The Social and Psychological Dimensions of Arab Media Discourse Related to Objectivity

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to highlight the social and psychological dimensions of Arab media discourse related to the ethical norm of objectivity in journalism. First, the paper explains the sociological and psychological bases of objectivity as an ethical norm in Western journalism, with particular attention to the way objectivity is related to truth and independence. Second, the paper provides background on Arab media, including English-language media. Next, the paper uses discourse analysis to examine selected English-language and Arabic-language news stories appearing in Arab media to compare how the ethics of objectivity are influenced by the social and psychological dimensions of Arab media discourse. The English-language texts are expected to be more "objective" than Arabic-language texts because of their concern with international public opinion, which highly values the ethics of objectivity.

Keywords: Arab media discourse, objectivity, international public opinion, objectivity ethics, ethical norms, English-language media, Arabic-language news, social dimensions, psychological dimensions

1. Introduction

There is a strong relationship between the social and psychological dimensions of media discourse and the ethical norm of objectivity. This is due to the socio-cultural background of the media writers which plays an important role in influencing their attitudes and tendencies towards society. This background is related to the norm of objectivity, in which we find that journalists are influenced by the status of readers and listeners, their ideologies, and cultures. So, when we find that journalists are biased in their discourse to their culture and their ideologies, the norm of objectivity is negatively influenced by this bias. Additionally, the socio-institutional dimension may influence the objectivity of media discourse negatively and positively. Some newspapers tend to be biased to the voice of the government or some political parties; others try to be unbiased to the opinion of politicians and government.

Based on this relationship between the social and psychological dimensions of media discourse and the ethical norm of objectivity, The main purpose of this study is to highlight the social and psychological dimensions of the Jordanian media discourse related to the ethical norm of objectivity in journalism.The paper provides background on Jordanian media, including English-language media. Next, the paper uses discourse analysis to examine selected English-language and Arabic-language opinion discourses appearing in Jordanian media to compare how the ethics of objectivity are influenced by the social and psychological dimensions of Jordanian media discourse. The English-language texts are expected to be more "objective" than Arabic-language texts because of their concern with international public opinion, which highly values the ethics of objectivity.

According to my knowledge of the Jordanian media discourse, I think that there are a lot of bias in Jordanian media discourse to the culture of the Arab audiences and readers in dealing with the political and economic issues. This bias negatively influences the objectivity of Jordanian media discourse in the international context. So, the Jordanian media discourse loses a lot of its credibility and objectivity among the other international media discourses. Also, it is noticed that the Jordanian media discourse in English language is more objective than the Arabic one. This is due to the status of the audiences in the English discourse, in which the journalists know that the norm of objectivity is given the first priority for the readers and audiences, so the journalists tend to be unbiased to their cultural and ideological backgrounds in their discourse.

2. Literature Review

Van Dijk (1995) analyzes opinion articles in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* in light of critical discourse analysis theory. He tries to prove how ideologies, which are the basic systems of fundamental social cognitions, organize the attitudes and the social representations shared by members of groups. Furthermore, Van Dijk claims that ideologies indirectly control the mental context models which form the discourse through studying the semantic structures, such as topic, propositional structures, coherence and levels of description which are monitored by ideologies.

Teo (2000) analyzes the ideological construction in the structure of newspaper reporting. He focuses on news reports relating to a Vietnamese gang in Australia whose violent and drug-dealing activities have received publicity in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Daily Telegraph*. The analysis of these reports is based on the critical discourse analysis theory, in which it is clear that there is a racist ideology manifest in "an asymmetrical power discourse" between the (ethnic) law-breakers and the (white) law enforcers. Also, the study explains that the racism in the Australian news reflects the marginalization of recent Vietnamese migrants in Australia.

In a book entitled **The Professional Journalist**, Hohenberg (1969) comments on the newspaper editorials and the method of writing them. He claims that the editorial page must be "something more than the voice of the proprietor, the vehicle for promoting his own interests and prejudices and those of his leading editors" (p.472). Besides, he believes that the editorial page should represent a community or region of the country; it should be 'a marketplace of ideas' for all the individuals of society. Furthermore, the researcher claims that editorials generally reflect the taste and character of the writer as well as the flavor of the newspaper. He also comments on the style variations of individual editorial writers by saying that these variations may be affected by the personality of the editor, in which the persuasive and argumentative styles are used by the editors to convince their readers of their ideas and opinions. However, the importance of this book stems from the author's views on the tools used by the journalists to make them more professional through focusing on the social dimensions of writing newspapers and editorials which are essential factors for the journalists' success.

