Trump policy more than the English headlines did.

Going through the articles, many examples have been spotted showing the lexical choice selection. One of the examples in the English version is this:

"Trump campaigned against the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants, playing on fears of violent crime, while promising to build a wall on the US-Mexican border to stop what he called potential "terrorists" from entering the country".

Using systemic functional linguistics (SFL), we can analyze the lexis and expressions in the texts because it tackles language from sociolinguistic point of view and that the select words remain within the domain of the contextual environment, from which writers or speakers pick out their

intended meaning. The phrase " *playing on the fears of violent crime*" indicate the negative attitude of Aljazeera.net English which made little of Trump's intimidation to the American people. This line of words adopts the immigrants views and voice of the current issue of immigration ban to the US. In the same clause, the article quotes the nominal group of Trump speech "potential terrorist" as another way of making his supporters as well as Americans get scary and stand by his executive order.

Second example of paradigmatic choice of words which indicate bias has been detected in both articles. Consider this:

English article:

"Since taking office last month*, the Republican president* has signed an executive order temporarily banning entry to the US by travellers from seven Muslim-majority countries and all refugees."

Arabic article:

"ومنذ توليه الرئاسة الشهر الماضي وقع الرئيس الجمهوري أمرا تنفيذيا يحظر مؤقتا دخول المسافرين من سبع دول إسلامية وجميع المهاجرين إلى الولايات المتحدة"

As the two sentences above show, the US president has been dubbed as " **the Republican president"** and not as the US president. The prejudice is clear because finally Trump is the US President and not only for Republicans.

Last difference in these two articles is that in Arabic article there are few more sentences that are not mentioned in English article. English article, on the contrary, has one sentence that is not mentioned in the Arabic article. Such differences are lexicogrammatical. These three following constructions of the Arabic article have not been mentioned in the English article:

1.

قال جيسي ميلر -وهو طباخ- "أردنا أن نظهر دعمنا لهم، إنهم جزء منا وجزء من هذا المجتمع، ونحن بحاجة إليهم كما هم بحاجة إلينا، وحقيقة أشعر بغيابهم فلا أحد للمساعدة هنا اليوم".

Translation :

Jessy Miller, a chef, said " we wanted to show our support to them. They are part of us and of this society and as they need us, we also do. Actually, I feel their absence and nobody here today to help us"

2.

من جانبه، قال أندريه هوزيه -طباخ ومالك سلسلة مطاعم- "إنها الطريقة الوحيدة التي نقول بها إننا هنا؛ نحن نتحدث عن مواطنين يقولون إننا نعتني بأميركا ونزرع وندير ملاعب الغولف ونعمل في المطاعم وفي كل مجالات الحياة الأميركية".

Translation:

"Andre Hozia, a chef and restaurant owner, said " it is the only way to tell them we are here; we are here talking about residents saying they care for America, grow and run golf courses, work in restaurants and present in all fields of American lives"

3.

أما لويس دياز -وهو أميركي من أسرة لاتينية مهاجرة- فصرح للجزيرة بأن تتعامل معنا كمواطنين من الدرجة الثانية من خلال السياسات التي تنفذها وزارة الأمن الداخلي وترحيل الناس إدارة ترمب" "حتى وإن كانوا داخل الكنائس ومنع دخول البلاد.

Translation :

Luis, a Latin American Immigrant, spoke to Al-Jazeera that " Trump Administration is dealing with us as nationals of second class through the policies that are done by the US Homeland Security including deporting people even if they are inside the churches and banning them from country entry"

In the English article, this clause complex was added and yet not mentioned in the Arabic article:

"I told my English teacher that I wasn't going to school, and she said she understood," said Rosa Castro, a 13-year-old US citizen in Detroit, who marched with her 26-year-old sister, one of several undocumented family members whose future she is concerned about".

As the article analysis shows many differences have been spotted in both articles. Such variance indicates the way editors select the language they want to affect readers' opinions about some heated debated topics.

5. Conclusion

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a useful tool for language and text analysis in both spoken and written texts. It helps analyze the news texts thoroughly by utilizing the paradigmatic axis of word selection, and contextual environment, which allows speakers, writers or journalists to choose among a limitless number of expressions. The analysis using SFL checks and explains

the resources of choice. Clearly, the ideology is instilled through the words and expressions of the writers of the articles in question.

Regarding my paper, it has shown that ideology was displayed in many forms such as the deletion, addition, selection of specific words and re-writing of news in a different language for the same website.

As for the features of the headlines in both websites, Aljazeera Arabic website articles and headlines mostly provide more informative and detailed stories than Aljazeera English website headlines and articles do.