3. The Meaning of Objectivity

Objectivity has a lot of norms and meanings. In this study, I want to focus on the meaning of bias to the cultural and ideological perspectives, in which if media discourse is biased to the writer's ideology and culture, it will not be objective. So, the norm of objectivity in this study is related to how much bias we find in media discourse. The media discourse should be objective in the sense that it is not biased to the writer's culture and ideology; it should focus on the truth.

Borden (2005) comments on the meaning of objectivity through referring to many scholars' claims. The writer claims that journalists neglect objectivity during the national questions. This is important in the study of Jordanian media discourse because the journalists deal with the Israeli-Palestinian question, so they tend to abandon objectivity when they deal with this question because of their pan-national ideology towards this question. Borden (2005) presents a strong claim when she says that the journalist's job is to be objective: "Being objective preserves independence, and keeping oneself pure as a journalist is a way to enact this stance…Another way to enact objectivity is to refrain from expressing any opinions about the news" (P.35). Finally, it is clear that objectivity is influenced by the journalists' sense of patriotism which might be a negative factor in influencing the journalistic objectivity.

4. Social and Psychological Dimensions of Editorial Texts

In this part of the study, there will be a contrastive analysis of the Arabic (*Al-Rai*) and English (*The Jordan Times*) opinion discourses in Jordanian media discourse in order to see which one is more objective and why. So, the analysis of these media discourses will be analyzed in light of critical discourse analysis theory and ethical norm of objectivity. Here, it should be stated that *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* newspapers are semi-governmental ones in Jordan. Although they both belong to the same press foundation, they are different in expressing objectivity.

4.1 Socio-Institutional Dimension

Editorial opinion is generally institutional, and not personal. Even when written by a single editor, editorials count as the opinion of the newspaper. This means that they will generally be shared among several editors, or between editors and management, or between editors and other social groups they belong to.

Whatever mental models of opinions about specific events are being formulated, they will tend to be derived from social representations, rather than from the personal experiences or opinions of an editor.

In fact, the opinions of editorials which represent the mental model of the editors are highly governed by the rules, attitudes and opinions of the institution itself which are conveyed to the society. Besides, the editorials may represent the voice or the opinion of a government if the government is the owner of the press institution.

The sociocognitive foundation of editorials also shows the institutional dimension. This is clear from the fact that the first person pronouns and stories about personal experiences will be quite rare in editorials. Also, the elements of the style, such as the selection of lexical items and modes of argumentation mark the institutional dimension.

Al-Rai and *The Jordan Times* newspapers belong to the same press institution. So, the opinion in both newspaper editorials will be similar. But the difference lies in the stylistic devices used by the writers of the editorials which is the result of to whom the editorial is directed. Thus, the socio-institutional dimension highly influences the opinion in both newspaper editorials.

As an example on the socio-institutional dimension in both *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* editorials, we select some examples from both editorials to see the influence of this dimension on the media discourse directed to the public opinion and to the international one. We will begin with examples from *Al-Rai* followed by ones from *The Jordan Times*:

إن بلدنا وقيادتنا وفي كل الظروف لا تتخلى عن مسؤولياتها الوطنية والقومية.1

(*Al-Rai*, July 19, 2002)

Our country and leadership in any situation will not forsake its   national and pan-national responsibilities.

الحملة الدولية الراهنة2 الهادفة وأد الإرهاب . لن يسهم عمل صبياني هنا أو هناك في كسر إرادتنا أو جعلنا نتخلف عن المشاركة في ومطاردة الإرهابيين

(*Al-Rai,* March 1, 2002)

A childish act, here and there, will not break our determination in participating in the current international campaign against terrorism or in chasing the terrorists ...

تطبيق شعار "الأردن أولاً"...معان كنموذج اقتصادي واجتماعي ... آن الآوان أن يوضع شعار الأردن أولاً موضع التنفيذ4

(*Al-Rai*, November 18, 2002)

"Jordan First", Ma'an as an Economic and Social Model … The time has come for "Jordan First" to be applied.

قد تكون هناك بعض العمليات العسكرية وبخاصة الانتحارية أسهمت في منح ذريعة للمتطرفين في الحكومة الإسرائيلية وجيش الاحتلال.5 للمضي قدماً في مخططاتهم الرامية الى اطاحة عملية السلام واحياء مشروع اسرائيل الكبرى والأبقاء على الشعب الفلسطيني رهينة الإحتلال والإستيطان والإذلال.

(*Al-Rai,* February 11, 2002)

Military operations and suicide attacks could have given extremists in the Israeli government and its occupation military to continue their plans that aim to stop the peace process and unliven the project of greater Israel and keep the Palestinian people under the hostage of occupation, settlement and humiliation.

From the previous examples taken from *Al-Rai* editorials, we can clearly notice the influence of the institutional dimension on the opinions directed to the Jordanian and Arab society. This is clear from the use of the phrases "بلدنا" *our country*, "قيادتنا" *our leadership*, "إرادتنا" *our determination*, "الأردن أولاً" *Jordan First*, "عمليات انتحارية" *suicide attacks*. This style reflects to a certain extent the vision and opinion of the institution of *Al-Rai*. Besides, the writer of such editorials who represents a mental model is highly influenced by this dimension through defending the view of the institution in each editorial. He uses biased words to the institution and to the Jordanian policy of dealing with the political issues in the region and he resorts to use the long sentences and the first person pronoun which implies that the writers of the editorials derive their opinions from the opinion of the Jordanian society and from the vision of their institution. This can be clearly noticed through the head title of each editorial in *Al-Rai* newspaper which is titled "رأينا" *our opinion,* in which this title implies that the editorial of *Al-Rai* newspaper represents the opinion of the Jordanian society in general and the opinion of *Al-Rai* as a press institution in particular.

Similarly, *The Jordan Times* editorials also reflect the opinion of the institution and of the Jordanian policy through a different style from *Al-Rai* one. This style is based on the use of the simple and straight- forward words.

Also, the opinion of *The Jordan Times* is written to be more relevant and acceptable for the international public opinion through dealing with the issues from an objective point of view. Below are some examples selected from *The Jordan Times* editorials to shed light on the institutional dimension of the opinion in *The Jordan Times* editorials:

1. (*The Jordan Times*, August 9, 2002)

The government decision to revoke the license of the office of Al-Jazeera in Jordan will not stop the news station from airing unbalanced and biased programmes such as "the Opposition Direction". The government knows that. But the decision is a message Al-Jazeera needs to heed for the sake of truth, professionalism, integrity and ethical standards.

2. (*The Jordan Times*, March 1, 2002)

Jordan's fight against terrorism started many years ago. It is a battle between principles. Terrorist groups have seen in the Jordanian model of moderation and openness an impediment to the spread of their values of hatred, rejectionism and backwardness.

3. (*The Jordan Times*, November 3, 2002)

Jordan stands for tolerance, dialogue, and coexistence. It has stood for these values throughout its history … "Jordan First" is the beginning of another journey for this nation.

4. (*The Jordan Times*, July21, 2002)

It is right to condemn suicide attacks. But Israeli practices that provoke these attacks must also be condemned. And what is more important is to do something to change these practices.

Obviously, the contrast between the two types of editorials shows that the opinion in both *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* editorials is institutional. But the difference lies in the style of expressing the opinions which is influenced by to whom the opinion is directed. This style is obvious through the modes of argumentation in both editorials. In *Al-Rai*, it is strongly biased to the opinion of the institution and to the Jordanian and Arab society, whereas in *The Jordan Times* it is biased to the opinions of the institution through a moderate and objective style.

Finally, the role and position of *The Jordan Times* and *Al-Rai* newspapers as semi-governmental and conservative ones, their relation with the Jordanian government make their opinions conveyed to the society towards certain issues institutional and governmental. So, the objectivity of the media discourse in both newspapers is negatively influenced by the domination of the Jordanian government which makes the media discourse as the voice of the government.