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7. **Appendix**

"يوم بلا مهاجرين" في أميركا احتجاجا على⬜رمب"

أغلقت متاجر وشركات صغيرة ومطاعم أبوابها، وغاب تلاميذ عن فصولهم الدراسية، ونزل آلاف المتظاهرين إلى الشوارع الخميس احتجاجا على سياسات الهجرة التي ينتهجها الرئيس دونالد ترمب في مدن مختلفة بالولايات المتحدة.

ودعا نشطاء إلى "يوم بلا مهاجرين" لتسليط الضوء على أهمية المولودين خارج الولايات المتحدة الذين يمثلون 13% من سكان البلاد، أو أكثر من أربعين مليون مواطن من الحاصلين على الجنسية الأميركية.

التي شملت مئات المهاجرين ويحتج المضربون على سياسات الرئيس ترمب المتعلقة بالهجرة، وعلى حملات الترحيل.

قال جيسي ميلر -وهو طباخ- "أردنا أن نظهر دعمنا لهم، إنهم جزء منا وجزء من هذا المجتمع، ونحن وفي حديث للجزيرة بحاجة إليهم كما هم بحاجة إلينا، وحقيقة أشعر بغيابهم فلا أحد للمساعدة هنا اليوم".

من جانبه، قال أندريه هوزيه -طباخ ومالك سلسلة مطاعم- "إنها الطريقة الوحيدة التي نقول بها إننا هنا؛ نحن نتحدث عن مواطنين يقولون إننا نعتني بأميركا ونزرع وندير ملاعب الغولف ونعمل في المطاعم وفي كل مجالات الحياة الأميركية".

تتعامل معنا كمواطنين من الدرجة إدارة ترمب" أما لويس دياز -وهو أميركي من أسرة لاتينية مهاجرة- فصرح للجزيرة بأن الثانية من خلال السياسات التي تنفذها وزارة الأمن الداخلي وترحيل الناس حتى وإن كانوا داخل الكنائس ومنع دخول البلاد".

ونظمت مسيرات وتجمعات للتعبير عن التضامن في مدن منها نورث كارولاينا وأوستن، كما انضم الآلاف لمظاهرات في شيكاغو وديترويت.

وفي واشنطن، أغلق أكثر من خمسين مطعما مطاعم أبوابها، بينها مطاعم فاخرة، بينما انتقدت الرابطة الوطنية للمطاعم الامتناع عن العمل قائلة في بيان إن المنظمين "يعطلون أماكن عمل أميركيين يكدون من أجل محاولة إعالة أسرهم".

وكان ترمب عبر خلال حملته الانتخابية عن رفضه المهاجرين غير الشرعيين الذين يقدر عددهم بنحو 12 مليونا، مركزا على المخاوف المحتملين المخاوف من الجريمة العنيفة، بينما وعد ببناء جدار على الحدود بين الولايات المتحدة والمكسيك ومنع الإرهابيين من دخول البلاد.

ومنذ توليه الرئاسة الشهر الماضي وقع الرئيس الجمهوري أمرا تنفيذيا يحظر مؤقتا دخول المسافرين من سبع دول إسلامية وجميع المهاجرين إلى الولايات المتحدة، وعلقت محاكم اتحادية العمل بهذا الأمر.

المصدر : الجزيرة + رويترز

US immigrants stay at home to demonstrate their value
Thousands participated in the protests across United States.
17 Feb 2017 08:58 GMT | US & Canada

Businesses shut their doors, students skipped class and thousands of demonstrators took to the streets in   cities across the United States on Thursday to protest against President Donald Trump's immigration policies.

Activists called "A Day Without Immigrants" to highlight the importance of the foreign-born, who account for 13 percent of the US population, or more than 40 million naturalised American citizens.

Trump campaigned against the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants, playing on fears of violent crime, while promising to build a wall on the US-Mexican border to stop what he called potential "terrorists" from entering the country.

While the number of participants in Thursday's protests could not be determined, many sympathetic business owners closed shop and working-class immigrants gave up a day's pay.

"I told my English teacher that I wasn't going to school, and she said she understood," said Rosa Castro, a 13-year-old US citizen in Detroit, who marched with her 26-year-old sister, one of several undocumented family members whose future she is concerned about.

Since taking office last month, the Republican president has signed an executive order temporarily banning entry to the US by travellers from seven Muslim-majority countries and all refugees. That order was put on hold by federal courts.

Immigrant rights groups have expressed alarm after federal raids last week rounded up more than 680 people suspected of being in the country illegally.