4.2 Socio- Cultural Dimension

People not only have personal beliefs about personal experiences, but also share more general beliefs with others, such as other members of the same group, or even with most others in a whole society or culture. Our sociocultural knowledge is an example of such shared beliefs. In fact, we would be unable to understand each other, nor would we be able to speak or to interact with others, without sharing a large amount of knowledge about all aspects of the world and our daily lives. From birth to death people acquire an enormous amount of knowledge, beginning with their languages and the principles of interaction, the people and groups they interact with, the objects around them, the institutions of society, and about the rest of the world. Teun Van Dijk (2001) assumes that these socially shared beliefs from what may be called social memory and that sociocultural knowledge is a central system of mental representations in social memory.

Knowledge may vary for different groups or cultures, also within the same group or culture, people usually make a distinction between knowledge and belief, between fact and opinion. Besides, there is an enormous amount of knowledge nobody ever disputes and that is accepted by virtually all members of a culture. According to Van Dijk (2001), this knowledge is called the "sociocultural common ground of a group or culture".

Thus, common ground knowledge is shared by all members of a culture and in that respect also defines what is common sense. Besides, religion may be a solid part of the common ground because culture is strongly related to religion which is acquired by the members of society from birth to death.

The last point in this theoretical framework of this dimension is that common ground beliefs are not limited to knowledge but may also feature evaluative shared beliefs, that is, social opinions or attitudes. In addition to that, common ground beliefs feature norms are values which form the evaluation criteria for what members of a culture hold to be good or bad and what should not be done.

Obviously, since the writers of *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* editorials are Arabs, their editorials will be based on this Arabic cultural ground that they belong to. But there are some stylistic variations which are due to whom the writers direct their opinions. Besides, the writers of *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* use many connotative words which are assigned on the basis of the cultural knowledge of the writers and the readers of editorials.

Most of the opinion discourses in *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* concentrate on the Palestinian issue and criticize the Israeli acts against Palestinian people. Besides, these opinion discourses represent the Arabs' vision towards the Palestinian people. This vision is strongly based on the cultural conflict between the Arab nation and Israel which is the result of the religious conflict in its essence. In fact, both *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* editorials represent this Arabic cultural common ground. This common ground is expressed in the opinion discourses in *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* through the biased words and the connotations to the Arabs' vision. Let us consider the following examples from both newspaper editorials:

1 كما كان متوقعاً ...اختارت حكومة شارون المضي قدماً في نهج التصعيد والتدمير وإغلاق الفرص وإدارة الظهر للدروس والعبر الكثيرة التي افرزتها دماء الضحايا التي سالت على ارض فلسطين التاريخية وسقط خلالها عشرات الفلسطينيين.

(*Al-Rai*, March 5, 2002)

As expected the Sharon's government chose to continue to escalate, destroy and close the windows of opportunity and turn its back on the lessons and expressions of the blood of the victims that ran on the historical land of Palestine and which resulted in 10s of Palestinians being killed....

2- (*The Jordan Times*, March 13, 2002)

Sharon's Launch of the largest military attack on the Palestinians since the erruption of the Intifada 18 months ago precedes the peace mission of US special envoy Anthony Zinni…Unless Israel stops "the bombing of civilian areas, the assassinations, the unnecessary use of lethal force, the demolitions, and the daily humiliation of ordinary Palestinians, "… there will be no peace.

Form these two quotations of *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* editorials, we notice how the two opinion discourses are strongly based on this sociocultural shared knowledge in expressing the attitudes against the Israeli acts in the West Bank. This is clear from the words " أرض فلسطين التاريخية" ***The historical land of Palestine,*** "الانتفاضة" "***Intifada***, and from the negative connotative words and expressions which are assigned on the basis of Arabic cultural common ground, such as " يدمر" ***destroy,*** " دم الضحايا", ***blood of the victims, Sharon, assassinations, demolitions*** and ***humiliation.*** But it is noticed through these quotations that the opinion discourse in *The Jordan Times* is different from *Al-Rai* one in that it insists on the role of peace in resolving this conflict. This attitude of *The Jordan Times* is due to the fact that this opinion discourse is directed to the international public opinion, so it has to be more moderate and objective than *Al-Rai* one. This can be noticed from the variation in the use of lexical items between *Al- Rai* and *The Jordan Times;* for example, *The Jordan Times* editorials describe the Palestinian attacks against Israelis as ***"suicide attacks"***, whereas in *Al-Rai* ones we also find "عمليات استشهادية" ***religious suicidal attacks*** or ***martyr operations***. But this variation shows us that *The Jordan Times* editorial tries to be more acceptable, moderate, and objective in its opinion for the international public opinion than *Al-Rai* which is directed and biased to the Jordanian and Arabic public opinion.

Let us consider another example to shed light on the Arabic cultural common ground on which the opinion discourses of *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* are based:

1. إن الوقت قد حان كي يدرك الإسرائيليون بأنفسهم بأن لا حل للصراع الفلسطيني الإسرائيلي وتداعياته العربية بغير الاعتراف بالحقوق الفلسطينية وفي مقدمتها حق تقرير المصير وإقامة الدولة المستقلة على التراب الوطني الفلسطيني وعاصمتها القدس.

(*Al-Rai,* February 11, 2002)

The time has come for Israelis to realize that the Palestinian- Israeli conflict is only resolved through the recognition of Palestinian rights, especially the right of self-determination and the right of a Palestinian state on Palestinian land with Jerusalem as its capital.

2. (*The Jordan Times*, February 5, 2002)

The Intifada is an expression of their frustration and their determination to realize their rights… All indications point to one answer: Sharon does not want peace. The Arabs do.

Commenting on these editorials we notice that the opinion discourse in both editorials is based on the Arabic cultural ground in supporting the Palestinian rights to establish their state. Besides, the mention of the word "القدس" *Jerusalem* implies a religious cultural dimension, in which Jerusalem is a sacred religious place for Muslims and Arabs. Thus, the opinion discourse in these editorials is based on these socially shared beliefs among Arabs in viewing their issues and problems.

Finally, the opinion discourse in *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* editorials is based on the Arabic-Islamic cultural ground which influences the use of lexical items and the modes of argumentation in all these editorials. Thus, the socio-cultural dimension represents the basis of all attitudes and opinions in both *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* editorials. Furthermore, it is noticed that the Arabic culture which influences the writers' writings might influence the objectivity of the Jordanian media discourse, in which they are biased to their culture in dealing with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

4.3 Socio – ideological Dimension

Before we start talking about this dimension in *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* editorials, we should clarify the notion of ideology in the social and cognitive context. In fact, ideologies have something to do with systems of ideas, especially with the social, political or religious ideas shared by a social group or movement. Communism as well as anti-communism are examples of ideologies. Group members who share such ideologies stand for a number of very general ideas that are on the basis of their more specific beliefs about the world and monitor their social practices (Van Dijk 2001).

Van Djik (2001) presents a very valuable definition of the notion of ideologies; they are "the fundamental beliefs of a group and its members" (P.12). So, ideologies are the basis of the social representations of groups (Van Dijk 1998).

Our first step in this discussion is to recognize that ideologies consist of socially shared beliefs that are associated with the characteristic properties of a group, such as their identity, their interests and aims, their relations to other groups or societies and their natural environment.

In fact, many psychologists have claimed that ideological beliefs are usually located in "the long term memory" (Van Dijk 2001), which is related to the socially shared beliefs. So, since ideologies are basic socially shared, we would not typically look for them in episodic memory, which is personal, subjective and consist of specific personal experiences.

There is a kind of connection between ideologies and values. Indeed, both are fundamental for social memory or long term memory. However, whereas ideologies are typical for groups and may determine group conflict and struggle, values have an even more general; more basic and cultural function and principle are valid for most members of the same culture.

Van Dijk (2001) has summarized the categories of the ideology schema that are based on membership criteria of a group, activities, aims, values and norms of a group. These categories show that an ideology is one of the basic forms of social cognition that at the same time define the identity of a group and hence the subjective feelings of social identity of its members (Van Dijk 2001).

Thus, in this theoretical framework of the notion of ideology, it should be emphasized that ideologies have an important cognitive dimension in that they may be studied as structures represented in the minds of members of groups, just like knowledge. It would, however, be very misguided if we would limit a general theory of ideology to such a cognitive dimension. It has been stressed from the beginning of this theoretical introduction that ideologies are also social. Even in the cognitive account, we speak of social cognition, social memory and of the shared social representations of the members of a group. This means that ideologies are not merely acquired and represented by individuals, but socially learned and represented by a group of people. So, it makes sense to speak of ideologies only in this combined sense of being at the same time cognitive and social.

The last point to discuss in this theoretical framework is the relationship between ideologies and culture in the social context. In fact, ideologies can not be defined for whole societies and cultures. The point is that ideologies develop as mental forms of a group, and often in relation to other groups. This means that if there is no conflict of goals or interests, no struggle, no competition, the ideologies have no point. In other words, it is only within and between groups that ideologies make sense, and not at the level of society as a whole. This would only be the case if a whole society would be related to another one. The same is true for whole cultures. Cultures may have a shared common ground, as well as shared norms and values, but not a generally shared ideology.

Obviously, in *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* editorials we may notice that the opinion discourse in these editorials is based on institutional, national, cultural, religious, professional, political and pan-Arab national ideologies. These ideologies influence to a certain extent the objectivity of media discourse, the mental models of the editorial writers and hence also influence the mental representation of the context in these opinion discourses.

Concerning the national and political ideologies that can be noticed in the editorials of *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times*, let us consider the following examples:

1 تفجير يوم أمس في عمان أكد مرة أخرى أن أمن الأردن واستقراره ما يزال مستهدفاً
وعلى اجندة الإرهابيين وتشكيلاتهم … إن قوى معينة لا تروقها هذه التحولات الإيجابية وهي ترغب عن طريق الإرهاب في تعطيل المسيرة الوطنية ووضع العصى في عجلة الإصلاح والديمقراطية والانفتاح والإنتاج…يخطئ الارهابيون والجهات التي تقف خلف عملهم الجبان يوم أمس في عمان إذا ما اعتقدوا أن مخططهم الإجرامي في تعكير صفو الأمن والهدوء والاستقرار الذي ينعم به بلدنا سيمر أو إرهابهم الدموي سيجبر بلدنا على تغيير نهجه السياسي المؤيد للسلام الدائم والعادل والشامل والمؤيد بلا تحفظ للشعب الفلسطيني الشقيق والمؤيد للتحالف الدولي المناهض للإرهاب.

(*Al-Rai,* March 1, 2002)

The explosion in Amman yesterday emphasizes once again that the security of Jordan and its stability is still being targeted and remains on the agenda of the terrorists and their organization … There are certain powers that do not see these developments as positive and desire through terrorism to halt the national march and lay obstacles in front of reform, democracy, openness, and productivity … The terrorists are mistaken and the same goes for parties which stand behind the cowardly act of yesterday in Amman if they believe their murderous crime against peace and stability which is enjoyed in our country will force our country to change its political perspective in support of a just, comprehensive and permanent peace and its support without reservation to the Palestinian brothers, bearing in mind that the Kingdom also supports the international alliance against terrorism.

2. (*The Jordan Times*, March 1, 2002)
Jordan's fight against terrorism started many years ago. It is a battle between principles. Terrorist groups have seen in the Jordanian model of moderation and openness an impediment to the spread of their values of hatred, rejectionism and backwardness. On both physical and ideological fronts, Jordan has own … Ideologically, these groups have failed to gain any significant ground among Jordanians …That is why the world needs to work closer in fighting all sorts of terrorism through a comprehensive vision that targets all the political, ideological, social, economic and political conditions conductive to the spread of the agenda of hate.

It is noticed through these two opinion discourses that both mental models of the editorial writers are against terrorist ideologies in support of the national welfare of Jordan to fight these outgroups which are terrorists because these terrorist groups have an opposite ideology against the national ideology. This is clear from the use of the lexical items "تعطيل المسيرة الوطنية " *to halt the national march,* "ضد السلام والاستقرار ", *against peace and stability*, "*their values of hatred*" and "*Jordan's fight against terrorism*" … etc.

Politically speaking, the word "***terrorism***" represents to a certain extent the political ideology of the world, in which the word "***terrorism***" becomes a very important word in the political sense after the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11th September which make the world formulate a political ideology against the terrorist acts all over the world. Let us consider the following examples to see the cultural, religious and pan-Arab national ideologies in *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* editorials:

1. إن بلدنا وقيادتنا وفي كل الظروف لا تتخلى عن مسؤولياتها الوطنية والقومية دعماً لقضايا العرب العادلة وفي مقدمتها
القضية الفلسطينية والمسألة العراقية…

(*Al-Rai*, July 19, 2002)

Our country and leadership in any situation will not forsake its national and pan-national responsibilities supporting Arab causes whose forefront is the Palestinian issue and the Iraqi question ….

    (*The Jordan Times*, July 21, 2002)

2. **Israel has occupied seven out of the eight major Palestinian cities in the West Bank … The Arabs are still reaching out to the Israelis with an offer of peace.**

3. إن الوقت قد حان كي يدرك الإسرائيليون بأنفسهم بأن لا حل للصراع الفلسطيني الإسرائيلي وتداعياته العربية بغير الاعتراف بالحقوق الفلسطينية وفي مقدمتها حق تقرير المصير وإقامة الدولة المستقلة على التراب الوطني الفلسطيني وعاصمتها القدس.

    (*Al-Rai*, February 11, 2002)

The time has come for Israelis to realize that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is only solved through the recognition of Palestinian rights, especially the right of self-determination and the right of a Palestinian state on the Palestinian land with Jerusalem as its capital.

4. (*The Jordan Times*, February 5, 2002)

Sharon appears stuck in an anachronistic ideological bubble that prevents him from recognising the painful price the whole area has to pay in the event of further explosion of the security situation in Palestine.

It is obvious through these opinion discourses in *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* editorials that they are based on the pan-Arab national, religious and cultural ideologies in support of the Arabs issues, particularly, the Palestinian issue against the Israeli ideology which is against peace and justice. The citation of the words "القدس" *Jerusalem*, "فلسطين" *Palestine* and "الحقوق الفلسطينية" *Palestinian rights* is strongly related to the pan-Arab national ideology which is based on the Arab-Israeli cultural common ground. In fact, the Arab- Israeli conflict can not be separated from the conflict of cultural and religious ideologies of both Arabs as a nation and Israel as an occupier state. This is clear from the use of the words "محتل" *occupied* and "الأراضي الفلسطينية" *Palestinian lands* which shows that both the mental models of *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* editorials are highly influenced by the socially shared knowledge of all Arabs towards Palestine as an Arab land and towards Israel as an occupier state. So, we notice that the media discourses here are not objective because of their bias to the Arabic culture.

Before we discuss the last kind of ideology, we must say that there is a stylistic variation between *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* in regard to the use of lexical items and the modes of argumentation. This can be noticed from using words like "بلدنا" *our country* and "مسؤوليات قومية" *pan-national responsibilities* in *Al-Rai* editorials which explicitly show the Arab ideology which is directed to the Jordanian and Arab public opinion. Whereas the opinion discourse in *The Jordan Times* indirectly reflects the Arabic ideology through criticizing the ideology of others. Thus, we have to say that all ideologies in *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* are controlled by the usual polarization, first between terrorists and anti-terrorists and second between Arabs and Israelis.

Commenting on the institutional and professional ideologies in *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times,* let us consider the following examples:

1. فيما تتوالى ردود فعل أبناء شعبنا الغاضبة والمنددة بالمستوى المتدني أخلاقياً ومهنياً لمحطة الجزيرة القطرية متسائلة في الوقت نفسه عن الأسباب الحقيقية التي تدفع بها إلى مثل هذا السلوك والتحريض المباشر والإساءة إلى الأردن قيادة وشعباً، مواقف أو تاريخاً مشرفاً ... فإن المؤلم فيما جرى والذي أدى إلى اتخاذ قرار أردني بإغلاق مكاتب الجزيرة ووقف نشاطها على الأراضي الأردنية، ما كان بلدنا يرغب في اتخاذ مثل هذا القرار لولا أن الأمور وصلت حداً يصعب علينا القبول به أو التعاطي مع حملة التشكيك والإساءة المبرمجة ضد الاردن التي تقودها الجزيرة والتي تتجاوز أخلاقياً ومهنياً وسياسياً كل الحدود والأعراف والتقاليد لا تندرج أبداً تحت باب الرأي والرأي الآخر وإلا فإن الساحة الإعلامية وفي عصر تتكاثر فيه الفضائيات ... ستغدو ساحة فوضى ومستباحة لكل من يريد أن يصفي حسابه مع أية دولة أو يسعى لابتزازها ... ما يعني في النهاية خروج الصحافة ووسائل الإعلام على المألوف وانخراطها في لعبة السياسة الدولية وتخليها عن دورها التنويري والمحايد والموضوعي في تناول الحدث وإيصال الحقيقة للناس بعيداً عن المصالح الضيقة والمكاسب والحسابات العابرة.

    (*Al-Rai*, August 9, 2002)

In addition to the popular angry reaction about the low ethical and professional behavior of the Qatari Al-Jazeera Channel, many are asking about the real reason which has allowed the station to adopt such behavior and direct incitement to the leadership and people of Jordan, a country which has always noble historical stands. What happened subsequently in the closure of the station and the stopping of its activity on Jordanian soil was also hurtful.

Our country did not want to take this decision, but things seemed to have gotten out of hand to the degree that we could not just accept what was happening in terms of the negative campaign orchestrated by Al-Jazzera against Jordan. This campaign went beyond the professional and political ethics and conventions and do not go under the right to be heard. In an age when satellites are proliferating …, the media field is becoming chaotic and open for setting accounts and with which every state to exploit and get what it wants to pass …This, in the end, means the press and mass communication become involved in the international political game and stop performing an awareness role that is objective and not based in its handling of the news and the way it delivers it to the people away form self interest and advantages.

2. (*The Jordan Times*, August 9, 2002)

Also in media, opinions are free. But there is a fundamental difference between opinions and down right libellous and slanderous statements that encroach on the ideals, history and value of peoples … The freedom with which new media operate utilising state-of-the- art technology has rendered old ways of dealing with the press archaic and ineffective. This, however, should not be a license for media organisations to act in complete disregard for professional ethics and for the truth … Al-Jazzera is crossing professional and ethical red lines.

From the above quotations we notice that both writers of *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* comment on Al-Jazeera Channel campaign against Jordan and its leadership from a professional and institutional point of view, not from an objective point of view. This can be noticed through the ideology of journalistic writings, and how they should be true, unbiased and not crossing the ethical and professional lines. These principles and ideas influence the journalistic field as a profession. Besides, these two opinion discourses represent the institutional ideology of *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times* in that the employees and the writers are governed by certain shared ideas that influence their attitudes and opinion in accordance with the ideas and the attitudes of their press institution which is conservative and semi-governmental.

There is a stylistic variation between the two opinion discourses of both *Al-Rai* and *The Jordan Times*. This is obvious from the focus on the justification of the Jordanian decision in regard to the closure of AL-Jazeera office in Jordan for the Jordanians and Arabs. On the other hand, *The Jordan Times* editorial focuses on the justification of the Jordanian decision for the international public opinion through unbiased attitudes emphasizing the principles of journalism as a profession.

Finally, it might be useful to say that ideologies represent the systems of ideas, especially, with the social, political, religious, cultural and institutional ideas shared by a social group. Thus, these ideologies negatively influence the objectivity norm of the Jordanian media discourse, in which we find the opinion discourses reflect the opinion of the government and the culture of readers.

5. Conclusion

This study can conclude that the English media texts in Jordanian media discourse are more objective than the Arabic ones. This is due to the fact that journalists of English texts tend to be unbiased and influenced by the western ethical theories of truth and objectivity. Also, it is noticed that the Arabic texts are more influenced and biased to the national and pan-national ideologies regarding the Israeli-Palestinian question. This is due to the fact that the Arabic opinion texts are directed to the local public opinion, in which we find a shared common ground between the journalists and the addressed audiences. Although *The Jordan Times* and *Al-Rai* newspapers belong to the same press foundation, we find that the English opinion discourse is more objective and moderate for the international public opinion in spite of the indirectly biased attitude to the Arabic opinion. Additionally, my study recommends that the journalists of Arabic texts in Jordan should be trained on the basis of the ethics of objectivity through giving them some courses in this field. Also, the governments in Jordan should give the journalists a lot of freedom in expressing their attitudes, not to make them as the voices of governments. Also, the study recommends that future case studies should be conducted in the field of objectivity ethics in the Arab media discourse.

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